



UNIVERSIDADE
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PORTUGUESA

BETWEEN LOVE STORIES AND ACTIVISM – PATHOS, STORYTELLING
AND CONNECTION IN THE COMMUNICATION OF TAYLOR SWIFT
ON INSTAGRAM AND THROUGH MUSIC

Dissertation to Universidade Católica Portuguesa to obtain a Master's Degree
in Communication Sciences with the specialization of Marketing,
Communication and Advertising

By

Clara Elly Neumann

Universidade Católica Portuguesa

September 2024



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DISSERTATION

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Under the supervision of Professor Patrícia Tavares

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Abstract

A glamorous superstar who is taking the world by storm and an ancient Greek scholar. These are not necessarily two people which one would bring together. And yet this is exactly what this dissertation does. The ancient Greek scholar Aristotle and his *rhetoric* are looked at from a modern way through the glittering and sparkling lens of Taylor Swift. The dissertation uses a qualitative research design with a content analysis as well as semi-structured interviews to understand the communication strategy of artist Taylor Swift. The research focuses on the concept of storytelling in connection with an emotional communication approach related to the pathos theory of Greek scholar Aristotle. It assesses how Swift uses pathos in storytelling to create an emotional connection with her fans. The dissertation considers the impact of the music of artist Taylor Swift and looks at Instagram to understand the communication strategy connected to social media. Understanding the connection which Swift built with the help of her music and social media interaction. The interviews and the content analysis underline how successful Swift manages to interact with her fans and how emotional her communication strategy is. It shows how promoting engagement is one of her main ways of creating a successful, emotion-based communication strategy. The dissertation also looks at the activism which can be found in Swift's communication and how it has become part of her recent music as well as her Instagram appearance.

Keywords: Taylor Swift, Pathos, Instagram, Communication Strategy, Activism, Storytelling

Resumo

Uma super-estrela glamorosa que está a conquistar o mundo e um antigo académico grego. Estas não são necessariamente duas pessoas que se juntariam. E, no entanto, é exatamente isso que esta dissertação faz. O antigo académico grego Aristóteles e a sua retórica são analisados de uma forma moderna através das lentes brilhantes e cintilantes de Taylor Swift. O trabalho adota uma abordagem de investigação qualitativa com recurso a análise de conteúdo e a entrevistas semi-estruturadas para compreender a estratégia de comunicação da artista Taylor Swift. A investigação centra-se no conceito de storytelling em ligação com uma abordagem de comunicação emocional relacionada com a teoria do pathos do de Aristóteles. Descobre como Swift utiliza o pathos na narração de histórias para criar uma ligação emocional com os seus fãs. A dissertação aborda a influência da música da artista Taylor Swift, bem como a análise do Instagram para compreender a sua estratégia de comunicação nas redes sociais e pretende compreender a ligação que Swift construiu com a ajuda da sua música e da interação nas redes sociais. As entrevistas, bem como a análise de conteúdo, sublinham o sucesso com que Swift consegue interagir com os seus fãs e o quão emocional é a sua estratégia de comunicação. Mostra a utilização do engagement como uma das suas principais formas de criar uma estratégia de comunicação bem sucedida e baseada na emoção. A dissertação também analisa o ativismo que pode ser encontrado na comunicação de Swift e como este se tornou parte da sua música recente, bem como da sua presença no Instagram.

Palavras-chave: Taylor Swift, Pathos, Instagram, Estratégia de Comunicação, Ativismo, Storytelling

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“You look like Taylor Swift in this light, we’re loving it”¹ –

Introduction

Academic and Business Relevance

Emotions and emotional triggers as well as emotional responses from consumers are an important factor when it comes to marketing, self-presentation and connecting with others. This does not only count for businesses but also for individuals such as actor or singers. In today’s age of social media, the ability to catch follower’s attention in a short amount of time makes the use of emotional triggers even more important. Especially when it comes to overcoming the distance social media can create and establishing a feeling of being closely connected. Emotions have been part of communication for centuries. As part of a strategy, they date back as far as the rhetorical practices by Aristotle and other scholars of ancient Greece. However, today we live in a world which is fast and overflowing with information, pictures and advertisements. Therefore, it is interesting to understand the importance of strategic consideration of emotional triggers as an actual part of a communication strategy. This dissertation aims to understand which power emotions hold in the light of a personal brand. In more depth, this dissertation explores the music, performance and self-presentation of the singer-songwriter Taylor Swift in order to understand how rhetorical practices from Aristotle can be found in her strategy. As this world is changing and brands as well as people are taking a stand for what they believe in this dissertation also looks at the activist part in Swift’s music and presentation to understand the role activism can play in connection with music, performance and emotions. Social media has become a tool which cannot be ignored by anyone in the world we live in. The same goes for Taylor Swift which is why this paper also aims at understanding how Instagram can be used to create a connection between the star and her fans. Above all of this stands the question of how strategies are built and how intentional they are. Combining this with the reception on social media can lead to an overview on how successful emotions and the use of pathos as well as activism in personal branding is for Taylor Swift. There have been studies exploring the use of rhetorical concepts

¹ (Swift, 2024e)

in the field of social media advertising. This study however focuses on the concepts of rhetorical factors such as pathos combined with activism while concentrating not on a classical brand but on an artist. This work expects to contribute to a gap which focuses on both the active strategy of a singer-songwriter phenomenon such as Taylor Swift while also understanding the role she plays when it comes to activism and how a connection with her fans can be created. All these different aspects are combined under the use of emotion and Instagram as a social media platform. Another importance this dissertation holds for the field is the chosen social media platform. While there have been numerous studies on Twitter and Facebook this paper focuses on Instagram and therefore on a platform which emphasises images rather than text. This brings a new perspective to the use of emotions in a communication strategy.

Research Topic

This dissertation explores if and how the ancient concept of pathos by the scholar Aristotle is used today the singer-songwriter Taylor Swift in her music, her performance and her self-presentation. In more depth this paper explores the Instagram strategy as well as the strategy within the songs, videos, performances and connection with fans in the case of Taylor Swift. It looks at the singer-songwriter as a person and an artist and explores her activist side as well as trying to understand the emotions she uses for storytelling in her music, her videos and her performances. The aim is to explore on one hand how she uses emotional approaches in her strategy and on the other hand to explore how this emotional approach is received by her fans and followers on Instagram. The paper only focuses on the platform Instagram in order to understand how pathos, a text-based technique, can work on a visual platform and combining it with the emotional approach she uses in her videos and songs. This is interesting to see as it takes the rhetorical practice which originates in the spoken word to a visual level and within that explores the changes and new adaptations in it. The concept of storytelling is also observed.

Research Question and Research Objectives

The research questions this paper is trying to answer this question: *How does Taylor Swift use pathos in social media as well as in her music as a strategy to achieve an emotional connection with her followers and fans? How does activism play a part in her music and her strategy?* To answer this question, the focus is on both her music and performances as well as on her social media interaction with fans and followers.

The research objectives for this dissertation can be described as following:

1. Recognise if and how emotions and activism are used in Taylor Swift's music and self-presentation
2. Understand if and how emotions and activism are an active part of a social media strategy
3. Explore how fans and followers react to an emotional strategy and how they see the connection to Taylor Swift.

Before focusing on the research to answer these questions the next section of this paper introduces the theoretical framework.

Part I – Theoretical Framework

Literature review – Conceptual Framework

This part of the dissertation consists of the literature review which offers the conceptual framework and introduces the main concepts needed to put the results of the research into context. The literature review consists of four different sections which are organised in subsections. The first section explores the Aristotelean rhetoric. It starts with offering a general overview of the Aristotelian rhetoric as well as giving a short context of the circumstances of this rhetoric. The next two sections explore the concept of persuasion as well as the trilogy of ethos, logos and pathos before the next section focuses on pathos in more depth. This section is necessary because the paper puts its main focus on the concept of pathos within the rhetorical trilogy. The last subsection of the rhetorical section then focuses on how these concepts have been translated into modern communication and what change can be found within them.

The second section explores the concept of social media and especially communication on social media. This chapter looks at social media in general as well as focusing on Instagram as a specific social media platform. Another concept introduced in this chapter is the concept of storytelling. Storytelling is explained in a more general way first before then exploring in more depth how storytelling can work in the music industry. Before looking at social media the second section opens with introducing the concept of visual rhetoric as well as multimodality which is explained as a tool to help understand how communication on social media, especially Instagram as a visual platform, can work. It then explores the logic behind social media in order to understand how it works and how communication can take place in it. The next subsection focuses on the concept of storytelling in general and offers an overview on how storytelling can work in the music industry. After this the chapter refocuses on social media, more specifically on Instagram as it is the chosen social media platform for this dissertation. Here the logic of Instagram is explored alongside the use of Instagram in marketing and communication strategies. The next subsection takes a look at the connection between fans and artists and followers and personas on social media including the stakeholder theory. This chapter offers an overview over the Digital Service Act introduced by the European Union.

The third chapter of the literature review focuses on the concept of activism and more specifically brand activism. It explores how advertising has changed in the face of brand activism and tries to use this to understand how a personal brand can use activism as a

communication strategy. It starts by looking at why activism has become such an important part of marketing for brands and the part social responsibility plays in it. It then continues to look at different forms of brand activism and how they can work for brands. Next, the chapter looks at brand activism in connection with social media in order to connect the concept to the platform Instagram this paper works with. Even though this chapter focuses on brand activism the term brand can be translated into a personal brand as well.

The fourth chapter of this literature review gives an overview of the artists Taylor Swift. It helps to understand her success as well as her communication style and marketing strategy. This chapter aims at understanding the background of both the artist as well as her global success. It looks at the life of the artist understanding personal backgrounds and offering an overview over important aspects of her career. The chapter then continues to look at how her communication works and how she creates a connection with her fans. This part also takes a brief look on how her music works and how her success is built.

The last chapter of the literature review offers a summary of the first four sections in order to connect the them and give a summarised starting point for understanding the research model and its methodology.

1. Rhetoric – a general introduction in the rhetoric of Aristotle and its persuasive means

Before exploring the concepts created by Aristotle and understanding how these are important for this dissertation it is important to understand rhetoric in itself. This first section therefore gives a brief overview of the Aristotelian rhetoric and the historical circumstances of it before the next subsections dives deeper into certain aspects of it and exploring the concepts introduced by the author. Aristotle was a scholar in ancient Greece who wrote the work *Rhetoric* (Bonet & Sauquet, 2010). He lived from 384 until 322 B.C. was a student of Plato and became the tutor of Alexander the Great (Shields, 2007). At the time philosophers did not agree with the persuasive means of rhetoric and criticised it for not using proven arguments but relying on opinions rather than proven facts (Bonet & Sauquet, 2010). However, Aristotle even though being the student of Plato and therefore having a philosopher as a teacher went against his teacher's views and granted rhetoric the title of science, making it an important and official tool for scholars at the time. It is important to keep in mind that the ancient art of rhetoric was focused only on the spoken word (Bonet &

Sauquet, 2010) as, especially in Athens, important issues were discussed publicly in the Agora and even during trials it all came down to how well one could use the spoken word to one's benefits. Today rhetoric is applied to all different kinds of human interaction and communicative situations (Bonet & Sauquet, 2010) and concepts have been adapted to modern times which includes using rhetoric in written form including social media and advertising. This first chapter is supposed to help understand how rhetoric used to work in ancient Greece in order to see how it has been adapted to modern approaches and to understand what can be learned from the ancient practice.

Aristotle himself defines rhetoric as a science which aims to find the most persuasive aspect in the current presented topic of an argumentation (Aristotle & Gernot Krapinger, 2018). Therefore, one must try to identify the most convincing one of existing means. One would need to find the most convincing means in order to succeed in the desire to persuade an audience and convince them of one's point of view. This is true for different circumstances which are divided into three different categories by Aristotle himself and for each of these categories he offers advice on how to successfully give a speech and what to keep in mind to make sure the persuasive process works. These three forms of speech are state affairs, lawsuits and celebratory speeches (Aristotle & Gernot Krapinger, 2018). Each of these occasions require different means in order to achieve persuasion and have different requirements on structure and stylistic means because each of these categories works in different circumstances and has different topics of concern (Aristotle & Gernot Krapinger, 2018). The first category of speech is the advisory act of speech which aims at future affairs and where the speaker offers help and guidance for a topic or circumstance (Aristotle & Gernot Krapinger, 2018). This can happen both in private or in public surroundings (Aristotle & Gernot Krapinger, 2018). The advisory speech aims at use or damage for the audience (Aristotle & Gernot Krapinger, 2018). In Aristotle's time it would be used for topics such as war or peace and therefore usually concern state affairs and are given to an audience which has the power of decision making when it comes to these affairs. The second category Aristotle describes is the judicial speech (Aristotle & Gernot Krapinger, 2018). This category of speech aims at past events and is used to word either a defence or an accusation and is held in front of a judge or a jury which needs to make a decision on the case (Aristotle & Gernot Krapinger, 2018). As this speech can change the outcome of a trial and decide between right and wrong it was a very important speech during the time of Aristotle as the

ancient Greek did not have a juridical system such as we have today and the speech given to defend oneself would be the most important aspect on the outcome of a trial. The third and last category of speech he offers is the celebratory speech (Aristotle & Gernot Krapinger, 2018). This speech is most commonly used to praise someone but can also hold elements of blame in it (Aristotle & Gernot Krapinger, 2018). It is usually used on anniversaries or funerals and aims at the present (Aristotle & Gernot Krapinger, 2018). It can also be found when it comes to telling legends about heroes or praising people long gone to future generations (Aristotle & Gernot Krapinger, 2018). This category is the one where the outcome of the speech is the least important compared to the other two categories as it does not have an immediate effect. It is also the one which has probably changed the least during the centuries between ancient Athens and today as celebratory speeches given at funerals, anniversaries or state dinners still hold the element of praise about one person and not focusing on argumentation but rather convincing the audience of what great things this person did achieve and why he or she is being honoured. Generally speaking, it is important to find the most convincing aspect within a subject and present it convincingly to the audience in order to create persuasive arguments (Aristotle & Gernot Krapinger, 2018). Aristotle also explains that within these arguments the facts have to be either proven to be true or to be commonly accepted as true in order to make sure an argument is actually convincing to the masses (Aristotle & Gernot Krapinger, 2018). Panigyrakis et al. (2019) state that people engage in rhetoric in both personal as well as professional lives. They define rhetoric as following: "... rhetoric assists in identifying the available means of persuasion to achieve one's goal and according to Aristotle, effective rhetoric includes, Logos, Pathos and Ethos" (Panigyrakis et al., 2019, pp. 702).

Aristotle goes on to differentiate between two different means to support one's case and offer proof about what is being said as he argues humans need to think that they see proof in order to be fully convinced (Aristotle & Gernot Krapinger, 2018). The first category are means which are not created within the speech and can be used to proof or support a point (Aristotle & Gernot Krapinger, 2018). These means include things such as witness statements or statements made under torture (Aristotle & Gernot Krapinger, 2018). This category of possible proof is not created within the speech but is something from outside used to support one's case. It therefore is not part of the technical ability of rhetoric. The second category of convincing means is the one which is produced during the given speech

and throughout the spoken word. These means are also known as the trilogy of logos including the enthymeme and the syllogism, ethos focusing on the nature and trustworthiness of the speaker and pathos concerned with the emotional state of the audience (Aristotle & Gernot Krapinger, 2018). These three concepts are explained in further detail in a subsection below. But before the trilogy can be looked at closer the next section takes a look at the concept of persuasion and the importance it plays for rhetoric.

1.1 The concept of persuasion

Before focusing on the trilogy of logos, ethos and pathos this chapter explores the concept of persuasion. Bonet and Sauquet (2010) agree with Panigyrakis et al. (2019) that rhetoric is something which is used in different social interaction whether this interaction might be in a private context or in a public one. They argue that everyone needs the means of persuasion because we all try to persuade people in order to agree with us or convince them of our ideas (Bonet & Sauquet, 2010). However, according to Shields (2007) “Aristotle does not suppose it appropriate to persuade for the sake of persuasion, or even persuade for the sake of winning” (pp. 377). This shows that even though persuasion is the goal in rhetoric it cannot work with all possible means in order to achieve it. Aristotle does put responsibility in to the audience to differentiate between manipulation and successful ways of persuasion (Shields, 2007). This means that even though a speaker wants to persuade the audience and convince them in a certain case the speaker also has to accept defeat if the rhetorical means used were not enough to convince the audience. As already mentioned above in order to successfully persuade someone and avoid the problem of manipulation it is important to figure out which are the most convincing means to the cause. Presenting these means in a trustworthy and logical way helps the speaker achieve the persuasion in the audience. It is important to note that persuasion for Aristotle has to be achieved “by argument rather than by emotional manipulation” (Shields, 2007, pp. 379). Even though the line between persuasion and manipulation can sometimes be very small a speaker needs to focus on the argumentation and if emotional approaches are being used, they need to be used in the context of a well-structured argument in order to avoid crossing the line towards emotional manipulation. The next section gives an overview of the three rhetorical means logos, ethos and pathos which are used to achieve this argument-based persuasion and therefore work to avoid any emotional manipulation. It gives an overview over logos and

ethos and then leads to another subsection which gives a more detailed overview over the third rhetorical concept for persuasion: pathos as this is the one this dissertation focuses on most.

1.2 Logos, Ethos and Pathos – an explanation of the different parts of the Aristotelian trilogy

The goal of nearly all speeches as well as the main goal in advertising and in most communicative acts is to persuade people into a decision. Whether this decision is about buying something, voting for someone or, in ancient times, convincing judges in a public lawsuit or convincing them whether they should start a war or not. Whether the act of persuasion is happening in private or public, in written or in spoken word. The goal is the same. The person speaking or writing or creating the advertisement requires a decision from the audience. In his work *Rhetoric* Aristotle introduces a trilogy which is supposed to help achieve this goal. This trilogy consists of the three concepts of logos, ethos and pathos. Aristotle himself mentions that these three concepts can never be found without each other in a speech (Aristotle & Gernot Krapinger, 2018). Within this trilogy pathos is aimed at the emotional state of the audience, ethos is connected to the character of the person speaking and logos represents the logical structure of the argumentation (Aristotle & Gernot Krapinger, 2018). The following chapter looks at pathos in more depth. Therefore, this section offers a closer look at the concepts of ethos and logos in order to understand them and then especially understand the difference to the concept of pathos.

For the concept of ethos Aristotle advises to have a spokesperson who is trusted by the audience as well as being goodwilled (Aristotle & Gernot Krapinger, 2018). On top of that the person speaking should have the right mindset and tone of voice for the given occasion so the audience believes what is being said (Aristotle & Gernot Krapinger, 2018). Ethos shows the speakers “good will, competence and reliability” (Bonet & Sauquet, 2010, pp. 124) and therefore concentrates on the character of the speaker and its moral quality (Bonet & Sauquet, 2010). Even though this paper focuses on the means of pathos and its importance for successful persuasion, ethos cannot be neglected as the person speaking or in today’s world the trustworthiness of the brand or source creating an advertisement or an act of speech is an important factor of convincing people. Bonet and Sauquet (2019) state that ethos was an important tool for Aristotle and he insisted on the importance of it within

the rhetorical praxis. Aristotle states that the speaker has to appear as a trustworthy person in order to achieve the persuasion wanted as people do not believe a speaker with poor morals or someone who seems to not be confident or informed within the topic which is spoken about (Aristotle & Gernot Krapinger, 2018). It is also helpful if the speaker appears to be in a certain mood which then reflects on to the audience as they can then adopt that emotion for themselves and it helps to make the audience more open for a successful outcome of the speeches persuasive desire (Aristotle & Gernot Krapinger, 2018). Whether the speaker's mood is real or staged does not matter as long as it is convincing and appears believable (Aristotle & Gernot Krapinger, 2018). The mood of the speaker can help to make him or her more reliable as different emotions underline different arguments. Aristotle uses the example that if someone is loved by the speaker the speaker would not wish them harm which makes his arguments in favour of this person more reliable but would, for example, diminish his credibility if he would speak against this person (Aristotle & Gernot Krapinger, 2018). David Graham Tonks writes in his 2002 paper that ethos is connected to the "integrity and credibility of the source" (Tonks, 2002 pp. 813). This shows an interesting difference between the rhetoric and settings Aristotle knew and the settings we know today. The statement from Tonks shows that today ethos in rhetoric does not only focus on a speaker anymore but is a source which can also be a website, a social media channel or a manager behind a brand. But it can also be a person who functions as a speaker. This shows that rhetorical aspects and concepts even if they are still very much necessary today need to be seen in the light of modern settings which has changed the perception of it and results in the adaptation of the concepts even further in order to fit in today's world but also be ready for future development and change.

This section explores the concept of logos further. Logos focuses on the logical structure of the argumentation and is therefore the one of the three concepts which deals with information, facts and opinions. Aristotle explains that in order to succeed within the field of logos one has to find look at a topic and figure out which part of an argument has the highest possibility of being true and therefore convincing and then proceed to present this argument to an audience (Aristotle & Gernot Krapinger, 2018). All rhetorical concepts are working with convincing means created throughout the speech by the speaker. Logos is a form of creating these convincing means in all different categories of speech and Aristotle himself mentions that there is no difference between the categories when it comes to the

creation of arguments (Aristotle & Gernot Krapinger, 2018). He differentiates between two different ways of building an argument and proofing a point: Example and enthymeme (Aristotle & Gernot Krapinger, 2018, pp. 121). For the proof through an example, he describes two different ways in which an argument including an example can be created. The first one is to use real past events which have actually happened and use them to refer to possible future events (Aristotle & Gernot Krapinger, 2018). He argues that the possibility of events happening again in the future if they have already happened in the past is high and these kinds of examples can therefore be used as a reasonable argument (Aristotle & Gernot Krapinger, 2018). It is also a way of argumentation which makes the audience trust the speaker as past events are usually well-known within the setting of one specific group or culture. This makes the speaker trustworthy and gives him or her the credibility needed in order to achieve a successful ethos. This already shows how the different parts within the rhetorical trilogy work together and can strengthen and support each other. The second way of how to form an example according to Aristotle is making something up in the form of a fable (Aristotle & Gernot Krapinger, 2018). A fable can be used to describe the possible outcome of events and use these stories to underline the argument one is trying to make. Aristotle himself advises fables especially in front of a large public audience when “no suitable past event can be found” (Aristotle & Gernot Krapinger, 2018, pp. 123). A fable does not rely on past events but usually works with a moral that comes out of the told story and can then be used to support an argument. In order for this to work the speaker must be trained in how to tell a fable especially when it is one that has to be made up by the speaker. The example as a way of argumentation is an inductive proof because it starts at one specific event and then creates a rule from this event which is supposed to work as a general rule. Inductive proofs can be difficult as the chance of them not being true is higher than in a deductive way of proof where the speaker concludes a single event from an already known or given rule. Even Aristotle himself warns his readers about the inductive way of proof because they can be difficult and can easily be wrong (Aristotle & Gernot Krapinger, 2018).

The second way for creating an argument through logos is the so-called enthymeme. Before looking further into the creation of enthymemes it is important to look at the syllogism as according to Aristotle enthymemes are shortened syllogisms (Aristotle & Gernot Krapinger, 2018). A syllogism is a certain structure of an argument. The structure consists of two or more premises which then lead into a conclusion (Aristotle & Gernot

Krapinger, 2018). If the given premises are true than that means that the conclusion has to be true as well because true premises cannot create a false conclusion (Aristotle & Gernot Krapinger, 2018). This shows the power of the syllogism and how it works because the conclusion of a correctly created syllogism can be trusted as being true because the premises themselves are true (Aristotle & Gernot Krapinger, 2018). The syllogism as well as the enthymeme works from a rule towards a specific situation and is therefore a deductive form of argumentation. The enthymeme is a shortened syllogism (Aristotle & Gernot Krapinger, 2018). Aristotle states that when it comes to rhetoric one does not have to mention and connect everything as it leads to confusion within the audience and makes the speaker appear as someone who babbles on rather than cutting to the core and focusing on a clear and organised argumentation (Aristotle & Gernot Krapinger, 2018). He criticises that someone who babbles is saying things which are clear and known from the start and did not need to be said but this leads to the problem that “the uneducated are more successful in front of the masses” (Aristotle & Gernot Krapinger, 2018, pp. 128), because the “uneducated people make general statements and generalise while the educated ones are talking about their knowledge and fields which are close to them and their expertise” (Aristotle & Gernot Krapinger, 2018, pp. 128-129). To be a successful speaker and persuade the audience one needs to have at least some knowledge on the topic otherwise the speaker loses its credibility which then leads to a less convincing ethos (Aristotle & Gernot Krapinger, 2018). For the enthymeme the premises do not have to be actual truths but are rather built upon common knowledge and common opinions (Aristotle & Gernot Krapinger, 2018). They need to have the highest possibility of being true and if they are made from an opinion this opinion needs to be commonly accepted by the masses and shaped by trusted people (Aristotle & Gernot Krapinger, 2018). An enthymeme is a shortened syllogism and a syllogism is made of two or more true premises and a conclusion which has to be true according to the premises. For a syllogism the speaker has to present the premises in order to guide the audience through the argumentation. With the enthymeme this is not the case. The enthymeme does not need all the premises the syllogism needs but it works with the help of the audience to build the argument. Aristotle himself explains that the enthymeme works with premises which do not have to be mentioned as they are common knowledge and can therefore be completed by the audience in order to get the structure of a syllogism (Aristotle & Gernot Krapinger, 2018). This can lead to an argument which only consists of a conclusion or only one premises which

then requires the audience to fill in either the premises or the conclusion. With this argumentative technique the audience is much more mentally engaged because they do need to finish the arguments in their heads. In order to use an enthymeme successfully the speaker needs to work with common knowledge and culturally accepted views and opinions (Aristotle & Gernot Krapinger, 2018). However, Hussein (2023) shows that there are numerous of critical voices amongst scholars debating whether or not a public opinion can be used as part of a rhetorical argument. One of the critics about it is that leaving out premises or conclusions and expecting them to be filled in by the audience can be a risk as everyone needs to have the same understanding of the topic presented by the speaker (Hussein, 2023). For Aristotle there are two different groups of enthymemes which work in the same way but have different purposes; the first group proves something and the second group disproves something (Aristotle & Gernot Krapinger, 2018). Both of these groups have the same theoretical structure which is why there is no further differentiation between the two in order to keep it as easily understandable as possible. For both of these groups it is the final conclusion after the premises is what makes the enthymeme proof of a certain point (Aristotle & Gernot Krapinger, 2018). Aristotle mentions four different ways in which an enthymeme can be presented and through which the argumentation is build: “possibility, example, evidence and sign” (Aristotle & Gernot Krapinger, 2018, pp. 148). All of these ways are possible and depend on the circumstance of the argumentation which the enthymeme is part of. The enthymeme can be summarised as a “deductive way of reasoning for rhetoric” (Hussein, 2023, pp. 273) and it focuses on common knowledge as it cannot make a functional argument without common knowledge (Hussein, 2023). As an additional note it is also important to know that there are real and apparent enthymemes as well as syllogisms (Aristotle & Gernot Krapinger, 2018). These apparent ones appear as a real argument but if closer looked at can be seen as an argumentation which does not lead to a real and true conclusion (Aristotle & Gernot Krapinger, 2018). However, exploring them fully is not important for this dissertation but it is necessary to realise they exist and that not every enthymeme can be seen as proof for an argument. Ammar Safaa Hussein (2023) states that there are different interpretations across scholars on how the enthymeme can be used and how its use was anticipated by Aristotle himself as well as critical voices on its legitimacy as a part of an argumentation (Hussein, 2023). The following statement shows the importance of the audience within the rhetorical persuasion: “the participation of the

audience is not only something needed to achieve persuasion. It is a crucial part of the rhetorical process and without it, there is no persuasion whatsoever” (Hussein, 2023, pp. 275). The engagement of the audience leads from the logos part to the pathos part as logos engages the audience with finishing arguments but pathos engages them emotionally and leads the way in which direction arguments are completed and believed. While logos as well as ethos are important concepts in the scholar’s trilogy, which can be found in modern argumentation, it is the concept of pathos which becomes most interesting when it comes to social media. Pathos works with emotions in the audience and is therefore especially important to persuade listeners, followers and costumers. “Pathos is the feelings that the words of the speakers produce in the audience” (Bonet & Sauquet, 2010 pp. 124). Pathos is the third part of the rhetorical trilogy and the next chapter looks even closer at pathos and how it was described and used by Aristotle himself in order to give an understanding on how it has been adapted to modern argumentation and social media marketing and how it is used today.

1.3 Pathos – the role of the audience and the use of emotions in rhetorical persuasion

This next section explores the concept of pathos as it is introduced in the Aristotelian rhetoric and its use. Aristotle defines pathos as one of the three rhetorical instruments for persuasion (Aristotle & Gernot Krapinger, 2018). Pathos is the part of the rhetorical trilogy which focuses on the audience as a contributing factor to a successful persuasion. Pathos works with the audience and has the goal to emotionally connect the audience to the topic of the persuasive act (Aristotle & Gernot Krapinger, 2018). In other words: it is supposed to help set the mood for the audience and get them emotionally involved with the presented topic an according to Tonks (2002) it is “directed to values, attitudes [and] beliefs” (pp. 813). The importance of the emotional state the audience is in is explained by Aristotle with the fact that people decide differently on certain topics depending on which emotion they are feeling towards the presented topic (Aristotle & Gernot Krapinger, 2018). He states that a decision can be very different “whether we are sad or happy, whether we love or hate” (Aristotle & Gernot Krapinger, 2018, pp. 13). This shows the importance for the speaker’s success to have the audience in the right emotional state in order to get the desired persuasive outcome. Having the audience in an emotional state of anger would therefore be harmful for a speaker if he needs the audience to feel positive emotions towards the topic. This would

then require a change of emotions within the audience which the speaker has to achieve within the speech itself. Aristotle continues to list different possible emotions that could be triggered in the audience and proceeds to explain how each emotion works (Aristotle & Gernot Krapinger, 2018). The list includes emotions such as anger, love, jealousy, pity and goodwill amongst others (Aristotle & Gernot Krapinger, 2018). Each presented emotion he divides into three aspect which the speaker needs to know about in order to successfully work with emotions (Aristotle & Gernot Krapinger, 2018). The three aspects are the emotional state of the listener, whom this emotion is directed at and what exactly the emotion is about (Aristotle & Gernot Krapinger, 2018). It is important to note that Aristotle does not offer a tool on how to exactly trigger these emotions in an audience but rather describes the emotion and the reasons one could feel it which then offers the speaker help on what to focus on in a speech to awake these emotions in the audience (Aristotle & Gernot Krapinger, 2018). For Aristotle emotions come in opposite pairs and if one knows how to trigger one of the two emotions this person would then naturally also know how to trigger the other emotion.

His most detailed example is the emotion anger and how it fits into the three aspects of emotion already mentioned (Aristotle & Gernot Krapinger, 2018). So, in order to explain how emotions are important to successfully persuade, this paper also focuses on the emotion anger in order to stick as close to the example given by Aristotle as possible however, this does work for all possible emotions according to Aristotle. He starts with defining the given emotion and why humans feel it (Aristotle & Gernot Krapinger, 2018). For anger he states that it is an emotion which is a sort of pain connected to the desire of revenge which is felt because someone did treat one unrightful disrespectfully (Aristotle & Gernot Krapinger, 2018). The emotion can either be felt because it concerns the person who is supposed to feeling it or because the mistreatment concerns someone loved or deeply respected by people in the audience which makes one feel the anger or any other emotion for them (Aristotle & Gernot Krapinger, 2018). This shows that the speaker can either work with mistreatment directly connected to the audience which is listening or trying to focus the emotion on a different group of people which is loved or closely connected to the audience which is being addressed. For example, if one is talking to a group of parents, it might be possible to arouse the emotion of anger when talking about mistreatment of children as an audience full of parents is likely to feel the emotion of anger when children and especially their own children

are mistreated. Aristotle offers different occasions or actions which could evoke this feeling of being disrespected in someone in order to make the reader and speaker understand how one might need to frame an event in order to create this feeling of being disrespected and therefore the emotion of anger (Aristotle & Gernot Krapinger, 2018). The emotions presented by Aristotle are listed in opposite pairs consisting of a negative and a positive emotion (Aristotle & Gernot Krapinger, 2018). Even though the listing of emotions is not a rhetorical handbook on how to arouse emotional responses in an audience it can help the speaker in working with emotions. Aristotle offers a list of examples in which circumstances a certain emotion is felt (Aristotle & Gernot Krapinger, 2018). The speaker can then use these examples and find some which have the same effect but are connected to the topic of speech. As this example of anger shows, Aristotle is very detailed in his description of the different emotions which is how he fills the chapter on pathos in his work (Aristotle & Gernot Krapinger, 2018). Seeing how detailed and differentiated Aristotle explores these different emotions and how they can be found in people and be aroused by a speaker in an audience shows the importance he grants pathos as a rhetorical mean (Aristotle & Gernot Krapinger, 2018). Changing the state an audience is in to make them more open to the argumentation presented in a speech or in a written form of communication is essential for Aristotle (Aristotle & Gernot Krapinger, 2018). It is something which becomes even more interesting when looking at today's world of communication. Social media offers a wide range of emotions within seconds of scrolling through it which makes it even more important to create the right emotion for each case in order to stand out of the crowd of emotions being thrown around and to really catch the follower in the right emotional state to be persuaded by their communication strategy. The following section takes a look on how different scholars have discussed the importance of rhetoric in today's world. This use focuses on marketing communication and advertising and offers a more general overview over the modern use of rhetoric. The section of the literature review after this one starts to take a closer look at social media and social media logic in order to understand how communication on platforms such as Instagram works and to understand how this modern use of rhetoric is implemented there.

1.4 The modern adaptation of ancient rhetorical practices with a focus on pathos

This next section focuses on how the use of rhetoric in general and more specifically pathos has shifted and in which way the emotional approach has found its way into the

modern world of communication and marketing. It helps to understand how the ancient concept has changed and shifted in order to stay relevant in modern times. This gives the starting point for the next chapter of the literature review which then focuses on social media and storytelling and the role pathos plays in it. But before going to this chapter, it is important to understand how the persuasion with pathos works in a more general way. This section looks at different scholars and their views on modern use of rhetoric and pathos in communication and shows the differences to the ancient use of pathos and emotions. Before discussing these different points of view in more detail it is important to note that one of the main differences between ancient Greece and today's communication is the way in which it happens. During Aristotle's life rhetoric happened in a spoken word scenario and the use of rhetoric was focused on speeches mostly given in front of public audiences (Bonet & Sauquet, 2010). Today the setting for rhetorical use is different. Communication is not limited to the spoken word but happens in written form and even in visual forms such as pictures or videos (Bonet & Sauquet, 2010). Therefore, the way in which rhetorical means are used has changed and needs to be adapted to these different circumstances. Panigyrakis et al. (2019) see the rhetorical means as a crucial part of today's advertising and communication strategies and offer an explanation on how each of the three rhetorical concepts is used today. For logos they state that it can be used "in favour of the strengthening of the connection due to the exposure to social media marketing activities" (Panigyrakis et al., 2019, pp. 702) ethos refers to "how credible the consumer evaluates the brand" (Panigyrakis et al., 2019, pp. 703) and pathos in their opinions is connected to brand attachment (Panigyrakis et al., 2019). Their study explores "how social media marketing activities (linked to logos) influence brand attachment (linked to pathos), through the mediating role of self-brand connections (linked to ethos)" (Panigyrakis et al., 2019, pp. 709). Their findings suggest that there is a connection between social media marketing strategies, brand attachment and self-brand connections (Panigyrakis et al., 2019) which argues that the connection between the three rhetorical concepts logos, pathos and ethos is still relevant in modern marketing. They argue that "logos, pathos and ethos can structure the argument of marketing communications towards the achievement of one's goal" (Panigyrakis et al., 2019, pp. 710). This leads to the assumption that the rhetoric introduced by Aristotle is still a relevant part of today's communication. But while Panigyrakis et al. (2019) advise companies to focus on social media marketing to strengthen the relationships

between brands and consumers they also remind the readers that already existing connections need to be taken in to account when it comes to the power of social media towards these brand-consumer bonds (Panigyrakis et al., 2019). They conclude that “the understanding and knowledge of how rhetoric can help achieving one’s goal can be leveraged on for any other online or offline purpose a marketer might have” (Panigyrakis et al., 2019, pp. 711). This statement shows that the use of rhetoric can not only be helpful for social media and online communication but can also work for offline communication and advertising purposes. Rhetoric can also be found when looking at the music industry and how music is used. Dewberry and Millen observe in their paper how songs are used as a rhetorical tool in presidential campaign in the USA (2014). They describe music as a “primarily pathos-centered form of rhetoric” (Dewberry & Millen, 2014, p. 87). Even though they focus on the musical part of a song rather than the lyrics specifically for their argument it shows the importance rhetoric in general and pathos specifically holds in music and song writing processes. They argue that the sound of the voice singing the song often has a bigger impact on the listener than the actual words being sung as it is the voice and the melody which transports emotions and feelings (Dewberry & Millen, 2014). The authors do explain that when talking about musical rhetoric both “the sound and the language” (Dewberry & Millen, 2014, p. 89) have to be taken into account in order to grasp the totality of musical rhetoric (Dewberry & Millen, 2014).

Mangiò et al. (2021) conducted a study on the use of rhetoric during the COVID-19 pandemic in order to understand how the use of rhetorical means changed within this socially difficult time. They realised that the lockdown caused a drastic change within the marketing strategies of brands from the argumentative logos towards the more emotional pathos (Mangiò et al., 2021). They state that the change towards social pathos was at its highest during the most uncertain phase of the pandemic while communication strategies went back to normality after the lockdown rules were lifted (Mangiò et al., 2021). This study shows how important rhetorical aspects can be for a brand and how the focus can change from one concept to another due to different circumstances. It also stresses the importance of pathos when it comes to a situation or circumstance when emotional responses are needed in order to persuade an audience.

Bonet and Sauquet (2010) argue in their paper on *Rhetoric in management and in management research* that rhetoric can be used and is used in many different disciplines.

The fields they argue rhetoric is used in modern society stretch from everyday conversation over research theories, decision making and symbolic interactions to leadership and management styles (Bonet & Sauquet, 2010). With this they take a step away from the world of social media, consumer connections and advertising and show a more general place rhetoric holds in modern society. The fact that they include conversations into their list shows how rhetoric is also an important part of everyday personal life as well as professional disciplines such as marketing. This gives an overview of the importance rhetorical practices still hold today. Tonks (2002) argues that the trilogy of rhetoric can very well be seen in “marketing tactics because they all have the eventual purpose of persuasion” (813). He states that “making sense of persuasion in marketing communications frequently operates now through the lens of rhetoric to understand the stories and the dramas that surround the meanings embedded in products which require a degree of involvement” (Tonks, 2002, pp. 814). This agrees with other scholars in granting the rhetorical trilogy of logos, ethos and pathos an important place in the modern world of marketing communication. Chris Hackley in Brown et al. (2018) goes as far as to state that “we seem to be living in an age of pathos in public communication” (pp. 1343). He argues that an emotional response is needed to stay relevant and not be forgotten (Hackley in Brown et al., 2018). This goes for communication as well as politics (Hackley in Brown et al., 2018) and therefore also goes for advertising and marketing. It is interesting to see the mention of politics. Politics is probably the one field of public communication where rhetoric is still the closest to what it used to be in ancient Greece and therefore the closest to how Aristotle intended for it to be used. But arguing that not only rhetoric in general but especially pathos is something that dictated every area of public communication is very interesting and underlines the importance of rhetorical means to achieve persuasion up until this day and age. He further states that even though visual aids are used for communication rhetorical concepts are relevant in order to understand how we perceive speech, text and even images (Hackley in Brown et al., 2018). Seeing these different scholars agree on the fact that rhetoric still holds an important place in today’s communication underlines the strength the ancient theories by Aristotle still have and that even though these concepts were created centuries ago the importance of persuasion through different means has not changed. What has changed is the context in which this persuasion has to happen such as moving from the spoken word to the written word or even to visual aids on Platforms like Pinterest or Instagram. The shown arguments by different

scholars also show the importance of pathos as a singled-out concept within the trilogy of rhetoric. Whether it becomes necessary in order to shape connections between brands and consumers or in order to change advertising means into more socially emotional spheres: pathos cannot be overlooked or ignored. The next section of this literature review therefore focuses on social media and especially on Instagram in order to see how these concepts can find a way into the world of Instagram and how it can be used and is used.

2. Social Media, Storytelling and Rhetoric in the Field of Strategic Marketing

The first chapter of this literature review focused on the ancient art and practice of rhetoric according to the Greek scholar Aristotle. This next chapter focuses on the media part of this dissertation and look firstly at the bigger concepts of social media and storytelling. In more detail it focuses on the role social media has in our society today, how it works and how it can be used in a marketing context as well as introducing the platform Instagram as it is the one this paper focuses on. Before looking at these subsections the chapter starts with a brief overview over the concept of multimodality and visual rhetoric in order to create a connection between the rhetorical practices and the social media world and in order to understand what research has already been done in the fields of rhetoric in modern ways.

2.1 Multimodality and visual rhetoric

Multimodality in itself is a complex term. Professor Knape, a professor of rhetoric at the University of Tübingen discusses the term of multimodality and tries to implement it into a rhetorical context (Knape, 2018). Looking at this shows the importance of looking at the concept of multimodality in the rhetorical frame first in order to draw a connection between the different sides of modern rhetoric to the use of rhetoric in the specific context of social media. Knape argues that if one would want to incorporate the term multimodality in the rhetoric field one has to look at the performative part of the rhetorical practice (Knape, 2018). Knape himself warns his audience that multimodality in itself is a complex term and that rhetoric already offers different “multis” as tools to create rhetorical persuasion (Knape, 2018, pp. 49-50). In summary these three multis he is talking about concern first, codes, second, text and third, the medium used (Knape, 2018, pp. 49-50). The author states that all these multis have to be taken into consideration when performing a rhetorical act of

persuasion and strongly stresses that the actual performance, whether it might be written, spoken or on social media, is the most important part about rhetoric (Knape, 2018). He stresses that the crucial part of achieving a successful persuasion is the connection between the one performing the rhetorical act and the audience receiving it (Knape, 2018). If the audience fails to receive the rhetorical act in the intended way the rhetorical performance failed (Knape, 2018, pp. 51). This is important to remember when looking at the use of rhetoric in social media. The creator of the rhetorical act needs to know and understand the audience the rhetorical act is directed to to make sure the audience receives the message in the intended way. Knape then goes on to remind his audience that one has to think if there are any given resistances or if the planned rhetorical act creates resistance or overcomes it (Knape, 2018, pp. 52). He also mentions the emotional resistance of the audience to be one of the biggest ones to overcome (Knape, 2018, pp. 52). This is the moment in which pathos as a rhetorical tool becomes interesting for communication and storytelling in general and social media in specific as pathos can be used to create the right emotion within the audience to receive the rhetorical message in the intended way and thus overcoming the emotional resistance. The concept of multimodality shows the amount of thought which has to be put in to a modern act of rhetorical persuasion as there are many different multis to consider in order to be able to achieve convincing an audience and overcoming possible resistance in the process.

