

Essay #1 "From Working Poor to Elite Scholar"

Statement of Purpose, Dept. of History

One of the proudest accomplishments of my life was earning my college degree, despite the fact that my early adulthood pointed in the opposite direction, beginning with my marriage at the age of 19. Throughout the 1990s I lived as one of the "working poor," someone who slipped through the cracks of supposedly historic prosperity. By the age of 25 I was divorced and frustrated with menial, low-paying jobs: clerk, receptionist, housecleaner. There is nothing like scrubbing someone else's toilet to inspire one with determination toward obtaining an education. Because of my absolute commitment toward earning my degree, I got a flexible shift at a retail warehouse which enabled me to acquire my degree while supporting myself financially.

Enrolled at the local community college, I experienced a different world opening up to me; excited by a new encouraging environment, I excelled academically. I learned that if I tried hard, I could succeed; if I wanted something badly enough, I possessed the ability to take advantage of these opportunities. I worked a minimum 35-hour workweek for five years to put myself through school without succumbing to the temptation of a student loan. I paid tuition up front with the money I earned. It was the example of my mother, a Puerto Rican immigrant working diligently to provide for her family, who instilled a work ethic into me that has stood me in good stead.

With a lifelong passion for history, I have developed an interest in the cultural history of early modern and modern Europeans, especially women's history. The experiences of ordinary women fascinate me: how they constitute their world through popular folk tales and literature; how the seemingly irrational paradoxes of the past to modern eyes are completely rational when taken within the historical context; and finally, how these historical changes and transformations in culture constitute the present. I enjoy studying the early modern period of English history, especially the Tudor-Stuart period, because of the tensions that existed between medieval philosophies and the rising Enlightenment intellectualism. My influences have been diverse. I read the popular historian Barbara Tuchman, not for her technical accuracy, but for her beautiful prose. Natalie Zemon Davis's research inspires me in the way that she cleverly picks out fresh life from tired sources. And finally, Michel Foucault's philosophies have profoundly influenced the way I write, for now I have a philosophical grounding that makes me highly sensitive to my own biases. In fact, Foucault's post-structuralist matrix has been instrumental in shaping my current project focusing on the 17th-century midwife Elizabeth Cellier. In this project, I am reexamining the current histories of English midwifery using Cellier as a case study, detecting a decided bias embedded within them. The underlying assumption of these histories is that pre-industrial professional women—and Cellier in particular—struggled against patriarchy and oppression from the male medical community, when in fact Cellier's literature shows that she utilized the accepted discourses of patriarchy available to her in her writing and turned them into useful tools of political and religious power.

This essay uses an outstanding combination of personal information and academic exposition. The personal information makes the reader interested in this young woman as a person, and the academic information proves that such interest is warranted. Notice that the woman is matter-of-fact about some rather large challenges she has faced in her life; she doesn't ask for special consideration, rather she explains certain decision-making processes and turning points in her development as a person and a scholar. This is an outstanding essay overall.

#1 "From Working Poor to Elite Scholar"

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Here is a nice exposition of a specific academic project, leading to publication. Do you have a paper that you could submit for publication before you apply to graduate school? Your professors can guide you in this process.

Always name your advisers and mentors.

When you have identified specific professors at the targeted graduate program who could be mentors to you, mention them by name.

As a student, I feel that my success lies in the fact that I approached my studies as if I were a professional (historian, not student, that is). I always enrolled in the most challenging courses and worked with professors I felt were the most qualified in my areas of interest. Never did I settle for an A- or B+. If I got one, I would ask what I could do to improve—and ultimately, I utilized the advice to strengthen my work. My personal academic milestone occurred while I was completing a research seminar on historical methods. This required course was taught by an Americanist—Dr. Julie Worth, director of the [school withheld] history department—so our research topics were limited to American sources. I was able to work within my main interest, which is marginalized women, while using the primary sources of *The New York Times*. The resulting paper, "Biologically Unsound: Women, Murder, and the Insanity Plea in the Progressive Era" examined the preponderant use of the insanity plea for women who went outside their "innate nature" and murdered, regardless of the circumstances which drove them to kill. Although the topic was outside my focus, which is European history, this paper was selected for publication in the Phi Alpha Theta journal, *The Historian*.

