

## **My Guilty Pleasure - It's For Me, Not For You**

After learning so many things in life, whether it would be in academia, a skill, professional opportunities and more, I started to grow my interests and indulge in the ones I enjoy. Good examples are reading historical facts and learning about new places to potentially travel to and dream about it. This is to further explore the possibilities of how much more joy I can feel and grow as a person as well, a time in which I could dedicate to doing tasks I enjoyed, for pleasure's sake.

There are so many forms of policing to what I should be allowed to tell others about my interests or hobbies, what is considered 'acceptable' to not tarnish my reputation; to be potentially called 'weird', a 'freak' or made to feel bad and rethink my interests. There are always questions of whether I should tell people that I like something when they don't? Will I look silly if I do? What will people think of me? Am I truly strange compared to my peers?

Growing up, I enjoyed listening to older music - mostly 1980s rock music (i.e. Rush, AC/DC, Genesis, Scorpions, etc.). According to social media, where folks my age are attending clubs, and music festivals that blast modern-day pop music, even talking about songs which I have never heard of, I feel that I cannot relate. I envy folks who attended the concerts in the 1980s. I imagine what it would be like to be back then and listen to these performers live, what they were like alive. For many years, I slowly tell people that I am not a fan of modern-day music and that I like 1980s rock. Why? Because it blows me away. Rush's lyrics, each band's synchronized guitar playing, epic bass sounds, and the grand stage presence. All of these provide an escape for a few minutes while I indulge in their artistry, being captivated by lyrics that make me reflect on myself and the world around me but still make me feel warm as it increases my

adrenaline, even when I sit for hours on end. Nonetheless, I still feel judged or viewed as different, but listening to this music is a form of pleasure.

As a teenager, instead of going to parties or getting drunk at Khaosan Road in Bangkok, I stayed in my room, locked the door and embraced my inner imagination - a connection dear to me but also brings me great comfort in times of uncertainty, such as now. I created an imaginary country, where there was a made-up language, a system of government with a President, foreign policies that are both controversial and progressive, a currency and diverse population demographics. Creating and shaping this imagination was my everyday activity for over six years, whenever I had time away from my school. I guess this is where my love for International Relations and Political Science started and encouraged me to stay motivated in my studies here.

Overall, I hope this little piece resonates with you in some manner, in a sense as a reminder that pleasure is meant to be for you, it should not have to impress your friends, family, or anyone. After all, it's you who feels the joy of doing what you like for your emotional benefit, as long as it does not harm others of course.