After looking closer at multimodality, it is also important to discuss the concept of visual rhetoric. Ancient rhetoric mostly dealt with spoken word and sometimes with written text. However, modern use can and often does also implement pictures, paintings, photographs, statistics, moving images such as film or social media postings. Because this paper in total and this chapter more specifically looks at the use of pathos on Instagram it is important to take a closer look at the use of visual rhetoric as Instagram as a platform is known to focus primarily on pictures rather than text. José van Dijck and Thomas Poell state that not only social media uses rhetorical means in a visual way but that mass media has already started to use these visual ways to create rhetorical affects (Dijck & Poell, 2013). In their example they refer to the mass medium television and state that “television cameras and broadcast techniques add immediacy and intensity to the rhetorical power of words: shots of bloody victims or sweating presidential candidates have emotional impact, enhancing television’s potential to sway large audiences towards collective pathos” (Dijck

& Poell, 2013, pp. 4). This already shows the use of rhetorical means in a mass media context and the special focus by van Dijck and Poell on the rhetorical Pathos underlines the importance it has. It also shows that the use of images can add an important new level to persuasive rhetorical practices as the sender does not have to rely only on words but can use images to underline the presented emotions or arguments. Social media has to work with visual rhetoric as well. Most importantly a platform such as Instagram which primarily focuses on visual content.

Barbara J. Phillips and Edward F. McQuarrie point out that advertising relies on pictures in order to persuade potential consumers (Phillips & McQuarrie, 2004). Therefore, visual rhetoric does not only become important when looking at Instagram in specific but also when focusing on marketing in general. They remind the reader that the use of visual advertising and the combination of rhetorical figures with visual aids can be challenging for the receivers due to a high level of complexity (Phillips & McQuarrie, 2004). This shows the importance of knowing the group a communication strategy is aimed at to make sure the picture is understood in the way intended by the communicator. Matthew O. Peterson is building his work on the work conducted by Phillips and McQuarrie and focuses even stronger on the concept of the visual metaphor and the rhetorical use going beyond it. He states, as well as Phillips and McQuarrie did in their work, that the rhetorical figure of metaphor is one of the most common used ones when it comes to visual rhetoric (Phillips & McQuarrie, 2004 and Peterson, 2018). The use of a visual metaphor can be challenging to understand as the metaphor usually works with a high level of complexity, especially when it comes to visual metaphors (Phillips & McQuarrie, 2004 and Peterson, 2018). Peterson defines the visual metaphor as “a special type of comparison whereby one ‘domain’ (a pictured entity or imagined concept) is understood in terms of another” (Peterson, 2018, pp. 68). The visual metaphor is named by different authors as it shows a clear mixture between the rhetorical figure of a metaphor and its use when it comes to a visual platform. Peterson states that the metaphor can be used in a diverse way as its understanding depends on context, interpretation and use of different attributes and can therefore only partly be steered into the wanted outcome by the sender as the understanding depends on the receiver and its background, knowledge and circumstances (Peterson, 2018). The metaphor is one example of how rhetoric can work in a visual context. This example was given to understand the

concept of visual rhetoric as it is the base for the following chapters. The next section focuses on social media and how rhetoric fits into this concept.

2.2 The age of social media, where Instagram fits into it and how rhetoric can be applied in it

This next chapter focuses on the concept of social media and how it works in our modern age. In order to understand how rhetoric can be placed and used in the setting of social media this chapter gives a short overview over the place social media takes in the web 2.0 and tries to understand the psychological and generational aspects of social media as well as the competitive aspect of communication and marketing strategies on social media. Instagram belongs to the group of social media platforms. “The so-called Web 2.0 is a deeply interactive reality which finds its essential predicate in offering the possibility to share content with other people, as well as to modify and reproduce it” (Vero, 2021, pp. 13). Ebersbach, Glaser and Heigl take an even more detailed approach to the features of the Web 2.0 as they focus on social media platforms which belong to the phenomenon of the “social web” (Ebersbach et al., 2016, pp. 309). They define the social web as a part of the Web 2.0 which focuses heavily on creating and maintaining connections between individual users (Ebersbach et al., 2016).

Besides the connection and interaction between different users the social web is also used to share knowledge and information and connect people with similar interests (Ebersbach et al., 2016). This area of sharing information and knowledge as well as the possibility to connect people and create relationships with them is something which becomes important for social media advertising as it aims at exactly these aspects of the social web. Another important part about the social web is that it cannot only be used to share information but also to create content (Ebersbach et al., 2016). Van Dijck and Poell argue that mass media such as television has started to understand the power of images especially when it comes to pathos (Dijck & Poell, 2013). Understanding this pathos-based content strategy approached by mass media can be used not only for news content but also for advertising on mass media as well as entertainment and with that being translated into an age of social media (Dijck & Poell, 2013) making images an important part of a social media strategy as well as a mass media strategy. Looking at the platform Instagram this image-based approach becomes important.

Ebersbach et al. also state that the relationships within the social web often already exist in the real world and that the social web is used to deepen and to maintain these relationships, especially when it is not possible to do so in the real world due to distance or other circumstances (2016). This is interesting when it comes to the aspect of communication and self-presentation throughout the social web as it suggests that a brand or person such as a singer or actor needs to establish a real-world connection with the fans and followers as well as a digital one. This is interesting to keep in mind as a real-life connection between an artist and its fans can be quite challenging and it is interesting to see how this connection can be realised in real life. Instagram as a social media platform belongs into this concept of the social web and can therefore be used to connect people, to deepen and maintain relationships and to share knowledge and information. Van Dijck and Poell (2013) argue that media (mass media that is) has always tried to connect an audience to a format, to news or to advertisements and entertainment and that with the new use of social media this is still the case just the methods have changed (Dijck & Poell, 2013). One difference here is that social media has the ability to address a larger and more international crowd while traditional mass media is usually focused on a more national or even regional crowd (Dijck & Poell, 2013).

Ebersbach et al. describe Instagram as a platform that focuses primarily on photos (Ebersbach et al., 2016). Photos are used to connect to people and share information. Van Dijck and Poell argue that social media, just like mass media, follows a certain logic (Dijck & Poell, 2013). “Like mass media, social media have the ability to transport their logic outside of the platforms that generate them ...” (Dijck & Poell, 2013, pp. 5). This shows that social media cannot be viewed as something isolated but affects the world outside of social media as well. This is especially important to understand when it comes to marketing and strategic communication as it uses social media but requires an effect in the world outside of social media as this is where the purchase takes place.

Social media has a different media logic than mass media (Dijck & Poell, 2013). The main difference is that mass media used to work as a gate keeper which can control the content flow while in social media the receivers also become the creators which leads to a less controlled content flow (Dijck & Poell, 2013). One thing which becomes important when talking about advertising on social media is that social media platforms work with “mechanisms of deep personalization and networked customization” (Dijck & Poell, 2013,

pp. 9). This shows an increased need for brands to know and understand their followers and customers as the content they create needs to be as personal as possible. The connectivity of social media logic aims to connect all the different participants in the social media network and with that create a connection between them (Dijck & Poell, 2013). Both mass media logic as well as social media logic need to be understood in order to understand the different aspects marketing and communication strategies needs to cover in order to be successful. According to Marta Vero one important aspect which cannot be ignored neither in the internet nor in the outside world is trust (Vero, 2021). The Web 2.0 focuses on connection between users. Vero argues that the connections within this Web 2.0 are heavily focusing on anonymity and that even though it is building a different reality trust is a factor which cannot be ignored (Vero, 2021). Even though this trust aims more at the ethos aspect of rhetoric it is important to mention it in order to understand what is required to achieve successful outcome in social media marketing and presentation. The rhetorical means of logos, ethos and pathos work together and therefore one cannot be discussed in detail without mentioning the other two. Vero also connects this problem of trust online to the art of ethos in Aristotle's rhetoric and argues that the audience has to trust the ones who are producing content in order for the creators to be successful and the content to be persuasive (Vero, 2021).

While the Internet started as something that brought anonymity into society especially social media platforms are working against this, offering users the chance to show themselves and their lives in all honesty, connecting to other users and receiving feedback on their actions (Vero, 2021). This is a chance to strengthen the trust into content creators again as it moves closer to the orality and face-to-face situations in which trust is usually earned in the real world (Vero, 2021). In this context Vero stresses the importance of visual based platforms such as Instagram (Vero, 2021). She states that the platform is especially popular "among teenagers and young adults" (Vero, 2021, pp. 23). According to Vero this use of images and video content has led to the phenomenon of influencers (Vero, 2021). Influencers can be seen as a modern take at the ancient concept of ethos as they appear trustworthy and as opinion leaders (Vero, 2021). Even though this dissertation focuses on the social media platform Instagram it is important to note that there is a huge variety of different social media platforms which might require different approaches to a social media strategy and which are making the social web a place of competition when it comes to capturing the user's attention. This can also be said for different brands within one social

media platform as users are confronted with many different postings on the same platform all trying to win their attention and with that the social media user as a new customer. This gives a short overview over how social media works and how it fits into our society, the connection to mass media and the importance of trust in a social media context.

2.3 Storytelling – shaping connections through the power of a story

One tool of a communication strategy is called storytelling which this paragraph explores in more detail as it is not only important in general communication strategies but also plays a role in social media communication and marketing. It is a concept which is used in different communication settings. Stories consist of different parts such as “characters, setting, plot, theme, conflict and resolution” (Houghton, 2021). They usually follow the same construct of having a starting point, a middle part and an end (Houghton, 2021). Houghton argues that these elements are manipulated by storytellers to achieve certain affects within the receivers of the story (2021). Storytelling can be used as a tool to create a connection between a brand and a consumer, a sender and a receiver as well as, in this case, an artist and its followers and fans (Aimé, 2021). Not only can it be used as a tool to create connection but it also helps to build and strengthen trust within those connections (Aimé, 2021). One of the objectives of storytelling can be described as building an emotional link from one involved party to the other (Aimé, 2021), such as artist and fan. Even though this chapter talks about the use of storytelling in a brand-related context it is important to understand that the artist Taylor Swift can be seen in the same position as a brand talking to fans who represent the position of the consumers. One reason why stories work so well in branding but also in communication strategies in general is because they work with schemata (Houghton, 2021). This means that stories trigger emotions which have already been triggered by similar circumstances and events without having to have lived through the actual experience of the told story (Houghton, 2021). This helps to connect people via stories about known schemata but can become confusing and difficult if told stories do not fit into the already known schemata (Houghton, 2021). In order to transport a story and get a receiver to understand and follow the storyline the receiver needs to have imagery while the story needs to create an affect within the receiver to be successful in transporting the feelings and information told (Houghton, 2021). Creating this imagery and affect can help to strengthen the relationship between the sender and the receiver which would in the case of

Taylor Swift mean the connection between the artist and her fans (Houghton, 2021). This can then help the receiver to actively implement the sender and the told stories into their own identity and self-concept and strengthen the relationship between them (Houghton, 2021).

Stories help brands to touch consumers, especially when it comes to the brand's own story (Tsai, 2020). Tsai goes as far as saying that “[a] brand is just a sign without any vitality if there is no story to tell consumers” (Tsai, 2020, pp. 1). The author goes even further stating that a brand's story is its soul and without it a consumer can never capture the essential spirit of a brand (Tsai, 2020). This can be translated into the music world and the connection between artist and fans in a way in which an artist needs to have a story in order to get the fans to capture the essential points of the music. Having a story behind a brand makes consumers receive products in a specific way and adding emotion to this perception and with that shaping how the brand is perceived as a whole and helps to establish a connection between brand and consumers (Tsai, 2020). According to Tsai the brand needs to build this connection and emotional sense of identity to get consumers to buy its products as the chance of consumers being loyal to a brand and buying its products increases when they feel connected to it (Tsai, 2020). One reason why storytelling is a successful and popular tool is because it helps to make an advertisement more emotional and connect to consumers on an emotional level (Tsai, 2020). Translating this into the music industry would suggest that storytelling through a song would become more emotional and with that easier to emotionally connect to fans when storytelling is used.

When looking at the argument that a story being told by a brand gives the brand a soul (Tsai, 2020) this offers the consumers not only a brand they can maybe identify with and feel something when talking about it but it also makes the brand reachable and gives it a personality which makes it possible for the consumer to create a connection with the brand which goes above liking the products, or the art and music produced by an artist, and really feel connected to the artist making the whole building an emotional connection with one's followers and fans is a challenge which requires the use of pathos. Pathos is the art of evoking emotions in the people one is addressing in order to make them more emotionally open for certain arguments or in the case of an artist more open to the message transported in the art. This shows that storytelling can be one tool to achieve this ancient practice in a modern setting.

2.3.1 Storytelling in the music industry – a whole story in one song

The chapter before this one looks at storytelling as a concept and focuses mostly on the context of brand and consumer as well as giving a more general overview over the concept. This can be translated into the storytelling used in the case of Taylor Swift as a brand and creating this connection with fans and followers. However, as this paper talks about the phenomenon of Taylor Swift it is important to look at the concept of storytelling from a different angle. This angle is the art of storytelling in music as the musical part is the selling point for Taylor Swift. The music industry works with stories in various ways. This chapter explores how storytelling is used in the music industry and how this can be translated into the social media world.

Adam Bradley describes pop music as poetry saying that “Pop’s poetry always lives in the space between word and music” (Bradley, 2017, p. 13). Going into further explanation about this statement the author argues that songs consist of the combination of music and lyrics which is needed in order to create the poetic feeling he receives from listening to songs throughout his life (Bradley, 2017). However, it is the lyrics standing on their own as well which, in many pop songs, give the song the feeling of being a sung poem (Bradley, 2017). Song lyrics can be analysed in a way poetry can as well as the author shows by analysing the song *Diamonds* by Rhianna (Bradley, 2017). Even though this is a very interesting take on song writing and lyrics the poetic depth of lyrics are not be as important for this dissertation as it focuses more on storytelling elements as well as on emotions being translated within the songs. One part which creates poetry in songs is, amongst others, a story (Bradley, 2017). While poems and stories in written form target emotions. Bradley (2017) argues that music and sung lyrics have an even easier way to human emotions as the way an artist sings the lyrics and performs the music can help transform these emotions. One thing Bradley summarises throughout his findings is that a song in contrary to a poem is something social that is written for a group of other people and which needs this group and social aspect in order to be a complete product (Bradley, 2017). This gives storytelling in a song a dimension of bringing people together with the same story even though this story might be received or interpreted in various different ways.

“Songs tell stories” (Bradley, 2017). The author goes on to explain this statement further in stating that stories can help the human mind to order experiences and then communicate them to others (Bradley, 2017). Hansen (2024) goes even further arguing that

it is not only stories created through a song about that artists create whole storyworlds around who they are or rather who they pretend to be to the public through their songs and performances. This shows that it is not only the song which can tell a story but that famous artists often create a whole bigger story around who they are and what they want the world to see. This storyworld allows the artist to take the fans with them into the story they are creating and offer them their own perspective on the story (Hansen, 2024). Bradley continues to explain that there are similarities between spoken and sung or written narratives but that they also differ in ways concerning aspects like setting, characters and plot (Bradley, 2017). Storytelling in songs is close to the storytelling in oral narrative as a song as well as a told story are something happening in the moment as well as listening to it rather than reading it (Bradley, 2017). Of course, lyrics can be read while one listens to a song but most often the lyrics and the story within them are experienced over an auditive channel only. One more difference when it comes to storytelling through a song is that not only the lyrics but the melody, rhythm, voice and performance are part of this story (Bradley, 2017). Even though this musical aspect is of course very interesting it is not part of this dissertation as the focus lies more on the words being sung as well as performance when it comes to videos or concerts. Bradley states that there is a continued discussion about the intensity and purpose of stories and storytelling throughout musical scholars with one side arguing that the narratives in songs cannot be compared to the ones in literature and oral storytelling while the other side supports the argument that stories are part of the song writing process and that both lyrics and melodic elements are part of creating a story within a song (Bradley, 2017). One thing which becomes clear while reading through Bradley's take on storytelling in pop music is that it is not a typical form of storytelling but it rather opens up a world for the listeners to intertwine their own stories with the ones they listen to. This circles back to the need of a listener and a group for a song as these connective elements of the lyrics which offer every listener their own version of the story rather than presenting them with a fully told one (Bradley, 2017). The way fans or listeners in general can add their own experiences to a song and a told story opens up an opportunity for artists to give their fans inside on one hand and also create a connection with them on the other and making them seem less like a faraway superstar and more like a friend experiencing similar emotions and parts in life. But music also helps to tell personal stories or feelings. Hansen (2024) shows in her study about pop star Justin Bieber how lyrics can act as a tool to explain certain emotions or retell stories

from one's perspective even though they might have happened a long time ago. One thing to keep in mind when it comes to stories told in songs is that they might escape the traditional model of stories having a beginning a middle part and an end but that they can work with images, emotions and moments (Bradley, 2017). There are arguments in the music industry stating that pop music has nothing to with storytelling and that not every song tells a story but that some songs are about nothing (Bradley, 2017). Susan McClary shows these different opinions in her paper as well circling back to the question if music actually tells stories or if the stories, we hear in music are really the listeners own personal narratives connected with the music giving a different story to everyone who listens (McClary, 1997). Even though it important to know this point of view exists, this paper focuses more on the storytelling aspects trying to see if Taylor Swift uses storytelling and if she does how it can be found in her songs in both lyrics and performance.

While this subchapter has offered a closer look on how storytelling in music and lyrics is produced or used by artists the next chapter refocuses on a tool which neither the music industry nor the marketing world can live without and which has already been part of this chapter: social media. More specifically it looks at the platform Instagram and how it can be used in the marketing world as well as a tool for artists, storytelling and connecting with fans and followers.

2.4 Social Media Interaction – how Instagram works as a platform for communication and connection

This chapter takes a closer look at the platform Instagram and how it can be used by both brands and artists to communicate with fans and followers and create a connection. Social media has changed the world of music as well as the world of communication and advertising. Artists cannot stick to their music and interviews only anymore but they have to perform on social media as well and keep their fanbases engaged meaning that they do have a new medium which is important for their success and also adds to the fact that they cannot stay anonymous as social media is everywhere and new information are shared within seconds (Hansen, 2024).

Instagram is a platform which mainly focuses on images. Especially in the beginning stages of Instagram the platform would limit its content to “precisely, images, eventually accompanied by a very short tagline and hashtags, that is keywords which allow the posted image to be disseminated widely” (Vero, 2021, pp. 23). Throughout the years of its existence

Instagram has undergone several changes and adaptation which have not only affected private, personal content sharing but also the strategic content sharing by brands (Vero, 2021). Instagram as a platform can be used in many different ways not only by individuals but also by brands or artists to share work, give updates, connect and let fans and followers be part of their lives. The use of social media platforms such as Instagram has gotten to the point where especially young artists cannot step away from it and for which these platforms give close and global access to them and what they decide to share about their personas and lives (Hansen, 2024). “[T]heir participation in an intensified online public culture from the outset of their careers has proliferated and diversified audiences’ points of access to their personas” (Hansen, 2024, p. 9). This focus on online participation and engagement can of course have both positive and negative outcomes and can happen in various different ways. Scholars are underlining the fact that rhetorical methods are being used in order to successfully share knowledge and information on social media (Toder-Alon et al., 2013). A word-of-mouth interaction needs a person or users looking for information and another person providing this information (Toder-Alon et al., 2013). This phenomenon works with the rhetorical mean of ethos meaning the person providing information has to be trusted by the one receiving it (Toder-Alon et al., 2013). Word-of-mouth interaction is something which can be found on social media as well as in real life. While in real life it often happens by oral suggestions and recommendations it can happen on social media via commenting or sharing content. Instagram as a platform works mostly with images or videoclips which can be shared by users. This makes it even more important for senders to create something receivers would want to share.

2.4.1 Emotions in Social Media Communication and how pathos can be part of social media

Even though Aristotle mentions the need of the three concepts to work together in order to achieve successful persuasion it can be interesting to pick them apart and focus on only one of them in order to really understand how it works and how it applies to social media strategies. In the case of pathos this helps to understand in which way emotions can be created through a screen without having a real face to face connection. This section explores the ways in which social media can offer a platform for exactly those emotional aspects of communication and how the ancient pathos created by Aristotle can be translated into a modern marketing and communication strategy.

Panigyrakis et al. (2019) state that rhetoric can and should be used as a tool in order to “effectively and efficiently structure and design their social media marketing activities” (Panigyrakis et al., 2019, pp. 711) this offers the opportunity to use the tool of pathos in order to “cultivate positive feelings” (Panigyrakis et al., 2019, pp. 711) towards the brand or a person. Trust plays an important role in the everyday life and it is no less important when it comes to social media (Vero, 2021). This importance of trust not only in shared information but especially in the people or profiles which share this information shows the connection to the rhetorical aspect of ethos (Vero, 2021). Having the issue of ethos connected to trust on social media and finding logos in the information shared on social media in the first place already shows two of the three important rhetorical practices introduced by Aristotle. Pathos is the only one left. The emotions used to affect audiences are especially important to form close connections between brand and consumer (Panigyrakis et al., 2019). This again can be translated to the connection between artist and fans. However, this connection is discussed in more depth in the next section which is why this section focuses more on how these emotions are used and created.

Mangiò et al. (2021) used their research to understand how brands can change a rhetorical narrative within an occurring circumstance. They used the recent COVID-19 pandemic in order to understand how brands adapted to this global challenge and how it affected social media (Mangiò et al., 2021). Their results showed that trending hashtags changed over time leading them to the conclusion that it might be possible that brands have used hashtags in order to create a certain social pathos (Mangiò et al., 2021). The authors argue that for brands this might have been a rather safe option to steer consumer interests in the face of a crisis than more radical approaches might have been (Mangiò et al., 2021). This gives the first possibility to create pathos: the hashtag. Due to the fact that hashtags work with words it can be seen as a tool which can be used throughout different platforms even though they are usually closely connected to images or videos. Mangiò et al. also discovered that different industries can change their rhetorical approaches in the face of severe circumstance or when it appears to be necessary (Mangiò et al., 2021). The study conducted by Mangiò et al. focuses primarily on the use of hashtags, offering a view of the written approach to pathos on social media.

The use of hashtags is an interesting approach and, with the written words, closer connected to the ancient art of rhetoric than images are. However, social media platforms

and withing that especially Instagram focus on visual content rather than written one and even though they use hashtags they are only part of a more complex way of communicating via this platform. In the beginning of this chapter the art of visual rhetoric was introduced as well as the phenomenon of multimodality which are both essential to approach the use of visual content for pathos-based communication and marketing on Instagram. In the context of multimodality, the sender, in this case an artist, uses different modes to reach the audience and to achieve successful persuasion (Knape, 2018). These different modes offer the chance to combine a visual level with a written one strengthening the effect of pathos or adding a level of logos to a pathos-based communication strategy. Focusing on the visual level of multimodality or of advertising in general one needs to think about the concept of a visual metaphor. This concept of visual metaphor is one of the most popular ones when it comes to visual rhetoric as it appears to be the most obvious one (Phillips & McQuarrie, 2004 and Peterson, 2018). The work with visual approaches to pathos require the sender to understand the audience they work with as metaphors require a common understanding in order for the receiver to understand the intention of the sender (Peterson, 2018). The message sent through a visual aid has to be understood in a certain way which can change due to social circumstances, cultures or generational differences (Phillips & McQuarrie, 2004 and Peterson, 2018) making it necessary for the sender to study and understand its receivers, their living environments and their national as well as cultural and even political backgrounds. “It is a fundamental axiom of communication studies that meanings are constructed by people in interaction and, therefore, similar symbols have different meanings for different audiences” (Dewberry & Millen, 2014, p. 83). This statement shows the importance of understanding one’s audience as the personal interactions and different audiences shape the meaning of any communicative act.

According to Phillips and McQuarrie advertising relies on pictures and needs these visuals to succeed (Phillips & McQuarrie, 2004). In the age of mass media, it was already understood which power and which importance pictures hold and in the age of (picture based) social media platforms this importance becomes even more obvious (Dijck & Poell, 2013). Metaphors are open-ended and can therefore either be a strong tool when understood in the intended way or a weakening tool if the understanding is lost between the sender and the receiver (Peterson, 2018). With this open-end use and the room for interpretation a visual metaphor can lead to the required effect of being both interesting and memorable which then

leads to a higher chance of staying relevant long enough to be spread to a large enough crowd (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2011).

The use of visual metaphors and visual arguments in general has proven to be successful for both the mass media and social media. Visuals have emotional impact and with that impact they help to steer a crowd or an audience into a common pathos making them more open for persuasion (Dijck & Poell, 2013). The so-called datafication discussed by van Dijck and Poell (2013) shows the possibility for senders to understand their audiences with the help of evaluating data concerning trends on one hand and their own audiences on the other hand in a real-life audience format. This section shows that social media can create pathos in different ways. The first one is the written approach with hashtags, the second one is the visual approach with pictures and videos as metaphors and other rhetorical figures. The combination of visual and textual level in general and picture and hashtag in a more detailed way allows senders to use the category of multimodality and reach their audiences in different ways. Social media has become an important platform for communication, marketing and self-presentation. With the help of pathos, it can steer a large group of fans and followers in a certain direction. The next and last subsection of this chapter focuses on the connection the sender tries to create with its followers in order to maintain a relationship with them.

2.5 The stakeholder theory – connections on social media

A brand cannot stand alone. Neither can a famous person whether that is a musician or an actress or a politician. A brand without customers or followers in the online world cannot exist. A famous person without fans and influence is not famous. Because of this need for connection between the two sides this chapter focuses on connections between brands and their followers on social media platforms which can be translated into famous people and their fans on social media as well as in the real world. This section highlights the concept of the stakeholder theory focusing on the world of branding and companies. Even though this is where the stakeholder theory is usually situated it is important to understand that this is used as an example and is, for this dissertation, translated into a famous individual and the fans as one of the stakeholders. It also looks at the stakeholder theory to understand the importance followers and customers have for a brand as stakeholders and how these stakeholders affect possible strategies of a brand. The term stakeholder applies to all who are affected by an organisation or affect it in any way (Mahajan et al., 2023). This means

that the word stakeholder includes both external stakeholders such as clients as well as internal stakeholders such as employees, managers, and so on (Hörisch et al., 2014).

The idea of the stakeholder theory suggests that it is not only shareholders who are important for a company to survive and thrive but that all those affected by the company and interested in it play an important role for the company's long-term success (Mahajan et al., 2023). It also aims in creating value for all interested parties in the company and not only focusing on shareholders (Mahajan et al., 2023). Including stakeholders in the management approach of companies can be a useful way to improve the company's position in the market. Acknowledging stakeholders and their needs as well as their ideas can help companies to improve products and services as they have a direct conversation with the ones affected by them rather than just the shareholders who are financially interested in the company but might not offer any insight in the service or product (Mahajan et al., 2023). To give an example for the power of stakeholders in the Taylor Swift related subject of the music industry one can note that the bridge in the song *ME!* by Taylor Swift had been received very negatively by fans (Holmes, 2019). They have even called parts of the bridge "cringe-worthy" (Ritschel, 2019) which led to Taylor Swift listening to her stakeholders and deleting the bridge changing the song to one her fans would appreciate more (Holmes, 2019). Mahajan et al. (2023) highlight the fact that stakeholder theory cannot only be considered a theory but has to be taken into serious account for practical matters for companies. The practical approach on applying stakeholder theory within a company can look different for every company and of course also looks different for individuals. Social media however is one way this exchange can be achieved and external stakeholder can be addressed. Having this knowledge of the stakeholder theory and understanding that social media can be a tool to understand the importance of engagement with stakeholders via social media.

In order to understand how this connection can work the next part of this chapter looks at how social media can create a connection between fans and artists or brands and consumers. Ebersbach et al. define social media platforms as a part of the social web aiming at connecting different users and maintaining connections in an online world in case, they might not be possible in the real world anymore (Ebersbach et al., 2016). This shows the importance of connection when it comes to the use of social media. Van Dijck and Poell list connectivity as one of the main aspects of both mass media and social media logic portraying media in general as a tool to connect different groups such as fans and artists or "advertisers

and consumers” (Ebersbach et al., 2016, pp. 8). Panigyrakis et al. (2019) state that brand attachment is connected to the concept of pathos which is influenced by the marketing strategies of a brand² on social media. They found that “the relationship between social media marketing activities and brand attachment is significant and mediated by self-brand connections” (Panigyrakis et al., 2019, pp. 710). They go even further stating “that memories through feeling and thoughts that relate to the brand make the brand more salient, and the bond even stronger” (Panigyrakis et al., 2019, pp. 705). Taylor Swift for example is known for using her own life experience for often making her music sound like diary entries which she uses from her own diary (Wilson, 2020). This offers the fans a close insight into the artist’s life and feelings but also offers a broad range of feelings and emotions the fans can feel with the artist together and translate them to their own lives. This insight and connection create a parasocial relationship between artist and fans creating an experience for the fans just like they are talking to a friend (Nisbett & Schartel Dunn, 2019). This shows that brands can hugely influence the connection their consumers have with the brand through their social media performance with the help of focusing on an emotional approach (Panigyrakis et al., 2019).

Pathos is the part of the rhetorical trilogy which is responsible to form and strengthen this connection with the brands consumers. Another aspect of these connections formed between brand and consumer is the aspect of trust. As Marta Vero (2021) states it is essential for human interaction. She goes as far as stating that “a good, functioning social system relies on trust-based relationships” (Vero, 2021, pp. 10). Vero mentions that this trust-related relationship can be based on the ancient art of ethos making the speaker or producer of content a key figure in successful persuasion (Vero, 2021). As mentioned by Aristotle the three rhetorical means work together and one cannot be without the other (Aristotle & Gernot Krapinger, 2018). This being said it is important to mention the ethos part of the trilogy being based on the concept of trust-related issues. Even though his paper mainly focuses on pathos the aspect of ethos cannot be ignored. However, media as well as social media comes with certain rules and restrictions. One of these restrictions is the so-called Digital Service Act (short DSA) which has been introduced by the European Union in order to regulate the use and power of social media platforms. The next section of this chapter looks closer into this

² In order to simplify the reading flow, it is important to note that the term brand can also be used in the sense of a personal brand in the sense of a musician.

2.6 Digital Service Act

2.6.1 Social media responsibility – the Digital Service Act

The Digital Service Act (DSA) aims to create a safer space online (European Commission, 2022). The bill was introduced to the European Commission in 2020, has come into effect in 2022 and has been fully adaptable since February 2024 (German Government, 2024). This DSA includes different platforms ranging from social media platforms over search engines to e-commerce-related platforms (European Commission, 2022). This includes the platform Instagram as well as the area of social media marketing. Alina Turillazzi et al. analysed this Digital Service Act before it has officially come into effect in 2022. They discuss the ethical, legal and social implications the DSA has (Turillazzi et al., 2023). Looking at the different parts and regulations of the DSA the ultimate goal of this Digital Service Act can be described as following: “[i]f implemented correctly, the legislation could bring back the online network’s original promise: to be a decentralised, open network that enables everybody to communicate and create freely” (Turillazzi et al., 2023, p. 91). One thing the DSA aims to accomplish is to have platforms react faster to illegal content and so-called “fake news” as it introduces the possibility for everyone to report illegal content and demands platforms to react faster (Turillazzi et al., 2023). Turillazzi et al. worry that this might lead to a problem as content might be deleted too hastily after being reported which could lead to a gatekeeping function in a negative way as smaller or more diverse content might have a harder time staying online (Turillazzi et al., 2023). They continue stating that “writers, journalists, politicians, and, more generally, influencers should pay increased attention to the content they share online. They are the new ‘shareholders’ of the internet and, most importantly, of digital platforms” (Turillazzi et al., 2023, p. 94). This can be translated to all people with influence on social media giving them the responsibility to make sure the content they share and post is true and not harmful in any way. Looking at this DSA it is clear to see that it tries to improve the internet and protect users from illegal and harmful content, manipulation and data loss. As the DSA has only been fully effective since 2024 it has to be observed how useful it is and how it affects the internet and social media platforms in the future. One thing that can be noted is that the EU is currently stating a legal case against Meta, the mother firm of Facebook and Instagram (European Commission, 2024) which shows that the DSA is already in full use. For this dissertation, there is no more detailed information about the DSA but it is important to note

that it has been issued and is in full force and that it affects social media as platforms such as Instagram now have tighter regulations to follow which might lead to complications in the future about postings. The DSA has the chance to make the social media universe a safe space again. It can not only work to protect users from wrong information but can also help protect users from cyber bullying as well as working on creating a safer and more respectful environment on social media platforms. How and if this protection is possible and how the DSA can work once it is in full effect is something that has yet to be seen and be closely watched over the upcoming years.

3. Marketing and Activism – why simply selling a product is not enough

This chapter looks at the concept of activism in brands. Even though this dissertation is not about a classical organisational brand but a musician it is important to understand how activism works in a marketing and branding context as it has different aspect as classical activism in form of protests might have. Therefore, this chapter looks at brand activism but again treating the individual musician like a brand. Especially in today's world it is important to take a stand when it comes to certain issues of society. Whether these are social issues or environmental issues. This goes for politicians and musicians as well as for brands, companies and organisations. To understand the meaning of brand activism, this paper looks at the following definition. “[B]rand activism is defined as a communication strategy whose aim is to influence the citizen-consumer by means of messages and campaigns created and sustained by political values. As to its inner workings, it borrows from the campaigns of social movements, copying their aesthetics of authenticity [...]” (Manfredi-Sánchez, 2019, p. 348).

As we look at different brands it is visible that the advertising strategies of brands do not only focus on the products anymore but they have a deeper message and take a stand on social or political issues. The issues of which advertising touches on include, amongst others, feminism, equality, LGBTQ+ rights, environmental issues and support of immigrants (Manfredi-Sánchez, 2019). The issues included in brand activism and newer advertising strategies are described by Manfredi-Sánchez (2019) as “far removed from conventional issues” (p.344). This shows that brands do not advertise with the urge to change or influence

everyday politics but rather focus on big social issues which are important to a globalised world. “Globalisation has expanded markets and increased the demand for consumer goods and products” (Manfredi-Sánchez, 2019, p. 346). This underlines the need for brands to address political and social issues which affect and can therefore be understood by a broader, globalised consumer audience in order to reach a larger number of people. Trends in politics or in social issues can define the if, why and how brands react in an activist way (Manfredi-Sánchez, 2019). Staying out of an activist context might be the right way for some brands and it also might be something which is advised to artists. However, it is important to realise that today’s world expects brands to take a stand and to position themselves in order to show costumers that the brands care about different issues (Manfredi-Sánchez, 2019). This makes it hard to stay away from activist messages within the advertising industry as the brand can be received in a negative way for not positioning itself. The Edelman Trust Barometer from 2023 states that even though brands position themselves the general opinion is that businesses are not doing enough when it comes to environmental or social issues (Edelman, 2023). The report also shows that it is not only the brand in general which is expected to take a stand but also the CEOs showing that consumers do not want brands to follow trends but to really take a stand in social issues (Edelman, 2023). This takes the level of activism and trust to a more personal level as people expect individuals which are connected to a brand to take a stand as well. The next sections go into more detail about brand activism showing different ways in which this activism can happen and relating it to the rest of this literature review.

3.1 Activism and social responsibility – a change in marketing

Brand activism and social responsibility are related concepts (Wannow & Haupt, 2021). There are many different topics brands can position themselves in when it comes to brand activism. Even though this change in advertising can be difficult for some brands it is unavoidable for most. Brands might worry about taking a stand because they risk offending stakeholders (Moorman, 2020). This possible risk in brand activism is one which is recognised by different scholars throughout the field (see Moormann, 2020, and Wannow & Haupt, 2021). Wannow and Haupt conducted a study on consumer reactions (2021) and discovered that negative reactions are often the case when it comes to gender stereotypical related subject especially addressing male consumers. Their research has led to the conclusion that in cases like this the activist approach can be a lot more harmful to the brand

then helpful (Wannow & Haupt, 2021). This shows that there are also cases, campaigns or topics where taking a stand can be a rather risky thing to do and brands need to be careful with which topic they are working. However, this risk of having stakeholders who disagree is always a possible problem and different authors agree that activism and taking a stand in social issues is something which cannot be ignored by brands.

Consumers expect brands to position themselves and take a stand on important social or environmental issues (Zhou et al., 2024). This connects to the idea that “companies have an important responsibility to contribute to the world in which they operate” (Moorman, 2020, p. 389). This view is described by Moorman as one which is focused on stakeholders and includes more into a brands strategy than sale numbers. This highlights the need for corporate social responsibility urging brands to position themselves in important matters (Moorman, 2020). Apart from this corporate social responsibility aspect brand activism can function in different ways and be part of a brands advertising strategy for different reasons (Moorman, 2020). The different views Moorman lists on brand activism include a calculated view which uses activism in order to get a winning outcome, and education view, using the power and position of a brand to educate society, a cultural view which offers influential brands to educate on a cultural point of view and an authentic view from the brand itself meaning a brand should be connected with their activist messages in an authentic way (2020). There is also a political mission view which is linked to social change and can either be built up during the existence of a brand or be part of the brand from the beginning (Moorman, 2020). The last view introduced by Moorman (2020) is the “Employee engagement view” (p. 391) which aims at helping companies attract employees due to the brands activist positions. These different views presented by Moorman show how a change in advertising appears and what power can lie within a successful marketing strategy involving social, environmental or even political issues. This leads to the realisation that “[b]rand activism contributes to the design and implementation of new communication management strategies in society” (Manfredi-Sánchez, 2019, p. 356).

3.2 Different forms of brand activism

There are different ways in which this activism can take place. The last chapter also shows different reasons why brands engage with activist cases and how this can affect advertising.

Manfredi-Sánchez (2019) states in his definition of brand activism that brands copy aesthetics of social movements and borrowing their campaigns. He elaborates this by defining four different ways in which campaigns and social movements are being copied by brands (Manfredi-Sánchez, 2019). The first form of campaigns are the ones with “a symbolic character and value” (Manfredi-Sánchez, 2019, p. 348) which step away from products and service and rather focus on values such as reputation and status (Manfredi-Sánchez, 2019). This first possibility works with “cognitive and emotional values” (Manfredi-Sánchez, 2019, p. 348).

The second one mentioned in his paper Manfred-Sánchez defines as a “redefinition of politics far removed from conventional structures” (Manfredi-Sánchez, 2019, p. 348). These kinds of campaigns work with political issues that are far removed from favouring a specific party but are rather acknowledged as universally important (Manfredi-Sánchez, 2019). Issues for these campaigns are, amongst others, environmental protection or equality (Manfredi-Sánchez, 2019).

The third kinds of campaigns are those which are aiming at a huge international public and can therefore be seen as global campaigns (Manfredi-Sánchez, 2019). These are especially important for global brands and work closely together with the values portrayed by a global brand. Manfredi-Sánchez also states that these kinds of campaigns often work with third parties such as NGOs (2019).

The last sort of campaigns mentioned by Manfredi-Sánchez are the ones he calls hybrid (2019). Those campaigns focus strongly on digital aids as well as non-digital ones (Manfredi-Sánchez, 2019). These kinds of campaigns are discussed in more detail in the next chapter. Looking at these four different ways to do an activist campaign as a brand shows that there are a lot of possibilities to involve activism into the marketing and communication strategies of a brand. This also shows that activism can look very different depending on brand, issues, campaigns, reach or nationalities. It is of course important to note that these four different categories cannot be strictly separated but that they can work together and have similarities as well as crossovers. The next chapter takes a closer look at brand activism and its connection to the digital world, especially social media.

3.3 Activism on social media – how activism can work in a commercial and digital based world

The chapter above this one describes four different ways in which brand activism can take place. One of the mentioned formats is a hybrid one focusing on both digital and non-digital means. This combines the possibility of working with digital activism while also including both global but especially local languages or specialities into the campaigns (Manfredi-Sánchez, 2019). Strategies which are fully or at least partly rooted in a digital world have the possibility to react to trends, news or even moods within the digital context at an immense speed (Manfredi-Sánchez, 2019). Having the possibility to react this fast can help brands to stay relevant and react and interact with their followers. On the contrary, it also has the risk of provoking counter-campaigns or getting negative reactions (Manfredi-Sánchez, 2019).

Zhou et al. are stating the importance of social media in advertising strategies in their study as well. “[S]ocial activism and sociopolitical movements have been growing in influence on social media” (Zhou et al., 2024, p. 1). After consumers expressing their needs for brands to take a stand and speak out about social issues numerous brands have listened and positioned themselves in different topics of interest (Zhou et al., 2024). In order to do this, social media platforms have become a popular tool for publishing advertising campaigns as well as connecting to followers (Zhou et al., 2024). The authors criticise that social media is often used as a general term without differentiating between different social media platforms (Zhou et al., 2024). This is why the focus on different platforms and the message-platform relations. For this dissertation the focus is on the social media platform Instagram. Because of this the findings gained from the mentioned study are limited to the ones affecting the platform Instagram directly or platforms with similar concepts such as Pinterest or Snapchat.

The authors divide the different social media platforms in different purposes they fulfil giving Instagram the space for sharing lifestyle content while Twitter and Facebook are considered more political (Zhou et al., 2024). It is important for brands to understand the platforms they are working with and fit their advertising style in to the style the platform requires (Zhou et al., 2024). This helps consumers and followers to engage with the content as they receive advertising in a format which they expect on this platform and are therefore more open to engage with it (Zhou et al., 2024). In order to achieve this, brands have to adapt

their advertising strategies to different social media platforms and have campaigns which fit different platform formats while still being authentic (Zhou et al., 2024). If an ad fits the style of a platform the consumers are less likely to feel their flow of content gets interrupted helping the ad become part of their platform experience and brands might receive more positive feedback for it (Zhou et al., 2024). Zhou et al. (2019) state that the support of social media platform for brand activism advertising needs to be studied further in order to gain enough knowledge to use it in a helpful way. However, their findings did support their hypothesis that content which fits the style and content of a platform is received as less disturbing and therefore consumers and followers react to it in a more favourable way which increases the engagement rates for brands (Zhou et al., 2024).

Social media can also work as a place for activism for celebrities or influencers. The 2018 political statement made by Taylor Swift shows that (Nisbett & Schartel Dunn, 2019). The voting registration went up immensely after Swift taking a stand on the midterm election in the state of Tennessee (Nisbett & Schartel Dunn, 2019). The authors argue that it is the engagement and connectivity of social media paired with the narrative aspect of it which creates an environment of trust between celebrity and fans which can then lead to celebrities having input on social media (Nisbett & Schartel Dunn, 2019).

4. Glitter, Glamour and friendship bracelets – the phenomenon of Taylor Swift

This third literature review chapter focuses on Taylor Swift as an artist. To understand her as a person and as an artist, there are different sections. The first focuses on her background and the history of her success, understanding how her personal life matches with the different steps of her success. This chapter also has a section introducing the change in her music and in her social media communication towards a more activist way of communicating. The second section looks at her fanbase, the so-called Swifties, including information about the current *Eras Tour*. The last subsection of this chapter then looks deeper into the connection between her and her fans, as well as the way she communicates with her fanbase.

