TAYLOR SWIFT AND THE *1989* ALBUM RELEASE AND FAN RESPONSE

PARASOCIAL RELATIONSHIP STUDY

A Thesis

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by

Sarah White

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Abstract

of

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This thesis looks at how social media and its intricacies, paired with parasocial

relationships, significantly influence and control social media-goers' behavior in favor of

the entertainer, in this case, Taylor Swift. The critical question of this thesis is: How did

Taylor Swift use social media to communicate with her fanbase about her release of the

album, *1989*? This thesis will employ close textual analysis on Swift's social media posts

about her album release on release day and fan response from the three social media

platforms: Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter. This study argues Swift used simple

language and popular social media intricacies to oversee and control the online

conversation about *1989* and her fandom.

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Date

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Lastly, thank you to Taylor Swift. Thank you for your activism in sisterhood and believing in supporting women, not tearing them down. As you powerfully said at the 2016 Grammy Awards,

> I want to say to all the young women out there: there are going to be people along the way who will try to undercut your success, or take credit for your accomplishments or your fame. But if you just focus on the work and you don't let those people sidetrack you, someday when you get where you're going, you'll look around, and you will know that it was you and the people who love you who put you there.

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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

Background: Who is Taylor Swift Anyway?

Taylor Swift, a multi-Grammy Award-winning singer and songwriter, made an impact in the country music world when she was 15 years old. Coming from humble beginnings, Swift grew up on a Christmas tree farm in Reading, Pennsylvania (Taylor Swift Biography, 2017, para. 2). At the age of 10, Swift sang at local fairs and competed in talent contests. At age 11, Swift sang the "Star Spangled Banner" at a Philadelphia 76ers game. By the age of 12, Swift began to write country songs and self-taught how to play the guitar. (Taylor Swift Biography, 2017, para. 2). To pursue her country music career, the Swift family moved to Hendersonville, a town near Nashville, Tennessee, the country music capital. While in Nashville, Swift signed with Big Machine Records at the age of 15, a mere sophomore in high school (Doyle, 2009, para. 17). Swift turned her narrative of experiencing bad relationships into successful country music by writing country songs that exposed the narrative of her heartaches with intimate and intricate lyrics resembling diary entries. Her country hit songs earned her ample radio time and many platinum albums. "Swift found that using her failed relationships as material for her confessional songs was a hit formula" (Cripps, 2013, para. 4). Swift expressed, in her music, teenage narratives of love and heartache all the way through her early twenties. Swift claims country music "is the place to find reality in music, and reality in the stars who make that music" (Cripps, 2013, para. 8). Her country music became more than a

popular sensation to all country music lovers worldwide; she became the face of country music.

Swift's popularity and fanbase were quickly on the rise. In 2012, at the age of 22, Swift had earned seven Grammys, including Album of the Year, Best Country Album, Best Country Solo Performance, and Best Country Song (The Recording Academy, 2017). Swift's album *Red* made her the first artist since the Beatles, and the first female singer ever, to "log more than six weeks at number one with three consecutive studio albums" (Country Music Association, 2013). In 2012, *Rolling Stone Magazine* named Swift's *Red* album to be among the top fifty albums of all time (Country Music Association, 2013). The following year, Swift was named one of *Time Magazine*'s 100 Most Influential People (Country Music Association, 2013). In 2013, Swift was *Billboard's* reigning artist of the year, and she held the record for the most top 10 debuts in the history of the Hot 100 Chart (Country Music Association, 2013). From an early age, Swift was not only altering country music by commanding popular radio time but unbeknownst to herself, Swift was developing into one of the world's most powerful and influential celebrities as well as a cultural phenomenon. Fans were enamored by her persona, her music, and the clean-cut country girl image she presented for over a decade.