My focus as an undergraduate has always been with an eye toward graduate school and a career as a professional historian. Aware of the rigors of graduate study, I have not only completed an undergraduate language requirement in Spanish, but I am also currently enrolled in an accelerated French course. In addition, I have become active in the historical honor society, Phi Alpha Theta, including serving as chapter president. During my tenure our chapter hosted the Phi Alpha Theta Regional Conference, the largest regional conference in the nation. With the help of faculty adviser Dr. Judith Gaillard, I created the conference sessions, chose appropriate student commentators for those sessions, and gave a keynote speech. The experience taught me that I have a flair for organization as well as mediation. Under my leadership, our chapter also published its first journal, and hosted a variety of campus activities. This year I am working with the Computer Society in order to establish a Web site for students who need help succeeding in history courses; we are going to call it the Clio home page. My position as an authority figure both in classroom work and within these various organizations has awakened a desire to embrace teaching, for I enjoy sharing the excitement of education with my peers, as well as helping them achieve their own academic success.

I feel that my life experiences as well as my commitment to education would be an asset to Cornell's doctoral program in history. Cornell has a exciting interdisciplinary program that is exceptionally impressive. In particular, Dr. Rayna Wilhelm's specialty in Tudor-Stuart social and cultural history complements my own interest in studying the experiences of English pre-industrial women. This combination will provide the strong background I desire in order to shape my future research interests. I feel that Cornell is a premier institution for an aspiring Ph.D. candidate and as such, a very competitive program. But I know I have the tools and the determination to excel in such a stimulating and challenging environment.

ESSAY #5: "Library Floors and Literature"

Personal Statement

It happened two years ago as I lay sprawled out on the floor of the library lounge at the Université de Grenoble in Grenoble, France. I was working on an *explication du texte* of Guillaume Apollinaire's poem "La Loreley" for my *Poèmes et Proses du XXe Siècle* class when I suddenly put it together: this was *my* approach to literature. Close reading, formalism. Staying close, very close, to the text. I was certain.

Certainty, however, proved rather unstable. I knew it was important not to close myself off from other approaches to literature, so when I returned to Swarthmore from Grenoble, I took two courses which I knew would be highly theoretical—*Women Writers 1790–1830* and *Feminist Literary Criticism*. These courses brought me around to a kind of hybrid approach to literature which I find rich, effective, and enjoyable. In this approach I maintain a close connection to the text at the same time that I apply theoretical work.

I am using this approach to literature in two major projects this year.

First, I received a \$2,400 National Endowment for the Humanities Younger Scholars Summer Research Grant. I proposed to expand on a prior research project, looking at the use of silence in the novels of Elie Wiesel, and at the ways Wiesel both demonstrates and gets around the fact that conventional language simply breaks down when it is used to talk about the Holocaust. I plan to expand on the same project for my senior English thesis. For this thesis I am studying the ways Wiesel uses silence in the literal content of his novels and in his writing technique, and am working toward explanations as to how he gives these silences meaning. My fluency in French from my semester of study in Grenoble has been invaluable since most of Wiesel's works were written originally in French. My thesis involves close, formalist readings of Wiesel's novels, and is enriched by theoretical work. (This thesis appears as "Senior Essay" on my transcript; that designation will change next semester to "Thesis.")

My second major project this year is a self-designed research project which has just replaced comprehensive exams in the Swarthmore English Department. I am working with British poetry just following World War I, looking at how these poets write about a kind of war that truly had no precedent since it was the first war in which death could be so effectively and impersonally mass-produced. I am focusing on my observation that a surprising number of these poems rely heavily on biblical or mythical images, as though more contemporary images simply were not applicable any more.

I have known for several years that I want my graduate work to be in the field of English, but my approach to literature has been enriched by my double major in English and sociology-anthropology. Twice my interest in anthropology has led me to study literature of non-European cultures, both times with great personal satisfaction. My papers for *The Black African Writer* combine theoretical research with a good deal of formalist textual analysis and close reading. I had several long conversations about these papers with Prof. Wallace Mann, the R. Talbot Sondheim Professor of African Studies at Swarthmore.

This is a great experiential opening. The reader can "see" the student "sprawled out," and the essay offers an exotic setting. This candidate displays amazing breadth while leading the reader through distinct phases in her intellectual development. The masterful way the candidate weaves in theorists, theories, authors, and names of works lightens what could otherwise be heavy exposition. The essay as a whole amounts to an intellectual argument, the point of which is this: This candidate's background points to the inevitable conclusion that this student is ready to excel at the targeted graduate program.