4.1 Who is Taylor Swift – background and history of her success

This section looks at the singer and songwriter Taylor Swift and the brand and enthusiasm that comes with it. The focus lies especially on the currently ongoing *Eras Tour*

but also gives an overview of the history of the person Taylor Swift and her success. Taylor Swift is known as one of the most successful singer-songwriters in the world right now and has a remarkable influence (Théberge, 2021). The American superstar manages to sell millions of copies of actual CDs in an age when music sales are more often happening on streaming platforms than in a physical form (Théberge, 2021). The singer was born on December 13th, 1989 (Summer, 2024). She starts taking singing lessons by the age of nine (Summer, 2024). Swift's parents have been supporting supported the star from a young age by moving the family to Nashville, the centre of country music, to give her a chance to thrive in the business (Théberge, 2021). At 14, the young singer had a "one-year artist development contract with RCA Records" (Théberge, 2021, p. 45). A year later Swift had signed a contract with producer Scott Borchetta (Théberge, 2021). In 2010, the artist received a Grammy for Album of the Year for her second studio album *Fearless*, making her the youngest artist to receive this award (Théberge, 2021). Gaining critic about her not writing her own songs the singer then dropped her next album *Speak now* which she has written on her own, showing critics that she does in fact write her own music (Glasenapp, 2024). Her third album was also the one with which she changed direction, leaving her country roots behind and steering into a pop music direction (Glasenapp, 2024). It was also the album which started to enter real people and more advanced and grown-up relationships as an inspiration for her lyrics compared to the more innocent and dreamy love songs on *Taylor Swift* and *Fearless* (Glasenapp, 2024). Her album *Red* worked further on building a bridge from her former music towards a newer style in the pop genre of music (Glasenapp, 2024). Her next album, 1989, is the one fully introducing Swift in the pop genre (Glasenapp, 2024). It also connects to her real life as the album musically celebrates a new beginning, and a change of location and direction while the real-life Taylor Swift was also entering a new era and moving to New York City (Glasenapp, 2024). As it is publicly known that Swift uses her real-life relationship experiences and works them into her songs, the knowledge of her connecting her real-life move with a change in genre music wise as well as having a song called "Welcome to New York" on this album shows how tightly her life and her music are intertwined, and how her fans can not only find their own lives in her music, but can also understand and follow her life within her music (Glasenapp, 2024). A public feud with rapper Kanye West, which is explained in more detail in a later section, led to Swift receiving a lot of hate comments from both fans on social media and public media, which led to her disappearing for a year (Wilson,

2020). When she re-entered the music world the singer dropped a new album named *reputation* which gave her music a new direction and finally “killed” the good girl country image she used to have, completely leading her into an era of a grown-up singer (Summer, 2024). The album, however, has not been seen as popular as her other ones, and even her own fans were left rather disappointed (Glasenapp, 2024). Her next album *Lover* is an album on which Swift does not primarily focus on her own life through relationships, or on the public fight the *reputation* album was about. It is, however, the first album on which she takes a stand politically, including songs with a feminist message as well as songs supporting the queer community (Glasenapp, 2024). The next two albums *folklore* and *evermore* can be named together as they dropped with a gap of four and a half months (Glasenapp, 2024). Both albums went to number one in the Billboard charts granting Swift a mention in the Guinness Book of World Records, as it was the shortest time gap for two (female) number one albums (Glasenapp, 2024). Both albums were recorded and released during the COVID-19 pandemic, meaning they were recorded under social distancing rules (Glasenapp, 2024). The albums also show another side of Swift’s songwriting talent. In both albums Swift takes a step back from telling her own stories and starts to function as the author of new stories, creating her own short stories, both fictional and true or partly true within her songs (Glasenapp, 2024). Swift herself explains that *folklore* was the first album where she felt like she did not have to stick to her own experiences or feelings to write songs (Swift, 2020). The album portrays a teenage love triangle having different points of view and as that working together as a whole story (Swift, 2020). With *Midnights* the artists broke yet another record having 10 of her 13 songs on the album listed in the places one to ten on the Billboard Hot 100 List (Glasenapp, 2024). Her newest album *Tortured Poet Department* dropped during the *Eras Tour* and ended up becoming part of the show as well as surprisingly being a double album (Rosenbloom, 2024a). This journey through Swift’s musical evolution shows how the artist grew and changed throughout her life, and how that has been adapted in her music. It also proves that Swift has managed to not only stay relevant over the time of her career, but to actually manage to break record after record and win prize after prize with her albums. The artist is now 34 years old and has eleven published albums (Borcholte et al., 2024). Swift was the most streamed artist on both *Spotify* and *Apple Music* in 2023 as well as the most streamed female artist in the history of *Apple Music* (TIME, 2023).

Apart from her music Swift has won other prizes and was given more honours. In 2017 she was on the cover of *Time Magazine*'s "Person of the Year" cover (Glasenapp, 2024). This honour is discussed in more detail in the next chapter, as well as the activist Taylor Swift. In 2019 Swift won the first ever Billboard "Woman of the Decade Award" (Glasenapp, 2024, p.76) and in 2022 the artist was given an honorary doctor degree by New York University (Glasenapp, 2024). *Time Magazine* has named Swift their Person of the Year in 2023 (TIME, 2023).

4.1.1 Taylor fights back – a change of direction towards a more activist communication style

In 2015 Taylor took a stand for artists around the world by publicly fighting Apple Music less for her own rights, and more for using her position, power and voice to help those smaller or younger artists who do not have as much influence (Glasenapp, 2024 and BBC, 2015). The problem was that Apple Music wanted artists to give their music for free, for three trial months before receiving any payment for it (Glasenapp, 2024). Swift wrote a public letter to Apple Music criticising this, stating that it was at no point the right of Apple to request the work of artists for free (Glasenapp, 2024). Her protest was successful, and Apple dropped the three-month rule paying artists straight from the beginning (Glasenapp, 2024 and BBC, 2015). This is only one of the examples where Taylor fought not only for herself but also for those who might not have it as easy to fight and to be seen and heard.

Swift has gone through a legal fight with her former label in 2019, concerning the rights to her own music, which led to her re-recording the songs and publishing them in albums titled (*Taylor's Version*) (Théberge, 2021). It is important to note that these re-recordings did not mean Swift was trying to change or improve her songs but rather tried sticking as close to the original versions as possible (Glasenapp, 2024). Glasenapp (2024) underlines one thing which goes for most things concerning Swift which is that she succeeds with many things not only because she is a great artist but also because she has an incredibly loyal fanbase. This also goes for her re-recordings, as her fans were the ones switching to the new versions to fully support their idol (Glasenapp, 2024). Swift is portrayed as the one artist having a lot of control over what is going on and the creative lead in her song writing process (Théberge, 2021). This is especially unusual for young female artists in the business (Théberge, 2021) and can therefore be seen as something which underlines her feminist approach, and give young fans the possibility to look up at her.

After winning a sexual assault lawsuit and speaking out for the democratic party in the 2018 midterm elections, for LGBTQ+ rights and women's rights, the singer started to use her reach and popularity for other cases than music (Wilson, 2020). The lawsuit in question was against radio DJ David Mueller who groped her during a Meet and Greet in 2013 (Glasenapp, 2024, p. 74). Swift only sued for one dollar taking a stand for feminism, rather than getting money out of a lawsuit (Glasenapp, 2024). As with the Apple Music case, it can be seen once again that Swift uses her influence, voice and power to help those who are not as powerful and heard as she is. This lawsuit helped her be part of the earlier mentioned Time Magazine "Person of the Year" edition, which in 2017 portrayed people supporting the #MeToo movement (Glasenapp, 2024).

Before 2018 Taylor Swift was not known as a celebrity who would publicly share political opinions, or offer statements on political issues in any way (Glasenapp, 2024). This however changed during the 2018 midterm elections when "Taylor Swift made national news by posting a political statement on Instagram endorsing candidates in her home state of Tennessee and encouraging her 112 million followers to register and vote nationwide" (Nisbett & Schartel Dunn, 2019). In her documentary *Miss Americana*, the artist shows her struggle with releasing this political statement, even though everyone advised against it (Wilson, 2020). The struggle she explains is going from the picture-perfect good girl which she was shaped to be, to a young woman who not only has an opinion but is entitled to speak out for what she stands for (Wilson, 2020). This fits into the cases of speaking out for others and being strong and loud for those who might not have it as easy to be heard. Swift mentions that she has long supported women and the queer community and could not stay silent any longer when those communities were so directly threatened by the midterm elections (Wilson, 2020).

This change was also visible in her music, which followed after this first political statement, as songs like *The Man* had more critical lyrics towards society, especially feminism, than earlier songs about heartbreak used to have (Wilson, 2020). The album *Lover* in general is one which speaks a lot more about social issues through the music than her albums before that (Glasenapp, 2024). Glasenapp (2024) analyses how *The Man* supports feminism, and highlights the inequality between men and women. The song might even be a hint to the music industry, which tends to credit men more for their song writing than women, something which Swift herself had to fight against and suffer through (Nisbett &

Schartel Dunn, 2019). Other songs on the album support the queer community (*You Need to Calm Down*) or draw attention to the change in the political climate in the US (*Miss Americana & the Heartbreak Prince*) (Glasenapp, 2024). This shows the change in her music after speaking out in public on a political matter for the first time, in 2018, as it clearly shows that she becomes more confident in addressing social problems with her songs as well.

A recent posting of Swift concerning the 2024 US election shows this activist side of her again. After the TV duel between presidential candidates Donald Trump and Kamala Harris the singer posted a statement on Instagram, stating her support for Harris, and her Vice President Walz, and informing her followers of her reasons to vote for Harris as well as telling them to do their own research and reminding, especially her young followers, to register to vote in the presidential election in November (Swift, 2024b). The artist then also used her speech after receiving an award at the American Music Awards (VMAs) in 2024 to address her fans and everyone listening, reminding them to register to vote for the upcoming presidential elections (Ray, 2024). This shows that she has now entered an era where she openly shares her opinion on social media and takes a stand even in political matters.

Please see appendix N for the posting.

4.2 Taylor Swift the best friend of millions – how her communication works

The brand around Taylor Swift can be seen as emotional, which becomes very clear when looking at her current *Eras Tour* which is filled with glitter, tears and friendship bracelets (TIME, 2023 and Glasenapp, 2024). The German news magazine *Der Spiegel* [The Mirror] calls her “the American Friend” [Die Amerikanische Freundin] (Borcholte et al., 2024). This headline already suggests a closeness between the singer and her fans, as a friend figure is a lot closer than a star–fan dynamic usually is. The authors continue to state what it is that makes Swift appear as a friend: her music (Borcholte et al., 2024). The songs she writes are about togetherness and friendship (Borcholte et al., 2024). Swift uses social media to reach and connect fans and it can be seen as a successful way of connecting (Théberge, 2021). One part of this connective communication is the main message Swift gives her fans in everything she says; the message that she is one of them, that she is not some far away untouchable superstar, but that she is a young woman growing up and struggling through different stages of life just like her listeners (Glasenapp, 2024).

When it comes to her music and what she sells, the artist offers a deep insight into her world, her feelings and her journey of growing up (Wilson, 2020). This can be seen in songs being written about relationships, breakups and the ups and downs of growing up which have been written by the artist herself, from a very young age on, and feature elements of her diaries throughout the years making her music authentic and personal (Wilson, 2020). In 2020 the singer-songwriter published a documentary about her life. In *Miss Americana* she gives her fans a chance to get an insight into her song writing processes, her life and her emotions (Wilson, 2020). This leads to showing the hurt she felt throughout the feud with Kanye West and also gives an insight on how she changed from not having a public opinion about anything to speaking out, and becoming more and more politically (Wilson, 2020). In this documentary the singer speaks openly about her career and shows more private video material (Wilson, 2020). Forbes magazine supports this closeness with her fans stating that the artist covers relatable topics such as her own struggles with relationships and love in her songs (Fitzgerald, 2024).

Her documentary goes as far as allowing people to see the struggle the success has brought for Swift, as the singer openly talks about her eating disorder and how she has struggled with herself, her image and changing her music style throughout the years (Wilson, 2020). It is not only an open insight into the artist's life it also shows, like music does, struggles her fans can understand and identify with (Wilson, 2020 and Borcholte et al., 2024). It is a close connection the superstar establishes with her fans giving them the opportunity to see who she is and how she feels, while also remaining a very private person, controlling very tightly what she shows the world about herself (Borcholte et al., 2024). The singer offers her fans a real person dealing with real problems and sharing them like one would share them with friends (Glasenapp, 2024). Glasenapp (2024) describes this closeness as a phenomenon known for ancient heroes or in this case heroines. He argues that Swift gives the fans enough distance and stardom so they can look up to her and see her as their idol, but she also stays humble and close enough to them, singing about her life and her problems, giving the fans the opportunity to identify with her and see her as one of them (Glasenapp, 2024).

One thing fans appreciate about their idol is her dorkiness which has become part of her image, and makes her even more approachable for her fans and followers (Lewis, 2024). The dorkiness mentioned in this article can be found in her music but especially in her music videos and dancing styles (Lewis, 2024). Taylor Swift herself uses criticism against her and

who she is as an artist, and hints at this criticism in her songs which can be seen in examples like *Clara Bow* where she ironically mentions that a new starlet has an edge, she herself never had (Lewis, 2024). According to Lewis (2024) it is this ironic way of making fun of herself as well as her dorkiness, and her being considered cringe in various occasions which makes her relatable for her fans, and makes it easier for fans to identify with their idol and see themselves in her (Lewis, 2024). One specific example for her dorkiness is the music video to *Shake it Off* where Swift constantly puts herself in situations where she shows that she can in fact not dance (Glasenapp, 2024). Instead of feeling awkward about it she fully embraces the fun she is having even though what she is doing is not perfect (Glasenapp, 2024). It is this self-humour which makes the artist relatable, and her fans identify with her, and which gives urges Glasenapp to give her the title “Dork not Diva” (p. 98).

Théberge (2021) describes the range of the success Swift has with the example of her mobilising her fans via social media to address Scott Borchetta (her former producer) and Scooter Braun negatively about the way they have treated her, and she succeeded greatly with it. This shows the power Swift holds when it comes to connecting with her fans showing clearly how far fans would go to help and support their idol as the messages went as far as death threats (Théberge, 2021). The connection and bond between Swift and her fans have proven to be a powerful source for change and action (Théberge, 2021). This can also be seen when it comes to the hate ex-boyfriends of the artist have to suffer through by the fans when Swift releases new songs about them and their relationships (Glasenapp, 2024).

4.3 Easter Eggs, Track 5 and Queen of Strategy – Taylor Swift as a *Mastermind*³ and her *Swifties* as detectives

The last section has shown that the connection between the artist Taylor Swift and her fans (*Swifties*) is a very strong and a very special one. *Swifties* do not only appreciate the music Swift produces but also the strategy behind her marketing, her music and how it is all connected. According to Glasenapp one of these strategies is the famous track five on Swift’s albums (2024). According to the author the fans were the ones discovering the importance of this track as being the most personal or meaningful on each album (Glasenapp, 2024). He goes as far as stating that the fans have discovered this before Swift herself has started to fill this number on the track list with meaningful titles on purpose (Glasenapp, 2024). In her

³ (Swift, 2022b)

album documentary *folklore: the long pond studio session* the artists herself talks about the importance of track number 5 on each album and the difficulty of picking it for *folklore* (Swift, 2020a). She mentions that the decision of picking the fifth track on an album is connected to a lot of pressure (Swift, 2020a). For the *folklore* album track five is a song written only by Swift herself, called *my tears ricochet* (Swift, 2020b) which she describes as one of the “saddest songs on the album” (Swift, 2020a, min. 00:026:55 - 00:26:57) talking about how your best friend can turn into your worst enemy (Swift, 2020a). This shows how strongly Swift herself feels about the famous fifth track on her albums, and how much planning and consideration goes into picking this specific song. This shows one part of the strategist Swift behind her brand and everything she decides to show to the outside. It can be noted here that it was track five on her *Midnights* album, called *You’re On Your Own Kid* which holds the line “so make the friendship bracelets, take the moment and taste it” (Swift, 2022a) which encouraged fans to make friendship bracelets and trade them at concerts.

Another part of Swift’s well planned and executed strategy is the hiding of easter eggs in everything she does, giving her fans the opportunity to find them and keeping up the engagement with her fans (Glasenapp, 2024). These easter eggs can be hidden in clothing, speeches, performances, interviews, music videos and of course the songs themselves (Glasenapp, 2024). Swift makes no secret about hiding these easter eggs for her fans to find. At an appearance on “The Tonight Show” with Jimmy Fallon she talks about her *Midnight* album and mentions that she has a PDF file for easter eggs just for the music video for *Bejeweled* alone (Fallon, 2022, min. 00:20:37 – 00:20:46). It is then the work of her fans to unpack and find all the easter eggs given in not only this music video, but in everything she does which leads to a constant engagement she has with her fans. Glasenapp (2024) describes these easter eggs as an important marketing tool for Swift as it gives her the chance to constantly keep the engagement rate of her fans, high as well as directing them back and forth between songs, videos and interviews as they figure out the meanings behind different hints.

This section showed on one hand the evolution of Taylor Swift and gave some background on her life and career. On the other hand, it showed two of the most important things when it comes to Taylor Swift and her marketing success: engagement and connectivity. Swift seems to be the friend of all her followers and fans, giving them a chance to find themselves in her music and identify with her. She also manages to keep everyone on

their toes and engaged with the music and her as a person by constantly dropping new hints and easter eggs for fans to find, discover and unmask.

5. Connecting what we already know – a summary of the literature review

This literature review consists of five different chapters. While the first four chapters introduce the main topics rhetoric, storytelling and social media, activism, and of course Taylor Swift this last chapter aims to connect the former chapters and help the reader gain an overview of the content introduced in the last chapters. The first chapter introduces the ancient art of rhetoric following the rhetorical understandings of the Geek scholar Aristotle. The main learnings from each chapter are summarised and then connected to give the reader a short overview before the methodology.

5.1 Rhetoric

For the Greek scholar Aristotle pathos is one of the three artificial means of giving a speech. Pathos aims at creating an emotional setting for the audience which defines the starting mood for delivering a speech (Aristotle & Gernot Krapinger, 2018). With this the rhetor hopes to persuade the audience more successful as they are in a state of emotions which makes them open to receive the information and arguments given in the speech. The important thing to note here is that this emotional state must be created through the art of speaking by the rhetor (Aristotle & Gernot Krapinger, 2018). Pathos is used in the modern world of communication not only in the spoken form but also in a visual and written way (Bonet & Sauquet, 2010). This modern use is expanded to the use on social media as well (Panigyraakis et al., 2019).

5.2 Social Media and Storytelling

The second chapter focuses on storytelling and social media. It introduced the concept of multimodality and showed how it is important for different platforms in the face of a communication and marketing strategy. In the light of social media this dissertation focuses on the platform Instagram. Instagram as a platform was introduced and explained further when it came to the part of connecting with fans and followers through it (Ebersbach et al., 2016 and Vero, 2021). Instagram can be used to bridge a gap between artist and fans. One of the most important values for social media is trust and the feeling of connection

(Dijk & Poell, 2013). Another concept which was introduced in the chapter was storytelling. First, the general concept of storytelling was introduced showing that a good story has to fulfil certain requirements such as setting a place, characters and a plot (Houghton, 2021). It also taught us that storytelling can be used to connect people (Aimé, 2021). Secondly, the subchapter about storytelling in (pop) music was introduced. Here it became clear that stories in songs are often a combination of what the artists tell their fans and the very personal individual interpretation by the fans. It also showed that it is not necessarily the lyrics but also the melody and the obligation of having the narrative sung which really shapes and transports the story (Bradley, 2017).

5.3 Activism

Brand activism focuses on brands or people taking a stand in political, social or environmental issues. Activism can be seen in different forms and can happen both online as well as offline. It is important to note that brands usually follow activist trends that arise in society such as feminism or the LGBTQ+ movement (Manfredi-Sánchez, 2019). Positioning themselves as brands or in this case as a person helps followers, fans and consumers to connect the position to their own identity. People often expect others to take a stand and position themselves especially when it comes to social issues (Zhou et al., 2024). Social media can offer the chance to react instantly to new trends and to reach a lot of people globally in a very short amount of time (Zhou et al., 2024). The downside is that social media also offers a place for instant criticism and counter postings.

5.4 Taylor Swift

Taylor Swift as an artist has gone through a diverse musical spectrum having produced eleven studio albums at the age of 34 (Borcholte et al., 2024). The artist is known for having a huge and loyal fanbase which supports her idol and fights for her as it has been seen at various occasions (Glasenapp, 2024). Swift has changed from light-hearted happy endings to teenage love stories to more grown-up lyrics talking about love, loss and friendships. From the year 2018 onwards Swift has also been known to be more politically forward in her opinion, as well as in her songs (Wilson, 2020). But even before that she has been known for speaking up for those who might not have a voice loud enough to be heard. In her communication she appears to be close to her fans giving them the possibility to identify with her songs and her life as well as interpret the songs in a way they fit their own lives and experiences. Swift is known to be a successful strategist and planning her releases

as well as her hints and easter eggs very carefully leading to a constant engagement of her fanbase (Glasenapp, 2024). She is also known for keeping a close connection with her fans giving them the opportunity to understand her emotions as well as offering them a room for their own emotions.

6. Conceptual Framework

Now the question is how all of this can be connected. To put in Taylor Swift's own words in her song *So High School*: "You know how to ball I know Aristotle" (Swift, 2024a). This already shows that the Greek scholar is a relevant character in today's communication processes and goes as far as being an inspiration for songwriting. The emotional connection between an audience and a speaker which is created via Aristotle's pathos can be found in modern communication and song writing as well as in ancient speeches. Swift herself uses emotions in her songs which are not only felt by her, but which give her fans and listeners an opportunity to fill gap, identify with the artist and project the songs and lyrics to their own experiences and lives. When it comes to activism and taking a stand the emotional aspect can still be found as it is not only the artists personal agenda to speak up for herself, but to shed light on social injustice and on problems which concern a broader audience. When it comes to activism and taking a stand it does not matter whether it is in a social, political or environmental matter. And just like the emotional aspect is important brands and artists have to engage with their consumers, fans and followers in order to be successful. They create an identity which helps consumers identify themselves with and find themselves, their views and beliefs in this brand or artist. "Branding utilizes techniques of persuasion to make the brand become a seamless part of individuals' everyday lives" (Murray, 2013, p. 87). This statement underlines the role rhetoric plays in marketing as persuasion is the main goal rhetoric is trying to achieve. The importance of social media or the possibilities social media can offer are presented. Having Instagram as a social media platform can offer a chance to create emotionally filled content as well as activist content while staying in a direct dialogue with fans and followers. One tool described not only for social media but also for song writing and communication in general is the concept of storytelling. It offers the listener the chance to engage with the story and find themselves in it while also being fully emerged and engaged in it. Emotions and the ability to connect with

fans and followers are two very important subjects for marketing strategies and there are different ways on how to achieve these connections.

This model shows the connections of the different concepts within this study

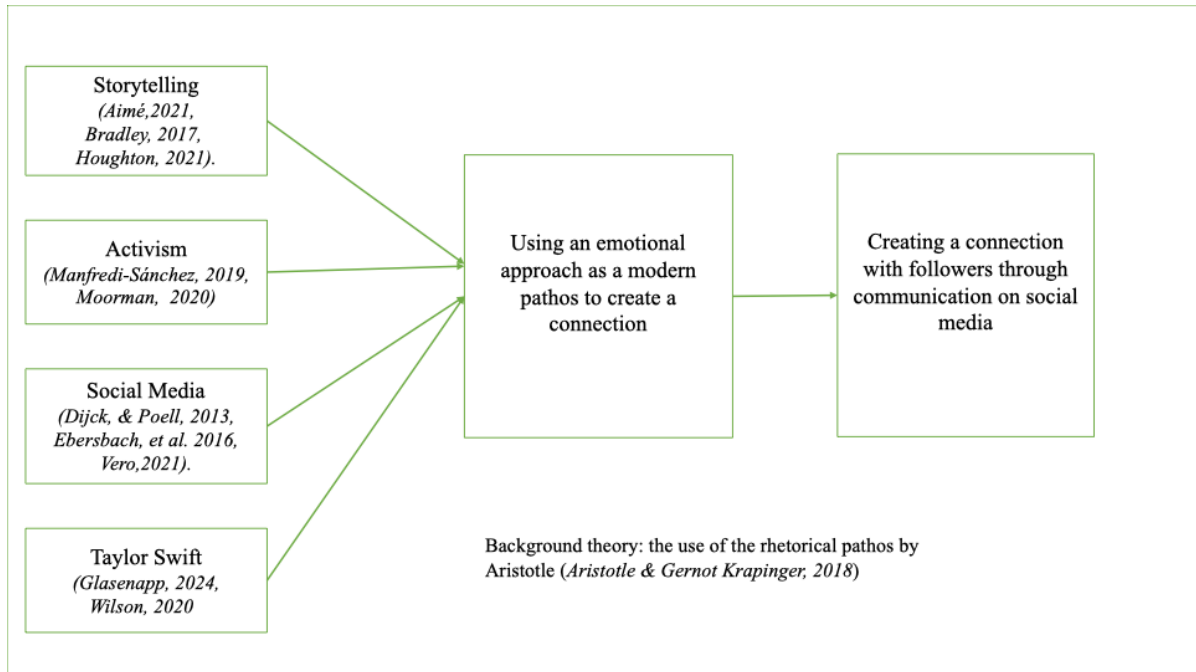


Figure 1: *Conceptual Model*

Part II – Empirical Study

1. Methodology

1.1 Research Relevance

This dissertation uses a qualitative approach to answer the research question: *How does Taylor Swift use pathos in social media as well as in her music, as a strategy to achieve an emotional connection with her followers and fans? How does activism play a part in her music and her strategy?*

As introduced in the literature review pathos is a rhetorical tool to evoke emotions in an audience. To understand this emotional approach, this dissertation uses a qualitative approach, in a multimethod design, including content analysis as well as semi-structured interviews. This empirical part is crucial to understand the literature better and in order to not only get a theoretical insight into the use of pathos and activism on Instagram and in music but also understand how people react to this emotional approach and how strongly it can be found within the phenomenon of Taylor Swift. The study is held in a qualitative design to achieve insight into the emotional reactions of people to Taylor Swift, as well as understanding concepts such as storytelling or the use of pathos in marketing from a professional point of view. The research question urges a qualitative approach to capture the nuances and diverse explanations to link the concepts at stake.

The methodology for this dissertation consists of a combination of two different qualitative research approaches. The first one is a detailed content analysis which is then supported by semi-structured interviews. The content analysis looks at an Instagram post from @taylornation as well as one from Taylor Swift herself. The analysis also looks at the music of Taylor Swift comparing the communication within an earlier song as well as one from a later album. The semi-structured interviews are held with an advertising agency to get a deeper insight into the concept of storytelling, as well as with Taylor Swift fans and one non-fan. These interviews are then used to accompany the content analysis. The interview guide for both the agency as well as the Taylor Swift connected interviews is explained in detail in the next section.

1.2 Research Question and Research Objectives

This dissertation looks at the communication of Taylor Swift and how she uses emotions and storytelling in her communication strategy to connect with her fans and followers via social media as well as through her music. The main theory standing behind this dissertation is the use of pathos in a rhetorical sense introduced by Aristotle. The

dissertation looks at the following research question *How does Taylor Swift use pathos in social media as well as in her music as a strategy to achieve an emotional connection with her followers and fans? How does activism play a part in her music and her strategy?*

To answer this question, three research objectives are presented:

1. Recognise if and how emotions and activism are used in Taylor Swift's music and self-presentation
2. Understand if and how emotions and activism are an active part of a social media strategy
3. Explore how fans and followers react to an emotional strategy and how they see the connection to Taylor Swift.

The next section introduces the research design for this paper.

1.3 Research Design – Content analysis and semi-structured interviews

The research design for this study consists of semi-structured interviews and a content analysis. This method was chosen to guarantee in depth answers, and to get an insight into the participants opinions, experiences and emotions with the introduced topic of this research. The content analysis was picked to offer the researcher the chance to get a deep, analytical insight into both songs of the artist as well as postings on Instagram. Combining these two gives the opportunity to combine the researcher's analysis with reaction of the interview participants and connect the analytical side with the side of the recipient.

The questions are built in an open question concept leaving enough room for the interviewee to explain their point and get new and interesting information which can be elaborated throughout the interview (Adeoye-Olatunde & Olenik, 2021). The interview guide also includes follow-up questions to get deeper insights to addressed topics (Adeoye-Olatunde & Olenik, 2021). As advised in literature about creating an interview guide for semi-structured interviews, it is only a help for the interviewer to keep on track of the interview but allows room for the interviewee to offer personal insights and for the interviewer to be able to not strictly follow the guide but engage with the interviewee (Adeoye-Olatunde & Olenik, 2021). The first interview guide is addressing someone from an advertising agency. The topics of this interview guide are structured as following:

Storytelling: Understanding the use of storytelling in an agency surrounding and focusing on important aspects to make storytelling a successful tool in marketing.

Activism: Aims at understanding how brands use activism and what needs to be considered to successfully build a campaign around activism.

Advertising: Understanding the difference between a brand and a personal brand and how these two advertising strategies differ.

Rhetoric: Asking the interviewee about the direct connection between Aristotle's rhetoric and modern marketing strategies.

Taylor Swift: Understanding the success of Taylor Swift from a marketing point of view.

Instagram: This part of the interview guide aims at understanding the power and use of Instagram and how different concepts can be found on this platform. It also looks at important aspects for using the platform as a marketing tool.

The second interview guide aims at both Taylor Swift fans and a non-fan who did see the *Eras Tour*. Both of these perspectives (fan and non-fan) get the same interview questions as this offers the chance to get an insight in how Taylor Swift is seen from different points of view and offers better groundwork for comparison. This is the structure of the second interview guide:

Being a fan: This aims at understanding how participants became a fan or how they know about Taylor Swift.

The Eras Tour: Understanding both memorable moments of the tour as well as feelings arising because of the tour or those connected to it.

Emotional connection: This part aims at understanding what emotions are connected to Taylor Swift and her songs and work.

Swift's success: This section aims at differences to other celebrities in order to understand why she is so successful and how this success can be seen and is analysed by fans and non-fans.

Identification: This aims at understanding in which way and to what amount people can identify with the artist.

Marketing and the name Taylor Swift: This section aims at understanding other references people have when it comes to Taylor Swift apart from her music as well as seeing the marketing part of Taylor Swift and how people resonate with it.

Instagram: This last section helps to understand the role Instagram plays for Taylor Swift and her fans as well as her non-fans.

For all of these topics different questions were provided. Both interview guides included one last open question to give the interviewee the chance to point out things they find specifically important but were not asked about.

This open question can be found in the appendixes A-F as the last question.

1.4 Interview Participants and additional Information

The participants for these interviews were collected via direct request, as well as call to action on Instagram on the researcher’s Instagram story. The agency member was contacted via email and asked for availability and willingness to participate in this study. The other participants contacted the researcher after the Instagram story was uploaded and offered their time to participate in the interviews. The semi-structured interviews were held with the help of two interview guides. The first one was applied only to the agency member while the second one was applied to Taylor Swift fans as well as the non-Taylor Swift fan. Table 1 shows the conducted interviews and gives information about duration and dates of the interviews.

R	Code	Name	Interview Duration	Interview Date	Information
1	A1	Agency member	30:32	22.07.2024	Appendix A/B Interview 1
2	NF1	Non-Taylor Swift Fan	23:07	11.08.2024	Appendix C Interview 2
3	F1	Taylor Swift Fan 1	44:46	26.08.2024	Appendix D Interview 3
4	F2	Taylor Swift Fan 2	15:35	29.08.2024	Appendix E Interview 4
5	F3	Taylor Swift Fan 3	19:45	06.09.2024	Appendix F Interview 5

Table 1: Details of interviews conducted

In total, there were five interviews held for this study. Two of them were held in an offline setting and the other three were held online via a video call. One participant is part of an advertising agency, three are Taylor Swift fans and one is not a Taylor Swift fan but went to see the *Eras Tour*. The interviews were held with individuals in a one-on-one setting. All interviewees were informed about the interviews and participated in them willingly and anonymously. They all gave their consent for an audio recording of the interviews. The interviews were held in a time frame between the 22nd of July and the 6th of September. The long-time frame can be explained due to the availability of the participants.

For the informed consent letter, the participants were sent please see appendix K.

1.5 Data Collection Procedures

All the interviews were held face-to-face. While participants and researcher are not all in the same country three of the interviews were held with the help of a video call. The other two interviews were held in in presence as both participants and the researcher were in the same place. One of the interviews was held in German while the other four were held in English.

The audio of the interviews was recorded to help the researcher transcribe them and give the opportunity to focus on the participant in the process of the interview. The interviews were held in a conversation format, giving the researcher the opportunity to ask follow-up questions and making the interview situation more natural for the participants. The interviews were transcribed using the transcription tool on *Word online* and individually checked and edited by the researcher. The German interview was translated by the researcher.

Please see appendix A for the original version and appendix B for the translation.

1.6 Data Analysis Procedures

After transcription the data was coded with the help of the theoretical approach of the conceptual model.

For the data analysis of the transcribed interviews a thematic analysis was used (Christou, 2022). The interviews were coded manually by the researcher. The thematic analysis was chosen to give the researcher the chance to find themes within the conducted

data and interpret the interviews in depth (Christou, 2022). Even though the interviews were held via the help of two different interview guides they were coded with the help of the same coding book. This ensured for the researcher to discover themes which combine both the fan perspective as well as the professional marketing perspective. The coding was done using different colours for different themes.

The aim of the researcher was to find patterns in the participant's answers and to group those into themes (Christou, 2022). For the coding and themes a codebook was designed. For this research eight themes were discovered. The coded parts of the interviews were then summarised in an overview with the different themes.

Please see appendix G for the code book.

Please see appendix H for the summary of the coded interviews.

For the complete coded interviews please see appendixes B to F.

1.7 Ethical Considerations

The participants agreed to the interviews willingly and gave their informed consent for audio recordings. The researcher made strong efforts to always stay objective and ensure the participants anonymity. The questions were asked in an open format giving participants the opportunity to ask freely without being steered into a certain direction by the researcher.

1.8 Content analysis

Bradley (2017) states that if we look at songs in an analytical way it is important to include emotions into this analysis as songs work with emotions. With this in mind this analysis looks at two songs as well as an Instagram post of both Taylor Swift herself and one from the official account @taylornation. The two chosen songs *Love Story* and *The Man* show a variety of the artist's work. They have been chosen because the songs *Love Story* represents an early era of the artist and is a popular song of a younger Taylor Swift. The second song *The Man* represents an older artist and gives an insight into the more activist music of the adult Taylor Swift. The posting by @taylornation highlights the aspect of connection with the fans and was chosen to get a deeper insight to the emotional connection. As a second post the one by @taylorswift after the European leg of the Eras Tour gives an important recent statement of the singer that connects to the interviews. It also offers a chance to see a direct message from the artist to the fans. The content analysis helps the researcher to get a deeper insight into already given content. The postings and song including

the music videos were analysed by the researcher herself. After analysing the content these analyses have been coded and grouped into themes which match the themes of the interview code book (see appendix G for the code book). This coding strategy after Christou (2022) helps the researcher to find similarities between the content created by the artist and the interviews with participants who are receiving the artist's content. A summary of the coded content analysis can be found in appendix I. The colour codes are already in the content analysis, but the different quotes have been grouped together in the appendix.

1.8.1 From sweet princess storytelling to taking a stand for feminism – a comparing analysis of Taylor Swift's "Love Story" vs. "The Man"

The two songs which are analysed in this section are the ones called "Love Story" and "The Man". The songs have been released on the albums *Fearless* in 2008 and *Lover* in 2019 (Fitzgerald, 2024). Those eleven years between the two released albums and the songs released with them can be found in the music itself as Taylor Swift changes as an artist, as well as a person in general. Looking at her music style the earlier albums released by the artist have been country albums as the young Taylor Swift started making a name for herself in the world of country music (Fitzgerald, 2024 and Wilson, 2020). During her career, she shifted from country music to pop music making her *Lover* album one of her pop music albums (Fitzgerald, 2024). Her documentary *Miss Americana* which offers fans an exclusive insight into her work as well as into her personal life and her journey as both an artist and an individual underlines those changes. The artist states that in 2018 during the midterm election she understood that she could not claim to be one the side of women and on members of the LGBTQ+ community but never actually speak out about it in her songs which then led her to become more activist in both personal life and work life (Wilson, 2020).

1.8.1.1 Taylor Swift and Shakespeare – "It's a love story, baby just say yes"⁴

There is probably no story in the world that has been used as much in pop culture as Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* has. Taylor Swift uses this well-known story in one of her songs and gives it not only a more modern adaptation but also changes the ending. The ending of the Shakespearian version is well-known leaving both of the lovers to die for their love ending a romantic story in a tragedy (Shakespeare, 1597). Taylor Swift changed the ending for the song and her music video which has been dropped in 2009 to one which fits

⁴ (Swift, 2009).

into the early stages of her career; the sweet, innocent happy ending where two lovers find each other, get married and live happily ever after (Swift, 2009). The early eras of Taylor Swift portray a young artist who was working hard to stay true to her sweet country girl image singing out of her diary and talking about topics that teenagers are concerned about: friendship, school and ... relationships. Having these topics offer the perfect stage for one of the biggest and most well-known love stories of all time: *Romeo and Juliet*.

Taylor's version of the famous story offers something the original one does not provide: a happy ending. Romeo talking to Juliet's father and in the end proposing to Juliet offering them both a chance to a bright and happy future (Swift, 2009). Another importance to note is the shift of perspective within the song (Sloan, 2021). While the song starts off with the female perspective of Juliet it ends with the perspective of Romeo changing the story and standing up for their relationship (Sloan, 2021). The beginning of the song gives the listener an insight into the feelings and desires of Juliet without knowing or understanding the dreams of Romeo (Swift, 2009). The listener learns about the female protagonist begging her male counterpart to stand up for their relationship and sneaking around with him while being sad about not being able to be with him (Swift, 2009). This young, dreamy, happy-end version of such a tragic story fit to the sweet innocent image Taylor Swift tried to keep as a young artist. In her commencement speech at New York University in 2022 she underlined the pressure of being the sweet, good an innocent girl everyone else could look up to and be an uncomplicated idol for other young girls (New York University, 2022). The music video of the song Love Story shows a young girl at college who looks eyes with a guy reading and instantly falls in love with him showing flashbacks she has in her mind of earlier times dancing with him (Swift, 2009). The flashbacks shown in the video remind less of Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* and more of Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* showing different ballroom scenes and ending with a scene similar to the one of Mr. Darcy and Elizabeth Bennett running towards each other in a misty morning field: It shows two lovers running towards each other realising that they are made for each other and that they are now happy to embrace their own happy ever after (Swift, 2009, min. 00:03:10 – 00:03:30 and Movieclips, 2011). In a way this can be seen as a hint to the strong female artist she is and will become even more as she grew older. Having the old story written by a man changed to a happy ending and using movie sequences created for another immensely famous love story written by one of the most successful female

authors shows a hint to strong female leads and idols to change a story written by a man and giving it a personal touch. Swift has translated the tragedy of Romeo and Juliet into a modern setting but keeping the old romance alive.

The protagonist in the video can be seen imagining a story of an old romantic love spinning it out in her head the moment she locks eyes with a guy in college and ending the video with a kiss after having this whole storyline played out in her head (Swift, 2009). The story being told in this video reminds the viewer of long-gone times with balls and puts the viewer into a film scene of a romance movie.

Apart from the support of women's literature in her video the song *Love Story* shows a happy ending to a tragic story. It also shows a young and idealised version of love where one look is enough to fall for each other and live happily ever after. Taylor Swift herself makes fun of exactly this naivety in her 2022 commencement speech at NYU where she addresses the graduates joking that she is sure everyone had exactly this experience of meeting the love of their lives reading under a tree on a college campus (New York University, 2022). Addressing this ideal idea, the artist had of how to meet one's true love and also making fun of it shows the personal growth Swift has experienced. It also gives fans and listeners the idea that having idealised stories is fine, but that reality does look different than made-up stories and fairy tales do.

1.8.1.2 Taylor Swift as an activist - Musical feminism in "The Man"

The sweet innocence which is portrayed by the ideal happy ending to the perfect love story in Taylor Swift's *Love Story* is something which cannot be found in this much more grown up and activist song of hers. The song *The Man* was part of Swift's *Lover* album which has been released in 2019. Focusing on the lyrics of the song first, Swift describes different scenarios which have harmed her or which she has been judged for in the past such as a lot of changing partners or not getting the credit for her own music (Swift, 2019). She uses these aspects she has been judged for in the past and imagines how she would be treated for the exact same things if she would be a man (Swift, 2019). This song clearly shows a shift in her music compared to the sweet, innocent and happy *Love Story*. This song has a clear feminist message addressing the issue of women experiencing disadvantages within society in general but also within the music industry. The lyrics show Swift's disappointment in how men are celebrated for the same things women are judged for. This is a strong statement towards the music industry as well as towards society in general as the artist has

discovered a powerful way to highlight sexism in everyday situations. Swift changes her music towards a more outspoken and activist style which also shows how the artist has grown and discovered the power she holds and maybe even the position of being an idol for many young women. The artist stresses the power she would have if she was a man (Swift, 2019). Considering the power, she already holds in the industry this is a very strong take on the industry as she is claiming that her being a man would make her even more successful than she already is.

The video for this song portrays these issues from a male perspective with Swift acting as the main character disguised as a man (Swift, 2020). The artist works with a lot of clichés from the entertainment industry such as having a lot of models in bikinis on a yacht while a rich man enjoys the view (Swift, 2020) Another scene demonstrates an angry tennis player smashing his racket (Swift, 2020). Swift herself plays the main male character which the viewer only discovers at the end of the video when the transition and the make-up is shown (Swift, 2020). Having a female artist disguised as a man playing the role fulfilling stereotypes in the industry is an interesting perspective. Swift also works with a lot of male behaviour which society kind of accepts even though it is not respectful such as mansplaining and being overly aggressive (Swift, 2020). The whole video would have had a different tone to it if Swift would play herself as a woman.

The song has also been part of the setlist of the *Eras Tour* (Wrench, 2024). Within the concert the artist puts on a suit jacket over her glittering bodysuit while having all her dancers wearing suits as well portraying powerful women in male coded clothes (Wrench, 2024). The dancers as well as Swift herself use male coded posing (showing off muscles, puffed chest) in order to transport the image of them behaving like men do who are, according to the lyrics, are more powerful and are celebrated for things women are typically judged for (Wrench, 2024). The performance shows an incredible amount of power behind the lyrics. This really captures the anger which is described in the song and puts Swift in a powerful position expressing the sexism within the music industry as well as society in general.

The lyrics as well as the video and the performance in concert show how Swift has changed from the innocent *Love Story* of 2009 to an advocate for feminism and highlighting inequality in society. This shows she has moved to a more activist stage of her music career in the ten year that were between the two song releases.

1.8.2 Emotions, Storytelling and Connections – Taylor Swift und @taylornation on *Instagram*

Connections are important. Not only in a private way but also in a huge public way between an artist and her fans. In the case of Taylor Swift this connection can be seen in various ways underlining the importance of her fans to her. Forbes magazine, for example, states that the album *Lover* has not only been a successful pop album but has been a love letter to her fans thanking them for the support they have shown throughout difficult times in her career (Fitzgerald, 2024). The chapter before this one analysed the emotion and storytelling used in the artists songs and in which way those can be helpful to form a connection between Taylor Swift and her fans. This chapter now looks at other ways of communication such as her Instagram performance as well as her commencement speech given at the New York University (NYU) where she received an honorary doctor in fine arts in 2022 (New York University, 2022).

1.8.2.1 Healing songs – Taylornation and a connection created through Instagram



Figure 2: Post by Taylor Nation on Instagram (Taylornation, 2024).

The caption of this post asks the followers to name the Taylor Swift song that heals them (Taylornation, 2024). This opens up a lot which needs to be looked at. Firstly, it shows that Swift and her team understand that the artist's songs have an enormous amount of power as they see them as songs which are able to help the listeners heal from whatever they go through.

