

E: Alright, right now, in this first part, I'd like to ask you some questions about yourself. Let's talk about what you do. Are you a student?

S: Yes. So I'm a student at the Education University of Hong Kong. I'm enrolled in double major program where I study language studies and education.

E: What will you do with your degree after you've finished?

S: That is an interesting question because I'm kind of caught between either pursuing the teaching career or maybe going for higher education as a master's degree, but I'm a little caught between that at the moment so I'm not entirely sure.

E: All right, let's talk about free time activities. What do you like to do in your free time?

S: So I like to read in my free time. I also, since I'm not originally from Hong Kong, I really enjoy the time video chatting with my friends who're spread across the world. So usually, I have a camera on somewhere at some point.

E: Do you prefer to spend most of your free time indoors or outdoors?

S: I prefer a balance of both. So, some days I want to stay in with the book. Other days I desperately need to meet other people and beyond interacting. So I would say it's not specifically where I prefer one to the other.

E: What did you like to do in your free time when you were a child?

S: I liked to play with blocks. That was a minor obsession of mine, so be it LEGOs or just Jenga blocks, then I would turn into dominoes. And I hated dolls and Barbies, only blocks which was ...

E: Why?

S: I think it was the build ability aspect of it. So before I wanted to be a teacher, I actually was thinking of pursuing a career in software engineering. And the reason for that is, like, again, you create something, something is a visible product of yours. So I feel like that started pretty young.

E: What do you plan to do in your free time this weekend?

S: This weekend I plan to study in my free time. Well, if you call it free time study. It's mid-term week, so a lot of quizzes and assessments. I don't think I have free time this weekend.

E: Let's talk about travel. Do you like to travel?

S: I love to travel. You know, I feel being in a non-native country of mine has opened up the borders to a lot many more. This summer, actually, I was on exchange when the pandemic happened. And so I was kind of stuck in Europe for that six months and in June, the borders open to Europe. So I was able to move around a little bit. And that kind of fed into a little bit of an addiction, I feel.

E: Where do tourists like to go in your country?

S: Tourists do not like to go to my country. So, a little bit of context, I'm originally from Pakistan. There is ... the number of major metropolitan cities, you can count on your hand. And so if I were to assume, I would assume they would go to the bigger cities and stay in the maybe richer areas. But if I were to recommend, the north of our country is beautiful landscape. It's in the mountains and its wide-open fields that it plateaus down and there's beautiful snowfall. And there's wonderful resorts, if anybody does want to visit. Yeah, just to get away from it all.

E: Is traveling abroad popular in your country?

S: Very popular. So as a developing country, there's a lot of resources that aren't available domestically. So me and people like me who want to pursue specific careers and specific degrees, but no, there's no University in Pakistan who will offer that or a degree that won't really do anything for them do travel abroad for education and then further ... sometimes for career purposes, they decide to remain abroad. It's actually one of the bigger problems in our countries of brain drain, where the more qualified individuals are no longer choosing to stay behind. So I definitely see that as ... it definitely exacerbates the class disparity ... what's happening there.

E: Where would you like to travel to in the future?

S: I don't think we have time. Everywhere, anywhere, any country I can name. But I'm more interested these days in traveling around East Asia, since I feel like I have, OK, I've seen Hong Kong, and that is my exposure to East Asian culture. But what is Japan like, what is Taiwan like, I don't know. And I really like to.

E: Alright. Now, I'm going to give you a topic. And I'd like you to talk about it for one to two minutes. Before you talk, you'll have one minute to think about what you're going to say and you can make some notes if you wish. You understand?

S: Yes.

E: The topic I'd like you to talk about is the type of clothing you like to wear. Alright. So first of all, you got one minute to prepare. (*After one-minute preparation*) All right. Now remember, you've got one to two minutes for this so don't worry if I stop you. I'll tell you when the time is up. Can you start speaking now please?