In 2014, on the cusp of turning 25 years old, a new edgier version of Taylor Swift emerged. Swift's hair became short and straight, and her red lips suited her new staple look of a more mature and less country version of Taylor Swift. Swift disassociated herself from the country twang music, put away her cowgirl boots, and severed her bonds with producing country music. She moved out of her Nashville home and bought an

upscale loft in the heart of New York City, where she lived alone with her cats Meredith and Olivia. Moving to New York City gave Swift more independence and altered her life view, as well as her musical sound shifting, with endless potential and possibilities. In an interview with VH1's "Big Morning Buzz Live," Swift asserts, "Moving to New York affected every aspect of my life, which inadvertently changed my music. So when my life changes, that's when you'll see a change in theme on my album" (Taylor Swift Explains Her Move to NYC on Big Morning Buzz Live, 2014). Swift's change of scenery and audience continued when she was invited to perform at the 2013 and 2014 Victoria's Secret Fashion Shows (Victoria's Secret Press Room, 2014), and announced her next album would be a pop music album. All of these life changes, experiences, and challenges not only set Swift up for a drastic alteration of who she was, but it was preparation for a cultural and musical change Swift's fans would experience as well. Swift was growing into womanhood, grasping onto her newfound pop artist identity, and growing fame. Swift realized if she wanted her fans to remain loyal she would have to convince them to adopt and accept her new identity too.

Swift's album *1989* was her first pop album venture. This new album "arrived in October of 2014, and in the first week sold 1.287 million copies, more than any of her competitors in first-week sales and more than any album in that period since 2002" (Schneier, 2014, n.p.). Billboard (2015) celebrated Swift's *1989* album and confirmed it had outsold her last two country albums and earned three more Grammy's. In an interview with *Vogue* in 2014, Swift expressed that she completely changed the sound of everything she has done until now (*Vogue*, 2014, para. 2). Swift claimed she did not want

to hurt her country fans feelings or betray Nashville (*Vogue*, 2014, para. 2). Swift

claimed, "But essentially it comes down challenging yourself as an artist" (*Vogue*, 2014,

para. 2). Swift expressed to *Music Times* (2014), an online news provider reporting on

celebrities and music, that she had always wanted an album to have a very distinctive

sound and believed this is a sonically cohesive album ("Why Did Taylor Swift Go Pop?"

para. 3). Before the album was available for purchase, Swift released her first single from

the album, "Shake It Off," in August 2014. "Shake It Off" allowed the audience to hear

and absorb the new distinctive 1980's inspired sounds of Swift's album. The song was not

played on active rotation on many country music stations; however, for pop radio, the

rotation of the song was frequent (Reuter, 2014, para. 5). Reuter (2014) claimed the song

had "Gone into power rotation on almost every pop radio station. It will range anywhere

from 10 spins a day to 17 spins a day" (para. 6). It is safe to say Swift now sat at the head

of the popular culture table. At a time in her life when she became famous and extremely

successful in her country music artist identity and career, Swift risked losing her fanbase.

The release of *1989* was not just an introduction to Swift's new musical sound, but also

the platform used to introduce the audience to Swift's new identity as a mature woman.

She could have potentially found herself in unfavorable circumstances with a lack of

sales, no fan support, and negative public feedback. Instead, Swift's fanbase supported

her and grew into a broader community which transformed identities with her as fans of

Swift's country music to now Swift's pop music fans. A new relationship based on a

musical and identity change was formed. This thesis will investigate how Swift used

social media to communicate with her fanbase about the release of her *1989* album.

The significance of this study was twofold. First, the communication via social media from Swift to her fans on the *1989* album release alluded how the rhetoric manipulated and controlled fan behavior online. Second, the immediate feedback addressed to Swift from the fans, showed instant validation or rejection of Swift's position in pop culture. Time allows opinions and behavior to change and conform to new ideas, feelings, and display of fan behavior. The immediate fan response captured the genuine fandom controlled by Swift's rhetoric without the opportunity of time-lapse to create behavioral change. Swift's successful country identity had to be surpassed by her new pop identity. To sustain her fandom and transfer it to her new identity and music niche, Swift had to successfully connect with her fanbase in an emotionally shared way. Her personal and shared identity with her fans as a teen country artist had to transcend into an adult woman, now a pop artist, in a socially influential and manipulative way. The overwhelming approval of Swift's new identity and the sound of *1989* withstood the risk of the music genre change in Swift's career.