Secondly, it also shows that even though the songs are written and intended in a certain way by Swift, she understands that each song is received in a very different way by each person listening to it. This means that a song can be a heartbreak song for one person, a song that helped them through difficult times for the next and a friendship anthem for a third person. The caption leads to thinking that every person listening to a song has a different relationship with it and connects with it in a very different way (Taylornation, 2024). Another interesting factor about the posting is that it starts with “The face of someone who can do it with a broken heart ... and you never know who has one” (Taylornation, 2024). As the image shows Taylor Swift herself and the connection to the song *I Can Do It With a Broken Heart* (Swift, 2024c) portrays the artist in a very authentic light stating that even though she is a famous superstar she deals with a broken heart and other emotions like everyone else even though no one knows what she might be going through.

The fact that the account @taylornation actively asks the fans and followers to reply and interact with them shows that a certain interest for connecting with the fans is wanted. Swift can use this account for interaction and connection with her fans while keeping her own account at a purely informational format which allows now commenting under her postings (Swift, 2024b). How this offer for connection is received by the fans can be seen when looking at the comment section of the posting. The following image offers an overview over the comments under the post.

Comments



lara.k0ch 8w

"Everything you lose is a step you take" - gets me every time



4.342

Reply

— View 24 more replies



jedm33 8w

Are we ever getting a I can do it with a broken heart music video ?



364

Reply

— View 14 more replies



anniswildestdreams 8w

this is me trying. the whole song.



5.434

Reply

— View 31 more replies



briannafoxmakeup 8w

"I've been having a hard time adjusting. I had the shiniest wheels now they're rusting." 😭



3.240

Reply

— View 13 more replies



avabarrett 8w

i can do it with a broken heart!! (living w out long live on the setlist)



4.925

Reply

— View 12 more replies

Comments



ones i loved
tried to help
so i ran them off
and here i sit alone
behind walls of regrets
falling down like promises that i never kept.



143

Reply

— View 4 more replies



rivergotmoos 8w
"If all you want is gray for me, then it's just white
noise and it's just my choice." (i have a lot going
on at the moment)



385

Reply



sgardea13 8w
you got this! sending good vibes your way
👉👉



11

Reply



shilosadventures 8w
Same



1

Reply

— Hide replies



cwhitson.17 8w
"And if you never bleed you're never gonna grow
🌷"



512

Reply

— View 2 more replies

Figure 3: Comment section of the @taylornation Post (Taylornation, 2024)

The comment section within this posting shows two things. First, it shows how fans follow the call to action to share their personal healing songs and which songs hold special places in their hearts for whatever reasons. This shows that fans enjoy the possibility of connecting with their idol through their lyrics and sharing this connection online. It also shows how everyone connects the lyrics of different Taylor Swift songs to their own lives and sees them not only as a song but as a part of their very own story and identity. Secondly, it shows another form of connection which is the one in between fans within the *Swifties* community. This can be seen when scrolling through the responses of healing songs shared as other users comment on the songs showing how they feel about the songs and exchanging experiences and insights of their lives. This offers a community feeling creating a space for fans around the world to connect and share their own feelings towards different songs as well as helping each other and lifting each other up.

This posting therefore shows on one hand the possibility of an artist to connect with her fans and on the other hand the chance of using an Instagram posting to create a safe space for fans and followers to connect, communicate and discuss the impact individual songs and the artist as a whole has on them.

8.4.2.2 After terrorist warnings and phenomenal shows – Taylor Swift’s statement about the European leg of the Eras Tour

The post discussed in this part of the content analysis is from the artist herself on her own account. The post was made on the 22nd of August after the last shows of the European leg of the *Eras Tour* in London were over (Swift, 2024d). The comment function on Swift’s account is limited to only her which means that the researcher can only look at her post and the one comment she made to extend the post caption. Because of this it is not possible to look at any interactions or reactions after the comment and posting was made. The pictures within the posting show different moments of the *Eras Tour* full of glittering outfits, surprise guests and glimpses at the audience from Swift’s perspective (Swift, 2024d). In summary, the pictures within the post show a fun and magical touring experience focusing on the positive aspects of the tour and having the artist in the focus of all of them. The following screenshots show a summary of what the posting is about on a purely visual level.



Figure 4: Post by Taylor Swift after the European leg of the Eras Tour (Swift, 2024d)



Figure 5: Surprise artist Ed Sheeran in the Eras Tour post (Swift, 2024d)



taylorswift



6,7 M

1

94,9K



Figure 6: The crowd in the Eras Tour post (Swift, 2024d)

This rather positive summary of the tour changes as soon as the caption accompanying this posting is read. The artist starts her caption with mentioning how the European leg was in general pointing at “passionate crowds” at a “more hectic pace” as well as mentioning the change of the setlist with adding in her newest album *The Tortured Poets Department* (Swift, 2024d). She wraps this section of the statement with thanking her crew for their work and the shows they managed to pull off together (Swift, 2024d).

After this the caption becomes a lot more emotional and personal as Swift is referring to the planned attacks in Vienna and how she has felt going on stage in London after her cancelled shows in Vienna (Swift, 2024d). The shows in Vienna have been cancelled due to a terrorist threat which has been picked up by Austrian authorities (Sun, 2024). The posting on Instagram was the first time the artist spoke out about the threat as she made no mention of it when coming on stage at her London shows (Rosenbloom, 2024b). Taylor Swift addresses both the attack as well as her long silence about it in the caption of the posting. She addresses how she has felt “a new sense of fear” when going on stage in London as well as having been filled with “a tremendous amount of guilt” about all the fans who were looking forward to attend the shows in Vienna and were not able to because of the planned

attacks (Swift, 2024d). With this she talks directly about how she has felt about the planned attacks offering fans and followers an insight into her emotional response. The mention of guilt also shows an understanding towards fans, giving the idea that she understands the impact and power she has on people's lives and how much she and her shows mean to her fans. She then continues with thanking the Austrian authorities for reacting so quickly as it led to everyone "grieving concerts and not lives" (Swift, 2024d). After showing how she, herself has felt about her shows being a target for a terrorist attack, she then goes on to explain her silence about the events during her shows in London. The artist explains that her priority was to finish the European leg of the tour safely and not giving attackers any more reason to target one of her shows (Swift, 2024d). With this she offers an explanation for not speaking out about it sooner as well as showing that she prioritises her fans and the safety for those who are still attending upcoming shows. She shows that the silence about it and her focus on the upcoming shows was her way of not giving in and not giving too much power to the attackers but focusing on what she is doing and what else is to come.

After speaking out about the planned attacks she continues to thank all surprising artists joining the shows as well as explaining that she will rest until October when the *Eras Tour* is scheduled to continue (Swift, 2024d). The following screenshots show the caption of the posting which has been analysed in this section.



TAYLORSWIFT

Posts

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taylorswift In summation

We have officially wrapped the European leg of The Eras Tour. With it came the most passionate crowds I've ever played for, new traditions in the show, and an entirely new era added in. It was a more hectic pace than we'd done before, and I'm so proud of my crew/fellow performers for being able to physically perform that show and build our massive stage, take it apart, and make magic with so few days in between for recovery and travel. They're the most impressive people I know and I'm so lucky they gave The Eras Tour their time, their energy, and their expertise.

Walking onstage in London was a rollercoaster of emotions. Having our Vienna shows cancelled was devastating. The reason for the cancellations filled me with a new sense of fear, and a tremendous amount of guilt because so many people had planned on coming to those shows. But I was also so grateful to the authorities because thanks to them, we were grieving concerts and not lives. I was heartened by the love and unity I saw in the fans who banded together. I decided that all of my energy had to go toward helping to protect the nearly half a million people I had coming to see the shows in London. My team and I worked hand in hand with stadium staff and British authorities every day in pursuit of that goal, and I want to thank them for everything they did for us. Let me be very clear: I am not going to speak about something publicly if I think doing so might provoke those who would want to harm the fans who come to my shows.

In cases like this one, 'silence' is actually showing restraint, and waiting to express yourself at a time when it's right to. My priority was finishing our European tour safely, and it is with great relief that I can say we did that.

And then London felt like a beautiful dream sequence. All five crowds at Wembley Stadium were bursting with passion, joy, and exuberance. The energy in that stadium was like the most giant bear hug from 92,000 people each night, and it brought me back to a place of carefree calm up there.

[View all comments](#)

22 August

Comments



taylorswift 3w · Author

We had some EPIC surprise performances from my long time friends @teddysphotos, @florenceandthemachine, and @jackantonoff. Performing 'Florida!!!' with Flo for the first time was unforgettable and Ed took me right back to our old Red Tour memories. It was the most dizzying honor to become the first solo artist to play Wembley 8 times in one tour. To the fans who have seen us this summer, you'll always have the most sparkling place in my memories. You were a dream to perform for, dance with, and share those magical moments with. We'll see you all again when we resume The Eras Tour in October, but for now we get to take a much needed rest. Thank you for the adventure of a lifetime. May it continue...



: TAS Rights Management



305K

Comments on this post have been limited.

Figure 7: Caption of the Instagram post about the Eras Tour (Swift, 2024d)

This caption gives a clear insight into the thoughts and feelings of the artist and shows a way she can directly communicate with her fans and followers.

The next section of the dissertation presents the results from both the interviews and the content analysis after they have been coded. After that the results are discussed with the use of the theoretical framework to find an answer to the research question.

2. Results Presentation and Discussion

2.1 Results Presentation

This section offers and presents the results which have been found in both the interviews and the content analysis. It explains the different themes in which interviews and content analysis have been coded and offer a collection of the most important quotes. This works as a base for the discussion section of the dissertation. The full version of the coded interviews can be found in the appendix.

2.1.1 Interviews

The interviews have been coded in eight different themes to gain insight and information which fulfil the objectives and answer the research question. This results presentation helps to understand these themes and gives an overview over the most important quotes to illustrate each theme. Both interview guides are summarised under the same themes. This gives the opportunity to look at the theoretical concepts from a professional point of view in an advertising agency as well as looking at the consumer side as the interviews concerning Taylor Swift have a view from the receiver.

The first theme which has been discovered in the interviews is **activism**. The theme activism was discovered in both the interview with a member of an advertising agency (A1) as well as in interviews with Taylor Swift fans (F2 and F3). The theme was chosen because the **research question** asks about the **use of activism in Swift's music and communication strategy**. The interview with the agency member helps to give an overview over how activism is used in marketing and communication strategies, and what is important for both companies and personal brands. The interviews with the Taylor Swift fans then offer a chance to understand how fans, followers and listeners receive activism in the specific case of Taylor Swift and in which way they connect the artist with an activist communication strategy. Having these different points of view gives the researcher the chance to see the business side of activism in a communication strategy and understand how it is received. This presentation of results shows an example of important quotes. The full list of quotes for each theme can be found in *appendix H*.

From the agency perspective the question about **activism** led to statements **about how it works and what is important about it**.

“jumping on to activist topics does not always work for brands when it is not in their DNA or the protagonists behind the brand do not stand behind an activist claim. In this case, it would be wrong to shape the brand’s appearance in this direction” (A1, Index B).

“only if it fits the core of the brand or the DNA of the brand, if there is something already in the values of the brand. The other possibility is when the brand wants to conquer a topic because they realise WOW this is going to change us fundamentally as a business. We have to change in order to fit into this” (A1, Index B). The participant offers example brands which have either had an activist spirit from the start (*Oatly*) or have changed their company’s values adapting to an activist future (*Rügenwalder Mühle*) (A1, Index B)

The Participant states that *“activism works with emotionalization”* as *“it tries to evoke anger in people or a feeling of being helpless which will then be changed into self-efficacy”* (A1, Index B)

“more than just jumping on because it shows a change within the brand and the business towards a topic fuelled by activists is possible but it has to be done in a believable manner” (A1, Index B)

Then it was asked if **Taylor Swift fans have discovered activism in various different ways.**

In political matters:

“around like her efficacy for the US elections” (F2, Appendix E)

“then later on also how she took political statements or how she positioned herself” (F3, Appendix F)

In social matters:

“And and why things are really important to her, particularly around women's rights and trans rights and and the rainbow community as well” (F2, Appendix E)

“I think one particular thing is when she went to court over a guy groping her and she sued him for a dollar, you know, because it was the principal of it” (F2, Appendix E)

Via songs and in her industry:

“the first females of our generation to really demonstrate what it's like to take your time and build a successful career and not feel like you have to find it into the traditional gender roles that you know, some countries kind of place on you and that it's ok to you know, show up for your friends and family and not feel like you have to rush into marriage or have kids and by a certain timeline. And I think that's that's really cool” (F2, Appendix E)

“But this song kind of took the power with it like she she also really when you look at her performance at the Eras Tour it is really like she, she feels what she's singing and she she at this point doesn't care that she needs to fulfil certain stereotypes or anything. And I I don't know she really pinpointed the the all the things that men can do or where who are seen different when a man does it, so like if the whole video was she without the makeup, it would have had another impact” (F3, Appendix F)

“The Man video” (F3 Appendix F)

The second theme which has been discovered is the **fandom of Taylor Swift**. This theme aims at understanding the view of the fans as well as implementing their experience with the *Eras Tour*. This theme does not include the interview with the agency member but rather focuses on **understanding what the fandom means to the interview participants and how they experience Swift from a fan's point of view**. Again, the most important quotes are shown here while the complete sample of answers can be found in the appendix.

On being a fan:

“To be honest, I am not a Taylor Swift fan” (NF1, Appendix C)

“So I kind of went to like when I would go to uni by subway or by train and everything. I would start listening to her albums and that's when I fell in love with her like I think

Taylor is more of a person that you have to listening listen to more times because she's not very like straightforward” (F1, Appendix D)

“I started to learn a little bit more about Taylor Swift and I wouldn't say like I was a massive fan over the last 10/12 years” (F2, Appendix E)

“I became a fan because I liked her music and it was very fun like this was the time when 1989 came out and so there were songs like Shake It Off, who were just fun to listen to and then I I think what really caught me was the Blank Space music video because it was like I don't know, somehow I liked her, how she presents herself” (F3, Appendix F)

“I mean, I know her because of the media and when I saw the Hannah Montana Movie that was the first time that I that I met her not met her but that I realised that she existed, like many many many years ago” (NF1, Appendix C)

“I'll circle back again the first time I've heard about Taylor Swift was about was on Glee” (F1, Appendix D)

“I discovered Taylor Swift for her Fearless album so and that's when I started as well to kind of see her like how like her other music videos” (F1, Appendix D)

“I think I stumbled across the music when I was about 14 or 15 and I actually can't remember whether it was on MTV or via the radio” (F2, Appendix E)

Moments at the Eras Tour:

“the Eras Tour is uh, it's a milestone in concert beginning with like, I think that Taylor Swift is probably like the first person doing like a three and a half hour show in big arenas with this whole big, big, big production” (NF1, Appendix C)

“Like, this is amazing. She is an amazing, amazing artist ... concert made for fans” (NF1, Appendix C)

“like even if you don't know the people you're going to in the concert, you can see that everybody's vibing to the same thing, you know” (NF1, Appendix C)

“And for me, not not knowing every song or not being a fan, I didn't feel excluded” (NF1, Appendix C)

“But no, like you actually then go to the concert and you see all of these people in costumes and with the friendship bracelets and having this in in living the concert with this intensity and you realise that it's a real movement, you know” (NF1, Appendix C)

“like with the Vienna stuff” (F1, Appendix D)⁵

“so I actually trained my partner who was quite unsure at the time, but so he really enjoyed it” (F2, Appendix E)

“Like it was dancing the whole time and also that it was with my best friend” (F3, Appendix F)

“And so I think the 1989-set and beginning when she, when you first see her” (F3, Appendix F)

The **Swifties** Community:

“like seeing the community that we want to be part of, like attack us like the Vienna Swifties to a way (F1, Appendix D)

“It's to everyone of us like I had. Like I told you, like I had a person an American person saying that that's the Vienna Swifties feelings were not valid because nothing happened. So it's not trauma” (F1, Appendix D)

⁵ As a disclaimer the reader needs to understand that this participant was supposed to go to a concert of the *Eras Tour* in Vienna which got cancelled due to a planned terrorist attack.

“But at the same time was also like the fans, like the fans decided to bring out bracelets like the fans decided to bring outfits” (F1, Appendix D)

“So the fans decided to also create part of this community and create part of this experience” (F1, Appendix D)

“But the first hour cause I saw the video like first hand and then the first hour there were so many negative comments about fatphobia” (F1, Appendix D)

“But more recently, you know, with the Eras Tour and learning a lot more about Taylor and I suppose having a better sense of community as well. Like, it's it's definitely felt like a safe environment” (F2, Appendix, E)

“I find hard about Taylor Swift fandom what really annoys me kind of is that everyone like when you say you're a Taylor Swift fan, everyone like just assumes that you don't accept criticism, criticism towards her and I think I would I would like I would like that people understood more that like just because you idolise her in some way you just still have enough intelligence to know that she is not necessarily who you think she is” (F3, Appendix F)

The next theme discusses **emotions and how they are either used in strategies or which emotions are felt in the connection to Taylor Swift**. This also aims at understanding the main **background concept of pathos and seeing how it is adapted**. For a better overview they are grouped into a strategic point of view, **positive emotions and negative emotions**.

Emotional strategies:

“Pathos is used with phrases such as ‘this has to explode’, ‘this needs to emotionalise’” (A1, Appendix B)

“I prefer to reach people with positive emotions I enjoy it more but as a professional communicator I, of course, understand that negative emotions are the bigger relevance anchor and that they activate a higher inner action level and therefore more involvement or participation for the thing” (A1, Appendix B)

Positive emotions:

“nostalgia is a key emotion” (NF1, Appendix C)

“Like I don't know, it's the feeling of being part of something super big” (NF1, Appendix C)

“like people need to be seen and heard and feel seen and feel heard. And that's what Taylor does to them. And that's what matters most” (F1, Appendix D)

“really fun and playful and yeah” (F2, Appendix E)

“inspiring that and really comforting” (F2, Appendix E)

“safe space to retreat back into and particularly when there might be a lot of chaos going on and and yeah, it's just really comforting” (F2, Appendix E)

“really fun” (F3, Appendix F)

“it's an understanding I feel what I feel understood by her and her music and seen somehow so a comfort, comforting feeling I would say” (F3, Appendix F)

Negative emotions

“I think that I also connect her a lot with pollution maybe” (NF1, Appendix C)

“I think that I also I associate her a lot with like, not green, not green” (NF1, Appendix C)

“I was a little bit sceptical” (NF1, Appendix C)

“For me like Loss of My Life (loml) has a different meaning like it's not like it's not to like to a person that I love, but yes, to like the concert. Like for me it was literally for now, the loss of my life, cause I really wanted to see her” (F1, Appendix D)

“emotion that I can feel its disappointment” (F1, Appendix D)

“I feel very forgotten and disappointed” (F1, Appendix D)

“Taylor Swift fans aren't dumb, they just have fun” (F3, Appendix F)

The next theme which has been discovered discusses the concept of **storytelling and looks at how it works as a strategy and how Swift fans discover it in the artist's work.**

About **storytelling in marketing:**

“it is important to have a good story, which is believable for the brand, not something fake. A story is about having a scenario A and a scenario B and a change or journey in between them” (A1, Appendix B)

“the best stories are the true ones” (A1, Appendix B)

“Sometimes you have to make up stories of course. Come up with story anchors which could have happened that way, that's for sure” (A1, Appendix B)

“Personal brands can always tell stories about their everyday lives” (A1, Appendix B)

Storytelling discovered in Taylor Swift:

“Like when Anti-Hero, she looks at herself like she's she's like her own monster of insecurities” (F1, Appendix D)

“it was about her experience like she was being called fat all the time” (F1, Appendix D)

“love about especially folklore is that she also not only wrote this about her own life but also like this fictional character James Betty situation” (F3, Appendix F)

The next theme discovers **social media**. Even though the focus of this dissertation is on the social media platform Instagram, the interview participants have mentioned other social media platforms as well which are listed in their quotes as well.

Instagram from a business perspective:

“users have a high sensibility of they are confronted with true and real or made-up stories” (A1, Appendix B)

“we expect real insights into the lives of real people” (A1, Appendix B)

“but the most important thing is to find a topic that touches the user, something which has a place in the user’s life” (A1, Appendix B)

“I would say that the communication Instagram needs today is made of the three aspects of a persuasive speech Aristotle described” (A1, Appendix B)

“social media we are back at a time where personal brands can achieve an enormous reach which was unimaginable before social media” (A1, Appendix B)

“to come to a conclusion for this answer I think it only works with real people. Business only content which is not personal on social media does not work because it is missing the trust element” (A1, Appendix B)

Social media as viewed by the fans:

“I saw that a lot in Instagram for example, before going to the concert and now seeing it live it's like oh, this is real” (NF1, Appendix C)

“yeah Instagram more like to show what she's doing in the concerts. Like, of course it's super emotional. Also, when you like, for example, after she played in Lisbon, I went to her Instagram and I saw that she posted a picture in Lisbon like, oh, thank you, Lisbon” (NF1, Appendix C)

“I just think that what she like out of her whole caption. I didn't like the way that she said about ‘Let me be clear’, you know” (F1, Appendix D)

“I had unfollowed Taylor Nation because it was so hard to see like the London stuff so, I was like, I need to unfollow” (F1, Appendix D)

“I don't use Instagram as often for Taylor Swift's content if I'm being honest, I just like my friends, use it to tag me on Taylor Swift stuff” (F1, Appendix D)

“More just to see like what she says? Like if she states something on Instagram cause that's like the biggest method of communication for her” (F1, Appendix D)

“Like, I would just message people about the situation and and yeah, like a lot of people actually message me on Instagram sending me the cancellation, like announcements for the Taylor Nation” (F1, Appendix D)

“she definitely makes an effort to connect with her fans through social media and various other ways, like through the website and yeah, which I I think is probably the the key point” (F2, Appendix E)

“I was aware there were chants being done at the Eras Tour and I wanted to learn what they were and I wanted to know what surprise song she was doing so I could kind of guess what ours may have been. And it was, yeah, it was just really lovely because my friends also follow her on social media. And so there was a few of us from work going over it so, we're able to bond over that and and you know, over her outfits and what others were wearing to the Eras Tour and yeah” (F2, Appendix E)

“a couple years ago, she made like a little Insta post to fall and I think that's really cute because like, she showed how she baked cookies and sat outside in the first autumn air and everything” (F3, Appendix F)

“her little Insta post, especially from like a couple of years ago or her Tumblr videos”
(F3, Appendix F)

“it in the first place when I started to get to know, get to know her I wasn't really on Instagram because as I said, I was very young and my first internet platform was YouTube so I think Instagram is isn't the main social media platform I connect Taylor Swift with” (F3, Appendix F)

“But now I don't necessarily consume her posts on Instagram, but post from other people” (F3, Appendix F)

The next theme discovers the **art of connections**. This aims at understanding on one hand the importance of connections in marketing and on the other hand see how these connections work in a real case scenario from the point of view of Taylor Swift fans.

Importance of connecting:

“the difference makes content which actually connects to the life of people” (A1, Appendix B)

“Something that is similar to me, something I can identify with” (A1, Appendix B)

Connections in the case of Taylor Swift:

“the way she connects with people in the concert, the way she interacts” (NF1, Appendix C)

“for a fan also she is like this, but she sees these little connections with all the little things that she says when connecting the lyric A with the lyric B and the colours of, you know, like she's been super detail oriented in that sense and that makes community that makes people talk about it like” (NF1, Appendix C)

“very unreachable” (NF1, Appendix C)

“Having that connection with the people that went to the concert and then releasing the albums? Yeah” (NF1, Appendix C)

“fall in love with like an artist and their and their work through like their poetic lyrics”
(F1, Appendix D)

“So, it's kind of fun, like she has a lot of like, different songs that can relate to you different levels. It doesn't have to be like a man and be like situation” (F1, Appendix D)

“Yeah. So, it relates to her life, but that shows how, like celebrities, have a very similar life to ours. Maybe bigger proportions, of course, but they have similar lives to ours. They have big feelings, and that's one of the things I love most about Taylor” (F1, Appendix D)

“I love feeling feelings and I'm a very feeling person and she's the same” (F1, Appendix D)

“her sad music or her music around boys which you know, like at different stages of my life I have really resonated with” (F2, Appendix E)

“But I think there's also a lot of healing music and she talks about having to go through periods of change and grief and loss and how she sort of adapted to that as well” (F2, Appendix E)

“and she really makes people feel heard and seen, particularly when maybe that's not the environment they're being raised in or, you know” (F2, Appendix E)

“And and kind of grow up with her in some respects and since I was 15 and and I think that's possibly part of the reason why she's so successful as well as a lot of us feel like we have grown up with her and she's almost like just part of like our friend group or like family” (F2, Appendix E)

“Like she she really lifts out all these girly things and makes them cool again because like as a young girl, you always get associated with like, it's not cool to have like, I don't know, pink dresses on or everything” (F3, Appendix F)

“And so she captures the feeling that a lot of people, a lot of women, go through, that they're like through relationships or then later on, as I said, the mental health issues and everything” (F3, Appendix F)

“she she brought a lot of things back that really are associated with these girly friendship things like friendship bracelets, for example, are very like it's it's just for your like, maybe you could say she kind of speaks your inner child also because like dance around with friends and exchanged these bracelets” (F3, Appendix F)

“you feel like you know her, and so you feel like she could be your friend or big sister or something” (F3, Appendix F)

“doesn't only write about relationships or not only about specific relationships like she writes about a lot of different relationships with different people in your life” (F3, Appendix F)

“many different versions of yourself and different eras of yourself, and that's ok to have those different versions and eras. And I think that's how I identify with her that I just also want to have fun with everything I'm doing and that changes over time” (F3, Appendix F)

“So, I really relate to that also that she's like really into the whole storytelling besides from her own life so” (F3, Appendix F)

The next theme is closely connected to the connections theme. It talks about **authenticity**. With this theme the researcher aims at **covering the aspect of ethos and understanding the importance of trust in a strategy**. It is again divided into the **theory of authenticity and trust and how it is executed and received in the interviews concerning Taylor Swift**.

The **theory**:

“When it comes to ethos, I think Aristotle himself said its about making oneself appear trustworthy” (A1, Appendix B)

“Capture something which gives this trust and credibility. A blue icon on Instagram can be an ethos signal as well” (A1, Appendix B)

“how trust building goes from the person who I can somehow imagine and who I can hear stories about towards a non-human brand. Towards something that goes beyond the people and connect many different people which then turned into some sort of company” (A1, Appendix B)

How it is executed and received in the case of Taylor Swift:

“to relate to that that for me authenticity is so important nowadays and and that's like what I see from her” (F1, Appendix D)

“knowing that she's also going through the same stuff and and that, yeah, she is just human at the end of the day” (F2, Appendix E)

“she gives us a lot more insight into her life than maybe other artists do as well” (F2, Appendix E)

“I think about how she really role models to other young people and even older people to speak up for themselves and be really authentic to who they are and in the world” (F2, Appendix E)

“I guess she she really tries to be authentic to herself and I think that's comes across for the fans and in her music” (F3, Appendix F)

“Yeah, I think it is because like I, I I for me it came across in the Miss Americana documentary and other interviews of her why she she spoke out so late, because, like when she started, she was really young and I don't know when you're that young, a lot of people tell you what you have to do to be successful and especially when you start so young” (F3, Appendix F)

“from a perspective as a fan, it makes her authentic, even though obviously don't know her” (F3, Appendix F)

“I don't know how, if it's really authentic, but I feel like it's authentic because she I feel like the reasons she why she speaks out about some things and doesn't about other things. I think it's valid and I like how she speaks out when she does it, so I guess” (F3, Appendix F)

The last theme looks at **strategy**. It is divided in general aspects of **marketing strategies and the more specific strategy of Taylor Swift and how it is received**.

General aspects of **marketing strategies**:

“it is important for brands to create a human like construct in people's heads, create something with an identity and certain values” (A1, Appendix B)

Strategy of Taylor Swift and how it is received:

“Taylor Swift can talk about her life on tour and has things she can talk about. Business brands have to create these stories they want to talk about” (A1, Appendix B)

“She there's a really you can see the the attention to detail and even I realise that I'm not a fan like people that are fans maybe they would catch more Easter eggs and I think that that that's super she's super smart in doing that like she's always giving hints to people that are fans, like with the lyrics and with the type of colours and the things like for example, I think that the I went to the Lisbon concert the first night and I think it was one of the first concerts with the last the Tortured Poets Department. It was like the one of the first times that she played like that set in the Eras Tour and you could see that everybody was like because she wears like this dress with like the lyrics and everybody was like, oh, like catching everything” (NF1, Appendix C)

“Not only the the connection that she has with her fan base, but you can see all the work behind and I think that that makes a huge, huge difference like she really you she works a lot for what she like you can realise” (NF1, Appendix C)

“It makes her more desirable, but also with the little hint of always providing these easter eggs” (NF1, Appendix C)

“I think that she has been super intelligent and super smart in providing information to the fans so they can be an active part in their marketing strategy not only her as a as a singer and like Taylor Swift Incorporation but the fans you know, and they are huge” (NF1, Appendix C)

“That the people were counting 13 rows and I don't know and it 13 is the lucky number and yeah makes you like to talk about and she's been super smart about it. Having the people making conversation about her all the time, you know” (NF1, Appendix C)

“one thing that her brand and her like her actions, which she does like outside to build, to build her community, prove that she's a person who loves her fans and everything” (F1, Appendix D)

“But I like I think she understands the magnitude of like her of her and what her brand is” (F1, Appendix D)

“She puts a lot of Easter eggs she keeps the audience engaged” (F1, Appendix D)

“So that's what she wants. She doesn't want you to talk about her personal life. She just wants you to talk about why she put a two when she was talking on the Grammy Awards. And she announced Tortured Poets Department because it was a two album” (F1, Appendix D)

“that's what stands out the most like her market marketing technique and their way like since young since a young girl like to keep it the an audience engaged. Yeah, that's what makes her stand out the most” (F1, Appendix D)

“Like for example the Midnights one, I kind of understand why she did that because it was like the shot” (F1, Appendix D)

“She's a brand, she's experience, she's an experience. I would say that. And I would say like expect the unexpected from her because she would always like expect, like unexpected. It's like her middle name” (F1, Appendix D)

“Ohh everything she does like it's a strategy like every two steps she does like of course there might be like some small moments that she it's more spontaneous. But like as she said in her documentary Miss Americana, she said like I plan my life two years ahead” (F1, Appendix D)

“then in more recent years, she's kind of pivoted and had more of a strategy around when she's gonna release things and putting out Easter eggs and almost playing a game with the fans umm, to keep them guessing and keep them involved and attentive” (F2, Appendix E)

“I think Tree Paine her, I want to say like PR manager, she like manages all the marketing of her. Not only from, you know like business perspective but also you know the the community that Taylor wants to kind of build within her brand and and also the the business deals or what she might do outside of her music particularly around, you know, the perfume she's released and the merch she does and the video she creates, thinking also of the All Too Well ten-minute video” (F2, Appendix E)

“And that's why it's so successful, because they keep the fans engaged in a really relatable way” (F2, Appendix E)

“she's presenting a very authentic picture in the way she as I said, the girlhood experience, I think it's really cute how she presents herself to all those fans and she's not presenting for the male gaze, but for the female gaze” (F3, Appendix F)

“but now I think it definitely is also like her, a good a good marketing strategy she also has and like now she knows how to present herself and how she, yeah I think that's a combination between authentic and marketing strategies” (F3, Appendix F)

“Taylor Swift is not only a person but also a whole fandom and brand as you said, I think and so yeah” (F3, Appendix F)

2.1.2 Content Analysis

The content analysis has been coded into the same themes the interviews have been coded in. This offers the researcher a chance for a more direct comparison between the two methods and offers a deeper insight into the phenomenon of the artist Taylor Swift and how her communication works. This section presents the coded findings in the themes. It gives an overview over the most important findings.

For the full coding please see appendix I.

Activism discovered in Swift’s songs:

Having the old story written by a man changed to a happy ending and using movie sequences created for another immensely famous love story written by one of the most successful female authors shows a hint to strong female leads and idols in order to change a story written by a man and giving it a personal touch (*Love Story*)

This song has a clear feminist message addressing the issue of women experiencing disadvantages within society in general but also within the music industry (*The Man*)

This is a strong statement towards the music industry as well as towards society in general as the artist has discovered a powerful way to highlight sexism in everyday situations. Swift changes her music towards a more outspoken and activist style which also shows how the artist has grown and discovered the power she holds and maybe even the position of being an idol for many young women (*The Man*)

Fandom and Community discovered in social media activity:

Secondly, it shows another form of connection which is the one in between fans within the *Swifties* community (@taylornation)

This offers a community feeling creating a space for fans around the world to connect and share their own feelings towards different songs as well as helping each other and lifting each other up (@taylornation)

Emotions discovered in social media as well as the music:

The lyrics show Swift's disappointment in how men are celebrated for the same things women are judged for (*The Man*)

She addresses how she has felt "a new sense of fear" when going on stage in London as well as having been filled with "a tremendous amount of guilt" about all the fans who were looking forward to attending the shows in Vienna and were not able to because of the planned attacks (@taylorswift)

The concept of storytelling found in her music:

Taylor Swift uses this well-known story in one of her songs and gives it not only a more modern adaptation but also changes the ending (*Love Story*)

The protagonist in the video can be seen imagining a story of an old romantic love spinning it out in her head the moment she locks eyes with a guy in college and ending the video with a kiss after having this whole storyline played out in her head (*Love Story*)

She uses these aspects she has been judged for in the past and imagines how she would be treated for the exact same things if she would be a man (*The Man*)

The use of social media:

using an Instagram posting to create a safe space for fans and followers to connect, communicate and discuss the impact individual songs and the artist as a whole has on them (@taylornation)

The comment function on Swift's account is limited to only her which means that the researcher can only look at her post and the one comment she made to extend the post caption (@taylorswift)

In summary, the pictures within the post show a fun and magical touring experience focusing on the positive aspects of the tour and having the artist in the focus of all of them (@taylorswift)

The aspect of **connection** discovered through **songs and social media**:

Taylor Swift herself makes fun of exactly this naivety in her 2022 commencement speech at NYU where she addresses the graduates joking that she is sure everyone had exactly this experience of meeting the love of their lives reading under a tree on a college campus (*Love Story*)

The caption leads to thinking that every person listening to a song has a different relationship with it and connects with it in a very different way (@taylornation)

It also shows how everyone connects the lyrics of different Taylor Swift songs to their own lives and sees them not only as a song but as a part of their very own story and identity (@taylornation)

The aspect of **authenticity**:

The early eras of Taylor Swift portray a young artist who was working hard to stay true to her sweet country girl image singing out of her diary and talking about topics that teenagers are concerned about: friendship, school and ... relationships (*Love Story*)

portrays the artist in a very authentic light stating that even though she is a famous superstar she deals with a broken heart and other emotions like everyone else even though no one knows what she might be going through (@taylornation)

With this she talks directly about how she has felt about the planned attacks offering fans and followers an insight into her emotional response (@taylorswift)

Strategy discovered through **social media**:

Firstly, it shows that Swift and her team understand that the artist's songs have an enormous amount of power as they see them as songs which are able to help the listeners heal from whatever they go through (@taylornation)

The fact that the account @taylornation actively asks the fans and followers to reply and interact with them shows that a certain interest for connecting with the fans is wanted (@taylornation)

The next section discusses the results and connects them to the theoretical framework guiding this paper.

2.2 Discussion

This section connects the results conducted in both the interviews and the content analysis with the theoretical framework established in the literature review.

The dissertation looks at how the artist Taylor Swift uses **pathos as an emotional approach on Instagram as well as in her music to achieve an emotional connection with her fans**. It also looks at the role **activism** plays in this **connection** and how the **concept of storytelling is used to create an emotional approach in the idea of pathos**.

Social media as a tool in modern communication is one which works with a complex concept called multimodality (Knape, 2018). This concept aims at communication which does not only work on one level but works with multiple codes such as visual and textual (Knape, 2018). The platform Instagram also works with visual rhetoric as it focuses mainly on pictures and videos (Djick and Poell, 2013). Swift is no stranger to the use of social media as a tool in her communication strategy. She **uses her captions to accompany the otherwise visual based platform Instagram**. Even though most of the participants do not use it in a direct connection to the account of Swift herself they do **understand that Instagram is a main tool of communication for the artist** (F1). The posting at the end of the European leg of the *Eras Tour* underlines that the platform is a main channel of communication for the artist as this is where she **shares information with her fans**.

Apart from being a tool for communication Instagram is part of the social web and can therefore be used to create connections with other users (Ebersbach et al., 2016). It is

this connection which can be seen when looking at the interaction with an official account such as **@taylornation which focuses on creating a connection between fans and artist**, as well as when looking at the responses of the participants and the comment section of the **@taylornation** post. The social web gives a chance to connect with people sharing similar interests (Ebersbach et al., 2016). Agency member A1 one states that these groups with similar interests give personal brands and individuals the chance of expanding on social media, as they can connect with the users via these shared interests. The fans themselves feel these groups of interests which are built on Instagram as the participants state, that even though they might not necessarily use Instagram to follow Taylor Swift herself, they do **use it to connect to others**, follow profiles that post about Taylor Swift and send messages to other fans. The app has also been used to prepare for the *Eras Tour* learning chants and looking for outfit inspiration. Social media has the power to connect and reach people within a more international spectrum and a wider range than mass media can reach people (Djick and Poell, 2013). The researcher has experienced this not only through the answers of the participants who connect with other fans from all over the world but also with the researcher's own call for interviews on Instagram which caused responses from various different countries all around the world.

The dark side of this community has been shown in the answers of participant F1 stressing the reactions towards fans in Austria after the cancelled shows. Even though the platform the participant mentions is Twitter rather than Instagram it shows the negative downside connections on social media can have, and that even in an otherwise supportive and connected environment hateful comment can happen. As the media world has changed from mass media with gatekeepers, to social media where the content can flow a lot less controlled (Djick and Poell, 2013) the negative aspects of a social media community are shown through the experiences of one fan on Twitter (F1). This negativity or downside of social media can happen because of an increased anonymity which is part of the reality of social media (Vero, 2021). This anonymity can give users the security of being behind a screen which brings out a negative aspect in a community which is usually coded in a safe and supporting way.

An important element in forming connections on social media is the **element of trust** for the person who is posting by the person who is receiving (Vero, 2021). This trust element can be found in the statements of the agency member A1 who mentions how trust is

something which is needed in both personal brands as well as companies (A1). The participant goes in further detail explaining that **trust fulfils the modern use of ethos in a marketing strategy** (A1). This is connected to one of the three rhetorical means described by Aristotle which focuses on the speaker and how this person can manage to portray oneself in a speech (Aristotle & Gernot Krapinger, 2018). Even though in today's world trust is not created through speech within the communicative act, but rather long term with means such as a blue icon on a social media profile (A1), the general concept of the trust element can still be found in today's strategies. This offers a first glimpse of how the ancient concept of rhetoric is used with a modern approach. Taylor Swift as a personal brand has one of these blue icons offering her fans and followers a sign of trust that the person talking to them on social media is the one they look up to or identify with. That the **trust** towards the artist is working can be seen in the responses by the interview participants stating that **Swift feels like a friend and seems authentic** (F2 and F3) even though, as F3 states, the fans do not know if she is how she portrays herself, or if this is just a part of her strategy. Rhetorical means cannot be ignored in modern advertising and communication studies (Panigyrakis et al., 2019) which the interview with an agency member has proven once more from a practical point of view. Even though there might be different names for the concepts logos, ethos and pathos they are still in use when it comes to communication and marketing strategies. This can already answer one part of the research question as it shows that the artist **Taylor Swift who is known to be a successful businesswoman uses rhetorical means in her strategy**. The use of ethos has already been discussed and the use of pathos can be found in her communication as well.

Pathos can help to build brand attachment in consumers (Panigyrakis et al., 2019). Looking at Swift **the artist goes beyond just her music**, and has to be looked at from the marketing point of view of a personal brand. Her fans can see this aspect of her being a brand as well as an artist which has become clear throughout various interviews. As Swift is known mostly for her music, and as music has the ability to transport pathos in a wide dimension (Dewberry & Millen, 2014) it is important to take into account **both her music as well as her social media appearance, to understand the exact use of pathos within her strategy**. Bonet and Sauquet (2010) confirm the use of pathos in various different communicative settings, as they state that it is used in different disciplines. Looking back at the definition of

pathos it aims at creating an emotional state within an audience which allows a speaker to persuade the audience with the help of this emotional state (Aristotle & Gernot Krapinger, 2018). Looking at the artist Taylor Swift the use of pathos might not necessarily be used to persuade people but the idea of putting the listeners in a specific emotional state can still be found. This emotional aspect without the necessity of persuasion in the classical sense, can be seen as **persuasion in a different way, aiming at persuading the listener to keep listening and being true to the artist which is closely connected to the take on modern pathos** of Hackley in Brown et al. (2018) who argues that pathos and emotional responses are needed **for the speaker to stay relevant**. Looking at pathos and persuasion from this angle it makes the pathos used by Swift crucial for her to stay relevant, and as successful as she is today. Looking at Swift's work and communication **emotional cues can be found throughout both music and social media communication**. Within her music both analysed songs show cues of emotions which lead to the creation of pathos. While *Love Story* works with emotions such as love and a dream relationship *The Man* focuses more on negative emotions such as anger wrapped in a powerful and energetic song. For the song *Love Story* Swift talks about the young innocent teenage love, which somehow works out in a positive version of *Romeo and Juliet*. This painted picture connects to dreams young people might have when picturing their lives, meeting the one, falling in love, overcoming all obstacles and living happily ever after. Swift herself now laughs at the naiveté she had when she was younger and wrote *Love Story* (New York University, 2022) but it shows how **she has felt those emotions giving her a connection with fans the same age and fans growing up with her**. Aristotle mentions that it is not necessary for the speaker to feel the same emotion which is aimed for in a pathos-based rhetoric, but it helps as it is easier to project an emotion that one feels for oneself (Aristotle & Gernot Krapinger, 2018). The emotional responses throughout the interview partners have been guided by mostly positive feelings from the fans, the connection to not being sustainable by the non-fan and have been addressed in a negative way by the fan not being able to attend the shows in Vienna. This shows **a lot of emotions, as well as references made to the artist**, and how the amount of love fans connect with her idol can change into negative emotions very easily when dreams are destroyed.

It is this similar feeling between the artist and the fans that creates a feeling of connection and gives the artist the image of being authentic which has been described by the

interview participants. Connectivity is one of the aspects of social media logic according to Djick and Poell (2013) as it offers a chance to connect with people around the world without having to be physically close to each other (Ebersbach et al., 2016). **Connection is something which Swift creates with both social media and her music.** Fans agree that the lyrics have accompanied them throughout their lives and they have connected with different lyrics at different times. This gives the **illusion for the fans that they are growing up with their idol living similar lives, even though they have never physically met and know only what is shared online and through song lyrics.** Taylor Swift as a close friend rather than a faraway superstar is the way the artist portrays herself and the way she is seen not only by fans but also by the media (Borcholte et al., 2024) proofing that the **strategy of creating a connection** works. This shows how Swift manages to create a very authentic version of herself for her fans, as fans tend to believe what she is singing about is true. In her documentary *Miss Americana* Swift explains how her songs are something extremely personal for her, and how it is her own life and her own experiences which can be found within her lyrics (Wilson, 2020). This way of writing songs close to her own life and experiences is her style up until the album *folklore* which is the first album where she spins a made-up story of a love triangle throughout the album which has nothing to do with her love life (Swift, 2020 and Glasenapp, 2024). Apart from the music it is social media which is used to connect to fans and give the fans the opportunity to connect with each other. The account @taylornation uses postings to give fans the room to react to music, express emotions the connect to it, and to use the comment section as a place where they can interact and advise each other. This does not only form a **connection with the artist but also creates a tight community and past events have shown how powerful this community and fandom can be, when it comes to supporting their idol** (Théberge, 2021). Another aspect of creating this feeling of being close to the artist and experiencing a feeling of connection can be found in the postings Swift makes on her own Instagram account. The artist does not only share concert pictures but also offers the fans an insight into her life off the stage. With the analysed posting about the end of the European leg of the *Eras Tour* the artist also offers a deep **insight into her feelings showing her own fear and vulnerability** in the eye of the threats to her shows in Vienna. With this she **offers the same emotional closeness and insight into her life which she also guarantees her listeners with the help of her music,** even though this insight is once again closely controlled (Borcholte et al., 2024).