S: So I found it very interesting that you chose this specific topic because I really do have a love hate relationship with the entire concept of clothes. My problem comes from the fact that I grew up in Pakistan and so your performance and your ... how you presented yourself in society held a very different type of connotation. So there was gender roles and norms surrounding your clothing and how you presented yourself on a very strict spectrum of masculinity and femininity. And me as a person, I do not like to adhere to these type of extremes. And while I do identify as a woman, and I'm a female, I ... the way I dress in the way I prefer to dress in my country don't really resonate with the id ... the typical ideals of femininity. And so my preference and clothing does run a little bit more androgynous than society would dictate how it should. A bit of it has been influenced by social media. I tend to lean towards comfort wear or fashion wear and I do like to still adhere to the concept of modesty when I'm thinking about how to dress myself. Growing up, I never like to wear dresses or anything above my knee and my mum would be frustrated as to why this little girl doesn't want to wear dress and I'd say, oh, because I feel cold and the truth was, I just wanted to run around in a pair of shorts without having to think about, oh, I have to keep prim and proper and make sure nobody catches me unawares, you know. That did follow me through. And now I'm in my 20s and I still like to tell my mum I don't like to wear dresses and, well, it's gotten better in terms of the relationship dealing with that. I do still see it as a big hindrance to our progress and society because once you present ...

E: Thank you. Sorry to interrupt.

E: So we've been talking about the type of clothing that you like to wear. And now I'd like to ask you some more general questions related to that. Let's consider, first of all, designer clothing. Are designer clothes popular in your country?

S: Well, yes as the short answer. The longer answer would be that there's a very strong class disparity. So the rich are the richest and the poor are the poorest. And so to kind of exacerbate that "oh I am better than you", people do like to buy designer clothing as more of a statement, rather than fashion choice. So that's the reason for popularity.

E: So, apart from the status issue. Why do you think people like to wear designer clothing?

S: Humans are creatures of hubris. I feel like we need things that not only set us apart but also make us conform to our larger society. And designer clothing, in a way, does do that because, well, no ... not everybody can afford it or wants to buy or wants to purchase it. There is that class of people who do, so while they are setting themselves apart, they are still buying themselves to society. And I feel like designer, not only clothing, designer goods themselves that kind of exacerbate that phenomena of "I am unique, but just like everybody else".

E: Do you think that the world would be better off without designer clothing, since they seem to be taking advantage of less than desirable human qualities?

S: Well, is that a bad thing, though? You know, we ... I feel in a larger capitalist society, you can't really say whether or not the distribution of a specific type of good is in positive or negative. But at the end of the day, I feel like we, we have this moral standard where if you're proud and that's a negative thing. Maybe that's just how some people choose to live in their lives. They're spending their money on things that don't really matter. And then that is, in the end of the day, their loss. So I don't think it's ... epidemic.

E: Let's turn now to the clothes that people wear to work. Do you think people at work make judgments about their colleagues based on the type of clothing they wear?

S: Yes, again, short answer. Longer answer would be, this is very true, at least in the more Eastern hemisphere, where there's the concept of professionalism and a code of conduct as you're moving in and out of work and in violation of that is seen as either disrespectful or inappropriate or both. And I feel that the thing that you just said about judgment, I think it's more based in how women dress and the judgment is passed, based on ... between other women majority of the time, as to what is considered revealing too masculine or too feminine or is it appropriate enough for that workplace or is it alluring to the male co-workers. I feel like that is often a, a topic of conversation at least in the background.

E: Some employers actually set a certain standard and even require their employees to wear a uniform. Do you think that people should be forced to wear certain clothes at work?

S: I feel like there can be a model of appropriacy because at the same time kind of unifying all spheres of human interaction into one saying that, “oh, I should be allowed to wear what I want” is, is, is a little bit of an individualistic concept, which I don't think would be flying in at least this part of the world. I think there should be limits inside of which people can dress the way they want as long as they address the fact that they are in a different space than, say, in their bedroom, or out with a friend and there should be distinction like that in the workplace. As far as a uniform goes, I feel like that is a little too redundant on an adult population. I feel like they should know to dress themselves in a way that it doesn't display social class. But again, that could be a problem given that they don't.

E: Alright. Thank you very much. That's the end of the test.

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