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**The political melody of style : a critical investigation into the intersections of music business, the fashion industry, and political science**

Reflecting back on my “Why NYU” essay, it’s clear to me that from the beginning, I had very clear academic pursuits and a strong connection to Gallatin’s philosophy. I had written, “I’m happiest when I’m learning; whether I’m rehearsing tap choreography, drawing Lewis structures, finding derivatives, writing a 20-page marketing proposal, or advocating about the coming Georgia Senate Runoff election, I know that everything I’m learning will serve a purpose...finding connections where there seemingly are none is a core Gallatin conviction.” Today, the same aspirations ring true, just perhaps in slightly different manifestations. Instead of learning to tap, I’m now pitching major music stories to journalists; instead of drawing Lewis structures, I’m analyzing the welfare effects of international tariffs. What I described in the beginning of my Gallatin journey as “business and politics”, has become more precise into the kinds of business I’m interested in pursuing as a career, specifically music and fashion. Now, my concentration is in finding the intersections between music business, fashion marketing, and political science. I’m interested in how the marketing of these industries (press releases, artist management, styling, etc.) can be used for social and political good. Or rather, whether or not they (as entities inherently rooted in capitalism) can be used for social and political good. Music and fashion have always been important spheres of exploration for myself in terms of identity; I want to be able to use my passion for these industries to be able to allow others to be able to feel how music and style have allowed me to feel— comfortable, safe, and free. I am, however, aware of the breadth of the industries, and how at the end of the day, they are ultimately political institutions, capitalistic industries. In the words of Gallatin’s philosophy, “one particular lens is insufficient.”

My first ever class I’d stepped into at NYU was Professor Rosanne Kennedy’s First Year Writing Seminar: The Politics of Home (Gender, Race, Class and Kinship). Unbeknownst to me on that first day, the metaphorical conception of “the home” would become a recurring theme in my interests and studies, connections in ways I never would have imagined. To me, identity has

become my home; this word, this metaphorical space, serves various purposes in connecting my own identity to my concentration, which can at times feel abstract. Connecting my own identity to the music industry, to the fashion industry, to political science, and economics has allowed me to feel “at home” in these seemingly disparate fields of study. This theme had followed me into an interdisciplinary seminar I took my sophomore fall, “Coming Out Stories”, in which for my final project, I created a zine connecting the idea of home with theories of queerness, gender, music, and writing, entitled “There’s No Place Like Home”. Even in taking the course “The American Constitution”, I was able to analyze supreme court cases in interrogating how aspects of identity and politics connect to how people respond to things or other people that are unfamiliar to them, things that don’t “feel like home”. Within my studies of fashion business and political theory, this theme has also been extremely prevalent. Fashion and identity are irrevocably intertwined, and to be able to connect sociological theories of Michel Foucault’s Panopticon, or Mary Douglas’ theories of dirt to the contemporary fashion industry has helped to strengthen my course of study.

Within the Gallatin Fashion Business program I’m currently taking while studying abroad in London, an integral connection I’ve made is that between the rise of capitalism and the fashion industry. There is no fashion without the existence of a middle class. At the core of my own personal life, it’s been a struggle grappling with the tensions between the inevitable hopelessness one grapples with under capitalism while wanting to pursue a career in business.. Rather than turning a blind eye to such tensions however, it’s important to be aware of one’s own privileges , and the intersectionality of my own identity and career aspirations. Alongside my coursework this semester, I am currently interning at a PR firm as a part of the global experiential learning program. This opportunity, I think, has epitomized these tensions that arise under “ethical” capitalism, a qualifier I’m centering my studies around, questioning its very existence. A lot of my work feels superficial, writing press releases marketing beauty products I’ve never used and never plan to use. What’s been extremely enlightening, though, is the fact that everyone in the industry knows just how superficial these industries are. Despite knowing that every aspect of a celebrity’s exterior is planned by countless professionals, the messages they send are very real. I’ve learned that, to me, it doesn’t matter if all marketing in these areas

are based in self-interest, if at the end of the day, it may have a meaningful impact on *one* young person in need of that. In need of something, in need of hope. The internship itself has also given me numerous opportunities to have first hand experience in the industries I'm interested in. I've been able to work on British musician, composer, and record producer Brian Eno's campaign naming "The Earth" as a co-writer for one of his songs. This project encourages other artists to do the same, donating 1% of their royalties to causes for protecting the environment. I was on the team to help put together and send out the press release, as well as making a database to pitch to. This project felt like something at the center of my concentration, connecting music business to (the unfortunately politicized) environment. Furthermore, last semester I volunteered with an organization called Headcount, which promotes voter registration and participation in democracy through the power of music and culture. For a musician to hold up a sign at a concert in Texas reading "Vote for Beto" is far from revolutionary. However, for one young person in the audience of thousands who is ignorant to politics (other than their parents'), this can mean a lot. Again, this endeavor feels central to the connections between the music and fashion industries and the political sphere.

While individualized, my concentration is nothing particularly "new". Historically, it has been impossible to separate music and fashion (and business in general) from politics. The relationship between the evolution of our political and economic systems and social and cultural progress underlies how I plan to allow my concentration to manifest into a career. Analyzing these connections from a historical framework has allowed me to (and will continue to) question the intersections between identity, business, and politics. To further solidify my course path, I plan to take more music business classes in the future. I also am planning to take one or two more global culture courses, in order to widen these perspectives into different political and geographical contexts. Finally, I will also be finishing a minor in economics.

I want to use my concentration to pursue a career in marketing or PR in the music or fashion industries post-graduation. I'm also potentially interested in pursuing an MBA. I think that framing my studies through Gallatin's interdisciplinary nature has allowed me to make connections between these areas of study that I never would have been able to before. Instead of

being a surface level fashion stylist or artist manager, I will be able to take these connections with me and operate in these industries on a deeper level.