#5: "Library Floors and Literature"

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My second excursion into less-traveled territory was a paper I wrote for *Introduction to Hebrew Scriptures*. I chose to do an exegesis of Isaiah 65:17–25. I worked from the original Hebrew text since I had taken a course in biblical Hebrew (Religion 93) and have a moderate level of reading comprehension of the language. I had a marvelous time digging so deeply into each word, and sometimes even individual letters, as is required in an exegesis of a Hebrew passage.

My two major projects this year—my thesis and my senior project—are related by the theme of war literature, and my work on one project gives me new ideas for the other. I feel fortunate that this has worked out, and at the University of Colorado-Boulder I want to continue studying twentieth-century literature. However, I am also ready to start widening my base, casting out in some new directions. I have found over and over that if I have a long-standing gut-level enjoyment of some kind of literature I almost invariably have a wonderful time and do a particularly good job taking an academic approach to that literature. Old English literature is in this category for me.

I have never done academic work in Old English literature, but for years I have treasured a cassette tape on which are recorded in Old English the stories of *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, *Caedmon*, and *The Wedding of Sir Gawain and Dame Ragnell*. And when I am feeling particularly harried, I often go to the Swarthmore library and treat myself to an old, scratchy recording of a reading of *Beowulf*, following along in the Old English text and in a modern English translation. By imitating the voice I hear and following in translation, I have taught myself a tiny amount of this language. I want to follow up on this interest.

My interest in studying at the University of Colorado-Boulder has grown out of conversations I have had with numerous people, including Prof. Laurie Langbauer who had a lot of specific information since she taught there one summer. When I spoke about my interests with Abbe Blum, another professor of English at Swarthmore, she recommended that I call Prof. Margaret Ferguson. I did so, and had a wonderful conversation which helped me to confirm that I would feel very much at home in the department. I am especially excited about the department's strength in twentieth-century, Renaissance, and Old English literature.

I am also genuinely pleased about the distribution requirements, since they will help me to explore areas that I did not or could not at Swarthmore. Only by doing that will I continue to learn new things about myself as a student of literature. I do not want my experience in the Université de Grenoble library to be a unique blip in my development. I want to continue changing, refining, playing around with the ways in which I approach literature. This ever-changing, ever-learning approach will help me to be a lifelong scholar and lover of literature.

These paragraphs show the depth of specific interest this student has in this specific graduate program. Be sure to customize your essays to this level of detail. Also note the use of professors' names, both at the undergraduate alma mater and the targeted graduate program.

ESSAY #8: "The Real History"

Raina L. Croff Personal Statement

This experiential opening grabs the reader, and leaves them thinking "What's going to happen next?"

This essay is extremely powerful, using personal and emotional information combined with an intellectual argument about the ownership of history and historical perspective. Showing this level of passion in an application essay is—quite frankly—risky. But this candidate pulls it off expertly. The candidate takes a strong and critical stand, without making the reader feel criticized. Of course, without the academic preparation recounted in this essay, it would not be nearly as effective.

It was February again and I could feel that familiar uneasiness returning to me. My fourth grade classmates' stares seemed to chain me to my seat with unbearable weight. I slumped in my chair, head lowered, eyes downcast staring at my open textbook. My nine-year-old body looked the physical portrayal of the effects of racism—degradation, self-consciousness, and embarrassment. My teacher's voice still rang in my mind, "Raina, would you like to read to the class the chapter on slavery?"

At the time, all I knew about my cultural background as an African American was what the textbooks had made sure I understood—my history in this country began as a slave. This was among the only roles in the history books in which I was shown a reflection of myself—an image painted by someone else, an outsider looking in. I too felt as an outsider when my fourth grade teacher picked me out because of my color, asking me to read for my race to the rest of the class. It was not what the textbooks told me about my African American heritage that had the greatest impact on me as a young person developing a worldview and a self-perspective. Rather, it was what the writers had strategically left out that stunted my knowledge, pride, and self-worth as a human being contributing to the achievements of the world.

African history before its transplanting, or "before its beginning again" in the New World, has been repeatedly and systematically written out of human history. This is one of the greatest oppressions affecting the African Diaspora. This failure to acknowledge and appreciate African contributions to human civilization creates a void in the self-development and self-perspective of the New World African individual. In turn, its ramifications ripple outward to contort how the rest of the world perceives us: As a developing African American thinker, I was unable to connect myself to a cultural context greater than what my education had spoon-fed me: redundant images of slave auctions and sardine-packed cargo trains of which the textbooks seemed to never tire. Since that fourth grade experience my parents have taught me that in order to learn anything about myself I must take my own initiatives. It is imperative that I choose my own sources and find accounts of my people's experiences written from their own minds. This is my passion—actively investigating sources of knowledge from which I can draw my own conclusions. The systematic suppression of African history in conventional education has only added fuel to my curiosity to learn about a history in which a reflection of myself emanates from the center. I want to share my passion and my research findings with others, especially reaching children at an early age so that they may have firm foundations on which to build knowledgeable minds and healthy self-esteem.