The Man is a song which works with different emotions than *Love Story* it is more activist than earlier Taylor Swift songs and offers a strong feminist message. The emotion with which the artist works here is primarily anger at how society or more specific the music industry is a place where men are celebrated for the same things women are judged for and which makes women work twice as hard to get to the same place men get in so much easier. With having both anger and love amongst many other emotions in her music the artist shows **a wide range of the use of pathos for different aspects such as connection or activism and change**. This song shows how the artist takes steps toward a more activist communication approach. Swift has not used an activist approach in her communication up until the year 2018 (Wilson, 2020 and Glasenapp, 2024) but has then started to implement activist messages into her music as well. Activism in brands usually focuses on social matters (Manfredi-Sánchez, 2019) and as a personal brand **Taylor Swift's activism can be found in social matters** as well which include topics such as feminism, the queer community and social climate or the urge to vote. The issues with activism in brands are that it has to fit the brand and must be believable for it to convince consumers or in the musical case listeners (Moorman, 2020). The importance of standing behind the issue is one thing agency member A1 stresses as well as it is the crucial part which makes the brand trustworthy. **Swift herself changed her image towards a more activist one**, explaining in detail why it took her so long to speak out in an activist manner (Wilson, 2020). Swift explained that she needed to speak up for the people she sings for which agrees with the statement of Zhou et al. (2024) stating that consumers expect brands to position themselves and have an opinion. Nisbett & Schartel Dunn (2019) have described the immediate effect the 2018 political statement of Taylor Swift had when it came to voting registrations. The artist has understood the power she holds and has come to the point where she herself argues that it is not about keeping a clean image but rather about voicing opinions and being strong and speaking up for those who might not have the opportunity (Wilson, 2020). Once again, this is something which **makes her appear authentic as her fans believe her change towards a more activist way of communication and celebrate her for it**.

To be able to put listeners into a preferred emotional state one must overcome emotional resistance. Emotional resistance is described by Knape (2018) as one of the biggest problems to overcome when it comes to multimodality. Pathos and the concept of storytelling can help to overcome this problem. Storytelling is a tool that is used in different

ways and can be found in advertising, in social media communication and in music as well (Aimé, 2021; Tsai, 2020 and Bradley, 2017). **Storytelling as a concept is used in marketing in various ways and holds incredible power to emotionally engage an audience** (Aimé, 2021). A1 highlights the **importance of authenticity in this case again as people expect real stories especially on a platform so focused on creating connections as Instagram,** and with a communication concept which also aims at creating a connection (Ebersbach et al., 2016 and Aimé, 2021). **Storytelling uses the concept of pathos as it aims at using emotional means within the story to create both a connection and an emotional response within the listener** (Houghton, 2021). To achieve this, stories aim at emotions and situation which have already been felt and can therefore make a memory resurface or evoke a familiar feeling (Houghton, 2021). Swift uses this concept of storytelling in various ways. For *Love Story* the artist uses a sweet, innocent and naïve feeling of the love at first sight and how it magically works out perfectly. This is combined with the use of the famous tragedy of *Romeo and Juliet* but changed to a happy ending. With this she does not only create a feeling which probably most teenagers have felt at some point, or dreamed about, but at the same time she connects it with a well-known story about love including the idea of doing it different and having a love that does work out and survives. Stories are especially powerful when they are true and show a real insight into the storyteller's life (Tsai, 2020). Even though Swift uses a well-known tragedy as her base she makes the story her own by including her feelings about love at first sight and singing honestly and openly about her dreams within this frame of *Romeo and Juliet*. This makes it possible for fans to connect the story and the feelings included in it into their own lives. As Swift grew older her music changed making love and emotions in general more complex which is something that fans can relate to as they too grew up and experienced life getting more complex. Bradley (2017) points out the role songs play in the world of storytelling as they are used to tell stories offering a chance to analyse the lyrics like you would analyse a poem. Artists use songs in order to communicate feelings and their own realities to their listeners (Bradley, 2017). **Swift uses exactly this power of songs in storytelling to transport her feelings and emotions, offers fans a way to connect with her and also giving a deep insight into her life.**

This is the way she uses stories to connect with fans up until the release of her pandemic album *folklore*. In a later recorded studio session about the album, she goes into detail on how she has changed her song writing style for this album (Swift, 2020). The album

folklore is the first one where Swift does not use her own life and emotions as a source of inspiration but takes on the role of an author spinning stories, about a love triangle between three teenagers. She explains how this love triangle is made up as she wanted to explore the power of creating stories (Swift, 2020). Having this change in source of inspiration shows that Swift understands how a story is created sticking to important aspects of stories such as characters and plot (Houghton, 2021). Using these techniques shows **Swift knows how to create a story which then makes it clear that storytelling is a concept actively used in her music which is part of her communication strategy.** The fans react positive to this storytelling as they are impressed on how Swift can translate feeling onto paper or how well she manages to create and spin stories (F1 and F3).

Social media, storytelling, pathos and activism all play an active part in Swift's communication strategy. To bring them all together there is one word which has been used throughout the interviews as well as in the theoretical framework when it comes to understanding the use of social media for an artist (Hansen, 2024). This word is: **engagement.** Making sure the community is engaged and stays true to the artist is one thing which can be achieved with the help of social media (Hansen, 2024). Swift does not only use social media as a way of keeping her fans engaged but various hints in communication, clothes, signs and songs. Swift uses these easter eggs to hint at new album releases, specific songs or eras, and more and her fans love to find the meanings behind those easter eggs analysing every song into detail and discussing social media posting, clothing choices and general behaviour (Glasenapp, 2024). **Swift herself knows about the power she holds** with the easter eggs, and how much her fans enjoy finding the hints she puts out (Fallon, 2022). This is what makes the song *Mastermind* so fun for her fans as the song sounds like she is giving herself the credit she deserves for all her strategy and tactics, when it comes to creating and putting out those easter eggs and keeping her fans on their toes (Swift, 2022b). It is other things as well which play a part of keeping the community of her fans engaged such as the famous track number five, and giving enough hints for them to figure out who the songs are about without clearly revealing it (Glasenapp, 2024). **With this Swift ensures that her fans are staying true to her and looking out for new clues, new music and new information.** And from a non-fan perspective this shows the dedication *Swifties* are often admired for, as they have made it their goal to find the easter eggs and interpret all the hints the artist throws at them. **Swift has found a balance of giving the fans insights into her**

life while being private in many aspects, and keeping them on their toes always wanting more and looking for clues while also giving them so much and offering them a chance to find themselves in her music and her emotions. The fans are the ones who have taken it a step further giving Swift new ways to engage with them as it is the fans who dress up for the *Eras Tour*, trade friendship bracelets and scream chant after chant during Swift's songs. But it is Swift who has managed to create the room and space for this giving her fans a chance to connect with each other and with her and portraying herself as one of them who feels emotions, sings about them, writes stories and likes to challenge her fans.

Wrapping this discussion up it becomes clear that **Swift knows what she is doing.** She uses concepts such as **storytelling, pathos and activism to transport her feelings and gives insights into her life, while at the same time giving fans the chance to connect with her through those feelings and identify with them in their own way making them part of their own lives.** All of this happens in a way which makes Swift appear as an authentic person, giving the fans the feeling of her living a similar life to theirs and offering a chance of finding themselves in her and her experiences, as well as seeing her less as an idol and more as a friend. This connection can be found on Instagram as well as Swift offers emotional insights through her captions and asks fans to share and connect with their experiences and connections to songs over the account @taylornation. The important part of keeping an audience engaged can successfully be found in Swift's way of playing with hints in songs, videos or on stage to offer her fans a chance to hunt for these clues and solve the mystery around what the artist is planning to do next.

3. "What if I told you none of it was accidental?"⁶ – Concluding the emotional strategy of Taylor Swift

This dissertation looked at the communication and marketing strategy of the artist Taylor Swift. To understand this strategy the focus was on Instagram as a platform and on the concepts of activism and storytelling. The ancient rhetorical concept of pathos described by Greek scholar Aristotle was used as a supporting background theory. The goal was to understand how pathos plays a role in modern communication strategies, and how the

⁶ (Swift, 2022b)

emotional approach is in use today. To understand this, a qualitative research design was used consisting of a content analysis of two songs and two Instagram posts combined with the use of semi-structured interviews to get a deeper insight into responses about the artist's strategy. The research has shown how Swift uses a highly emotional way to communicate with her fans through her music. She also uses her own emotions to create songs, and to connect with fans and listeners who go through similar life stages making the artist appear authentic and more like a friend than like an idol. Connecting with her fans can be seen as an important part of the artist's strategy as she gives her listeners multiple occasions to connect with her such as lyrics or interaction on social media. Swift makes sure to keep her fandom engaged giving them new hints and easter eggs, so the fans do not get bored and get the chance to be constantly engaged which makes the artist appear interesting and keeps fans on their toes constantly. The strategic tricks of keeping her audience engaged with the help of spreading easter eggs and hints and cues for the fans to discover, interpret and follow show the marketing genius Swift behind her communication as it proves that her way of communicating is planned carefully and not left to coincidence.

The first part of the research question can be answered with the knowledge that Swift uses emotions, and with that pathos as a very active part of her communication strategy. This pathos can be found in her music where she uses an open and honest approach with telling stories from her life and using the tools of storytelling to bring across the emotional state felt in those different stages and events from her life. But pathos can also be found in her social media strategy where she, on one hand, offers an open communicative approach sharing her own feelings about situations with the fans while on the other hand offering them the space and the chance to share their feelings which are connected to her songs, and asks the fans to share how they emotionally respond to her music. From an advertising point of view the use of pathos in a personal brand can help especially on Instagram, a social media platform that aims at creating emotional connections between real people.

The second part of the research question asks at how activism plays a part in Swift's communication as well as her music. For a long time of her career Swift has not been one to speak up publicly about activist matters. That has changed however in the recent years after urging her followers to register to vote in the 2018 midterm elections. Since then, her music and her way of communication on social media as well has become a lot more straightforward. With songs like *The Man* the artist uses this activist approach in her music.

She uses her voice to point out inequality in society singing for women, the queer community and a better political climate. With this she has started to use her voice and influence to authentically support issues which are close to her and which she feels the need to talk about. This activist approach has become part of her strategy, such as the emotional approach has as she uses it not only in her music but also in interviews or when talking on stage. This change in her voicing opinions in public has made her an even stronger idol for many, and it can be seen as a direct part of her strategy as she is working on authentically standing for what she is singing about or standing up for the people she is singing for. Because the shift she made has been explained so well by her it gives fans the opportunity to adjust and plays into the main aspects of her strategy: **engagement, connection, emotion and authenticity**.

4. Limitations and future research recommendations

This study has used only a small sample of people in a similar age group. For future research it would be interesting to see a bigger variation in demographics as well as focusing on different genders, living situations and a stronger difference between fans and non-fans or even haters as it would be interesting to see the artist's way of communicating from their point of view.

This paper has put its main focus on the rhetorical concept of pathos, and how it can be achieved with the help of storytelling or activism. For future research it would be interesting to put a stronger focus on other aspects of rhetoric, especially the touched upon ethos. Having the focus strongly on the element of trust and the strong leading figure of an ethos-based strategy would be interesting to see and can then be compared to the pathos-based strategy to get a bigger picture of the artist and her strategy.

Another limitation is that this dissertation has only focused on Taylor Swift as an artist. The interviews have already touched upon aspects of Swift being a leading force for the market with her strategy and comparing her to other artists. For future research it would be interesting to make this comparison the topic of research as it would be interesting to see how artists adapt to strategies and how they are received by different fandoms of different artists. In this scope it would also be interesting to see differences between female and male artists as well as between solo artists and groups.

The topic of activism has been part of this study but has been treated on a rather surface level. For future research it would be interesting to go deeper into the aspect of

Swift's late activism. This can be especially interesting in the face of the upcoming US elections and how postings and statement from artists like Taylor Swift have a direct influence on those.

The research for this dissertation has been restricted to a qualitative research design which has guaranteed a deeper insight into the feelings of the interview participants and has allowed them to give more complex answers. For future research it might be interesting to combine a qualitative design with a quantitative design to understand the influence the artist has on a bigger scope.

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Appendix

Appendix A – Transcript Interview 1 German (Original)

00:00:00 Interviewer

Gut, ich mache das hier lieber doppelt, weil.

00:00:03 Interviewee

Kenn ich.

00:00:05 Interviewer

Okay also meine erste Frage wäre, ihr arbeitet ja hier in der Agentur auch viel mit Stories und dem Konzept von Stories und ich wollte fragen, was ist denn wichtig, also was sind so die essentiell wichtigen Sachen, wenn man Storytelling für eine Marketingkampagne benutzt, wo würdest du da so die Schwerpunkte legen? Was würdest du sagen, ist da wichtig?

00:00:29 Interviewee

Erstmal ist wichtig ne gute Story zu haben, die glaubwürdig für die Marke ist, nicht irgendwas Aufgesetztes. Ne Geschichte zeichnet sich ja aus, dass es einen Zustand A gibt, Zustand B und irgendeine Veränderung Reise dazwischen.

Und wenn man da was Glaubhaftes findet, wie ne Marke oder nen Produkt auch dazu beitragen kann oder in der Vergangenheit dazu beigetragen hat, dass sich was Entscheidendes verändert, dann ist es immer die beste Veränderung dann ist die beste Geschichte die, die eben diese Veränderungskraft in sich trägt.

Wenn ich jetzt mal konkret werden, erzählen wir für die *Diakonie Stetten* zum Beispiel in der Spendenkampagne die Geschichte, dass deren, die Leute, um die sie sich kümmern, der Bewohner, Menschen mit Behinderung oder Handicaps am Leben teilhaben wollen. Und wenn man direkt in deren Leben reinschauen kann über Social Media und rausfinden kann, wie die Leben, wie die von Betreuern begleitet werden im Alltag und dabei erleben, dass sie dann mehr Teilhabe haben, das ist die Stärke dieser eigentlichen Kampagne.

00:01:43

Und diese Geschichte dann in sehr kurzer Form auf einem Plakat rüberzubringen in einem Satz. Ich wünsche mir mehr Freund, ich wünsche mir Freunde, kein Mitleid beispielsweise, das ist dann die die hohe Kunst ein Stück von diesem Storytelling auch noch so knapp zu bekommen, dass es in in low envolement Situation in kurzer Aufnahmekapazitätszeit auch noch funktioniert.

00:02:12 Interviewer

Okay Mhm, das war ja jetzt also die *Diakonie*, das sind ja als persönliche Einblicke in die Leben, würdest du sagen, eine Story kann man auch erzählen, wenn es quasi diese diesen ehrlichen persönlichen take dazu nicht gibt, oder ist es schon, ist es schon wichtig, dass es eben eine wirkliche wahre Story auch ist?

00:02:34 Interviewee

Also wir als Agentur sind davon überzeugt, dass die besten Geschichten die Wahren sind. „Truth Well told“ war das Motto von von der von einer anderen Agenturgruppe, die die haben das als Claim geführt, was, was, was ich unglaublich inspirierend finde zu sagen, eigentlich geht's darum, was Wahres zu finden und das gut zu erzählen.

Natürlich erfindet man manchmal auch Geschichten, erfindet Story Anker, die von Geschichten, die so hätten passieren können, klar.

Aber deine Frage war jetzt und ich glaub der Kontext in dem deine Arbeit stattfindet ist ja Instagram.

00:03:23 Interviewer

Genau. Ja

00:03:25 Interviewee

Und Da haben und da haben die User ne, ne hohe Sensibilität dafür, ob sie da mit echten oder mit erfundenen Geschichten konfrontiert werden.

00:03:35 Interviewer

Okay.

00:03:36 Interviewee

Selbst wenn man da jetzt im im Anzeigenbereich im Adsbereich unterwegs ist auf Instagram ist das schräg, wenn einem ne erfundene TV Spot Kampagne begegnet, das ist einfach nicht nativ für diesen Kanal.

Da erwartet man echte Einblicke in das Leben von echten Protagonisten.

00:03:57 Interviewer

Da hätte ich jetzt so zugestimmt, ja genau.

Ja, Instagram, also generell Social Media, ihr benutzt es ja auch viel als Agentur oder für eben eure Kunden.

Wie wichtig ist denn da diese diese Verbindung zu den zu den Usern zu kriegen?

Also jetzt gerade wenn man wenn ich Werbung schalte auf Instagram, dann ist es ja das wird dazwischen geschaltet, viele von den Nutzern nervt es vielleicht auch weil einfach da viel

dann dazwischen kommt was eigentliche Feed stört, wie ist es trotzdem möglich mit sowas oder dann eben auch über den eigenen Kanal so eine Verbindung herzustellen zwischen Marke und Konsumenten und wie wichtig ist es oder wie kriegt man das hin?

00:04:45 Interviewee

Das große Stichwort hier ist Relevanz, also ich bleib an den Dingen hängen, egal also im normalen Feed, in Stories oder wenn ich Reels Durchwische an den Dingen, die es irgendwie schaffen in, durch Relevanz meine Aufmerksamkeit zu bekommen und Relevanzfaktoren gibt es ganz Unterschiedliche.

Aber der Wichtigste wird wohl sein, dass ich ein Thema treffe was, meine User gerade wirklich beschäftigt, was irgendwo in deren Leben auch ankert.

Wir sind umgeben auf dieser Plattform von unendlich vielen Hooks, die nur versuchen, meine Aufmerksamkeit zu bekommen, ohne dass sie was wirklich Relevantes geben.

Und den Unterschied macht dann Content, der tatsächlich an die Lebenswelt der Leute anknüpft und nicht nur sagt fünf Dinge, die du noch nicht wusstest über Thema X was dich eigentlich gar nicht interessiert.

00:05:58 Interviewer

Mhm, Okay Relevanz.

Das bringt mir jetzt tatsächlich auch zum nächsten Thema. Das war jetzt eine gute Überleitung, Thema Aktivismus von Marken, also zum Beispiel die Marke *Oatly*, die Hafermilchmarke, die haben ja auch diesen Claim, sie sind sehr nachhaltig, sie sind sehr für, also helfen im Klimawandel, versuchen da irgendwie dagegen zu arbeiten und, was würdest denn du sagen, wie wichtig ist es, dass Marken jetzt gerade in der Welt, wo ja Klimawandel zum Beispiel ein großes Thema ist, aber auch Feminismus, oder die LGBTQ+ Bewegung, wie wichtig ist es, dass Marken auf diese aktivistische Schiene aufspringen und wie ist es möglich für ne Marke?

00:06:44 Interviewee

Mit dem Wort aufspringen habe ich so ein Problem, weil ich glaube, dass das Marken, also wir sind, als Agentur fühlen uns sehr stark dafür verantwortlich, dass wir nachhaltigen Wert für Marken schaffen und Marken nur mit Themen verknüpfen oder in Verbindung bringen, die auch wirklich glaubwürdig zu ihnen passen.

Deswegen ist ein aufspringen von Marken auf aktivistische Themen nicht immer möglich, wenn's einfach nicht in deren DNA liegt oder die Protagonisten dahinter das nicht wirklich vertreten dann ist immer falsch ein Markenauftritt in diese oder jene Richtung zu dängeln. Bei *Oatly* ist ein Überzeugungstäter am Werk die wollen wirklich die Welt verändern. Die Wissen von seit Anfang an ihres Weges in der Kommunikation, dass sie kommunizieren wollen, dass sie die Welt verändern mit diesem Produkt dass es eben nicht nur um ne besser schmeckende Hafermilch geht, sondern dass auch, ne, Alternative ist, die dafür sorgt, dass Tierleid weltweit zurückgeht.

00:08:03

Deine Frage, ob man aufspringen kann, würde ich beantworten mit: Nur wenn es zum Markenkern, zur Marken DNA passt wenn irgendwas in den Werten schon geankert ist oder mal ein Thema erobern möchte, von dem er erkennt, WOW, das wird uns als Unternehmen sowieso komplett verändern. Wir müssen uns anpassen und auch das wie wir wirtschaften anpassen um dem gerecht zu werden.

Beispiel *Rügenwalder Mühle* war irgendwie in meiner Kindheit bekannt als für die *Pommersche*, diese Leberwurst, die da beim großen Dorffest irgendwie genossen wird und alle singen dazu und toll.

00:08:54

Zu dem Zeitpunkt hat war Tierleid noch nicht das große Thema. Da gab es erste Aktivisten dagegen sicherlich von *Greenpeace* oder *PETA* Seite, aber das war noch kein gesamtgesellschaftliches Thema.

Heute ist die gesamtgesellschaftliches Thema und die *Rügenwalder Mühle* hat schon vor, weiß ich nicht fünf bis zehn Jahren das früh erkannt und auch reagiert.

Und das kam bei denen auch zusammen mit einer mit einem Wechsel innerhalb des Familienunternehmens, wo die nächste Generation übernommen hat und gesagt hat, ja, wir müssen uns als Fleischwarenproduzent anpassen, das kann nicht unsere Zukunft sein und wir gehen den Weg, auch vegane Alternativen anzubieten. Und die sind da im großen Stil, mit großem Mut rein und haben zu Recht heute auch den Ruf dafür da, gute Ersatzprodukte anzubieten, auch wenn sie trotzdem noch tierbasierte Produkte haben.

Und ich glaube, an dem Beispiel zeigt sich, das war jetzt auch mehr als ein Draufhüpfen, aber dort hat sich gezeigt, auch eine Veränderung der Marke, des Unternehmens an sich in

Richtung eines Themas, was durch Aktivisten getrieben wurde, kann möglich sein, muss aber auch glaubhaft betrieben werden.

00:10:28 Interviewer

Also quasi die Marke muss entweder eh schon diese Werte haben und sie eben noch nicht quasi ausgesprochen haben, dann ist es möglich, dass man diesen diese Schiene fährt oder eben sie muss sich dann auch selber ändern und das glaubhaft machen. Also wie beim Storytelling eigentlich auch, es muss halt glaubhaft sein und es, die Marke muss selber dahinterstehen.

00:10:50 Interviewee

Ich glaub das auch wirklich ne Gefahr darin liegt sowas nur als ich mach da mal mit ein Regenbogenfahnenposting abzusetzen zu zu zum CSD Tag und da einmal vielleicht ein Statement zu machen, das reicht nicht aus und das erkennt beispielsweise dann die queere Community auch sehr schnell, dass es dann Lippenbekenntnis ist.

Ansonsten nichts folgt keine Veränderung im Unternehmen, immer noch Benachteiligungen oder Ausschluss von Kollegen aus der queeren Szene in solchen Unternehmen beispielsweise oder dann scrollen und Leute aus der Community zurück und sehen, Ach ja, das gab es vor genau einem Tag vor genau einem Jahr auch schon mal aber das ist dann einfach nur ein Lippenbekenntnis und wird von den Leuten, denen es wirklich wichtig ist, eher dann negativ betrachtet.

00:11:54 Interviewer

Ja, es hatte ja auch ich glaub vor zwei Jahren war das eben auch im Pride Month, dass es da sehr viel negativ negative Kommentare auch gab zu gerade so große Firmen, die dann eben einen Monat das irgendwie gemacht haben und dann war es auch wieder weg.

00:12:13

Okay ich hab noch zwei große Themenbereiche. Das eine wollte ich Fragen sagen, dir sagt dir die Rhetorik von Aristoteles, was ist dir das ein Begriff, die Worte Ethos und Pathos?

00:12:23 Interviewee

Ja, Ethos, Pathos, Logos, ja.

00:12:25 Interviewer

Okay gut, weil das das passt auch, also es kommt auch in meiner Masterarbeit vor eben diese Verknüpfung.

Würdest du sagen, Ethos und Pathos eben der Redner und dann die Emotionserweckung beim Publikum oder jetzt dann im modernen Sinn eben bei der Community, ist das was, was aktiv benutzt wird für Strategien oder ist es eher, also benutzt man das nicht mit dem Hinblick auf dieses altertümliche sozusagen.

00:12:54 Interviewee

Ich glaub die Marketingwelt heute hat andere Begriffe dafür gefunden, aber operiert, operiert natürlich immer noch damit.

Also Logo ist das rationale Argument.

Du hast heute in in, in Kommunikationsstrategien immer noch das Faktenargument oder der die Beweisführung dem Reason to Believe wird dann an anderer Stelle genannt.

Was den Ethos angeht, also die ich glaub die Aristoteles hat gesagt, da geht s darum, sich selbst glaubwürdig zu machen.

00:13:35 Interviewer

Ja, genau.

00:13:40 Interviewee

Trust Elemente ist das, was man heute in der Marketing Sprache sagt, Siegel zu verwenden oder Referenzkunden anzuführen oder eine Kundenstimme.

Irgendwie einzufangen, das, was einem selber eine Glaubwürdigkeit gibt, ein blauer Haken auf Instagram ist auch ein Ethosignal.

00:14:04

Und Pathos wird heute verwendet mit Worten wie, „Das muss richtig knallen“ „Soll emotionalisieren“.

Oder mit finden wir noch eine stärkere Hook, wenn wir jetzt im Instagram Universum sind, dann ist es was, was am Ende die die Leute handeln soll, die die Daumenstoppkraft aufbringen soll. Das ist am Anfang eines Reels steht oder die erste Line ist die ich lese das was mich angelt reinzieht, hooked.

00:14:48

So würde ich sagen, die was, was Aristoteles aufgestellt hat, die 3 Bestandteile einer überzeugenden Rede, das ist auch das, was Kommunikation auf Instagram heute braucht. Nur würden wir jetzt in Fachkreisen, würde man das nicht nach seinem Modell besprechen.

00:15:07 Interviewer

Aber es ist auf jeden Fall noch zu finden. Abgewandelt.

00:15:09 Interviewee

Ja, ja.

00:15:12 Interviewer

Okay, spannend.

00:15:14 Interviewee

Sidefact dazu es gab eine Untersuchung der ich glaub 100 erfolgreichsten *TED Talks*, wie sich da Ethos, Pathos und Logos verteilt.

Was denkst du?

00:15:31 Interviewer

Ich hätte gesagt, Pathos ist das stärkste.

00:15:35 Interviewee

Bei Weitem. Mit, ich glaub 65%, wenn ich mich recht erinnere.

00:15:40 Interviewer

Wow, okay.

00:15:43 Interviewee

Ist der Anteil von zehn bis 12 Minuten Reden, ist der Anteil am höchsten.

Das rationale Argument nimmt glaube ich noch 20 oder 25% ein und dann noch ein bisschen Ethos.

00:16:01 Interviewer

Ok, spannend.

Cool Ja, eine Sache noch. Also gerade das ist jetzt, geht jetzt von dieser klassischen Markenwelt, sag ich mal ein bisschen weg.

Taylor Swift ist ja gerade am Explodieren, sage ich mal so, also die ist ja wirklich gerade überall und durch ihren Erfolg kann man ja schon auch sagen, sie hat irgendwie ihre persönliche Marketingstrategie, also sie vermarktet sich ja selber, wie machen, wie sie ihre Songs aufnimmt, wie sie die auch eben veröffentlicht, wie sie das alles anteasert und so jetzt auch die Konzerte.

Und wo würdest du sagen liegt so der der große Unterschied zwischen einer persönlichen Marke oder einer persönlichen Vermarktung in dem Fall eben und einer, ich sag mal einer klassischen Marke also die ein Produkt verkaufen will oder eine Leistung verkaufen will, wo würdest du da so die die großen Unterschiede sehen?

00:17:01 Interviewee

Kann ich erst mal die Gemeinsamkeiten anfangen?

00:17:03 Interviewer

Auf jeden Fall.

00:17:07 Interviewee

Also warum wir überhaupt über diese Unterschiede sprechen, ist, weil Marken einen bestimmten Zweck haben, schon aus ihrer Geschichte her abgeleitet, nämlich Vertrauen zu erwecken.

Marken sollten über die Person hinaus ein Vertrauenssignal sein.

Wenn du im Mittelalter ein, eine Klinge aus Solingen bestellt hast, dann hatte die eine Meistermarke du wusstest, welcher Mensch diese Klinge geschmiedet hat oder aus welcher Meisterwerkstatt sie kam.

Dieser Mensch an sich stand schon für eine hohe Qualität manche von denen waren über Landesgrenzen hinweg bekannt in halb Europa und man wusste wenn man jetzt von von diesen Meistern ne Klinge hat ist was unglaublich Wertvolles und dafür hat man auch hohe Preise verlangen können.

Zusätzlich kam dazu dann diese Ortsmarke, wo diese Zunft in Solingen, die ihr Wissen nicht mit anderen geografischen Gebieten geteilt haben, eben auch noch dafür gesorgt hat, dass es ne besondere Qualitätsmarke war.

Und das ging immer mehr über zu komplexer werdenden Produktwelt immer mehr über dazu, dass diese Solingen Marke stärker wurde als die Meistermarke.

00:18:39

Und an diesem Moment zeigt sich, dass, dass, dass diese Vertrauensbildung eben von dem Menschen, den ich mir irgendwie noch vorstellen konnte, über den auch Geschichten erzählt wurden, übergang zu einer nicht menschlichen Marke, zu irgendwas, was über Menschen hinausgeht, mehrere Menschen vereint, eine Art Unternehmen irgendwann mal war.

00:19:06

Und trotzdem ist bis heute so, dass jede Marke versuchen muss, etwas, ein menschenähnliches Konstrukt im Kopf von Menschen zu sein, also irgendwas, was eine Identität und eine Werthaltung hat.

Was ein Gesicht nach Außen hat und vielleicht auch ne Stimme, mit der sie spricht.

Also etwas, wo unser Unterbewusstsein erstmal sagt, ja, das könnte was Vertrauenswürdiges sein, das ist nichts Abstraktes, kein Roboter, das ist kein, kein, keine Maschine, die mir

irgendwas verkaufen will, sondern das ist was, was ne Beziehung mit mir sucht, was mir vielleicht was zu erzählen hat.

Ähm. Etwas, was Ähnlichkeit mit mir hat identitätsmäßig, womit ich irgendwie resonier.

00:20:10

Und jetzt gehen wir seit vielen Jahren durch Social Media wieder in ne Zeit, in der Personenmarken wieder unglaubliche Reichweiten haben können, das war vor Social Media gar nicht vorstellbar, da gab es einzelne Personen in der Welt, die ne hohe Reichweite haben konnten, durch Intermediäre wie Zeitungen, Zeitschriften, TV, Sender.

Aber das waren dann ne handvoll Sportler, Schauspieler, Politiker, die irgendwie international bekannt waren und deren Stimme gehört wurden.

00:20:55

Durch Social Media ist dieses Game total fragmentiert geworden und Menschen in unterschiedlichen Gruppen formiert durch Lebenssituationen oder durch Interessen haben plötzlich sich gegenüber Leute aus Social Media, die ne hohe Reichweite haben, weil sie eben zu diesem Thema was beizutragen haben oder weil sie innerhalb einer Nische eine große Wirkkraft haben.

00:21:30

Und jetzt hast du das Beispiel Taylor Swift angesprochen, die als Künstlerin, wieder mal ein Riesenpublikum erreicht mehr, mehr vielleicht sogar als ein amerikanischer Präsident.

Trump zu sein zu seinen sehr provokanten Zeiten rund um den Wahlkampf, den er dann gewonnen hat, und seine ersten Präsidentschaftsmonate hatte sicher auch eine wahnsinnige Reichweite und ein Medienecho aber Taylor Swift ist gerade gefühlt nur von dem Aufmerksamkeitslevel, was sie bekommt, ähnlich hoch.

00:22:21

Du wolltest wissen, was für Unterschiede liegen in dem wie Personenmarken funktionieren und wie Unternehmensmarken funktionieren können.

Personenmarken haben an sich ständig Geschichten zu erzählen aus dem Alltag.

Taylor Swift kann Einblicke geben in ihren Touralltag, hat Sachen, über die sie sprechen kann das haben, müssen Unternehmensmarken erstmal erzeugen diese Geschichten, über die sie sprechen können.

Das tun sie über Personen innerhalb der Unternehmen, über Corporate Influencer, die Dinge erleben, die dann Dinge live stellen, über Live Events, die rund um die Marke stattfinden.

Oder eben durch Geschichten, die sie stricken, konzipieren und so dann in die Welt raustragen.

Rund um die Fußball EM, die hinter uns liegt hat, *Lidl* zum Beispiel die verrückte Geschichte gestrickt, das Lothar Matthäus verloren geht und wiedergefunden werden muss.

Auch was, was Aufmerksamkeit bekommen hat und auch was, was nur letztlich über echte Menschen im Social Media Game funktioniert hat, mit denen sich *Lidl* dann verbunden hat, in dem Fall Lothar Matthäus.

00:24:04

Ich glaube, um jetzt nen Schluss mal für den ersten Teil dieser Antwort zu finden, ich glaube, dass es nur über echte Menschen geht, das reine Unternehmensinhalte Entpersonalisierte auf Social Media gar nicht funktionieren können, weil denen dieses vertrauensbildende Element fehlt.

00:24:34

Kein Mensch möchte auf Social Media nur angebotsmäßige, angebotsmäßigen Content, Promotional Content, der irgendwie ein Produkt versucht zu verticken, sondern da geht man ja hin um inspiriert unterhalten oder aufgeschlaut zu werden.

Das suche ich eben bei menschlichen Charakteren.

00:25:11 Interviewer

Für dich persönlich, wenn es ums Kreieren von ner neuen Strategie neue Kampagne geht, was ist denn so für dich einfacher oder nicht einfacher, spannender, was macht dir mehr Spaß, wo, wo kannst du mehr drin aufgehen, ist es eher was, was irgendwie wirklich emotional, also hochemotionale Richtung geht, oder ist es eher was, was in dieses mehr Aktivistischere geht, wenn wenn die Marke eben dazu passt und auch dahintersteht? Oder verbindest du die Sachen?

00:25:38 Interviewee

Das sind natürlich gar keine Gegensätze.

Aktivismus arbeitete ja über Emotionalisierung.

Also versucht Wut in Leuten auszulösen, oder Hilflosigkeit zu zeigen, die in ne Selbstwirksamkeit umgeformt wird.

Ich hab mehr Freude daran, Leute mit positiven Emotionen zu erreichen, weiß aber als professioneller Kommunikator natürlich darum, dass mhm negative Emotionen erstmal

größere Relevanz Anker sind und höheres Inneres Aktivitätslevel in Leuten auslösen und dementsprechend auch mehr Involvement, mehr Beteiligung an der Sache.

00:26:45

Ich glaub nur, dass wir in ne ziemlich düstere Zukunft schauen, wenn jegliche Kommunikation, die irgendwie auf unseren social Feeds auftaucht, versucht uns mit negativen Emotionen zu erreichen.

Deswegen sehe ich es auch als unsere Pflicht als gute Kommunikatoren, dass wir Menschen immer wo es geht, auch über positive Geschichten und positive Emotionen erreichen.

00:27:23

Ich will damit nicht den Aktivisten bloß nicht absprechen, dass sie, dass sie irgendwas ändern sollen, nein, die müssen so arbeiten, aber Marken haben die Chance, auch andere Wege zu gehen.

00:27:36 Interviewer

Doch das find ich schön, der Gedanke, dass irgendwie mehr Positives wieder kommt auf Social Media.

Genau, also Zeitmäßig wär's das dann jetzt auch schon.

Jetzt war meine Abschlussfrage, gibt es noch was, was du einfach sagen willst, das findest du noch wichtig.

Gerade jetzt in diesem Bereich Storytelling, Aktivismus, Emotionalität, irgendwas, was du jetzt noch dazu sagen möchtest, was ich jetzt nicht gefragt habe oder wo du das Gefühl hast, du möchtest noch mal einfach anknüpfen.

00:28:11 Interviewee

Ich glaub ich will nur noch mal unterstreichen, wir sind, weil wir eine große Purpose Debatte auch in in den letzten Jahren in, in unserem Fachkreis debattiert haben dass Marken unbedingt nach ihrem Sinn und Zweck in dieser Welt suchen müssen.

Aber nicht jede Marke die Rolle einnehmen kann, die Welt zu retten aus Grund X oder Y.

Also nicht jede Marke kann ein großes aktivistisches Thema haben und trotzdem kann man im Kleineren über seinen Zweck, seine Bestimmung gute Kommunikation machen.

00:29:01

Als Beispiel, Wir haben für einen für ein Unternehmen, das im Maschinenbau und Robotikbereich arbeitet gemeinsam einen Purpose gefunden, also einen inneren Antrieb. Der heißt „gemeinsam morgen noch besser“.

Und der sagt jetzt nicht, wir werden irgendwie, wir werden die Welt retten, sondern heißt unser gemeinsamer innerer Antrieb ist Freude am Tüfteln, Freude am Weiterentwickeln zu haben und das in der Gemeinschaft zu tun.

Und was sich da für Kommunikationschancen und Geschichten daraus ergeben, ist unglaublich und ich würde nur jede Marke, jedes Unternehmen ermutigen, auch wenn Purpose als Begriff viel in Mitleidenschaft geraten ist nach ihrem warum nach ihrem inneren Leitstern oder ihrem inneren Antrieb zu suchen.

Und von da aus Markenkommunikation zu steuern, zu entwickeln, auch wenn es vielleicht nicht die der große Weltrettungsgedanke sein kann.

Ja.

00:30:21 Interviewer

OK, gut, Dankeschön.

00:30:24 Interviewee

Gerne.

Appendix B – Transcript Interview 1 English (Translation)

00:00:00 Interviewer

Okay, good, I'll better to this twice because.

00:00:03 Interviewee

I know the struggle.

00:00:05 Interviewer

Okay, so my first question would be, you guys work a lot with stories and the concept of stories here in the agency and I wanted to ask, what is important, what are the essentials when one is using storytelling for a marketing campaign? What would you focus on? What is important?

00:00:29 Interviewee

First of all it is important to have a good story, which is believable for the brand, not something fake. A story is about having a scenario A and a scenario B and a change or journey in between them.

And if you can manage to find something like a brand or a product which can add to or has added to significant change in the past, then this is always the best change the best story is the one which holds this power for change in it.

To be more specific, for example, for the *Diakonie Stetten* we tell the story that the people they look after, the residents, disabled people or people with handicaps, that they want to be an active part of life. And if you are able to be a part of their life via social media and see how they manage their everyday lives with the help of their nurses and are able to play an active part in life this is the real strength of the campaign.

00:01:43

And then you have to shorten this story to a billboard. For example, I wish for friends not pity. This is the fine art of creating storytelling in such a short piece of the whole story for it to work in low involvement situations with a short attention span.

00:02:12 Interviewer

Okay mhm, with the *Diakonie* it is personal insights into their lives but would you say it is possible to tell a story without this personal take or is it important that the story one is telling is true?

00:02:34 Interviewee

We as an agency are convinced that the best stories are the true ones. “Truth well told” is the theme of another agency group they used this as a claim which I think is unbelievable inspiring to say that it is all about finding the truth and telling it well.

Sometimes you have to make up stories of course. Come up with story anchors which could have happened that way, that’s for sure.

But your question was, the context of your dissertation is Instagram right?

00:03:23 Interviewer

Exactly, yes.

00:03:35 Interviewee

There, users have a high sensibility of they are confronted with true and real or made-up stories.

00:03:35 Interviewer

Okay.

00:03:36 Interviewee

Even when you are in the ad part on Instagram, it is weird when you come across a made-up TV spot campaign. That is just not the narrative for this channel.

We expect real insights into the lives of real people.

00:03:57 Interviewer

I would agree with this, yes.

Yes, Instagram or social media in general, you as an agency are using it as well and for your clients too.

How important would you rate the connection to the users?

Especially when one is placing ads on Instagram then it is something that is interrupting the normal feed and might be a rather annoying factor for users as it is disrupting their usual feed. **Is it still possible to use this or one's own channel to create a connection between brand and consumers and how important is this? How can one manage this?**

00:04:45 Interviewee

The key word here is relevance. I stick to the things that manage to catch my attention with their relevance. Whether that is in the normal feed, in stories or scrolling through reels. And there are a lot of different relevance factors.

But the most important thing is to find a topic that touches the user, something which has a place in the user's life.

On this platform we are surrounded by an endless number of hooks which are only trying to catch my attention without giving me anything relevant.

So, **the difference makes content which actually connects to the life of people** and which not only tells us five things about topic X which you don't really care about anyways.

00:05:58 Interviewer

Mhm, okay relevance.

This leads me to the next topic. This was a really good transition, topic activism in brands. As an example, the oat milk brand *Oatly* has the claim that they are very sustainable and are helping to work against climate change. What would you say how important is it for brands in the world we live in right now with topics such as climate change or feminism or the LGBTQ+ movement, how important is it for brands to jump on this activist train and how is this possible for a brand?

00:06:44 Interviewee

I have a problem with the phrase “jump on” because we as an agency feel strongly responsible for achieving long-term value for a brand and connecting the brand to a topic that believably fits them.

This is why jumping on to activist topics does not always work for brands when it is not in their DNA or the protagonists behind the brand do not stand behind an activist claim. In this case, it would be wrong to shape the brand’s appearance in this direction.

In the case of *Oatly* they are convinced of what they are doing, they really want to change the world. They knew this from the beginning of their communication that they want to communicate that they are not only selling a better tasting oat milk but that they want to change the world with this product which they want to give an alternative which is going to reduce animal suffering around the world.

00:08:03

I would answer the question if it is possible to jump on that train with: only if it fits the core of the brand or the DNA of the brand, if there is something already in the values of the brand. The other possibility is when the brand wants to conquer a topic because they realise WOW this is going to change us fundamentally as a business. We have to change in order to fit into this.

For example, in my childhood the brand *Rügenwalder Mühle* was famous for the product “*Pommersche*” a sausage made of liver which everyone enjoyed at a huge village festival and everyone was dancing and everything was great.

00:08:54

Animal suffering was not a big topic at the time. Even though there were activists at the time such as *PETA* or *Greenpeace* it was not a topic concerning all of society.

Today it is a topic which concerns society as a whole and *Rügenwalder Mühle* realised this quite early, around five or ten years ago and managed to react. For them this also came with a change within the business where the next generation took over and said we have to adapt as a meat producer because this cannot be our future we will go the way towards the future and start to offer vegan alternatives. They did this in a big way with a lot of bravery and today they are rightfully known for great alternative products even though they also still have animal-based products.

And I think this example shows that it was more than just jumping on because it shows a change within the brand and the business towards a topic fuelled by activists is possible but it has to be done in a believable manner.

00:10:28 Interviewer

So, the brand needs to have these values already but maybe has not mentioned them yet in order for it to be possible to steer this way in a believable manner or they actually have to change themselves in order to sound believable. The brand has to stand behind those values in order to be believable, same as with storytelling?

00:10: 50 Interviewee

I also think that it can be quite dangerous to just post a rainbow flag for *CSD* Day and do a statement once. That's not enough and the queer community will realise very quickly that it is just lip service.