The resounding success of Swift's *1989* album was due to the fans' embrace of Swift's new style, interests, and behaviors displayed through the social media posts when she advertised and celebrated the album release. The process of adopting behaviors of celebrities is an aspect of fandom in socially mediated experiences (Fraser and Brown, 2002, p. 186). Social media allowed the mediated experience between Swift and fans to be interactive by allowing the fans to post comments on Swift's social media posts. The rhetoric shared between Swift, and her fans were worthwhile to study as it challenged the norms on how to control and sustain support during a drastic change in an artist's musical

career. Swift created rhetoric that invited a relationship that would support her career and

identity change. The rhetoric surrounding the *1989* social media posts consisted of

engagement of fantasy friendship. This fantasy relationship, called a parasocial

relationship, existed between Swift and fans. Parasocial relationships according to

Bennett et al. (2014) "are one-sided relationships, where one person extends emotional

energy, interest, and time, while the other party is completely unaware of the other's

existence (Parasocial Relationships: The Nature of Celebrity Fascinations, para. 1).

Swift's social media posts on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter announcing the

1989 album release gave her a unique advantage for recruiting support through social

media with her rhetoric being delivered instantly to her fans with the advantage of

immediate feedback and comment exchange. Swift's fans followed her social media

posts. The ability to follow Swift on social media was an illusion of exchange, because

the fans perceived a direct message from Swift to their social media, despite it being a

general message to the masses. This illusion of exchange strengthened the fantasy bond

of the parasocial relationship between Swift and her fans. Swift's rhetoric created a

perceived reciprocal relationship between herself and her fans. This perceived reciprocal

social exchange is identical to any other social media following scenario: friends follow

friends. Friends receive immediate contact and communication with other friends on

social media. The rhetorical input from Swift directed to her fans through social media on

the day of the *1989* album release, constructed specific behavior and directly controlled

the influence over her fandom. The social media rhetoric added a new dimension to how

Swift controlled and sustained her fan loyalty and the conversation about the positive

career change Swift made. Swift's social and emotional control over her fans' behavior during this career-changing time placed her as the exemplar of parasocial relationships.

The rhetoric surrounding Swift and her fan responses from Swift's social media post of the *1989* album release are necessary to study as the rhetoric goes beyond words; it transcends from words into a fantasy relationship manifested through shared key terms and cultural references. Discovering how key terms, and which key terms or patterns sustained and created loyalty during the genre change, will direct the research into defining how Taylor Swift used social media to communicate with her fanbase about the release of album *1989*, while simultaneously retaining fan loyalty by developing a parasocial relationship.

While a lot of attention is paid to celebrities and their fans, there is a lack of attention and research to the specifics on the structure of celebrity and fan relationships on social media. It could be linked to the relative infancy of social media in society, and the lack of understanding of the long-term effects social media has on today's users. Parasocial relationships theory will provide insight into how social media is a reliable device for celebrities to perform a fantasy relationship. This study expands previous research into social media and communication, explicitly how parasocial relationships on social media manipulate and control fan behavior and loyalty during a time where there is a risk to the celebrity's career. Social media intricacies, such as hashtags and retweets allow social media-users, in this instance, Swift, to express a thought and interest of the moment in a fashion that affects the viewers by establishing trust and creditability through perceived relatability. Exploring the rhetoric of the fans that were immediately unified

and impacted through the social media fantasy relationship will give the existing

parasocial relationship research insight as to how the immediacy of contact between

celebrity and fans is crucial for sustaining the fantasy relationship.

This research will employ close textual analysis, a method used to analyze

speeches, books, song lyrics, poems, etc., in a different forum than previously utilized:

social media. There is not much research currently involving close textual analysis and

social media, especially concerning celebrity rhetoric directed at fans. The rhetorical

findings collected using close textual analysis will contribute to the growing knowledge of

this method by providing awareness of how key terms, repetition, hashtags, tweets, and

cultural references create behavior and unity in a social media setting where the rhetoric is

instantly produced and consumed by the masses.