As a double major at Beloit College in anthropology and classical civilizations I have a strong background from which I can develop a successful future *doing* my passion—researching and teaching. I want to concentrate on the sociocultural traditions of West Africa, as well as studying her great achievements and contributions of antiquity. I want to research how traditional social patterns have been transplanted among the Diaspora in

#8: "The Real History"

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the New World, especially among African Americans. I want to investigate this through a historical-archaeological approach as well as from a modern perspective through cultural anthropology. In order to achieve this goal I must interact between a web of disciplines: African and African American studies; archaeology; and cultural anthropology. Ultimately my goal is to actively engage the public. I plan to do this through volunteer and professional training programs that focus primarily but not only on African Americans, targeting our youth and immersing them in the rediscovery of African history and contribution through education in archaeology.

My vision works from my mindset that African history is world history. It belongs to all of us as a part of our collective human history. I also believe in the educating of the peoples from the inside out—instilling a solid foundation of African knowledge in the black community and reaching out from there. My vision begins in the teaching of primarily African Americans with emphasis on the educating and hands-on involvement of our youth, but ultimately it is to equip them with the tools to be the educators of a wider, cross-cultural audience. A major part of my vision is in leading excavations, both in the New World and in Africa, where African Americans will have the opportunity to dig, learn, and hopefully develop a deeply seeded respect and passion for their long-neglected histories. In addition, I want to set up an internship program where African American students can be African archaeological research assistants, training them in excavation techniques and mentoring them in scholarly research methodology.

I want my brothers and sisters to experience the same excitement and inspiration that I feel through the empowerment of research and re-discovery of themselves and their history. I want them to share the feeling I had during a visit to Howard University when I laid my eyes on the bones of first-generation New World Africans whose remains had been salvaged from a black burial ground in New York. I was fascinated and moved to learn how they had kept their West African tradition alive even in their death through the details of their burial ritual. Archaeology is an eye-opening and mind-enriching avenue for the education of our youth. It is a field of ever-advancing scientific technology while simultaneously, a science of human imagination through the employment of individual interpretation. After all, archaeology is the material evidence of human ritual. It is the byproduct of behavior, which is itself a manifestation of an ideology. This is what I want to re-discover and teach—African *ideas* that have been forgotten, mis-credited, or stealthily lost from the pages of history. It is time they were recognized and repatriated to and by their own people.

I have already made some progress toward my goal of becoming an Afrocentric archaeologist. As both a McNair Scholar and an Associated Colleges of the Midwest Minority Scholar, I designed an archaeological research project. This past summer I was the research assistant to archaeologist Dr. Robert Salzer. I spent 13 weeks at the internationally recognized southwest Wisconsin Gottschall rockshelter site doing intense excavations and conducting original research. As the assistant ceramics analyst at the site, my project was to research

#8: "The Real History"

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Here is a very clean exposition of an outside research project. Notice the candidate mentions a lecture and publication that are going to happen in the future.

Here, again, the candidate provides an excellent example of recounting activities that will take place between this application and the date of matriculation.

Outstanding finish!

and record the style category and vertical distribution of each of the 2,000 pottery sherds unearthed over the past 14 years of excavations at this site. In addition to this, I had to format a computer program into which this data could be stored and re-opened as new sherds are uncovered over the following years. Ultimately, in addition to an in-depth research paper, I will speak about my project results at a professional archaeological conference in the spring. Also, my findings will culminate in a joint publication by me and my mentor in a professional journal—an article which will challenge the pre-established ceramics chronology for that region. This research and analyst assistantship and publication has equipped me with the archaeological training and exposure that I will need in order to be successful in my further studies in Old and New World African Archaeology—a rare opportunity for an undergraduate.

In addition to this experience, by the time this essay is received, I will be in Senegal, West Africa, studying anthropology at the Universite de Cheikh Anta Diop—the father of and greatest mind of his time in Afrocentric anthropology. Finally, I will be doing what I am passionate about—experiencing firsthand West African culture. This trip will be the physical reconnection for which I have been mentally preparing myself. I see this experience as the launch pad toward a successful future as a student in the Ph.D. program in African studies at Temple University.