Other than this nothing else happens within the company. Colleagues of the queer scene are still disadvantaged or excluded in these companies and then people from this community scroll back and realise, oh yeah, they did the same thing exactly one year ago and then this is only lip service and will be received negatively by the people who really care about it.

00:11:54 Interviewer

Yeah, I think about two years ago during pride month a lot of companies received negative comments because they talked about it for this month only and after this everything was gone again.

00:12:13

Okay, so I have two big topics left. First, I wanted to ask if you have heard of the rhetoric of Aristotle, do you know the terms ethos and pathos?

00:12:23 Interviewee

Yes, ethos, pathos, logos, yes.

00:12:25 Interviewer

Okay, great because this connection is part of my master dissertation.

What would you say, are ethos and pathos, so the speaker and evoking emotions in the audience, or in a modern way in a community, are these things which are being actively used for marketing strategies or is it not used with the focus on these ancient methods?

00:12:54 Interviewee

I would say the marketing world has found different terms for this but of course it is still used.

So, logos is the rational argument

Today there are still communication strategies that work with a factual argument or the reason to believe, how it is called as well.

When it comes to ethos, I think Aristotle himself said it's about making oneself appear trustworthy.

00:13:35 Interviewer

Yes, exactly.

00:13:40 Interviewee

Trust elements is the term used in today's marketing language, using seals or voice of customers as references.

Capture something which gives this trust and credibility. A blue icon on Instagram can be an ethos signal as well.

00:14:04

Pathos is used with phrases such as “this has to explode”, “this needs to emotionalise”.

Or things like can we find a more powerful hook, when talking about the Instagram universe it has to be something which gets users to act at the end of the day and be a thumb stopping force. It is the beginning of a reel or the first line I am reading which captures me and pulls me in, so I am hooked.

00:14:48

I would say that the communication Instagram needs today is made of the three aspects of a persuasive speech Aristotle described. But in professional circles you would not discuss them after his model.

00:15:07 Interviewer

But you can definitely still find it. Adjusted.

00:15:09 Interviewee

Yes, yes.

00:15:12 Interviewer

Okay, interesting.

00:15:14 Interviewee

Side fact about this, they examined the 100 most successful *TED Talks* to see how logos, ethos and pathos are distributed in them.

What do you think?

00:15:31 Interviewer

I would say pathos is the most used one.

00:15:35 Interviewee

By far. I think it was 65% if I remember correctly.

00:15:40 Interviewer

Wow, okay.

00:15:43 Interviewee

Is the amount in ten to 12-minute speeches the highest.

The rational argument takes up around 20 or 25% and then there is a bit of ethos left.

00:15:43 Interviewer

Okay, interesting.

Cool, okay one more thing. This is now taking a step away from the typical world of brands I would say.

Taylor Swift is, I'm going to put it this way, exploding right now. She is everywhere right now with her success. One could say she has her very own personal marketing strategy in the way she commercialises herself, in the way she records her songs and releases them and how she is dropping hints or now her shows as well.

And, what would you say are the big differences between a personal brand or commercialising one personal and a more classical brand that wants to sell a product or a service. What would you say are the big differences there?

00:17:01 Interviewee

Can I start with what they have in common?

00:17:03 Interviewer

Of course.

00:17:07 Interviewee

Okay so, the reason why we are talking about differences in the first place is because brands have a certain purpose derived from their history, install trust in customers.

Brands were supposed to be a sign of trust beyond the person.

During the Middle Ages if you would order a blade from Solingen, it would have been a master brand and you knew exactly who would have forged it or from which master forge it came.

This person stood for high quality and was well known over country borders through half of Europe. You knew if you had a blade from this master, it was something very valuable and so they could demand high prices for it.

Additional to that you had the brand of the location of the guild in Solingen which would not share their secrets with other geographical areas which added on to them being a special high-quality brand.

And then the product world got more and more complex up until the point that the brand Solingen became stronger than the master brand of the person.

00:18:39

And this shows how trust building goes from the person who I can somehow imagine and who I can hear stories about towards a non-human brand. Towards something that goes beyond the people and connect many different people which then turned into some sort of company.

00:19:06

But up until today it is important for brands to create a human like construct in people's heads, create something with an identity and certain values.

Something which has a face and maybe even a voice.

It has to be something where our subconscious self decides that this is something trustworthy, not something abstract, not a robot not a machine that wants to sell something but something that tries to build a relationship with me something that might have to tell me something.

Something that is similar to me, something I can identify with.

00:20:10

And now with social media we are back at a time where personal brands can achieve an enormous reach which was unimaginable before social media. Then it was just a few people around the world which would achieve a wide reach through intermediaries such as newspaper, magazines and tv.

But it was only a few athletes, actors or politicians who would achieve international fame and whose voices were heard.

00:20:55

Because of social media this changed and people in various groups which are designed through living situations or interests are now having people in front of them on social media with a high reach because they have to add something to this specific topic or because they have a high effectiveness within this niche.

00:21:30

And now you have mentioned the example of Taylor Swift who, as an artist, manages to reach a huge audience, maybe even more than the American president.

Of course, Trump had an enormous reach and media echo during his provoking times during the election campaign which he won in the and during his first months as president but just from the level of attention she gets right now, Taylor Swift is at a similar level.

00:22:21

You wanted to know where the differences are in how personal brands and business brands work.

Personal brands can always tell stories about their everyday lives.

Taylor Swift can talk about her life on tour and has things she can talk about. Business brands have to create these stories they want to talk about.

In order to do that they use people inside the company or corporate influencers who experience things and then post them live and with live events around the brand.

Or they create made up stories and share them with the world.

During the European Football Cup which just happened *Lidl*, for example, created this crazy story about Lothar Matthäus getting lost and having to be found again.

Something which got a lot of attention but which in the end did only work because of real people in the social media game who connected with *Lidl*, in this case Lothar Matthäus.

00:24:04

To come to a conclusion for this answer I think it only works with real people. Business only content which is not personal on social media does not work because it is missing the trust element.

00:24:34

No one wants to get only sales content and promotional content on social media which tries to sell you a product. On social media you want to be inspired or amused or educated and this is something I look for in human characters.

00:25:11 Interviewer

For you personally, when you are creating a new strategy for a new campaign what is easier, or not easier but more exciting what do you enjoy more, something that is highly emotional or something which goes more into an activist direction if it fits the brand and they stand behind it? Or do you connect those things?

00:25:38 Interviewee

They are of course no opposites.

Activism works with emotionalization.

It tries to evoke anger in people or a feeling of being helpless which will then be changed into self-efficacy.

I prefer to reach people with positive emotions I enjoy it more but as a professional communicator I, of course, understand that negative emotions are the bigger relevance anchor and that they activate a higher inner action level and therefore more involvement or participation for the thing.

00:26:45

I just think we are heading towards a very dark future if every communication which somehow ends up in our social feeds tries to reach us with negative emotions.

This is why I think it is our responsibility as good communicators that we try to reach people with positive stories and positive emotions wherever it is possible.

00:27:23

Of course, I don't want to tell activist that they have to change anything, no, they have to work in this way but brands have the chance to go different ways.

00:27:36 Interviewer

I like this idea of having more positive input on social media.

Okay, so timewise this is about it.

My last question is for you to tell me if there is anything else you want to say, something you find important.

Especially in the areas of storytelling, activism, emotions, anything you want to add that I didn't ask or where you feel like you want to add something?

00:28:11 Interviewee

I think, because we had a big purpose debate in our area of expertise, I want to underline that it is important for brands to find their purpose in the world.

But not every brand can take on the role of saving the world because of reason X or Y.

This means not every brand can have a big activist theme but they can still make great communication because of their very own purpose.

00:29:01

As an example, we found a purpose together with a company working in the mechanical engineering and robotic sector. And together with them we came up with their inner purpose "together tomorrow even better".

And this does not say we are going to save the world. It means that our inner drive is to experiment and the joy of further development and doing this as a team together.

And the stories and ways of communication that came out of this are unbelievable and I would like to encourage every brand, even though the word purpose has been overused in maybe not the best of ways, to look for their inner drive and to steer and create brand communication from this inner drive even if it cannot be the big saving the world idea.

Yes.

00:30:21 Interviewer

Okay, great, thank you.

00:30:24 Interviewee

My pleasure

Appendix C – Transcript Interview 2

00:00:00 Interviewer

M right, hang on. OK, perfect.

OK, so my first question to you is why are you a Taylor Swift fan or are you even a Taylor Swift fan? And if yes, how did you become one?

00:00:20 Interviewee

To be honest, I am not a Taylor Swift fan.

I mean, I know her because of the media and when I saw the *Hannah Montana Movie* that was the first time that I that I met her not met her but that I realised that she existed, like many many many years ago.

And yeah, I was never a fan, to be honest. I have a lot of friends that are fans, and of course she's always present in social media. And now with the giant *Eras Tour* also, she's been around forever. But yeah, I don't know. I was never a fan. Not a hater. Like, I'm just I I don't listen to her music but I don't hate her music either, you know.

If I hear a Taylor Swift song in the in the radio in the car radio I would I would keep it, but it's not like I listen to her like constantly or whatever. Yes.

00:01:16 Interviewer

OK, but did you go to the *Eras Tour*?

00:01:19 Interviewee

Yes, yes, I went to the *Eras Tour*.

00:01:23 Interviewer

And how like did you like it? How was it for you as a non-fan?

00:01:28 Interviewee

Yeah, I mean, I went because I had a friend who got a ticket.

And it was very funny because uh, she was in the line for the ticket. And I told her out of, like, a joke. Like, oh, if you get a ticket, if you manage to get two tickets, tell me and I would go with you. And at the end, she was able to get two tickets. So, she gave me one, and I ended up going with her and her group of friends.

00:01:50

Uh, it was very excited because I love music, I love live music and I love going to concerts and of course the *Eras Tour* is uh, it's a milestone in concert beginning with like, I think that Taylor Swift is probably like the first person doing like a three and a half hour show in big

arenas with this whole big, big, big production. So of course, it's something super interesting to go and see live and also because it's a tour that it's been going on for almost two years now, so I've been seeing it a lot in social media and I think that it's I think that I went more than because I like the music.

I I went because I wanted to experience like the experience of going to the *Eras Tour*, which was amazing, really like, even for me that I know some songs of course, there were times where I didn't know, like what was going on but even in those times, the production was so amazing that I can I understand now the fuss.

00:02:55

Like at the beginning probably I was a little bit sceptical like like uh, before going to the *Eras Tour* like, yeah, ok, It's an amazing concert, but what what is the fuss about it?

Like, why are people so obsessed with this? Like it's just the concert. But after going, I realised, like, no yeah, they're completely right. Like, this is amazing. She is an amazing, amazing artist the way she connects with people in the concert, the way she interacts it's super nice and how everything is uhm, it's a concert made for fans.

Like I was that's something that I thought about a lot after the concert, like for example, I'm I'm a big Coldplay fan and if I had something like an *Eras Tour* for Coldplay, I would be mad.

Like because going to the whole eras and stuff I I would absolutely lose my mind.

00:03:44

So not being on Taylor Swift fan and and enjoying it that much, I really can't imagine how it would have been for a die-hard Taylor Swift fan.

I think that is for losing your mind, really, I would lose my mind if I was a fan. It's it's incredible. Yes, I enjoyed it very, very much.

00:04:02 Interviewer

That sounds so cool that sounds so good.

Do you have like, a favourite moment of the concert? Like of the show?

00:04:12 Interviewee

I think, yeah. Yeah, yeah. I mean, there was a moment where I don't remember the era of them, but there was a moment where everybody was cheering so, so much.

I think that it was first time that Taylor Swift came to Lisbon so like all the fans were super, super excited and you could see, like, the vibe, what people were really excited like to be in the concert.

And there was a time in the like, mid concert that people were cheering. So, so, so much the the people in charge of the stadium. Uh, turn on the lights and you could see the the whole concert like, oh, and I think that it was an ovation of, like, probably five minutes, which is super long and you could and you could see like the vibe, you know, like not only seeing Taylor Swift, like super emotional and like, oh, my God, like, what's going on, but also seeing people around you that were, like losing their minds and screaming.

00:05:11

It was that I think that that was my favourite part of the concert and also, I went with a group of friends from my previous job and with the two little sisters of one of my colleagues and they were all dressed up with their and with and exchanging bracelets.

And they were they were like probably 12 years old, and you could see that they were so excited and having the time of their lives. So, like, just watching them, also enjoying the concert was so, so nice.

00:05:40 Interviewer

Ohh that sounds so great. That sounds so amazing.

So, as you already said like this is a very emotional experience, obviously. What do you think like what emotions would you as like kind of an approach from an outside perspective would connect with Taylor Swift?

Like what connections do you think or like what emotions do you connect with her, her music and her concert and her fans as well?

00:06:08 Interviewee

For sure **nostalgia**.

I think that it's a **very nostalgic concert** because you go through every era and, for example, I don't know when they went for from the first era, like when they were singing love, *Love Story* for example, or like these very old songs that I listened when I was 13, when the *Hannah Montana Movie* was released, for example.

Uh, it's super nice like it, it brings you uh, **I remember when I listened to it when I was 13 in my high school, you know?** Like, so I think that **nostalgia is a key emotion** like for this type of concert where you go, era and era like era, like all the eras of Taylor Swift.

Uh. Also like.

00:06:46

Like I don't know, it's the feeling of being part of something super big, like even if you don't know the people you're going to in the concert, you can see that everybody's vibing to the same thing, you know.

And for me, not not knowing every song or not being a fan, I didn't feel excluded.

Because I could see the the other I I was attending with people that were super, super fans and surrounding me there were also people that were like, had their costumes and their bracelets and like all these things.

But I never felt like I was not part of it, you know?

I think that uh, yeah, it was very exciting to be part of this really.

00:07:34 Interviewer

OK, that, that sounds, that sounds so cool. So, it's like a big open community and a very welcoming one.

00:07:41 Interviewee

Yeah. And even for example, before the concert started, like to enter the stadium, it was very, very hard uh, because there were a lot of people, uh, trying to get in and it was not very organised.

But even though everything was super stressful outside, you could see that everybody was taking care of everybody, you know, like you could see like all of because it was like 90% girls, so the all the girls were with their whole makeups and costumes were like taking care of the little ones.

Even if you didn't know each other, we were all like, very careful like, hey, you know, like, let's do this the right the the right way like we need to have fun.

So it's like a it's a nice community and I really like that I've been to a lot of concerts in my life and it's something that I always feel when I go to concerts but especially for Taylor Swift, it was I think that stronger in a way, and maybe it's because of, I don't know you see all of these people with their makeups and their and they're dressed and exchanging bracelets and it's super nice also that I saw that a lot in Instagram for example, before going to the concert and now seeing it live it's like oh, this is real.

00:08:45

Like it's not a pose or something that people post in social media just because like this really really happens and you can see girls with bags of the friendship bracelets and they are exchanging it and no, it's it's super nice. It's like being part of something big, really.

00:09:03 Interviewer

Yeah, that sounds that sounds so, so wholesome and so beautiful.

00:09:07 Interviewee

Yeah.

00:09:09 Interviewer

Do you think like, what do you think makes her different or like how is she different from other celebrities?

Because obviously she's, she's huge she's so successful and like, where do you think is that success coming from compared to other celebrities? What makes her so unique?

00:09:26 Interviewee

Well, of course it's undeniable that she's incredibly talented like she's an amazing, amazing singer.

I think that I I didn't hear her like out of tune in the whole three hours and a half. Also, that you can see that the all the effort behind uh, it's she really got gets to the top of everything you know, nothing is random. Like everything has a purpose in the concert and the colours and the light.

She there's a really you can see the the attention to detail and even I realise that I'm not a fan like people that are fans maybe they would catch more Easter eggs and I think that that that's super she's super smart in doing that like she's always giving hints to people that are fans, like with the lyrics and with the type of colours and the things like for example, I think that the I went to the Lisbon concert the first night and I think it was one of the first concerts with the last the *Tortured Poets Department*. It was like the one of the first times that she played like that set in the *Eras Tour* and you could see that everybody was like because she wears like this dress with like the lyrics and everybody was like, oh, like catching everything.

00:10:46

So, they, they don't miss anything. I think that marketing in community towards like her whole history, I believe.

And the product, it's incredible like the production, the, the, the fact that she's there singing for three and a half hours, it's insane, insane. And she does it in a very, very good way, the three and a half hours, like there's not a time where you see her tired, for example.

And you can see like that commitment to her job and I think that that's what makes her different.

00:11:24

Not only the the connection that she has with her fan base, but you can see all the work behind and I think that that makes a huge, huge difference like she really you she works a lot for what she like you can realise.

00:11:38 Interviewer

OK. Very interesting. Very interesting.

If you like look at Taylor Swift, apart from her music like taking all the music part, the concert away from it, what do you connect with the name Taylor Swift?

00:11:55 Interviewee

Like what? What? My I didn't understand what? I'm sorry.

00:11:58 Interviewer

I'm sorry, it's fine. It's so like outside of music like, apart from that, what do you connect with the name Taylor Swift?

Like, if you think about her not connecting her to music, how how do you like how do you picture her? What image do you have of her? How do you see her?

00:12:14 Interviewee

Uh, I see her as somebody **very unreachable**, to be honest almost like a robot, maybe because she's incredibly perfect, like, and every time you see her like it yeah, I see see her I relate her to somebody that it's like a huge superstar like, Super Stars that are like once in a lifetime like huge, huge.

I think that I also connect her a lot with pollution maybe.

00:12:45 Interviewer

OK.

Interviewee

Yes, I mean, **I don't know if I'm biased like the social media or whatever**, but **I I do connect her a lot with like the plane rides** and and I don't know, for example, not not to compare, but you see this whole production in the concert and you know that it's probably uh they it's ok,

this whole concert, um, pollute a lot and I don't see a lot of measures taking care for uh, reducing the carbon print, for example Coldplay does that.

They are also doing a huge, huge tour. Not as big as the *Eras Tour*, but they're also doing like this two years huge tour and they pay attention a lot and they are aware of like the huge carbon print that they their concerts make so yeah, **I think that I also I associate her a lot with like, not green, not green.**

00:13:44 Interviewer

OK. OK. Yeah, that's that's very interesting. Yeah, I've seen a lot about, like her private jet as well, and how much she flies. And all of that.

So OK, interesting. I feel like this is coming like this coming from a non-*Swift* is probably why it's more critical. I feel like if I ask like a full on *Swift*, it might be different.

00:14:05 Interviewee

No, of course, of course. No, no. But not not only because of the private jets, it's it's the whole work of doing a a production like this, it requires a lot of pollution, you know.

00:14:17 Interviewer

Yeah, obviously.

Interviewee

Maybe it's because I am biased with the whole jet thing that it's like I'm looking more careful into this detail, you know, but yeah.

00:14:28 Interviewer

But it's so interesting how how is it different from Coldplay? Like what is Coldplay doing?

00:14:33 Interviewee

They do they do a lot of stuff, like for example, everything is renewable in their concert, but when you get we, **you get the same wristband that shines and sparkles to the rhythm of music. I mean, Taylor Swift, nobody asked me to return it for example, I still have it.** In Coldplay they require they request you to give it back. And there's like this whole ranking of of countries that like, for example, I don't know, Santiago, Chile, 93% of the people returned the bracelet. Rome 92 like. And they have like, this ranking that they update every concert.

00:15:05

The whole concert is powered by green electricity, like by green energy, and you can see people like, for example, riding bikes in the concert that they are providing the energy to light up the stadium, you know, or the on the whole floor, I don't know if this marketing or

not, but at least they, but they are they're doing in their social media where they are informing like for example, the whole floor of the pits it's kinetic, so when people jump, they are powering the like the lights of the concert.

00:15:39

Everything is made of recyclable materials. They fly commercial, they try not to fly in in private jets, they try to when they're travelling in Europe, they they transport the equipment like by land, so they don't fly, you know, like they're taking care of.

And it's a huge like for example, at the beginning of the concert they play uh, a video where they inform about all of the like, for example the money that you paid for this ticket, it's going like 90% is going to this organisation that is taking care of Amazon Forrest like they they have a huge, the whole tour revolves on the green side of making tours, you.

00:16:26 Interviewer

Wow, that's so interesting. I did not know that that is so cool.

Wow. OK, go. Coldplay.

I have a story to that as soon as we're finished with this, I have a Coldplay story as well. **Ok, so do you think like back to Taylor Swift, do you think there is a strategy behind her brand and if so, what kind of strategy?**

00:16:54 Interviewee

I think, yeah, I mean, being a huge artist like she is, of course, there must be a strategy behind probably picturing her like this perfect person is a strategy like being unobtainable and like looking up to somebody that it's almost not a human, of course is.

It makes her more desirable, but also with the little hint of always providing these easter eggs for her fan base and I think that she works a lot probably with the fan base like there, there must be organisation behind it like talking with the fan groups of each country or the biggest ones like I, I think that she has been super intelligent and super smart in providing information to the fans so they can be an active part in their marketing strategy not only her as a as a singer and like Taylor Swift Incorporation but the fans you know, and they are huge, like for example, in South America, the Argentinian fan base is absolutely crazy, you know? And when she came to Buenos Aires, they did these whole activities revolting Taylor Swift. And it was the first time that she came to South America and a lot of people travelled from all over the South America to go see her in Buenos Aires and I think that fans have to do a lot in it with it, you know.

00:18:30

I think that for sure she has a strategy behind it, like with the different fan bases.

00:18:35 Interviewer

So you feel like the the connective part is like the biggest thing she does, like connecting, connecting fans, but connecting herself with them as well?

Interviewee

Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Yes, yes. Because even though like for me that I'm not a really, really a fan, I see here like this perfect person that is probably unreachable but probably for a fan also she is like this, but she sees these little connections with all the little things that she says when connecting the lyric A with the lyric B and the colours of, you know, like she's been super detail oriented in that sense and that makes community that makes people talk about it like, for example, when she released the the new album that people started to analyse the lyrics and counting, I don't know if it was like with fortnights. I believe with the with the video clip.

00:19:25 Interviewer

Yeah, I think I think so, yeah.

00:19:27 Interviewee

That the people were counting 13 rows and I don't know and it 13 is the lucky number and yeah makes you like to talk about and he's been super smart about it. Having the people making conversation about her all the time, you know?

00:19:46

Being updated.

00:19:49 Interviewer

OK, interesting. And one last real question about the connective part, like what do you think like which role does Instagram play for you in connection to her as not being a fan but also for her in general and maybe for fans like super hard fans like which role would you grant Instagram for it?

00:20:10 Interviewee

Uh. I mean now in yeah, probably like she's posting every concert I believe.

Yeah Instagram more like to show what she's doing in the concerts. Like, of course it's super emotional. Also, when you like, for example, after she played in Lisbon, I went to her

Instagram and I saw that she posted a picture in Lisbon like, oh, thank you, Lisbon. And it's like, oh, I was there like.

I think that that's the connection part like because to be honest, I don't I follow her, but I'm not she's not in my top. She doesn't appear a lot in my feed.

So I don't know if she posts a lot of a lot of stories, but.

Having that connection with the people that went to the concert and then releasing the albums? Yeah. To be honest, I don't know really well because I don't it's not really, she's not really in my feed.

00:21:09 Interviewer

OK. Yeah. No, that's fair. That's fair. That's fair. OK, is there anything you would like to add in general about Taylor Swift, your experience of her or anything?

00:21:21 Interviewee

No, yeah, that it is amazing to to see the phenomenon that Taylor Swift is now after going to the *Eras Tour* I really understand why she's this big.

And I that's something that I tried to explain also to people that are not fans and that tell me like, yeah, but why did you went to the *Eras Tour*? You don't like Taylor Swift that much and it's like, no, yeah, but it's it was so nice to actually understand first, how big she is, because of course you can see a lot of stuff in social media and you may think that, oh yeah, but probably they're being amplified because it's social media.

But no, like you actually then go to the concert and you see all of these people in costumes and with the friendship bracelets and having this in in living the concert with this intensity and you realise that it's a real movement, you know.

And the it's it and that it's incredible also because she has been able to be like to keep being updated in time because if you think about it like she's been around for how much, how many years like 15?

00:22:28 Interviewer

Yeah.

00:22:30 Interviewee

15 years and she's still the biggest artist now, you know.

And I can I can really realise why, like you can I can see that the production and what she does and the the music and what how she does all the marketing and everything it's it's insane, really I think that it's a it's a it's a case study for sure.

On how she is so successful in what she does, because she's clearly doing something that others are not doing and it's working for sure.

00:23:00 Interviewer

Yeah, ok very interesting. Thank you so much.

Appendix D – Transcript Interview 3

The transcription of this interview starts at 00:00:59 because the recording started when the researcher and the participant were still having a conversation not concerning the interview. Therefore, the transcription starts at the time the actual interview started.

00:00:59 Interviewer

Yeah. OK, let's go. So, first question, why are you a Taylor Swift fan and how did you become one?

00:01:11 Interviewee

So I've been following Taylor Swift like since around her like begin again like her *Red Era*. So like that's when I first encounter her like music videos. So I remember I really liked no. Wait, I'll circle back again the first time I've heard about Taylor Swift was about was on *Glee*. When, when? What's her name? Santana sang *Mine* to to Brittany on that episode. And I remember I loved the song so much. And I was like who is this? I was around like 12-13 around that time I was mainly focused on One Direction, but I remember like was the time that I got more access to like *YouTube* and everything and I remember like listening to that song on *Glee*. And I was like, this song is so beautiful. Who wrote it. And that's when I discovered Taylor Swift for her *Fearless* album so and that's when I started as well to kind of see her like how like her other music videos. So, at the time I was so I had, I was like 14. So, she was already in her *Red Era*.

So, I kind of like was able to watch like *You Belong With Me. Mine*. I remember enjoying *You Belong With Me* so much. I remember enjoying *Begin Again Back to December. Ours* too.

And like 22 as well. And that's also like when she started booming with like, the *We Are Never Getting Back Together*. So, it was kind of like the perfect recipe for me to know who she was at the time. And then, like, I was not what you would be considered a *Swiftie* like. Not how I am today. I was very much like I would follow her because I knew how big she was and I knew that she had really good songs, especially after *1989*, came out. I really love like *Shake It Off* and like *Wildest Dreams* like she did a bunch of like for me, I think *Blank Space* really up to up the charts. And that's how like I started, I was like, this is proper like production. So I was thinking, OK, I need to follow this person.

And that's what I did. Like when the whole situation I remember vividly. Like I didn't know what happened but I knew she kind of went missing on social media and then she just literally came back out of nowhere. And I remember like, watching the premiere of *Look What You Made Me Do* and I didn't like it at first because it's it was like, so it was so like repeat like, it repeated so much. And that's kind of like how I kinda kinda lost the interest on her again. So, it was kind of ups and downs.

I remember like when she also went COVID like when *Lover* came, I remember watching *Lover* with my mom like watching *ME!* and and we were like, oh my God, this is amazing. And it was really nice. And then I remember my sister also watching. She was like three or four years old. Four years, four years old. So she was watching with us and everything. So. And then we knew that she was coming to Portugal. So in 2020. So we're like, OK, let's get tickets because my mom really wanted to get tickets. And then after that, I remember she she launched *folklore* and I listening to listen to the first time and believe it or not, like I didn't like it. I was just like, I don't like it.

And then I was just like, I'm not gonna follow. Like I I would see her videos, her music videos and everything. But I would just, like, go back to *Ours*, *Mine* to that eras. More country like songs. Yeah.

And then after like, my mom was still very interested in what she was doing and everything, and I remember she had the *reputations* tour on Netflix and my mom was like ironing and she was putting that and then she went to the living room, and that's the first time I heard *This Is Why We Can't Have Nice Things* and *How It Was*. And I was like, this is cool. Like, I like this all. And and this was around the time that *Midnights* came out too.

So I kind of went to like when I would go to to uni by subway or by train and everything. I would start listening to her albums and that's when I fell in love with her like I think Taylor is more of a person that you have to listening listen to more times because she's not very like straightforward. She's very, very sneaky. And then the things that she does and she she writes and sings about. And I think that's for me, has been like the most amazing thing ever was to be able to fall in love with like an artist and their and their work through like their poetic lyrics.

So. So yeah. So that's how I fell in love with Taylor. And I became a *Swiftie*.

That's it.

00:06:31 Interviewer

That's it's very interesting because you're the second person who, who, who knows Taylor Swift from like, a a TV show or a movie because *** [name deleted for reasons of anonymity] told me that she the first time she ever heard about Taylor Swift was when she was in the *Hannah Montana Movie*.

00:06:46 Interviewee

Not even that. Like I just it was, I remember a few years after that they mentioned that, that she was there and I was like that was her?

Like I just I've heard about Taylor Swift. I didn't even heard her name because they don't say it's her song on *Glee*.

I just went to Google it and it was crazy, just like oh.

00:07:06 Interviewer

That's so interesting, but when you're saying like you had ups and downs with the the different albums like you didn't like *folklore*, what did you think about *The Tortured Poets Department*? Like, did you like that one?

00:07:16 Interviewee

That one I liked I almost cry when I found out it was like a second like drop. Hmm. I almost cried and I was just like this is so cool.

I think again, like there's some songs that you need to listen to over and over again. I have this thing of that I love to like listening to like, like, I get obsessed on one song I remember like for a long time.

I was, like, so obsessed with *Black Dog* and like *The Smallest Man Who Ever Lived*, like I was so upset with those two. But then it depends like on your mood, because I think she kind of has like a jukebox like a record player, it's like, what do you what do you feel now and then? It's like Moody, and then you have like a set list of her for for moody songs.

So, it's kind of fun, like she has a lot of like, different songs that can relate to you different levels. It doesn't have to be like a man and be like situation.

00:08:10 Interviewer

That's very interesting. So you have a song for every situation with her?

00:08:14 Interviewee

Yeah, like for me, I think I can, like I can relate. And I think that's what she wanted. She doesn't want you to find out, like the secret behind me because it's like Travis Kelsey or Joe or whatever. No, it's just like it's kind of like how do you relate to it, cause for sure it for her

it related to something but for us it also can relate to something like for example like with the Vienna stuff. For me like *Loss of My Life (loml)* has a different meaning like it's not like it's not to like to a person that I love, but yes, to like the concert. Like for me it was literally for now, the loss of my life, cause I really wanted to see her.

So, I think we can get kind of the songs like for example *We Are Never Getting Back Together*. I can do that to like a friendship, like it doesn't have to be like a relationship with like with a person. Yeah.

So or like my even though, like the lyrics might not, all the lyrics, for example the *Mine* songs like it talks about like kitchen bills and whatever, and it's about like overcoming those obstacles. But you can sing that to, to your, to your kid because like, that's the best thing that's ever there, you know, like or so. Yeah.

So, I think you can like even for example like a lot of the girls in Vienna were singing *The Smallest Men Who Ever Lived* to the terrorists, you know, like they were the smallest men ever because they took us something that that they can like, you know.

And and again like with the community. Like, again. *Thank You, Amy*. Of course, it's a big indirect to like Kanye and Kim.

But The thing is like they can undo like you have to be grateful for the people who stabbed you in the back and made you stronger actually, so yeah.

Yeah. So, it relates to her life, but that shows how, like celebrities, have a very similar life to ours. Maybe bigger proportions, of course, but they have similar lives to ours. They have big feelings, and that's one of the things I love most about Taylor.

00:10:16

Is that she's a very feelings person and she can translate them very well on, on paper. I wish I could do that.

00:10:24

She can translate them, translate it so well on paper and for me, that's like, that's something I wish I could do, and I'm a very feeling person. You as my interviewer and my close friend. You know that I love feelings. I love feeling feelings and I'm a very feeling person and she's the same. And I'd like to relate to that that for me authenticity is so important nowadays and and that's like what I see from her like her videos no, but like her songs like even for example, I love the metaphor she does. For example, the the *Fortnite* song, Monday, Monday stuck

like February. Like I don't remember the lyric, but every Monday feels like the end of February. Like it's continuing to be like all at all time, February cause it never ends.

00:11:17

I love that. Like that kind of like that like comparison like I love that I love doing like metaphorical stuff because sometimes people don't quite understand very well, when we say like so like explicitly and when you do like an allegory or like a comparison to something, I think it's so helpful. And I think maybe that's what people like people need to be seen and heard and feel seen and feel heard. And that's what Taylor does to them. And that's what matters most.

00:11:51 Interviewer

And that's very beautifully said. So, like emotional wise, you mentioned that you have songs for different situations and that it really depends on how you feel in the moment and how you relate to what she says and sings. But is there, like any like specific emotion that you maybe connect with Taylor Swift usually and also connect with her now after the thing that happened in Vienna, not being able to attend the concert?

00:12:24 Interviewee

I think like emotion that I can feel its disappointment.

Because she has a lot of songs about being disappointed about the guys she's dating

00:12:35

And like I said to you before, like of course I understand. Taylor that what she thought was needed to like, I understand completely. But that also, like, does not entitle her to not let me have my feelings. And I as much as she got like, like disappointed with the whole situation and frightened like I also was.

Like I said, waited a whole year, I spent so much money like I cannot go see her to London or like or or if I want to go see her in Canada, I have to pay €1000 for tickets and then €1000 for flight tickets.

And it's like I don't have any other opportunity, you know and and one thing that her brand and her like her actions, which she does like outside to build, to build her community, prove that she's a person who loves her fans and everything.

And to be honest, I think we have yet to be see that to to be to see that we have yet to see that. But I think I was really hoping that she would give us a solution and it's not the next

tour like I understand. Like I really. I'm gonna go to the next tour to the other to the other whatever.

00:13:45

But I wish she we would have like I don't know some kind of some kind of like, not price, but solution to to a situation that's so sad.

And I know that I feel like a brat be a bit selfish, saying that. I know that. But like, *that's how she portrays to be*. That's how her actions to the public show who she is. And I really thought that's she was gonna come up with a solution by now.

Of course. Like, if she doesn't come now, like I still have hopeful for that, even if it's whatever solution.

But it was really hard, *like seeing the community that we want to be part of, like attack us like the Vienna Swifties to a way*, I felt so disappointed, like by the Community like *I felt so sad, like not seen, not heard* like people didn't understand and then they were talking to people who are like Austrian, Austrian, Austrian. That's how you say it. Mm-hmm. And Austrian and like German people and, like, Nordic people are very, very like way more closed and more like straightforward to the point than, for example, American people and American *Swifties* don't understand.

00:15:04

That sometimes these people like like people from these countries and these cultures, like May may say some stuff that they might not actually believe in, but it's just like the way that they want to express themselves. They're just *frustrated* like they're not taking out of Taylor. Of course, they were jackasses who did that I'm not saying otherwise. And that's why she put that on their description.

00:15:26

But again like I know it's is is security issue. I know that she was waiting but I still wanted to listen from her. Like is that an issue for me to understand but at the same time want something different?

Like it was always going to be a lose lose situation. So, I *think for me the biggest emotion I feel and I think I can very relate to to to tell her on that it's like disappointment*.

You know, like the tour was going so well. Like, of course we had that really big bump in Brazil. It was really bad and and then this and it's it sucks because I was one of the affected

people, but she continued the show. And in here like we're just like because a bit forgotten, you know, and that's how I feel.

But I know that it's not the case. I think I'm still hopeful she's gonna do something, but it you know what it's like she doesn't say anything, and then you just see a post from Taylor Nation. Like, just promoting like a digital CD, you know? And she doesn't say anything like I know it was like like was scheduled or whatever, but if you really want to keep quiet like, keep everything quiet, you know?

And I understand if people don't agree with my point of view, I understand. But yeah. And then for example, signed copies only exclusive to you US customers.

00:16:47

Like you can do that, exclusive to like Vienna customers. Whatever, you know, like these kind of things. And I know the show must go on, but I feel very forgotten and disappointed by the whole situation.

I'm still I'm hopeful that she's gonna do something about it, I think she's going to. I just think that she's trying just to rest now and like, just be like, let me just breathe and then focus on this.

00:17:11

But like those are the feelings I'm feeling at the moment, and I think they're just as validated as as valid as someone's as Taylor Swift's are. Like, if Taylor like doesn't think it's the right approach, it's not like I'm not gonna go on Twitter and just go oh, she's a bitch, she's whatever. Not. I'm sorry. Not she's whatever.

00:17:32

Because why? Why would I do that? I understand that it's a very it's a lose lose situation. No one wins anything on this. Even Taylor doesn't win. Like what she wins even more fear and more fear to to do shows. So. So, yes. So I know this was one of the biggest issues. And because, like, insecurities.

And yeah, I'm just like very sad about it.

00:17:52 Interviewer

So you would have like, wished for her to react sooner or like say something or like at least like just. I'm just kind of summarising at least if she, like, if she didn't say anything like she did not say anything at all, not on Taylor Nation either, just like, keep quiet for it?

00:18:09 Interviewee

I just no, I just think like, I think she did the right thing. I said she did what she thought it was right. Like, I cannot go to her be like you have to do this, cause I'm just one person out of 100,000, you know, like she think that she thought she could do and I completely understand her.

I just think that what she like out of her whole caption. I didn't like the way that she said about "Let me be clear", you know.

In the sense of she just gave more ammunition to the community to go against us. And when I mean against us, it's not the people who are being jackasses.

It's to everyone of us like I had. Like I told you, like I had a person an American person saying that that's the Vienna *Swifties* feelings were not valid because nothing happened. So it's not trauma.

00:19:02

When I was listening to first hand of a girl who couldn't, she got tickets to London, thankfully, but she had a panic attack to go there because she was so scared. She was supposed to go to the one of the to the first night.

The first or the second night were the ones that were planned to happen, like my my night was the third, so thankfully I never like I knew that I was never going to be the victim, only if they carry out with the plans of the of the van and I was in the merch store, you know, but I would never be in the merch store around the area like around the time of the concert.

So I would never be a victim, thankfully. And I'm so happy that they cancelled and I'm grateful that they prioritise our safety above, above everything. Another part of me is like, damn, if the government said it's completely safe. You should have gone to.

00:19:52

But at the same time like no, because like she said, we are grieving concerts, not lives,

00:19:58

But I like I think she understands the magnitude of like her of her and what her brand is.

But she doesn't understand it because she is not her. She's not us, you know,

00:20:09 Interviewer

Yeah, she's just one person.

Interviewee

like we don't. Yeah, like we don't understand her. Like, like we don't understand what she's feeling. She also will never be able to understand the impact she has on people. So, and the

impact of like, her concert is just not going to see her. It was the whole experience behind it.

So. So yeah, it was just like, months of anticipation just down the drain. It was just like you're doing your thesis and then your thesis completely gone, you know.

And and you don't know when you're gonna go do it again and go back on it.

00:20:43

Of course, it's less catastrophic than if they came with the concerts, of course. But. But yeah, I just have a very mixed feelings on that and I just wanted her like she did what she thought it was. Right. I just think that the way that she she sent boundaries was not the right way to do it in a sense of like so let me be clear. Just gave an ammunition for everyone to be like ohh I was right people right people will fly. You were just like being jackasses and like no. What she wants is us to be together and united on this. It's not for you to be like I was right. Like no.

00:21:18

Like what you you should do now. It's just like, like I told you, like as you can see. Like you can see that this like she just wanted security. And it's not just going we were right. And there was like a Vienna girl on Twitter. She was going insane as well. And she she was supposed to go she's she's a mom to be and she's being so mean to everyone.

Like she said. Ohh, she's not talking about because of national security and claps up and then a person said I disagree. She literary just said I disagree and then she replied with are you a terrorist expert and blah blah blah and blah blah blah and I'm like, why are you being like I literally reply like I never interact on Twitter I just like and repost or send to my to my friend.

00:22:01

I never interact and it got to the point that I had to interact because she was being so rude, like like so rude to people who are just disagreeing with her and I guess she was getting a lot of hate.

And I just think just like her statement just gave a bit of more ammunition. I didn't like to let me be very clear like.

00:22:21

We know we just are frustrated and for sure it was she was not aiming at me or aiming at the people who were just frustrated.

She was aiming at the people who were like flooding the televisions comments on Vienna and like not being not not going to be a fan anymore and blah blah like she needs to

understand that maybe some people will not be fans anymore because she didn't give statements.

00:22:46

Like it happens like she knows like I she she did she did what she thought was right, and I understand. I just personally, I didn't like that specific "Let me be very clear" because it just gave her ammunition to do more hating.

And I know she's not like that. So, I think she's just, like, really pissed off about, like, people attacking her and.

I understand that you wanted to send something and I completely understand. I'm not saying anything. I'm not like, I'm not being like saying she didn't do it right or wrong, I'm just saying that she could have using use the the the words more carefully because I felt, yeah, I felt very attacked on Twitter, like to a point that I'm like, why am I even on Twitter? Like I never thought in deleting the app it was an app that it was kind of like my newspaper. Honestly. Mm-hmm. And it was an app that I would go see news or whatever and go check on Taylor Swift updates and it got to a point that I literally contemplated of deleting the app.

00:23:49 Interviewer

Oh my God. OK.

00:23:51 Interviewee

And that's not, that's not nice.

00:23:52 Interviewer

No, it's not.

00:23:53 Interviewee

You know, like it's not nice like I had so many like when the the last European leg show went, I literally cried for like two hours because I knew that I'm not gonna be able to see her. And then people were not validating my feelings online because it didn't happen. And I'm like, yeah, it didn't. But I was waiting a whole year I spent almost €500 on this. My mom and my family spent, more than 1000€ to go see her, and I still have to go there like a lot of people had to.

We still have to go there saying and try to find something positive out of it knowing that we could have been sharing this with her.

00:24:37 Interviewer

Yeah.

00:24:37 Interviewee

You know, and knowing that she was also not feeling safe and she probably, I honestly think she must have had a lot of like mixed feelings.

About like us being like all together, she probably was, like very happy and like I think they're taking out of the positive situation. But at the same time she probably was like guys, it's probably not safe please don't go. So. So, yeah. I just think that also, she's very still processing and I think it's OK and it's fine.

I just also need processing and I cannot listen to any other songs without crying because I was supposed to hear them live like every time I would listen to *Cruel Summer* before Vienna happened I would almost get emotional because I was like, I'm going to listen to this live and it's not going to happen and yeah.

So sorry for that.

00:25:26 Interviewer

It's fine, it's fine. I I completely understand your feelings. It's very like it's it's horrible. And also like when I saw the news, it just kind of immediately brought back the images and the news from the like from the terrorist attack at the Ariana Grande concert in Manchester. So obviously we all know it happened before.

Like young women, the girls have been targeted before by terrorists and like the government in Vienna and in Austria realising this is a threat and this happening and cancelling obviously is is a good thing. But then of course it's been a year that you've been waiting for it and I completely understand the disappointment in.

00:26:05 Interviewee

I think those feelings are valid.

00:26:07 Interviewer

Definitely.

Interviewee

They're just like people are more like if people saw *Inside Out*. They know that like memories can be like two feelings at the same time.

00:26:14 Interviewer

They can be.

00:26:16 Interviewee

You know, and in the real world there's more than two feelings, it's like four or five, so there's.

00:26:22 Interviewer

Yeah, that's very true.

00:26:24 Interviewee

Very complicated.

00:26:25 Interviewer

I love that comparison. OK, so we you said earlier that Taylor Swift is is very like that her songs fit very well into everyone's life because everyone kind of relates to them in a different way in in whatever situation fits to her and I have like three questions kind of that kind of merge into each other. **So like, what do you think like makes her different from other celebrities, is that that you can react like engage with her music so easily or that you can feel it so easily and or like is it something completely different that you think makes her different and also that makes her special in the way of like that, like of who she is?**

00:27:11 Interviewee

I think that she's she stands out from the other celebrities because she was a pioneer in the marketing on that part.

So all the Easter eggs and everything, it started out with her so.

All of these things I think, I don't think it's all about like relating to songs because, for example, before Taylor Swift, I'm also a really big fan of Ariana Grande. And funnily enough, I think I was having like similar like life moments that she was having when she was releasing her albums like I had my first boyfriend when she released *Sweetener* her I also like I also at the time like I was experiencing a breakup and like the loss of, like a breakup in with the Ariana, like, with *Thank You, Next* and like the this like and also the part of like being happy with friends and kind of this all whirlwind of emotions like 2019 was a really big heart year for me and like, *Thank You Next* like kind of show that I'm not alone like she was also like a whirlwind of emotions because it was like also she was still recovering from Manchester attack and as well with Mac Miller death and and then the *Positions* was also like this the the time I had like with my boyfriend.

So it was funny. And then the *Internal Sunshine* was also around the time that I was not with my boyfriend.

00:28:44

So, I think like **in terms of like relate related relatability** and if that's word **or feeling the authenticity** I think in this particular part like of musically like musically wise, I think a lot of celebrities are like Taylor.

I just think that Taylor is very smart and how she she does like things.

She puts a lot of Easter eggs she keeps the audience engaged.

00:29:12

And also like I think and I saw something really really interesting I don't remember where but they were saying that, like, ohh without Taylor Swift like this is the big tour like whatever blah.

But at the same time was also like the fans, like the fans decided to bring out bracelets like the fans decided to bring outfits.

00:29:33

So the fans decided to also create part of this community and create part of this experience and I think that's like this is the result of years and more than a decade of keeping your audience engaged, even if you're a year away with like the situation for *reputation* and everything.

UM.

It's like that's the thing like, keep your audiences engaged, like even Taylor does something like everyone will talk about about that.

So that's what she wants. She doesn't want you to talk about her personal life. She just wants you to talk about why she put a two when she was talking on the Grammy Awards. And she announced *Tortured Poets Department* because it was a two album.

And that's a very the correct theory so.

00:30:22

So I think that's that's that's the big part in what stands out the most. I think celebrities are starting to do that now too.

And we also say like Taylor, Taylor is a big performer. Like when she does a show, she does it big like Beyoncé. So even if she doesn't dance as well, she gives it all.

And I think when people recognise hard work, especially her fans.

00:30:48

And and like in the last, no joke. Five years, like, since the pandemic we got two new albums like three or four new recordings like week like people say we have been fed, you know, like tour, like insane.

It's like, yeah, two more new albums. Like she gave us so much. Like, she just keeps the audience engaged.

00:31:13 Interviewer

Yeah, didn't she also drop, like, both *folklore* and *evermore* during the pandemic?

00:31:17 Interviewee

Yeah, yeah, yeah, she did like *folklore* in June or something and then at the end of the year she did, she did *evermore*

So it's crazy and it's insane and.

00:31:26

That's like how you keep an audience engaged because she has so many feelings. You should just write them on paper.

She thinks she creates songs and that's what she wants to do the most. So I think she took the best of both worlds. Of course, she has the bad on it, like *Hannah Montana*. She took the best of both worlds and created like this engaged community. And that's like and that's what stands out the most.

00:31:47

Like she is hard working as hell, like the two times she cancelled concerts was in Bangkok because of the military coup and Vienna.

Two times out of like more than ten years of career and I got I was the unlucky one so sad about, you know.

00:32:03 Interviewer

Yeah, very understandable.

00:32:07 Interviewee

So, so yeah, and I'm just very I just think that's what stands out the most like her market marketing technique and their way like since young since a young girl like to keep it the an audience engaged. Yeah, that's what makes her stand out the most.

00:32:21 Interviewer

Do you, would you also say that that like engagement of an audience and the hard-working style is, her key like to the success she's having?

00:32:29 Interviewee

Definitely definitely cause like you can, you cannot be an artist if you don't have a group of fans following you.

00:32:35 Interviewer

Yeah, that's very true. That's.

00:32:36 Interviewee

Like it's it's impossible and and with with Taylor like if no one listens to your music, no one can talk to and word of mouth is so important. And I think she just used like every tool she had in the best way possible and and yeah, and like for me, keeping an audience engaged like, for example, I have a there's another artist, it's called Russ.

Like he is all the time launching songs. Of course, he's not as big as Taylor, but he's all the time launching songs.

So like it's keeping the audience entertained, like these are songs like I can listen. I can too like I can like, I think he also decided to do something really neat, really interesting. She I think he he kind of put it or I think he was him or Drake I don't remember who but put down the whole songs he had on *SoundCloud*.

And then the fans would vote which one they like the most, and then he would work on those songs.

00:33:32 Interviewer

Wow, that is insane.

Did you hear that like Taylor Swift got so much like negative feedback for the bridge in *ME!* because fans were saying it's so cringe, you know, when she says Oh like "kids, spelling is fun" that they changed the song and it's not in there anymore?

00:33:35 Interviewee

Yeah. Yeah. Yeah, yeah, yeah. That's so stupid

Like it's stupid. It's like it's the main lyrics. Like, why are you why are you, like, making a person change?

00:33:58 Interviewer

Yeah.

00:33:59 Interviewee

What they did.

Like I would have if I was like for sure. Now she wouldn't change it she just kept it as it was.

00:34:05 Interviewer

Yeah, probably.

00:34:06 Interviewee

Like for example the *Midnights* one, I kind of understand why she did that because it was like the shot.

00:34:12 Interviewer

Oh, which one did she change?

00:34:13 Interviewee

So like she did like a, you know, it's not a song, but on her video clip of *Anti-Hero* she she put herself in a like in a scale and it was saying fats.

But the first hour cause I saw the video like first hand and then the first hour there were so many negative comments about fatphobia and all that she took it off.

00:34:33 Interviewer

Oh, that's that's good, though that's something.

00:34:36 Interviewee

It depends because I I understand both points of view, but at the same time it was about her experience like she was being called fat all the time.

00:34:45 Interviewer

And she had an eating disorder. So yeah.

00:34:47 Interviewee

And she had an eating disorder. So, like, that's how she was feeling like it was related to her. It was not related to, like, you're being like, it was something negative. No, she just went to the balance and said that because she was like a normal person, you know and that's.

00:35:02 Interviewer

Yeah, true. But it can be taken the wrong way.

00:35:05 Interviewee

Yes, it can be taken the wrong way and that's what she says. Like when *Anti-Hero*, she looks at herself like she's she's like her own monster of insecurities. You know and yeah, that's like it's interesting. Like, I understand that part, I just don't think the *ME!* one like “spelling is fun” why?

Like it's funny. It's what kids like. My sister loved it like it's.

Like you can get new audiences like the the 22 hat people, they're getting your all children so.

00:35:33

So yeah, like I actually have very like I have a very how do you call it like polemic view on this. I completely understand that they're getting kids, but I think it should be older people because they're girls been waiting more than ten years since. Yeah. And just choosing kids, it's just like I know I understand it's nice and cute and all that, but at the same time, like you could choose like they could just like a kid, like a sister with her, with her older sister, you know.

00:36:06 Interviewer

Yeah.

00:36:07 Interviewee

Like they have time to ask people you know so I just I think that's that's what I that's what I would go for.

But again, I don't know what's happening backstage I just can speculate.

00:36:18 Interviewer

Yeah. OK. We have to move a bit quicker because it's already very long. It's fine. You're you're giving me. It's it's nice. I understand that you like to talk about the whole thing and obviously I get the feelings but we're going to move away from the emotional part and from the music for a bit.

If you think about her, you already mentioned, like, her working but apart from her music, what else do you connect with the name Taylor Swift?

00:36:50 Interviewee

What else do I connect to? Cats. That's the first thing that pop up because she's always, like, give up her cats. But I would also say, like, what connects as well like?

Hard work. A brand?

I think she's unfortunately sometimes people don't see it, but I think she's a lot more than the person.

She's a brand, she's experience, she's an experience. I would say that. And I would say like expect the unexpected from her because she would always like expect, like unexpected. It's like her middle name.

00:37:27 Interviewer

That's very that's very nicely put I like that you already mentioned that she's a brand. What do you think like do you think there is a strategy behind that and if so, what kind of a strategy?

00:37:39 Interviewee

Ohh everything you she does like it's a strategy like every two steps she does like of course there might be like some small moments that she it's more spontaneous. But like as she said in her documentary *Miss Americana*, she said like I plan my life two years ahead.

So. So yeah. So, I definitely think and believe that she she plans everything and I think that's the thing that she loves the most. And that's why, like, *Mastermind* is such a fun song.

00:38:10

Because she does find things, everything all the time. So I think she loves doing that because she can feel in control. And I think that's another thing about Vienna like, she it's something she couldn't control.

And I think it's also kind of made her because she, of course, she has things that she cannot control but most of the things she can do something because she the final say.

So I think, yeah, I think she's a control freak and that's why she loves it so much.

00:38:38 Interviewer

Did you like, did you see there, I I saw it once on Instagram. There was a post of saying we can all be like so we should all count ourselves so lucky that Taylor Swift decided to become a singer and not like a mass murderer or something, yeah?

00:38:55 Interviewee

Definitely, she would definitely be a good mass murderer, in the police as well

Interviewer

Or like an FBI agent.

00:39:03 Interviewee

For sure.

00:39:04 Interviewer

OK. Oh my God, this is this is fun. This is very interesting. OK, we're circling back to social media. You already mentioned Twitter as something you use and also, which has been a very dark place lately for *Swifties* from *Swifties*. So kind of a bad community.

I would like to look at another social media platform which is Instagram and I would like to know what role does Instagram play for you in connection to Taylor Swift and how do you use it?

00:39:35 Interviewee

Actually, what I did was I had unfollowed *Taylor Nation* because it was so hard to see like the London stuff so, I was like, I need to unfollow because I'm just, like, **too heartbroken to see**.

So I didn't follow them because I really like, I can't even listen to her like, I get sad, I get very sad.

So I have her cause in case she says something about Vienna or something also because I know, like my love will come back again I'm just, like, **very numb at this point**. But I I didn't see like, I don't use Instagram as often for Taylor Swift's content if I'm being honest, I just like my friends, use it to tag me on Taylor Swift stuff.

My Australian friends always tagging me for giveaways. I remember when Taylor Swift posted that story and they posted like their first content online, they had a lot of backlash of people about Vienna and that's why, like Taylor, did the thing that she did.

But they got a lot of backlash.

And and a lot of people saying, oh, I'm not a Taylor Swift fan anymore because you didn't say anything and what about Vienna, what about Vienna?

So I would see a lot of those. So the rest I would use just more the messaging, the messaging part to show like tweets to my friend and be like look what this person said like she's not OK and and yeah, like that's what I would do.

I didn't. I didn't. I don't use it a lot to follow up. Swift, swift, swift plant follow up like Taylor Swift.

More just to see like what she says? Like if she states something on Instagram cause that's like the biggest method of communication for her. I would just probably what would I do? Like, I would just message people about the situation and and yeah, like a lot of people actually message me on Instagram sending me the cancellation, like announcements for the *Taylor Nation*. So I remember that.

But that was it. I don't didn't do anything else like

00:41:44 Interviewer

OK. OK. That was like the last specific question. So my very last last question is like, is there anything you would like to add that you feel like is important or that you want to say or anything?

00:41:58 Interviewee

No, I think like I think I'm doing good. Like I said sometimes people have ups and downs and like even though, like it's not Taylor's fault like I just, I'm very sad and I cannot listen to music knowing that I'll never be able to listen to it live. So, so yeah, that's it.

I think I'm just sad, but I know I'll find my love for her again. And she for sure.

00:42:20 Interviewer

Yeah, I hope you do. It won't be really sad.

Interviewee

No, I will. And for sure she'll find the love for Vienna people as well, I think she just needs to really just rest and try to process what happened because I think it was so fast and it was, so, much like noise coming from everyone and everywhere, and it was after the like the attacks, the knife attacks as well. So, I think she just like really needs to like just do like what my stepdad usually does. He does [breathing out gesture]. Like she needs that and unwind and try to understand unwind as not in fart because I know that in the UK unwind is farting but.

Yeah. I mean, unwind as in like relaxed.

And time will tell which she wants to say I think she will mention more about Vienna. I think it's not going to be just that.

I know that with the there is a documentary. I think I'll be able to see more and I really want to see her perspective on it because that's that that's what at the end *Swifties* are feeling. We don't have any information, you know it was just like a statement and then three lines of her. And that's it.

You know, like in the world with information we don't have anything.

So I think and she has the information, of course, she doesn't have the terrorist information or whatever, but she has the whole information. But 1001 thousand one, 100,000 people don't have it and they're very frustrated in a world of information.

00:43:48 Interviewer

Understandable.

00:43:49 Interviewee

So I I think that's I think a lot of people right now are not going to be listening to her and are very sad about her. Maybe some people are going to be more like more hateful like my mom is really, really sad. Like, really.

But are going to be more hateful, not in a mean way, in a way of like, oh, I'm going. I'm going to not be a fan of hers anymore.

I just think they're just heartbroken because they want it like it's kind of a love story they just wanted to see her and everything. They weren't able to so yeah.

And that's just like what I want to show.

It's like storytelling that's your topic of thesis.

I think storytelling has ups and downs and and that's like and her next steps are going to be very crucial for this 0.5% of her fans.

Like how she's gonna react to that.

00:44:37 Interviewer

Yeah, of course. Ah, thank you so much. That was very, very interesting.

Appendix E – Transcript Interview 4

00:00:00 Interviewer

OK, perfect. OK. So, my first question is why are you a Taylor Swift fan and how did you become one?

00:00:09 Interviewee

Oh gosh, that's a really good question. I think I stumbled across the music when I was about 14 or 15 and I actually can't remember whether it was on *MTV* or via the radio.

And I like even then, I wasn't like a big fan. But then one day in science class, maybe when I was towards the end of the year when I was about 15 and some girls came in and we did like this massive Taylor Swift listening party when *Red* was dropped and half, the class was like ah eh, and and then the other half of the class is really into it. And I really enjoyed that atmosphere of the class and and so I started to learn a little bit more about Taylor Swift and I wouldn't say like I was a massive fan over the last 10/12 years.

But more recently, you know, with the *Eras Tour* and learning a lot more about Taylor and I suppose having a better sense of community as well. Like, it's it's definitely felt like a safe environment and really fun and playful and yeah.

00:01:40 Interviewer

Ohh that sounds so nice.

And it's so fun how like I love to hear how people come across Taylor Swift cause there's so many different stories. Like I've heard people come across her in *Hannah Montana* or like in the music video at some point. So it's really fun too.

Yeah. And you, you did go to the *Eras Tour*, right?

00:02:03 Interviewee

I did so I actually trained my partner who was quite unsure at the time, but so he really enjoyed it. So, we went to Sydney Friday night 23rd of Feb and really really loved it. Got some really great surprise songs. Yeah, it it was just such a lovely night.

00:02:33 Interviewer

Oh, that sounds so nice. Do you have like, a a favourite moment that you can pick from from the concert or from, like the experience of the *Eras Tour*?

00:02:42 Interviewee

Ohh gosh. I wouldn't say it was like one moment per se, but definitely like listening to a lot of the music **going through the eras like it brought back different memories and that was really special.**

A really cool moment, though, to narrow it down, we were the night where there was, like a lot of Thunder that was scheduled. Hmm. And. And so we weren't sure whether the *Eras Tour* was gonna go ahead on that night. And unfortunately, Sabrina Carpenter couldn't play.

00:03:22 Interviewer

Oh no.

00:03:23 Interviewee

And then Taylor later brought her out and played piano with her, and it was really lovely.

00:03:30 Interviewer

That is so cool.

00:03:31 Interviewee

And yeah so, they played *White Horse* together, which is a song that Sabrina covered when she was much, much younger on YouTube. And so it was a really beautiful full-circle moment.

00:03:44 Interviewer

Ah. That sounds really nice. Really special. **OK, next question, which emotion or which emotions like can be more than one do you personally connect with Taylor Swift?**

00:04:07 Interviewee

Ahm. I that's a really good question. I think she's known a lot for like **her sad music or her music around boys which you know, like at different stages of my life I have really resonated with.**

But I think there's also a lot of healing music and she talks about having to go through periods of change and grief and loss and how she sort of adapted to that as well, particularly in her newest album *Tortured Poets Department* and around *I Can Do It with A Broken Heart* and it's her newest hit single.

And it's just really inspiring that and really comforting knowing that she's also going through the same stuff and and that, yeah, she is just human at the end of the day.

00:05:18 Interviewer

Yeah, she is. Yeah. OK. Interesting.

OK, so what do you think is like is the key to her success? What makes her so successful over so many years, and in so many different music genres like she's been through a lot music wise.

00:05:40 Interviewee

I think you know like in the beginning she was really relatable. And then in more recent years, she's kind of pivoted and had more of a strategy around when she's gonna release things and putting out Easter eggs and almost playing a game with the fans umm, to keep them guessing and keep them involved and attentive.

And to you know what, she might be releasing in the future or umm really connecting on a more personal level with fans, particularly around the video she's released on like *Disney plus* and whatnot and around like her efficacy for the US elections.

And and why things are really important to her, particularly around women's rights and trans rights and and the rainbow community as well.

I think it's really important and she really makes people feel heard and seen, particularly when maybe that's not the environment they're being raised in or, you know.

00:06:54 Interviewer

Yeah. OK, very interesting.

Do you would you say that that is maybe like also what makes her different from other celebrities or is there something else that you think makes her different from others?

00:07:11 Interviewee

I think you know, she kind of just goes out of her way for her fans. I don't think it's necessarily different than some other artists, but she definitely makes an effort to connect with her fans through social media and various other ways, like through the website and yeah, which I I think is probably the the key point and she gives us a lot more insight into her life than maybe other artists do as well.

00:07:52 Interviewer

OK. And is there a way in which you you identify with her like you already said that she her songs they have resonated with you through different areas of your life and you you have felt what, she's felt. But is there any like specific way that you identify with her?

00:08:17 Interviewee

I think the way she advocates for others and herself is really cool. Like I I think about how she really role models to other young people and even older people to speak up for

themselves and be really authentic to who they are and in the world, and I like, I think one particular thing is when she went to court over a guy groping her and she sued him for a dollar, you know, because it was the principal of it.

But he tried to countersue her for, like, several thousands, millions.

You know, like it I I just think it was really nice for her to role model, particularly in that moment, that it is OK to speak up and it is OK to really advocate for yourself and.

Yeah, I think also.

Sorry, I've forgotten the question.

00:09:28 Interviewer

The question was in which way you identify with her like. In general or like in a specific way?

00:09:36 Interviewee

I think she's really she's one of the first females of our generation to really demonstrate what it's like to take your time and build a successful career and not feel like you have to find it into the traditional gender roles that you know, some countries kind of place on you and that it's ok to you know, show up for your friends and family and not feel like you have to rush into marriage or have kids and by a certain timeline. And I think that's that's really cool.

00:10:16 Interviewer

Yeah. Ohh, that sounds really nice. Yeah, she does do that, that's true.

OK, I'm gonna take a step away from the music for a bit. So, if you think about her, apart from her music, what do you connect with the name Taylor Swift?

00:10:37 Interviewee

That's a good question.

Just how generous and you know she is, you know, she donates a lot to charity, does a lot in the communities that she visits. Well, you know, like, where she can. She seems like a really supportive friend and yeah, she just seems really, really lovely and really genuine and yeah. I suppose that's what seems so relatable and yeah, and what makes it such a safe space and. You can really see how the that impact that it has and it's really nice to see.

00:11:30 Interviewer

That's that's that's very sweet. OK.

Do you think there is a strategy behind her as a brand? Like, not necessarily her music, but her as a, as a personal brand. And if so, what kind of a strategy do you think it is?

00:11:49 Interviewee

100%.

I think Tree Paine her, I want to say like PR manager, she like manages all the marketing of her. Not only from, you know like business perspective but also you know the the community that Taylor wants to kind of build within her brand and and also the the business deals or what she might do outside of her music particularly around, you know, the perfume she's released and the merch she does and the video she creates, thinking also of the *All Too Well* ten-minute video.

Yeah. So, I do think everything's well thought out and I think it plays into the Easter eggs quite a lot.

And that's why it's so successful, because they keep the fans engaged in a really relatable way.

00:12:58 Interviewer

Interesting. OK, OK. I have two more questions.

So, the first one is about social media. So which role does Instagram as a platform play for you in connection to Taylor Swift? How do you use it do you use it at all or like how do you see it?

00:13:19 Interviewee

I actually didn't use it a lot up until the *Eras Tour*.

I was aware there were chants being done at the *Eras Tour* and I wanted to learn what they were and I wanted to know what surprise song she was doing so I could kind of guess what ours may have been. And it was, yeah, it was just really lovely because my friends also follow her on social media. And so there was a few of us from work going over it so, we're able to bond over that and and you know, over her outfits and what others were wearing to the *Eras Tour* and yeah.

00:14:07 Interviewer

Ohh that's like so again like the feeling of community and like having a safe space to belong and ohh that's so nice.

Yeah. My final question is quite an open one. And so it's basically like is there anything you would like to add that you feel like I've missed or that you want to share or anything at all?

Interviewee

Ohh gosh. Not really.

Interviewer

That's OK.

00:14:37 Interviewee

I like, I do think it's quite cool having witnessed her grow as a person and evolve.

And and kind of grow up with her in some respects and since I was 15 and and I think that's possibly part of the reason why she's so successful as well as a lot of us feel like we have grown up with her and she's almost like just part of like our friend group or like family or cause it's such a safe space to retreat back into and particularly when there might be a lot of chaos going on and and yeah, it's just really comforting.

00:15:24 Interviewer

That's really nice. That's that's really nice. Last last sentence. She's really comforting. I really like that. OK. Amazing. Thank you so much.

Appendix F – Transcript Interview 5

00:00:01 Interviewer

OK. Why are you a Taylor Swift fan and how did you become one?

00:00:09 Interviewee

So, I am a Taylor Swift fan because like in the first place when I was, I think eleven or something, I started the first time I was on YouTube and the internet and everything. And then I found her music videos and I think at first I became a fan because I liked her music and it was very fun like this was the time when *1989* came out and so there were songs like *Shake It Off*, who were just fun to listen to and then I I think what really caught me was the *Blank Space* music video because it was like I don't know, somehow I liked her, how she presents herself like in the now I know that she made that video to like show that she has shown some power over that everyone said she was always dating everyone. And so I I really liked her looks and her music.

00:01:00

And then as I got older, I obviously more also more learned about her on the internet and I really liked how she presented herself, then later on also how she took political statements or how she positioned herself.

And also like *The Man* video or or just how her fun like she always had in the past, even more she had on Tumblr everything she had these like videos who made her like more relatable, like obviously I don't know her but she was I just liked what she posted and presented herself and yeah, it was really fun to watch her content and listen to her music.

00:01:38 Interviewer

And what was your favourite moment at the *Eras Tour*?

00:01:44 Interviewee

Oh that is very hard to describe. I think obviously what we're really stuck with me was like when you come into the stadium and you see all of those *Swifties* and all of these cool outfits and when she came onto the stage, it was really surreal because like she and I mean I wasn't like directly front of stage or anything, but I saw her and it was really cool.

00:02:06

And also then the *1989*-set I think because that was the album when I got into the whole Taylor Swift fandom and so it was really really fun.

I think that was the **most energetic album** for me. Like it was dancing the whole time and also that it was with my best friend.

And so I think the *1989*-set and beginning when she, when you first see her.

00:02:22 Interviewer

And you went to the concert in Munich, right?

Interviewee

Yes.

Interviewer

OK, nice. OK.

Which emotions do you connect with Taylor Swift and her music?

00:02:34 Interviewee

I think, I recently described it to my dad because he wasn't feeling anything with Taylor Swift **music that I think she like represents a lot of like this feeling of girlhood** that's like on TikTok a lot because at first, like **in the beginning of my Taylor Swift, I don't know fandom, it was mostly fun and dancing to Taylor Swift.**

00:02:53

But **then later on it was also like she also had these really emotional albums** like *folklore* or *evermore* **where she really hit a point with like mental issues and everything.** So I think **it's an understanding I feel what I feel understood by her and her music and seen somehow so a comfort, comforting feeling I would say.**

00:03:16 Interviewer

OK, very nice. And what do you think makes her special as a person or as an artist?

Interviewee

I need to think about it.

00:03:29

I think she I thought about this recently because people question a lot why do you like Taylor Swift? Because she's so mainstream everything but I think she, especially now and over the years she more and more became like very, I don't know her, so I can't say true to herself, but I feel like **she's presenting a very authentic picture in the way she as I said, the girlhood experience, I think it's really cute how she presents herself to all those fans and she's not presenting for the male gaze, but for the female gaze.**

Like she she really lifts out all these girly things and makes them cool again because like as a young girl, you always get associated with like, it's not cool to have like, I don't know, pink dresses on or everything, but she makes it cool and makes it fun and makes it safe place.

00:04:17

And so I think, I guess she she really tries to be authentic to herself and I think that's comes across for the fans and in her music.

00:04:28 Interviewer

OK. Nice.

Do you think that that is also the key to her success, or is there something else which you would say is the reason why she's so successful?

00:04:41 Interviewee

I think there's a lot of marketing behind it. I think she knows what she's doing, so so but I think at the beginning when you, when you watch her and those first shows like when she was really, really young like 16 or something it was just that she had had so much fun and she writes so much from her soul.

And so she captures the feeling that a lot of people, a lot of women, go through, that they're like through relationships or then later on, as I said, the mental health issues and everything. So, I think at the beginning it was just this authentic writing from her soul but now I think it definitely is also like her, a good a good marketing strategy she also has and like now she knows how to present herself and how she, yeah I think that's a combination between authentic and marketing strategies.

00:05:32 Interviewer

OK.

00:05:35

What do you think makes her different from other celebrities like there are other artists like, I don't know, Ariana Grande or also like male artists like Harry Styles and what do you think makes it different from these other artists?

00:05:47 Interviewee

I think that's what for me makes a difference is just for me she really speaks to my my, my feelings.

But that's like, I think a personal thing, but I guess I'm not the only one because she has a lot of fans, so I think maybe it's the same thing as I said before like she she she brought a lot

of things back that really are associated with these girly friendship things like friendship bracelets, for example, are very like it's it's just for your like, maybe you could say she kind of speaks your inner child also because like dance around with friends and exchanged these bracelets.

00:06:29

So I guess what I said before, why I like her is also why a lot of people like her because she she said I before I thought about last year a couple years ago, she made like a little Insta post to fall and I think that's really cute because like, she showed how she baked cookies and sat outside in the first autumn air and everything.

00:06:50

And so like these tiny things make her like as from a perspective as a fan, it makes her authentic, even though obviously don't know her, but you feel like you know her, and so you feel like she could be your friend or big sister or something, so I think that's why people also like her.

00:07:10 Interviewer

Yeah, she seems like a friend. Der Spiegel [The Mirror] they had, like, a a headline for an article and named her, like the best friend of millions. Yeah.

00:07:19 Interviewee

She really knows how to present herself as a best friend and how she connects with people.

00:07:24 Interviewer

Nice. And she also brings that feeling to everyone in the concert that they are also best friends for that time. It's amazing. That's so nice.

00:07:27 Interviewee

Yeah, yeah, yeah.

00:07:32 Interviewer

OK, you already said that you relate to her songs and to her music and like with the mental health issues or also with the more political statements that you really feel that and is there like a specific way how you identify with her or do you go through different stages of identifying with her?

00:07:51 Interviewee

I definitely go through different stages, because at first I think when I was younger I was more like looked up to her and I thought like it would be so cool to be her.

And now as I grow older, I obviously know that she is I don't know her, and she just present a picture of herself but and I know that now so I have a different relationship, I would say.

But you ask what identify with her?

00:08:18 Interviewer

How you identify with her?

00:08:20 Interviewee

Ummm I guess I really like that she doesn't have this one specific theme in her music, like she doesn't only write about relationships or not only about specific relationships like she writes about a lot of different relationships with different people in your life.

So I think I really like that she has fun with everything and explores everything because obviously as everyone has different eras in her life in your life as she as she does and so you really feel the dimension she has as a person, not only one specific I mean there are artists, and I think that's totally valid they only write about one theme or they only write songs to dance to or only write songs to cry too.

But she writes like kind of all of them she like she has songs to dance she has songs to cry.

00:09:09

And I think that that's what I identify with that is that you have so many different versions of yourself and different eras of yourself, and that's ok to have those different versions and eras. And I think that's how I identify with her that I just also want to have fun with everything I'm doing and that changes over time.

00:09:23 Interviewer

Yes, you mentioned earlier that you liked the song *The Man* and the video for it. Could you go into more detail about that song? Like, why, why do you think is it so important or so nice or what do you like about it?

00:09:35 Interviewee

I think first of all, I like the kind of power she presents in that video.

Like she also, is she I found really cool that throughout the whole video she was the man and I didn't recognise her.

I saw in the end when she got into the makeup, I was like I I don't know now I see it, but the first time I didn't saw I see it.

So, I I really liked how she kind of also made that I think there are a lot of, a lot of songs about feminism who are like sad and about struggles you have I think they're totally cool and I really, really liked that they're represented.

00:10:10

But this song kind of took the power with it like she she also really when you look at her performance at the *Eras Tour* it is really like she, she feels what she's singing and she she at this point doesn't care that she needs to fulfil certain stereotypes or anything. And I I don't know she really pinpointed the the all the things that men can do or where who are seen different when a man does it, so like if the whole video was she without the makeup, it would have had another impact.

And it's really interesting to see and so she really show showcased somehow what she's she said in the lyrics and that really it's like it's also fun to sing while it is having a really great message.

00:10:54 Interviewer

And do you feel like when she sings about like, feminism or also maybe, like the queer community, or like political issues. Do you think that it's authentic because she started really late with like being political, being outspoken.

Do you feel like it's authentic?

00:11:15 Interviewee

Yeah, I think it is because like I, I I for me it came across in the *Miss Americana* documentary and other interviews of her why she she spoke out so late, because, like when she started, she was really young and I don't know when you're that young, a lot of people tell you what you have to do to be successful and especially when you start so young.

So I understand why she didn't spoke out at first and also she isn't like she didn't study politics or anything, so so I I I get it why she didn't say anything because she obviously is also just a citizen in America.

But I think I think it comes across authentically because she kind of kind of explained it and also there was also marketing and kind of not staged but obviously in for her as she her how to say it she painted the picture of herself.

00:12:15

She painted it, so it's like obviously I don't know how, if it's really authentic, but I feel like it's authentic because she I feel like the reasons she why she speaks out about some things

and doesn't about other things. I think it's valid and I like how she speaks out when she does it, so I guess.

00:12:36 Interviewer

Interesting, OK, if you, ok, this is like a short answer, so so if you think about Taylor Swift or if you think about the *Eras Tour* like what is the first feeling that pops into your head like what do you feel?

00:12:50 Interviewee

Comfort and fun, I guess.

00:12:53 Interviewer

OK, nice. Good, ok, you said that earlier, so we can connect that very nice.

OK, now stepping away from the music, if you think about Taylor Swift, apart from her music, so without all of the songs or the videos or whatever, what do you connect with her like?

00:13:11 Interviewee

I think also kind of fun or authenticity, even though I know it's not only authenticity, but I think about her, as I said about her little Insta post, especially from like a couple of years ago or her Tumblr videos when she like, I don't know, just baked something in her kitchen or yeah, I think what I always think about is her love to fall, because I also really love fall. And so I think, yeah, I think I think that's, yeah, I think I I when I think about her, besides her music, I like, I think like she she I I would want to be her friend and I I would feel comfortable with her, I think and or and just with the version she presents of herself.

00:14:01 Interviewer

So she feels she feels normal, like one of us.

00:14:03 Interviewee

Yeah, she feels normal, even though I know obviously she is now cooking, baking those cookies and like her extremely expensive house.

But like the way she she has she.

00:14:14

Yeah, also what I really like are the behind the scenes videos, I like them with every artist, but how the songs are created and how the songwriting process goes.

And I think you really feel that feeling comes across that she was has fun with it and so it's like kind of it catches you too. And you too have fun with it and think like that must be really cool to like to sit around and brainstorm lyrics and everything.

00:14:35 Interviewer

Yeah. Did you see the *Pond Studio Session of folklore*?

Interviewee

Yeah.

Interviewer

That's, like, full on fall vibes.

00:14:38 Interviewee

Yeah, that's so that's so cute and it's like when I chill with my friends in the garden and talk about and.

And also what, what I really love about especially *folklore* is that she also not only wrote this about her own life but also like this fictional character *James Betty* situation and I really loved it because I really love fantasy and spinning out stories in my head and everything.

So, I really relate to that also that she's like really into the whole storytelling besides from her own life so.

00:15:08 Interviewer

Nice. OK. You already said there's a lot of marketing going on.

Do you think like obviously Taylor Swift as a person is also a brand. So what kind of strategy do you think is behind that behind her as a brand behind her whole marketing?

00:15:25 Interviewee

I think that they really want to present her as authentic, authentic, and so that also comes across for me, you know, I know it's obviously partly marketing strategy, but otherwise so that I don't really I'm I'm not into the whole marketing strategy thing, so I don't really I couldn't I couldn't tell you is that's her plan or anything but.

00:15:45

Yeah, I think they want to present her as very authentic and down to earth and one of the girls, I don't know, something, something like that and I think it's working obviously, so yeah.

00:15:54 Interviewer

Yeah. OK. Nice. OK, you already mentioned that you really enjoy her Instagram post from, especially like earlier times when she's posting about what she's doing.

But like what what role does Instagram in general play for you as a connection with Taylor Swift?

How do you use it? Or do you use it?

00:16:14 Interviewee

It in the first place when I started to get to know, get to know her I wasn't really on Instagram because as I said, I was very young and my first internet platform was YouTube so I think Instagram is isn't the main social media platform I connect Taylor Swift with.

00:16:30

But I thought about when I went on Instagram and at the time when she disappeared from from the internet and posted to and deleted her Instagram account and posted a snake post and everything.

That was the first time when I really looked her up on Instagram so I think I think that that as from the reputation era on she was on Instagram was a thing so and so.

But now I don't necessarily consume her posts on Instagram, but post from other people.

00:17:08

But I think yeah, I mostly consume posts from other people about Taylor Swift, but my first association as a social media platform, I would say is like YouTube, Tumblr. So it was the time where she where she really was active on those platforms I think, yeah.

00:17:25 Interviewer

Is Tumblr still a thing?

00:17:26 Interviewee

No, not really. But like also you do you saw the whole Tumblr post she posted on YouTube reuploaded so.

00:17:32 Interviewer

OK. OK. OK.

00:17:33 Interviewee

So that's why I said Tumblr.

00:17:35 Interviewer

Yeah. Yeah, OK, nice. OK, last question, is there anything you would like to add anything that you feel like you want to say or that I missed or anything else?

00:17:46 Interviewee

I don't know, I think I think what I find hard about Taylor Swift fandom what really annoys me kind of is that everyone like when you say you're a Taylor Swift fan, everyone like just assumes that you don't accept criticism, criticism towards her and I think I would I would like I would like that people understood more that like just because you idolise her in some way you just still have enough intelligence to know that she is not necessarily who you think she is, and that I'm very aware that what I like at her from her authenticity is also like I wouldn't say completely staged because I don't know. But like it is very, how to say it, she knows what she's doing, and I know that all of the things I like about her could be wrong, but I just like having fun with the whole fandom and having fun with what she's posting and and I don't really care who she is in real life.

00:18:55

Because I I won't meet her probably so and, and yeah, I think I would I would really I would like it if more people understood that Taylor Swift fans aren't dumb, they just have fun.

And I I I hope for everyone that they can have some fandom, some some role or as you said, Taylor Swift is not only a person but also a whole fandom and brand as you said, I think and so yeah.

00:19:20

I think that's what I want to add that I am very aware that they are critical critic critics sites for how to say it?

Interviewer

Critical voices

Interviewee

Critical voices about Taylor Swift and I, I hear them, I think they're valid but I think that doesn't mean that you can't have fun with her fandom, her music and everything she she embodies so yeah.

00:19:41 Interviewer

OK. Very nice. Thank you very much.

Appendix G – Code book: List of Themes

Questions

Activism: This covers both activism in Taylor Swift's communication as well as in the marketing world in general.

Fandom and Community: This aims at both the fandom of Taylor Swift in general as well as moments of the *Eras Tour*.

Emotions: This theme covers both good and bad emotions connected to Taylor Swift as well as how they are used in communication and marketing strategies. This relates to the connection to pathos.

Storytelling: This theme aims at the concept of storytelling and how it can be found both in marketing strategies as well as in song writing.

Social media: The main focus is Instagram but this theme also covers other social media platforms mentioned by the participants.

Connections: This theme aims at creating connections with fans or consumers and covers aspects like identification and relatability.

Authenticity: This aims at the ethos concept and covers aspect such as the element of trust.

Strategy: This aims at different aspects of marketing strategies in general as well as the specific strategy of Taylor Swift.

Appendix H – Coding results organised in themes

Theme 1: Activism – both activism in Taylor Swift’s communication as well as in the marketing world in general.

Interview 1: A1	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• This is why jumping on to activist topics does not always work for brands when it is not in their DNA or the protagonists behind the brand do not stand behind an activist claim. In this case, it would be wrong to shape the brand’s appearance in this direction.• In the case of <i>Oatly</i> they are convinced of what they are doing, they really want to change the world.• only if it fits the core of the brand or the DNA of the brand, if there is something already in the values of the brand. The other possibility is when the brand wants to conquer a topic because they realise WOW this is going to change us fundamentally as a business. We have to change in order to fit into this.• Animal suffering was not a big topic at the time. Even though there were activists at the time such as <i>PETA</i> or <i>Greenpeace</i> it was not a topic concerning all of society.• Today it is a topic which concerns society as a whole and <i>Rügenwalder Mühle</i> realised this quite early, around five or ten years ago and managed to react. For them this also came with a change within the business where the next generation took over and said we have to adapt as a meat producer because this cannot be our future we will go the way towards the future and start to offer vegan alternatives.• more than just jumping on because it shows a change within the brand and the business towards a topic fuelled by activists is possible but it has to be done in a believable manner.
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • it can be quite dangerous to just post a rainbow flag for <i>CSD Day</i> and do a statement once. That's not enough and the queer community will realise very quickly that it is just lip service. • Other than this nothing else happens within the company. • then this is only lip service and will be received negatively by the people who really care about it. • Activism works with emotionalization. • It tries to evoke anger in people or a feeling of being helpless which will then be changed into self-efficacy. • I don't want to tell activist that they have to change anything, no, they have to work in this way but brands have the chance to go different ways.
Interview 2: NF1	The participant did not make any references to activism.
Interview 3: F1	The participant did not make any references to activism.
Interview 4: F2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • around like her efficacy for the US elections. • And and why things are really important to her, particularly around women's rights and trans rights and and the rainbow community as well. • the way she advocates for others and herself is really cool. • I think one particular thing is when she went to court over a guy groping her and she sued him for a dollar, you know, because it was the principal of it.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • that it is OK to speak up and it is OK to really advocate for yourself • the first females of our generation to really demonstrate what it's like to take your time and build a successful career and not feel like you have to find it into the traditional gender roles that you know, some countries kind of place on you and that it's ok to you know, show up for your friends and family and not feel like you have to rush into marriage or have kids and by a certain timeline. And I think that's that's really cool.
Interview 5: F3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • then later on also how she took political statements or how she positioned herself. • <i>The Man</i> video • where she really hit a point with like mental issues and everything. • So, I I really liked how she kind of also made that I think there are a lot of, a lot of songs about feminism who are like sad and about struggles you have I think they're totally cool and I really, really liked that they're represented. • But this song kind of took the power with it like she she also really when you look at her performance at the <i>Eras Tour</i> it is really like she, she feels what she's singing and she she at this point doesn't care that she needs to fulfil certain stereotypes or anything. And I I don't know she really pinpointed the the all the things that men can do or where who are seen different when a man does it, so like if the whole video was she without the makeup, it would have had another impact.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • And it's really interesting to see and so she really show showcased somehow what she's she said in the lyrics and that really it's like it it's also fun to sing while it is having a really great message.
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Theme 2: Fandom and Community – This aims at both the fandom of Taylor Swift in general as well as moments of the *Eras Tour*:

Interview 1: A1	This participant did not mention the Swift fandom or the <i>Eras Tour</i>
Interview 2: NF1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To be honest, I am not a Taylor Swift fan. • I mean, I know her because of the media and when I saw the <i>Hannah Montana Movie</i> that was the first time that I that I met her not met her but that I realised that she existed, like many many many years ago. • And yeah, I was never a fan, to be honest. I have a lot of friends that are fans, and of course she's always present in social media. And now with the giant <i>Eras Tour</i> also, she's been around forever. But yeah, I don't know. I was never a fan. Not a hater. Like, I'm just I I don't listen to her music but I don't hate her music either, you know. • the <i>Eras Tour</i> is uh, it's a milestone in concert beginning with like, I think that Taylor Swift is probably like the first person doing like a three and a half hour show in big arenas with this whole big, big, big production • it's something super interesting to go and see live and also because it's a tour that it's been going on for almost two years now • I wanted to experience like the experience of going to the <i>Eras Tour</i>, which was amazing, really like, even for me that I know some songs of course, there were times where I didn't know, like

	<p>what was going on but even in those times, the production was so amazing that I can I understand now the fuss.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Like, this is amazing. She is an amazing, amazing artist ... concert made for fans.• So not being on Taylor Swift fan and and enjoying it that much, I really can't imagine how it would have been for a die-hard Taylor Swift fan.• I think that is for losing your mind, really, I would lose my mind if I was a fan. It's it's incredible. Yes, I enjoyed it very, very much.• where I don't remember the era of them, but there was a moment where everybody was cheering so, so much.• I think that it was first time that Taylor Swift came to Lisbon so like all the fans were super, super excited and you could see, like, the vibe, what people were really excited like to be in the concert.• the people in charge of the stadium. Uh, turn on the lights and you could see the the whole concert like, oh, and I think that it was an ovation of, like, probably five minutes, which is super long and you could and you could see like the vibe, you know, like not only seeing Taylor Swift, like super emotional and like, oh, my God, like, what's going on, but also seeing people around you that were, like losing their minds and screaming.• dressed up with their and with and exchanging bracelets.• like even if you don't know the people you're going to in the concert, you can see that everybody's vibing to the same thing, you know.
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• And for me, not not knowing every song or not being a fan, I didn't feel excluded. • surrounding me there were also people that were like, had their costumes and their bracelets and like all these things • Even if you didn't know each other, we were all like, very careful like, hey, you know, like, let's do this the right the the right way like we need to have fun. • So it's like a it's a nice community and I really like that I've been to a lot of concerts in my life and it's something that I always feel when I go to concerts but especially for Taylor Swift, it was I think that stronger in a way, and maybe it's because of, I don't know you see all of these people with their makeups and their and they're dressed and exchanging bracelets and it's super nice • you can see girls with bags of the friendship bracelets and they are exchanging it • they don't miss anything. • it's incredible like the production, the, the, the fact that she's there singing for three an a half hours, it's insane, insane. And she does it in a very, very good way, the three and a half hours, like there's not a time where you see her tired, for example. • you get the same wristband that shines and sparkles to the rhythm of music. • I mean, Taylor Swift, nobody asked me to return it for example, I still have it.
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • fan base is absolutely crazy, you know? • they did these whole activities revolving Taylor Swift. • yeah, that it is amazing to to see the phenomenon that Taylor Swift is now after going to the <i>Eras Tour</i> I really understand why she's this big. • it was so nice to actually understand first, how big she is • But no, like you actually then go to the concert and you see all of these people in costumes and with the friendship bracelets and having this in in living the concert with this intensity and you realise that it's a real movement, you know.
Interview 3: F1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I'll circle back again the first time I've heard about Taylor Swift was about was on <i>Glee</i>. • And I remember I loved the song so much. And I was like who is this? • I was around like 12-13 • I discovered Taylor Swift for her <i>Fearless</i> album so and that's when I started as well to kind of see her like how like her other music videos. • I was not what you would be considered a <i>Swiftie</i> like. • Not how I am today. I was very much like I would follow her because I knew how big she was

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I remember watching <i>Lover</i> with my mom like watching <i>ME!</i> and and we were like, oh my God, this is amazing. And it was really nice. • So I kind of went to like when I would go to to uni by subway or by train and everything. I would start listening to her albums and that's when I fell in love with her like I think Taylor is more of a person that you have to listening listen to more times because she's not very like straightforward. • So that's how I fell in love with Taylor. And I became a <i>Swiftie</i>. • like with the Vienna stuff. • like seeing the community that we want to be part of, like attack us like the Vienna <i>Swifties</i> to a way • In the sense of she just gave more ammunition to the community to go against us. And when I mean against us, it's not the people who are being jackasses. • It's to everyone of us like I had. Like I told you, like I had a person an American person saying that that's the Vienna <i>Swifties</i> feelings were not valid because nothing happened. So it's not trauma. • The first or the second night were the ones that were planned to happen, like my my night was the third, so thankfully I never like I knew that I was never going to be the victim, only if they carry out with the plans of the of the van and I was in the merch store, you know, but I would never be in the merch store around the area like around the time of the concert. • So I would never be a victim, thankfully. And I'm so happy that they cancelled and I'm grateful that they prioritise our safety
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	<p>above, above everything. Another part of me is like, damn, if the government said it's completely safe.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • She also will never be able to understand the impact she has on people. So, and the impact of like, her concert is just not going to see her. It was the whole experience behind it. • when the the last European leg show went, I literally cried for like two hours because I knew that I'm not gonna be able to see her. • But at the same time was also like the fans, like the fans decided to bring out bracelets like the fans decided to bring outfits. • So the fans decided to also create part of this community and create part of this experience • why are you why are you, like, making a person change? • But the first hour cause I saw the video like first hand and then the first hour there were so many negative comments about fatphobia • You already mentioned Twitter as something you use and also, which has been a very dark place lately for <i>Swifties</i> from <i>Swifties</i>. So kind of a bad community. • sometimes people have ups and downs
<p>Interview 4: F2</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I think I stumbled across the music when I was about 14 or 15 and I actually can't remember whether it was on <i>MTV</i> or via the radio. • I wasn't like a big fan

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Taylor Swift listening party when <i>Red</i> was dropped • I started to learn a little bit more about Taylor Swift and I wouldn't say like I was a massive fan over the last 10/12 years. • But more recently, you know, with the <i>Eras Tour</i> and learning a lot more about Taylor and I suppose having a better sense of community as well. Like, it's it's definitely felt like a safe environment • so I actually trained my partner who was quite unsure at the time, but so he really enjoyed it. • great surprise songs.
Interview 5: F3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I became a fan because I liked her music and it was very fun like this was the time when <i>1989</i> came out and so there were songs like <i>Shake It Off</i>, who were just fun to listen to and then I I think what really caught me was the <i>Blank Space</i> music video because it was like I don't know, somehow I liked her, how she presents herself • I got older, I obviously more also more learned about her on the internet and I really liked how she presented herself • you come into the stadium and you see all of those <i>Swifties</i> and all of these cool outfits and when she came onto the stage, it was really surreal because like she and I mean I wasn't like directly front of stage or anything, but I saw her and it was really cool. • then the <i>1989</i>-set I think because that was the album when I got into the whole Taylor Swift fandom

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Like it was dancing the whole time and also that it was with my best friend. • And so I think the <i>1989</i>-set and beginning when she, when you first see her. • in the beginning of my Taylor Swift, I don't know fandom, it was mostly fun and dancing to Taylor Swift. • I find hard about Taylor Swift fandom what really annoys me kind of is that everyone like when you say you're a Taylor Swift fan, everyone like just assumes that you don't accept criticism, criticism towards her and I think I would I would like I would like that people understood more that like just because you idolise her in some way you just still have enough intelligence to know that she is not necessarily who you think she is • I just like having fun with the whole fandom and having fun with what she's posting and and I don't really care who she is in real life. • Critical voices about Taylor Swift and I, I hear them, I think they're valid but I think that doesn't mean that you can't have fun with her fandom, her music and everything she she embodies so yeah.
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Theme 3: Emotions – This theme covers both good and bad emotions connected to Taylor Swift as well as how they are used in communication and marketing strategies. This relates to the connection to pathos.