I am the first person on both sides of my family to attend college, let alone to continue my education into the graduate level. I have made it this far, but if I am to make my goals into achievements, I must find my future at Temple University. I see myself as a dedicated, serious, and passionate student and leader, and I am confident that I possess the drive and self-discipline to successfully complete my doctoral study at Temple University. I strongly feel I have found my *nia*, or purpose, and now I must take the next step toward making my vision a reality. I have researched African studies and anthropology programs at Temple University and am excited to find that they align perfectly with what I want to study and teach others. I am enthusiastic about my field of study and anticipate the day when I will be teaching. In my study of Professor Molefi Kete Asante's book *Afrocentricity*, in speaking of his writing and the transformation of one's worldview through Afrocentricity he states, "Formless becomes form; black spaces are filled with truth . . . a new perspective, a new approach, a new consciousness invades our behavior" (pg. 6). I think of my own vision taking form, becoming reality. I will know the reward of the pursuit of my goal when I will see a young person sitting tall, head raised, and voice loud and confident as I ask her to read to the rest of the class about her ancestors and the mighty West African kingdom of Cayor.

It is important to know the level of competition you are facing when applying to elite programs.

This young student has more accomplishments than most of us could fit into a lifetime.

Being a unique candidate always garners interest from reviewers. So many candidates seem all the same to admissions readers. But not this one.

Essay #48 "African Kashmiri"

Letter of Interest—African American Studies

I was born in Arusha, Tanzania, on the slopes of Mt. Kilimanjaro. My father was a son of a Kashmiri immigrant. My grandfather came to Tanzania as a cheap laborer for the British colony. My mother is a daughter of a Segeju woman (Tanzania coastal indigenous group). As a child of these two great parents, I had an interesting childhood that continues to inform my personal and academic life. The union of my parents, my mother having been an "African," caused a split in my father's family. Furthermore, in school and public areas, my fellow Tanzanians called me a "Hindu," while I am an African and a Muslim. And the Indian Diaspora community derogatorily referred to us as "half castes." As a child I could not grasp these racial and identity issues; it is only when I came to America that I seriously began analyzing and questioning my childhood experience. I have learned that the African American experience in North America is an heroic narrative that speaks of similar quests for identity, belonging, and ownership for the past five hundred years. This is one of the many reasons I want to pursue a graduate course in the African and African American Studies Department at Harvard. The African American experience, past and present, is a useful model in explaining a wide array of issues such as identity, politics, and ownership in other countries of the world. Harvard's African and African American Studies Department is an environment that can personally empower me to explain my social and historical bits and pieces through the study of the black experience.

My life experience as a person belonging to either the African or Kashmiri side has offered me a unique perspective to life. Therefore, I am endowed, or have developed through no particular effort of my own, the ability to look at issues in many different perspectives. I can be neutral (invoking neither African nor Kashmiri side), I can take a side (invoking African, Segeju, Kashmiri, or the Muslim side, etc.), and I can also employ the meshed perspective (invoking all the parts). The permutations of my perspectives are endless as they are continuously enriched through similar experiences and age. For example, I grew up with an exiled Black Panther community in Arusha, Tanzania, where I learned about American history and its people away from America and especially from an exiled American/minority point of view. This ability of employing multiple perspectives on issues resembles the call in academic settings for a multidisciplinary approach. I am interested to join African and African American Studies at Harvard because it has a long tradition of scholarship and research on issues of culture and race that I am interested to explore. W.E.B. DuBois, who was also of mixed ancestry such as mine and whose life reflects some of my own experiences, was educated at Harvard. Training at Harvard will equip me with tools and training that will transform my experiences and passion into practical and tangible outcomes such as research skills, networks, and resources.

Harvard has a lot to offer in raising my intellectual capacity as a critical scholar of African culture and experience through analytical training, research, and networking with like-minded scholars. While at Harvard, I would like explore the evolution of a poetic

#48 "African Kashmiri"