Interview 1: A1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pathos is used with phrases such as “this has to explode”, “this needs to emotionalise”.
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I prefer to reach people with positive emotions I enjoy it more but as a professional communicator I, of course, understand that negative emotions are the bigger relevance anchor and that they activate a higher inner action level and therefore more involvement or participation for the thing.
Interview 2: NF1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I was a little bit sceptical • nostalgia. • very nostalgic concert • nostalgia is a key emotion • Like I don't know, it's the feeling of being part of something super big • it's it's super nice. It's like being part of something big, really. • I think that I also connect her a lot with pollution maybe. • I do connect her a lot with like the plane rides • I think that I also I associate her a lot with like, not green, not green.
Interview 3: F1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • That one I liked I almost cry when I found out it was like a second like drop. Hmm. I almost cried and I was just like this is so cool. • For me like <i>Loss of My Life (loml)</i> has a different meaning like it's not like it's not to like to a person that I love, but yes, to like the

	<p>concert. Like for me it was literally for now, the loss of my life, cause I really wanted to see her.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• she's a very feelings person and she can translate them very well on, on paper.• like people need to be seen and heard and feel seen and feel heard. And that's what Taylor does to them. And that's what matters most.• emotion that I can feel its disappointment.• And I as much as she got like, like disappointed with the whole situation and frightened like I also was.• I felt so sad, like not seen, not heard• frustrated• think for me the biggest emotion I feel and I think I can very relate to to to tell her on that it's like disappointment.• a bit forgotten• I feel very forgotten and disappointed• very sad about it.• just have a very mixed feelings on that• frustrated
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I just also need processing and I cannot listen to any other songs without crying because I was supposed to hear them live like every time I would listen to <i>Cruel Summer</i> before Vienna happened I would almost get emotional because I was like, I'm going to listen to this live and it's not going to happen and yeah. • They know that like memories can be like two feelings at the same time. • too heartbroken to see. • very numb at this point. • but I know I'll find my love for her again. • they're very frustrated in a world of information. • lot of people right now are not going to be listening to her and are very sad about her. Maybe some people are going to be more like more hateful like my mom is really, really sad. • just heartbroken because they want it like it's kind of a love story they just wanted to see her and everything.
Interview 4: F2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • half of the class is really into it. And I really enjoyed that atmosphere • really fun and playful and yeah. • and really really loved it.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • inspiring that and really comforting • Just how generous and you know she is • safe space to retreat back into and particularly when there might be a lot of chaos going on and and yeah, it's just really comforting.
Interview 5: F3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • really fun • most energetic album • then later on it was also like she also had these really emotional albums • it's an understanding I feel what I feel understood by her and her music and seen somehow so a comfort, comforting feeling I would say. • but she makes it cool and makes it fun and makes it safe place. • Comfort and fun • Fun • Taylor Swift fans aren't dumb, they just have fun.

Theme 4: Storytelling – This theme aims at the concept of storytelling and how it can be found both in marketing strategies as well as in song writing.

Interview 1: A1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • it is important to have a good story, which is believable for the brand, not something fake. A story is about having a scenario A and a scenario B and a change or journey in between them. • added to significant change in the past, then this is always the best change the best story is the one which holds this power for change in it. • if you are able to be a part of their life via social media and see how they manage their everyday lives with the help of their nurses and are able to play an active part in life this is the real strength of the campaign. • shorten this story to a billboard • fine art of creating storytelling in such a short piece of the whole story for it to work in low involvement situations with a short attention span. • the best stories are the true ones • it is all about finding the truth and telling it well. • Sometimes you have to make up stories of course. Come up with story anchors which could have happened that way, that's for sure. • Personal brands can always tell stories about their everyday lives. • During the European Football Cup which just happened <i>Lidl</i>, for example, created this crazy story about Lothar Matthäus getting lost and having to be found again.
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Interview 2: NF1	This participant did not touch upon the concept of storytelling.
Interview 3: F1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Like that kind of like that like comparison like I love that I love doing like metaphorical stuff because sometimes people don't quite understand very well, when we we say like so like explicitly and when you do like an allegory or like a comparison to something, I think it's so helpful. • it was about her experience like she was being called fat all the time. • she was feeling like it was related to her. • Like when <i>Anti-Hero</i>, she looks at herself like she's she's like her own monster of insecurities. • I think storytelling has ups and downs and and that's like and her next steps are going to be very crucial for this 0.5% of her fans.
Interview 4: F2	This participant did not touch upon the concept of storytelling.
Interview 5: F3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I know that she made that video to like show that she has shown some power over that everyone said she was always dating everyone. • love about especially <i>folklore</i> is that she also not only wrote this about her own life but also like this fictional character <i>James Betty</i> situation

Theme 5: Social Media – The main focus is Instagram but this theme also covers other social media platforms mentioned by the participants.

<p>Interview 1: A1</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • users have a high sensibility of they are confronted with true and real or made-up stories. • Even when you are in the ad part on Instagram, it is weird when you come across a made-up TV spot campaign. That is just not the narrative for this channel. • We expect real insights into the lives of real people. • things that manage to catch my attention with their relevance. Whether that is in the normal feed, in stories or scrolling through reels. And there are a lot of different relevance factors. • But the most important thing is to find a topic that touches the user, something which has a place in the user’s life. • On this platform we are surrounded by an endless number of hooks which are only trying to catch my attention without giving me anything relevant. • which not only tells us five things about topic X which you don’t really care about anyways. • when talking about the Instagram universe it has to be something which gets users to act at the end of the day and be a thumb stopping force. It is the beginning of a reel or the first line I am reading which captures me and pulls me in, so I am hooked. • I would say that the communication Instagram needs today is made of the three aspects of a persuasive speech Aristotle described.
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • social media we are back at a time where personal brands can achieve an enormous reach which was unimaginable before social media. • Because of social media this changed and people in various groups which are designed though living situations or interests are now having people in front of them on social media with a high reach because they have to add something to this specific topic or because they have a high effectiveness within this niche. • To come to a conclusion for this answer I think it only works with real people. Business only content which is not personal on social media does not work because it is missing the trust element. • No one wants to get only sales content and promotional content on social media which tries to sell you a product. On social media you want to be inspired or amused or educated and this is something I look for in human characters.
Interview 2: NF1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I've been seeing it a lot in social media • I saw that a lot in Instagram for example, before going to the concert and now seeing it live it's like oh, this is real. • Like it's not a pose or something that people post in social media just because like this really really happens • I don't know if I'm biased like the social media or whatever • Yeah Instagram more like to show what she's doing in the concerts. Like, of course it's super emotional. Also, when you like, for

	<p>example, after she played in Lisbon, I went to her Instagram and I saw that she posted a picture in Lisbon like, oh, thank you, Lisbon.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To be honest, I don't know really well because I don't it's not really, she's not really in my feed. • course you can see a lot of stuff in social media and you may think that, oh yeah, but probably they're being amplified because it's social media.
Interview 3: F1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I got more access to like <i>YouTube</i> and everything and • then you just see a post from Taylor Nation. Like, just promoting like a digital CD, you know • like I'm not gonna go on Twitter and just go oh, she's a bitch, • I just think that what she like out of her whole caption. I didn't like the way that she said about “Let me be clear”, you know. • like she said, we are grieving concerts, not lives, • a sense of like so let me be clear. Just gave an ammunition for everyone to be like ohh I was right • Like what you you should do now. It's just like, like I told you, like as you can see. Like you can see that this like she just wanted security. And it's not just going we were right. And there was like a Vienna girl on Twitter. She was going insane as well. And she she was supposed to go she's she's a mom to be and she's being so mean to everyone.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Like she said. Ohh, she's not talking about because of national security and claps up and then a person said I disagree. She literary just said I disagree and then she replied with are you a terrorist expert and blah blah blah and blah blah blah and I'm like, why are you being like I literally reply like I never interact on Twitter I just like and repost or send to my to my friend. • I never interact and it got to the point that I had to interact because she was being so rude, like like so rude to people who are just disagreeing with her and I guess she was getting a lot of hate. • I felt very attacked on Twitter, like to a point that I'm like, why am I even on Twitter? Like I never thought in deleting the app it was an app that it was kind of like my newspaper. Honestly. Mm-hmm. And it was an app that I would go see news or whatever and go check on Taylor Swift updates and it got to a point that I literally contemplated of deleting the app. • I had unfollowed <i>Taylor Nation</i> because it was so hard to see like the London stuff so, I was like, I need to unfollow • I don't use Instagram as often for Taylor Swift's content if I'm being honest, I just like my friends, use it to tag me on Taylor Swift stuff. • My Australian friends always tagging me for giveaways • So the rest I would use just more the messaging, the messaging part to show like tweets to my friend and be like look what this person said like she's not OK and and yeah, like that's what I would do. • I didn't. I didn't. I don't use it a lot to follow up. Swift, swift, swift plant follow up like Taylor Swift.
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More just to see like what she says? Like if she states something on Instagram cause that's like the biggest method of communication for her. • Like, I would just message people about the situation and and yeah, like a lot of people actually message me on Instagram sending me the cancellation, like announcements for the <i>Taylor Nation</i>.
Interview 4: F2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • she definitely makes an effort to connect with her fans through social media and various other ways, like through the website and yeah, which I I think is probably the the key point • I actually didn't use it a lot up until the <i>Eras Tour</i>. • I was aware there were chants being done at the <i>Eras Tour</i> and I wanted to learn what they were and I wanted to know what surprise song she was doing so I could kind of guess what ours may have been. And it was, yeah, it was just really lovely because my friends also follow her on social media. And so there was a few of us from work going over it so, we're able to bond over that and and you know, over her outfits and what others were wearing to the <i>Eras Tour</i> and yeah.
Interview 5: F3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I started the first time I was on YouTube and the internet and everything. • Tumblr everything she had these like videos • a couple years ago, she made like a little Insta post to fall and I think that's really cute because like, she showed how she baked cookies and sat outside in the first autumn air and everything.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • her little Insta post, especially from like a couple of years ago or her Tumblr videos • It in the first place when I started to get to know, get to know her I wasn't really on Instagram because as I said, I was very young and my first internet platform was YouTube so I think Instagram is isn't the main social media platform I connect Taylor Swift with. • when I went on Instagram and at the time when she disappeared from from the internet and posted to and deleted her Instagram account and posted a snake post and everything. • That was the first time when I really looked her up on Instagram so I think I think that that as from the reputation era on she was on Instagram was a thing so and so. • But now I don't necessarily consume her posts on Instagram, but post from other people. • I mostly consume posts from other people about Taylor Swift, but my first association as a social media platform, I would say is like YouTube, Tumblr. • No, not really. But like also you do you saw the whole Tumblr post she posted on YouTube reuploaded so.
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Theme 6: Connections – This theme aims at creating connections with fans or consumers and covers aspects like identification and relatability.

Interview 1: A1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the difference makes content which actually connects to the life of people • Something that is similar to me, something I can identify with.
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<p>Interview 2: NF1</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the way she connects with people in the concert, the way she interacts • I remember when I listened to it when I was 13 in my high school, you know • yeah, it was very exciting to be part of this really. • very unreachable • for a fan also she is like this, but she sees these little connections with all the little things that she says when connecting the lyric A with the lyric B and the colours of, you know, like she's been super detail oriented in that sense and that makes community that makes people talk about it like • And it's like, oh, I was there like. • I think that that's the connection part • Having that connection with the people that went to the concert and then releasing the albums? Yeah.
<p>Interview 3: F1</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • fall in love with like an artist and their and their work through like their poetic lyrics • But then it depends like on your mood, because I think she kind of has like a jukebox like a record player, it's like, what do you what do you feel now and then? It's like Moody, and then you have like a set list of her for for moody songs.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • So, it's kind of fun, like she has a lot of like, different songs that can relate to you different levels. It doesn't have to be like a man and be like situation. • No, it's just like it's kind of like how do you relate to it, cause for sure it for her it related to something but for us it also can relate to something • Yeah. So, it relates to her life, but that shows how, like celebrities, have a very similar life to ours. Maybe bigger proportions, of course, but they have similar lives to ours. They have big feelings, and that's one of the things I love most about Taylor. • I love feeling feelings and I'm a very feeling person and she's the same • But she doesn't understand it because she is not her. She's not us, you know • in terms of like relate related relatability • No, she just went to the balance and said that because she was like a normal person
Interview 4: F2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • going through the eras like it brought back different memories and that was really special. • her sad music or her music around boys which you know, like at different stages of my life I have really resonated with.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • But I think there's also a lot of healing music and she talks about having to go through periods of change and grief and loss and how she sort of adapted to that as well, • like in the beginning she was really relatable. • and she really makes people feel heard and seen, particularly when maybe that's not the environment they're being raised in or, you know. • I suppose that's what seems so relatable and yeah, and what makes it such a safe space and. You can really see how the that impact that it has and it's really nice to see. • I like, I do think it's quite cool having witnessed her grow as a person and evolve. • And and kind of grow up with her in some respects and since I was 15 and and I think that's possibly part of the reason why she's so successful as well as a lot of us feel like we have grown up with her and she's almost like just part of like our friend group or like family
Interview 5: F3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • her like more relatable, like obviously I don't know her but she was I just liked what she posted and presented herself and yeah, it was really fun to watch her content and listen to her music. • music that I think she like represents a lot of like this feeling of girlhood • Like she she really lifts out all these girly things and makes them cool again because like as a young girl, you always get associated

	<p>with like, it's not cool to have like, I don't know, pink dresses on or everything</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• And so she captures the feeling that a lot of people, a lot of women, go through, that they're like through relationships or then later on, as I said, the mental health issues and everything.• just for me she really speaks to my my, my feelings.• she she brought a lot of things back that really are associated with these girly friendship things like friendship bracelets, for example, are very like it's it's just for your like, maybe you could say she kind of speaks your inner child also because like dance around with friends and exchanged these bracelets.• you feel like you know her, and so you feel like she could be your friend or big sister or something• I definitely go through different stages, because at first I think when I was younger I was more like looked up to her and I thought like it would be so cool to be her.• And now as I grow older, I obviously know that she is I don't know her, and she just present a picture of herself but and I know that now so I have a different relationship• doesn't only write about relationships or not only about specific relationships like she writes about a lot of different relationships with different people in your life.• everyone has different eras in her life in your life as she as she does and so you really feel the dimension she has as a person, not only one specific
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• she writes like kind of all of them she like she has songs to dance she has songs to cry.• many different versions of yourself and different eras of yourself, and that's ok to have those different versions and eras. And I think that's how I identify with her that I just also want to have fun with everything I'm doing and that changes over time.• I like the kind of power she presents• I always think about is her love to fall, because I also really love fall. And so I think, yeah, I think I think that's, yeah, I think I I when I think about her, besides her music, I like, I think like she she I I would want to be her friend and I I would feel comfortable with her, I think and or and just with the version she presents of herself.• And I think you really feel that feeling comes across that she was has fun with it and so it's like kind of it catches you too. And you too have fun with it and think like that must be really cool to like to sit around and brainstorm lyrics and everything.• that's so cute and it's like when I chill with my friends in the garden and talk about and.• I really loved it because I really love fantasy and spinning out stories in my head and everything.• So, I really relate to that also that she's like really into the whole storytelling besides from her own life so.
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Theme 7: Authenticity – This aims at the ethos concept and covers aspect such as the element of trust.

Interview 1: A1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When it comes to ethos, I think Aristotle himself said its about making oneself appear trustworthy. • Trust elements is the term used in today’s marketing language, using seals or voice of customers as references. • Capture something which gives this trust and credibility. A blue icon on Instagram can be an ethos signal as well. • Brands were supposed to be a sign of trust beyond the person. • how trust building goes from the person who I can somehow imagine and who I can hear stories about towards a non-human brand. Towards something that goes beyond the people and connect many different people which then turned into some sort of company. • that this is something trustworthy
Interview 2: NF1	This participant did not mention authenticity.
Interview 3: F1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to relate to that that for me authenticity is so important nowadays and and that's like what I see from her • or feeling the authenticity
Interview 4: F2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • knowing that she's also going through the same stuff and and that, yeah, she is just human at the end of the day.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • she gives us a lot more insight into her life than maybe other artists do as well. • I think about how she really role models to other young people and even older people to speak up for themselves and be really authentic to who they are and in the world • She seems like a really supportive friend and yeah, she just seems really, really lovely and really genuine and yeah.
Interview 5: F3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I guess she she really tries to be authentic to herself and I think that's comes across for the fans and in her music. • when you watch her and those first shows like when she was really, really young like 16 or something it was just that she had had so much fun and she writes so much from her soul. • I think at the beginning it was just this authentic writing from her soul • from a perspective as a fan, it makes her authentic, even though obviously don't know her • Yeah, I think it is because like I, I I for me it came across in the <i>Miss Americana</i> documentary and other interviews of her why she she spoke out so late, because, like when she started, she was really young and I don't know when you're that young, a lot of people tell you what you have to do to be successful and especially when you start so young. • So I understand why she didn't spoke out at first and also she isn't like she didn't study politics or anything, so so I I I get it why she

	<p>didn't say anything because she obviously is also just a citizen in America.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • But I think I think it comes across authentically because she kind of kind of explained it • I don't know how, if it's really authentic, but I feel like it's authentic because she I feel like the reasons she why she speaks out about some things and doesn't about other things. I think it's valid and I like how she speaks out when she does it, so I guess. • or authenticity, even though I know it's not only authenticity • Yeah, she feels normal • I'm very aware that what I like at her from her authenticity is also like I wouldn't say completely staged because I don't know.
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Theme 8: Strategy – This aims at different aspects of marketing strategies in general as well as the specific strategy of Taylor Swift.

<p>Interview 1: A1</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the marketing world has found different terms for this but of course it is still used. • So, logos is the rational argument • Today there are still communication strategies that work with a factual argument or the reason to believe, how it is called as well. • it is important for brands to create a human like construct in people's heads, create something with an identity and certain values.
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You wanted to know where the differences are in how personal brands and business brands work. • Taylor Swift can talk about her life on tour and has things she can talk about. Business brands have to create these stories they want to talk about.
Interview 2: NF1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Also, that you can see that the all the effort behind uh, it's she really got gets to the top of everything you know, nothing is random. Like everything has a purpose in the concert and the colours and the light. • She there's a really you can see the the attention to detail and even I realise that I'm not a fan like people that are fans maybe they would catch more Easter eggs and I think that that that's super she's super smart in doing that like she's always giving hints to people that are fans, like with the lyrics and with the type of colours and the things like for example, I think that the I went to the Lisbon concert the first night and I think it was one of the first concerts with the last the <i>Tortured Poets Department</i>. It was like the one of the first times that she played like that set in the <i>Eras Tour</i> and you could see that everybody was like because she wears like this dress with like the lyrics and everybody was like, oh, like catching everything. • I think that marketing in community towards like her whole history, I believe. • And you can see like that commitment to her job and I think that that's what makes her different.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not only the the connection that she has with her fan base, but you can see all the work behind and I think that that makes a huge, huge difference like she really you she works a lot for what she like you can realise. • I think, yeah, I mean, being a huge artist like she is, of course, there must be a strategy behind probably picturing her like this perfect person is a strategy like being unobtainable and like looking up to somebody that it's almost not a human, of course is. • It makes her more desirable, but also with the little hint of always providing these easter eggs • I think that she has been super intelligent and super smart in providing information to the fans so they can be an active part in their marketing strategy not only her as a as a singer and like Taylor Swift Incorporation but the fans you know, and they are huge • I think that fans have to do a lot in it with it, you know. • I think that for sure she has a strategy behind it, like with the different fan bases. • when she released the the new album that people started to analyse the lyrics and counting, I don't know if it was like with fortnights. I believe with the with the video clip. • That the people were counting 13 rows and I don't know and it 13 is the lucky number and yeah makes you like to talk about and he's been super smart about it. Having the people making conversation about her all the time, you know?
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • And I can I can really realise why, like you can I can see that the production and what she does and the the music and what how she does all the marketing and everything it's it's insane, really I think that it's a it's a it's a case study for sure. • On how she is so successful in what she does, because she's clearly doing something that others are not doing and it's working for sure.
<p>Interview 3: F1</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • She's very, very sneaky. And then the things that she does and she she writes and sings about. • one thing that her brand and her like her actions, which she does like outside to build, to build her community, prove that she's a person who loves her fans and everything. • that's how she portrays to be. • But I like I think she understands the magnitude of like her of her and what her brand is. • she was a pioneer in the marketing on that part. • So all the Easter eggs and everything, it started out with her • I just think that Taylor is very smart and how she she does like things. • She puts a lot of Easter eggs she keeps the audience engaged. • that's like this is the result of years and more than a decade of keeping your audience engaged,

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• It's like that's the thing like, keep your audiences engaged, like even Taylor does something like everyone will talk about about that.• So that's what she wants. She doesn't want you to talk about her personal life. She just wants you to talk about why she put a two when she was talking on the Grammy Awards. And she announced <i>Tortured Poets Department</i> because it was a two album.• And that's a very the correct theory so.• Taylor is a big performer. Like when she does a show, she does it big like Beyoncé. So even if she doesn't dance as well, she gives it all.• And I think when people recognise hard work, especially her fans.• Like she gave us so much. Like, she just keeps the audience engaged.• keep an audience engaged• created like this engaged community• she is hard working as hell• that's what stands out the most like her market marketing technique and their way like since young since a young girl like to keep it the an audience engaged. Yeah, that's what makes her stand out the most.• word of mouth is so important
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• she just used like every tool she had in the best way possible and and yeah, and like for me, keeping an audience engaged• Like for example the <i>Midnights</i> one, I kind of understand why she did that because it was like the shot.• she took it off.• I just don't think the <i>ME!</i> one like “spelling is fun” why?• Like it's funny. It's what kids like. My sister loved it like it's.• Like you can get new audiences like the 22 hat people, they're getting your all children so.• Hard work. A brand?• she's a lot more than the person.• She's a brand, she's experience, she's an experience. I would say that. And I would say like expect the unexpected from her because she would always like expect, like unexpected. It's like her middle name.• Ohh everything you she does like it's a strategy like every two steps she does like of course there might be like some small moments that she it's more spontaneous. But like as she said in her documentary <i>Miss Americana</i>, she said like I plan my life two years ahead.• So. So yeah. So, I definitely think and believe that she she plans everything and I think that's the thing that she loves the most. And that's why, like, <i>Mastermind</i> is such a fun song.
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Because she does find things, everything all the time. So I think she loves doing that because she can feel in control. • So I think, yeah, I think she's a control freak and that's why she loves it so much.
<p>Interview 4: F2</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • then in more recent years, she's kind of pivoted and had more of a strategy around when she's gonna release things and putting out Easter eggs and almost playing a game with the fans umm, to keep them guessing and keep them involved and attentive. • And to you know what, she might be releasing in the future or umm really connecting on a more personal level with fans, particularly around the video she's released on like <i>Disney plus</i> • she kind of just goes out of her way for her fans • 100%. • I think Tree Paine her, I want to say like PR manager, she like manages all the marketing of her. Not only from, you know like business perspective but also you know the the community that Taylor wants to kind of build within her brand and and also the the business deals or what she might do outside of her music particularly around, you know, the perfume she's released and the merch she does and the video she creates, thinking also of the <i>All Too Well</i> ten-minute video. • Yeah. So, I do think everything's well thought out and I think it plays into the Easter eggs quite a lot. • And that's why it's so successful, because they keep the fans engaged in a really relatable way.

Interview 5: F3

- she's presenting a very authentic picture in the way she as I said, the girlhood experience, I think it's really cute how she presents herself to all those fans and she's not presenting for the male gaze, but for the female gaze.
- I think there's a lot of marketing behind it. I think she knows what she's doing
- but now I think it definitely is also like her, a good a good marketing strategy she also has and like now she knows how to present herself and how she, yeah I think that's a combination between authentic and marketing strategies.
- She really knows how to present herself as a best friend and how she connects with people.
- there was also marketing and kind of not staged but obviously in for her as she her how to say it she painted the picture of herself.
- are the behind the scenes videos, I like them with every artist, but how the songs are created and how the songwriting process goes.
- I think that they really want to present her as authentic, authentic, and so that also comes across for me, you know, I know it's obviously partly marketing strategy, but otherwise so that I don't really I'm I'm not into the whole marketing strategy thing, so I don't really I couldn't I couldn't tell you is that's her plan or anything but.
- I think they want to present her as very authentic and down to earth and one of the girls, I don't know, something, something like that and I think it's working obviously, so yeah.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • But like it is very, how to say it, she knows what she's doing, and I know that all of the things I like about her could be wrong • Taylor Swift is not only a person but also a whole fandom and brand as you said, I think and so yeah.
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Appendix I – Results of Content Analysis Coding in Themes

Theme 1: Activism

<i>Love Story</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In a way this can be seen as a hint to the strong female artist she is and will become even more as she grew older • Having the old story written by a man changed to a happy ending and using movie sequences created for another immensely famous love story written by one of the most successful female authors shows a hint to strong female leads and idols in order to change a story written by a man and giving it a personal touch
<i>The Man</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This song has a clear feminist message addressing the issue of women experiencing disadvantages within society in general but also within the music industry • This is a strong statement towards the music industry as well as towards society in general as the artist has discovered a powerful way to highlight sexism in everyday situations • Swift changes her music towards a more outspoken and activist style which also shows how the artist has grown and discovered the power she holds and maybe even the position of being an idol for many young women

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The artist works with a lot of clichés from the entertainment industry such as having a lot of models in bikinis on a yacht while a rich man enjoys the view • Swift also works with a lot of male behaviour which society kind of accepts even though it is not respectful such as mansplaining and being overly aggressive
@taylornation	There was no activism discovered in this posting.
@taylorswift	There was no activism discovered in this posting.

Theme 2: Fandom and Community

<i>Love Story</i>	This theme is not coded for music.
<i>The Man</i>	This theme is not coded for music.
@taylornation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Secondly, it shows another form of connection which is the one in between fans within the <i>Swifties</i> community • This offers a community feeling creating a space for fans around the world to connect and share their own feelings towards different songs as well as helping each other and lifting each other up
@taylorswift	This shows no connection to the community as the comment function is turned off.

Theme 3: Emotions

<i>Love Story</i>	For this song no direct emotional connections were coded.
<i>The Man</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Swift describes different scenarios which have harmed her or which she has been judged for in the past such as a lot of changing partners or not getting the credit for her own music • The lyrics show Swift's disappointment in how men are celebrated for the same things women are judged for

@taylornation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This means that a song can be a heartbreak song for one person, a song that helped them through difficult times for the next and a friendship anthem for a third person
@taylorswift	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • After this the caption becomes a lot more emotional and personal as Swift is referring to the planned attacks in Vienna and how she has felt going on stage in London after her cancelled shows in Vienna • She addresses how she has felt “a new sense of fear” when going on stage in London as well as having been filled with “a tremendous amount of guilt” about all the fans who were looking forward to attended the shows in Vienna and were not able to because of the planned attacks

Theme 4: Storytelling

<i>Love Story</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shakespeare’s <i>Romeo and Juliet</i> has • Taylor Swift uses this well-known story in one of her songs and gives it not only a more modern adaptation but also changes the ending • While the song starts off with the female perspective of Juliet it ends with the perspective of Romeo changing the story and standing up for their relationship • a young girl at college who looks eyes with a guy reading and instantly falls in love with him showing flashbacks she has in her mind of earlier times dancing with him • The protagonist in the video can be seen imagining a story of an old romantic love spinning it out in her head the moment she locks eyes with a guy in college and ending the video with a kiss after having this whole storyline played out in her head
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<i>The Man</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • She uses these aspects she has been judged for in the past and imagines how she would be treated for the exact same things if she would be a man • The dancers as well as Swift herself use male coded posing (showing off muscles, puffed chest) in order to transport the image of them behaving like men do who are, according to the lyrics, are more powerful and are celebrated for things women are typically judged for
@taylornation	The concept of storytelling was not discovered for this post.
@taylorswift	The concept of storytelling was not discovered for this post.

Theme 5: Social Media

<i>Love Story</i>	Music was not coded for the social media part.
<i>The Man</i>	Music was not coded for the social media part.
@taylornation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Swift can use this account for interaction and connection with her fans while keeping her own account at a purely informational format which allows now commenting under her postings • using an Instagram posting to create a safe space for fans and followers to connect, communicate and discuss the impact individual songs and the artist as a whole has on them
@taylorswift	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The comment function on Swift's account is limited to only her which means that the researcher can only look at her post and the one comment she made to extend the post caption • In summary, the pictures within the post show a fun and magical touring experience focusing on the positive aspects of the tour and having the artist in the focus of all of them

Theme 6: Connections

<i>Love Story</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Taylor Swift herself makes fun of exactly this naivety in her 2022 commencement speech at NYU where she addresses the graduates joking that she is sure everyone had exactly this experience of meeting the love of their lives reading under a tree on a college campus • It also gives fans and listeners the idea that having idealised stories is fine but that reality does look different than made-up stories and fairy tales do
<i>The Man</i>	For this song no connection codes have been found.
@taylornation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The caption leads to thinking that every person listening to a song has a different relationship with it and connects with it in a very different way • This shows that fans enjoy the possibility of connecting with their idol through their lyrics and sharing this connection online • It also shows how everyone connects the lyrics of different Taylor Swift songs to their own lives and sees them not only as a song but as a part of their very own story and identity
@taylorswift	This account was not coded for connections.

Theme 7: Authenticity

<i>Love Story</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The early eras of Taylor Swift portray a young artist who was working hard to stay true to her sweet country girl image singing out of her diary and talking about topics that teenagers are concerned about: friendship, school and ... relationships
<i>The Man</i>	For this song the aspect of authenticity has not been coded.
@taylornation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • portrays the artist in a very authentic light stating that even though she is a famous superstar she deals with a broken heart and other

	emotions like everyone else even though no one knows what she might be going through
@taylorswift	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • With this she talks directly about how she has felt about the planned attacks offering fans and followers an insight into her emotional response

Theme 8: Strategy

<i>Love Story</i>	Music was not coded for this theme.
<i>The Man</i>	Music was not coded for this theme.
@taylornation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Firstly, it shows that Swift and her team understand that the artist's songs have an enormous amount of power as they see them as songs which are able to help the listeners heal from whatever they go through • Secondly, it also shows that even though the songs are written and intended in a certain way by Swift, she understands that each song is received in a very different way by each person listening to it • The fact that the account @taylornation actively asks the fans and followers to reply and interact with them shows that a certain interest for connecting with the fans is wanted
@taylorswift	No strategy codes have been found in this post.

Appendix J – Researcher’s Instagram Story

This story was posted on Instagram to get interview partner who have a connection with Taylor Swift because they are either fans or went to the *Eras Tour*. All interview partners of this paper who were asked questions regarding Swift have been found with help of this post.



Appendix K – Letter of informed consent

This letter was sent to the agency member for information about the dissertation. The letter has a different topic on it as the focus of this paper has been adjusted and slightly changed after the interview.

TITLE OF STUDY

Qualitative Analysis of emotions used in advertising strategies including Instagram as a platform.

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR

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PURPOSE OF STUDY

You are being asked to take part in a research study. Before you decide to participate in this study, it is important that you understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please read the following information carefully. Please ask the researcher if there is anything that is not clear or if you need more information.

The purpose of this study is to understand how different brands create different advertising strategies, focusing on the role emotions play for them in the process. The focus for these strategies will be on the use of Instagram as a social media platform for brands to both advertise and connect with consumers.

STUDY PROCEDURES

The design of this study will be interviews. The interviews include will be held online via videocall. The interviews are supposed to take around 20 to 30 minutes. In order for the researcher to be able to describe them without missing essential parts the audio of the interviews will be recorded. This recording will only be for the purpose of making sure nothing of the interview gets lost and the audio files will not be included in the final thesis.

RISKS

This study should not come with any risks. However, if you feel like you cannot answer a question or you do not want to for whatever reason you may decline to answer any or all questions and you may terminate your involvement at any time if you choose.

BENEFITS

There will be no direct benefit to you for your participation in this study. However, we hope that the information obtained from this study may help understand the advertising industry and the different approaches in at especially looking at an age of social media. If you are interested in the results of the study you can get a copy of the final thesis after the

researcher has graduated if you wish.

CONFIDENTIALITY

For the purposes of this research study, your comments will not be fully anonymous. Every effort will be made by the researcher to preserve your confidentiality including the following:

- Keeping notes, interview transcriptions, and any other identifying participant information in the personal possession of the researcher.
- Names will be kept out of the thesis unless specifically requested to use the name by the interviewee. Interviewees will be connected to their brand, agency or position within the research and be mentioned as that in the thesis.
- Answers and comments will be used for research purposes only.
- Audio files, transcriptions and other data will be destroyed after five years.

Participant data will be kept confidential except in cases where the researcher is legally obligated to report specific incidents. These incidents include, but may not be limited to, incidents of abuse and suicide risk.

CONTACT INFORMATION

If you have questions at any time about this study, or you experience adverse effects as the result of participating in this study, you may contact the researcher whose contact information is provided on the first page. If you have questions regarding your rights as a research participant, or if problems arise which you do not feel you can discuss with the Primary Investigator, please contact the Researcher's advisor at patavares@ucp.pt.

VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION

Your participation in this study is voluntary. It is up to you to decide whether or not to take part in this study. If you decide to take part in this study, you will be asked to sign a consent form. After you sign the consent form, you are still free to withdraw at any time and without giving a reason. Withdrawing from this study will not affect the relationship you have, if any, with the researcher. If you withdraw from the study before data collection is completed, your data will be returned to you or destroyed.

CONSENT

I have read and I understand the provided information and have had the opportunity to ask questions. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time, without giving a reason and without cost. I understand that I will be given a copy of this consent form. I voluntarily agree to take part in this study.

Participant's signature _____ Date _____

Investigator's signature _____ Date _____

Appendix L – Song lyrics *Love Story*

*We were both young when I first saw you
I close my eyes and the flashback starts
I'm standin' there
On a balcony in summer air
See the lights, see the party, the ball gowns
See you make your way through the crowd
And say, "Hello"
Little did I know*

*That you were Romeo, you were throwin' pebbles
And my daddy said, "Stay away from Juliet"
And I was cryin' on the staircase
Beggin' you, "Please don't go," and I said*

*Romeo, take me somewhere we can be alone
I'll be waiting, all there's left to do is run
You'll be the prince and I'll be the princess
It's a love story, baby, just say, "Yes"*

*So I sneak out to the garden to see you
We keep quiet, 'cause we're dead if they knew
So close your eyes
Escape this town for a little while, oh oh*

*'Cause you were Romeo, I was a scarlet letter
And my daddy said, "Stay away from Juliet"
But you were everything to me
I was beggin' you, "Please don't go," and I said*

*Romeo, take me somewhere we can be alone
I'll be waiting, all there's left to do is run
You'll be the prince and I'll be the princess
It's a love story, baby, just say, "Yes"
Romeo, save me, they're tryna tell me how to feel
This love is difficult, but it's real
Don't be afraid, we'll make it out of this mess
It's a love story, baby, just say, "Yes"
Oh, oh*

*I got tired of waiting
Wonderin' if you were ever comin' around
My faith in you was fading
When I met you on the outskirts of town, and I said*

*Romeo, save me, I've been feeling so alone
I keep waiting for you, but you never come
Is this in my head? I don't know what to think*

*He knelt to the ground and pulled out a ring
And said, "Marry me, Juliet
You'll never have to be alone
I love you and that's all I really know
I talked to your dad, go pick out a white dress
It's a love story, baby, just say, "Yes"
Oh, oh, oh
Oh, oh, oh, oh
'Cause we were both young when I first saw you*

(Love Story Lyrics, n.d.)

Appendix M – Song lyrics *The Man*

*I would be complex
I would be cool
They'd say I played the field before
I found someone to commit to
And that would be okay
For me to do
Every conquest I had made
Would make me more of a boss to you*

*I'd be a fearless leader
I'd be an alpha type
When everyone believes ya
What's that like?*

*I'm so sick of running
As fast as I can
Wondering if I'd get there quicker
If I was a man
And I'm so sick of them
Coming at me again
'Cause if I was a man
Then I'd be the man
I'd be the man
I'd be the man*

*They'd say I hustled
Put in the work
They wouldn't shake their heads
And question how much of this I deserve
What I was wearing, if I was rude
Could all be separated from my good ideas and power moves
And they would toast to me, oh, let the players play
I'd be just like Leo, in Saint-Tropez*

*I'm so sick of running
As fast as I can
Wondering if I'd get there quicker
If I was a man
And I'm so sick of them
Coming at me again
'Cause if I was a man
Then I'd be the man
I'd be the man
I'd be the man*

*What's it like to brag about raking in dollars
And getting bitches and models?
And it's all good if you're bad
And it's okay if you're mad*

*If I was out flashin' my dollas
I'd be a bitch, not a baller
They'd paint me out to be bad
So it's okay that I'm mad*

*I'm so sick of running
As fast as I can
Wondering if I'd get there quicker
If I was a man (you know that)
And I'm so sick of them
Coming at me again (coming at me again)
'Cause if I was a man (if I was man)
Then I'd be the man (then I'd be the man)*

*I'm so sick of running
As fast as I can (as fast as I can)
Wondering if I'd get there quicker
If I was a man (hey)*

*And I'm so sick of them
Coming at me again (coming at me again)
'Cause if I was a man (if I was man)
Then I'd be the man
I'd be the man
I'd be the man (oh)
I'd be the man (yeah)
I'd be the man (I'd be the man)*

(If I was a man, I'd be the man)

(The Man Lyrics, n.d.)

Appendix N – Post supporting Kamala Harris



taylorswift 



 11 M



 1,5 M





Liked by irene_crr and others

taylorswift Like many of you, I watched the debate tonight. If you haven't already, now is a great time to do your research on the issues at hand and the stances these candidates take on the topics that matter to you the most. As a voter, I make sure to watch and read everything I can about their proposed policies and plans for this country.

Recently I was made aware that AI of 'me' falsely endorsing Donald Trump's presidential run was posted to his site. It really conjured up my fears around AI, and the dangers of spreading misinformation. It brought me to the conclusion that I need to be very transparent about my actual plans for this election as a voter. The simplest way to combat misinformation is with the truth.

I will be casting my vote for Kamala Harris and Tim Walz in the 2024 Presidential Election. I'm voting for [@kamalaharris](#) because she fights for the rights and causes I believe need a warrior to champion them. I think she is a steady-handed, gifted leader and I believe we can accomplish so much more in this country if we are led by calm and not chaos. I was so heartened and impressed by her selection of running mate [@timwalz](#), who has been standing up for LGBTQ+ rights, IVF, and a woman's right to her own body for decades.

I've done my research, and I've made my choice. Your research is all yours to do, and the choice is yours to make. I also want to say, especially to first time voters: Remember that in order to vote, you have to be registered! I also find it's much easier to vote early. I'll link where to register and find early voting dates and info in my story.

With love and hope,

Taylor Swift
Childless Cat Lady

: [@inezandvinoodh](#)

11 September

(Swift, 2024b)