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performance called *Mashairi ya Kuimbana* (poetic form of criticism) practiced in the 1940s in Tanga, into a newer form known as *Mipasho*, practiced in commercial centers such as Dar es Salaam. Specifically, I would like to analyze the performance of two female artists¹, who are one of the contemporary exponents of this form in Tanzania. This exploration will also look at how *Mipasho* embodies social and political criticism. The research will analyze both the poetic texts and performance aspects of *Mipasho* to paint a coherent picture of this dynamic cultural form. Lastly, I would like to make a comparative analysis between Hip Hop's "dissing" and "beef" phenomena with *Mipasho*. I believe the faculty, peers and resources at Harvard are best equipped to transform my interest into an exciting and rewarding research experience. While at Harvard, I would like to work with Prof. William Julius, who is an expert on youth culture and politics of race. Working with Prof. Francis Irele, known and respected expert on post-colonialism and cultural renaissance, will guide my research with appropriate theoretical tools. Additionally, I would like to seek the guidance of Prof. Marla Fredrick; her expertise on religion, culture and gender issues will be crucial in giving my research the appropriate academic nuances. A diverse and resourceful faculty body at the African and African American Studies Department will provide me the right place to shape and nurture my intellectual faculties. At Harvard, I expect to learn a lot from students and faculty members and at the same time, I hope to share some of my own experiences.

I have been fortunate to conduct research under the guidance of Dr. Aileen Julien, funded by the project on African Expressive Traditions Grant on *Mashairi ya Kuimbana* (mentioned above). The research entailed the audio-video recording of the poetics texts as recalled by few remaining exponents of the form. In addition to the earlier research which was well received by faculty and my fellow researcher, I conducted additional research on *Mipasho*, a contemporary form of poetic criticism practiced in urban centers of East Africa. Specifically, the research looked at the enduring relevancy of poetic criticism forms in airing grievances. This research was guided by Prof. Adesokan and generously funded by the Ronald E. McNair Scholars program at Indiana University, Bloomington. The research was presented at numerous academic meetings and conferences (see attached C.V. for complete list).

It is not enough for me to be purely a scholar, with no direct impact on this world. I have put my background and interests into action when I co-founded Aang Serian, a global NGO that works on preservation of indigenous knowledge. Aang Serian is of diverse ethnic, gender, religious, and international composition and works in mainly three areas of development: appropriate education, audio-video recording studio, and fair-trade initiatives. Aang Serian's education program, which currently runs a secondary school in Masailand, Tanzania, has created a unique and innovative educational model for the indigenous communities of Tanzania. This model was cited by UNEP² as a model for Africa as it combines Tanzania's

Note how he mentions specific professors he would like to work with, and shows that he has more than passing knowledge of their areas of expertise.

This candidate uses footnotes appropriately, which means sparingly and only to keep citations from disturbing the flow of the narrative.

1. Hadija Kopa and Nasma Khamis are thought to be bitter enemies.
2. See www.UNEP.org/CBD/WG8J/3/INF/3, page 53.

#48 "African Kashmiri"

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national syllabus with Aang Serian's indigenous knowledge curriculum. This educational model aims to address these communities' immediate needs, systematically record the indigenous knowledge, and instill confidence and identity among the indigenous youth. I intend to interest Harvard's faculty and student body to volunteer and conduct research in Tanzania, an engagement that will enrich and impact the lives of both parties, I am hoping.

Besides the preservation of indigenous knowledge through creation of an innovative model, I helped co-found a community recording studio (now a radio station³ in Arusha, Tanzania) and a media centre⁴. The objectives of the recording studio and the media centre are to encourage Tanzanian youth to use media technology to voice, critique, store, and disseminate their cultural heritage and personal voices. The community recording studio, a space for underrepresented youths, has been an enormous success. Some of the members of our media and recording studio have attained international reputation such as the Xplastaz⁵, a music group that fuses Hip Hop with Swahili/Masai tribal chants. A graduate of our media centre won a National Geographic grant to create a documentary on the disappearing rock paintings of central Tanzania. I had an opportunity to speak about my experiences and projects at Harvard last May and received positive feedback from students and faculty members. I kept my connections with Harvard ever since working with the project on African Hip Hop as an adviser and contributor of audio-visual resources. These are some of the experiences and projects that I would like to continue.

Harvard's innovative teaching experience and research facilities offer me an unparalleled academic and personal opportunity. Attaining an education at Harvard will not only answer some of my fundamental personal questions but will offer me an opportunity to serve my people who have invested so much in me. In addition, I am looking forward to being in the Cambridge area to reunite with friends and colleagues. After my education, I intend to return to Tanzania to work as a professor, lecturer, consultant, and as a professional writer.

Thank you for your attention to this material, and I am deeply grateful for your consideration.

3. Provided by generous assistance from Prometheus Radio Project at: www.prometheusradio.org.
4. See www.asdrum.org for further details on the project.
5. See www.xplastaz.com for further details on the music group.