This research will, therefore, make specific claims as to how the language

dynamics of sustaining loyalty among parties during a metamorphic stage is strategized

and successfully executed. The data collected will then serve as not only a critique but

also as instruction as to how successful rhetorical expressions control the commitment of

an alleged relationship amongst parties in a social media setting.

Methodology

As texts cannot articulate for themselves and have meaning that may not be self-

evident, texts require analysis and interpretation to reveal the motive and argument of the

rhetor to the critic. The artifacts in the present study will be analyzed using a rhetorical

criticism method: a close textual analysis. The close textual analysis method will reveal

the motive and argument supporting the notion that some terms or ideas are more

significant or central than others. The rhetoric encompasses key terms, which directly

shape the content and the advancement of an argument or motive. Using close textual

analysis by examining the language patterns help identify the "how" and "why" in a

rhetorical piece which peruses a particular interest. Specifically, with this critique, the

close textual analysis will examine how and why Swift's rhetoric was successful in

creating and sustaining fan loyalty throughout her metamorphosis.

Close textual analysis is comprised of two dominate steps which are detailed with

micro-level procedures. The first step was observation, followed by the next step of

interpretation.   Discovering the cohesion between the observation and the interpretation

elements of the text will lead to a disclosure of the overall rhetoric and how it is designed

to sustain an argument or motive based on what key terms the rhetoric employs. As stated

by Lucas (1988), "The benefit of close textual analysis is that it allows the critic...to 'slow

down' the action within the text so as to keep its evolving internal context in sharp focus

and to allow more precise explication of its rhetorical artistry" (p. 249). The detailed

process of examining the rhetoric word by word provides the critic with the means to

discover and understand the interest of the rhetor, which potentially could be overlooked

otherwise.

According to Kain (1998), the first step, observation, is concerned with a text as a

whole or is applied to a selected passage. The objective of this first step is to note any

prominent aspects where the substance of the rhetoric and the concept of elements such as

the organization of the text, cultural reference, and structural rudiments are cohesive.

Coding, or annotating any keywords, compelling phrases, repetitive terms, elaborations,

contradictions, a core group of vocabulary words, etc. is exhibited in this step. Annotating

brings attention to the logical progression of the rhetoric as well as its organization of the

argument or motive. Coding the substances of the rhetoric will also provide aid to

understanding the motive for the persuasion or argument supplied by the rhetoric.

Annotating requires the critic to pay close attention to the key terms, and the evidence it is

providing about motive.

      In her research, Kain (1998) stated the next step is moving from observation to

insight by interpreting the details of the observation. Interpretation connects the

observations of word choice to answer the how and why; it helps sustain the argument of

the rhetoric. Rhetorical findings do not stand on their own but instead, necessitate

interpretation. According to Lucas (1988), "Each word, each phrase, each sentence

conditions the response of the audience" (p. 249). The performance of the effective

rhetoric, as well as the interpretation, will provide logical reasoning and relevance to

answering the research question. In close textual analysis, the data interpretation clarifies

why key terms become significant and why language patterns emerge.

      The first step of data analysis for this research was critical observation the rhetoric

of Swift and the fans. Explicitly, noticeable expressions, cultural references, as well as

structural and organizational rudiments of the rhetoric were recorded. The objective of

this observation was to code any repetition of terms, any compelling keywords or phrases

from the rhetoric of the fan comments, as well as the rhetoric of Swift's social media posts

from Twitter, Instagram, and Facebook on October 27, 2014.

The next step was interpreting the analysis of the findings. The noted key terms and notable phrases alluded to themes. The explanation of the collection of words, word patterns, and syntax concerning the rhetoric created logical and sensible themes using the motive and persuasion of the rhetor. The interpreted text data explained the word choice, tone, and content of Swift and fans as beneficial and reciprocal. The repetitive key terms, tone, and language patterns in the social media rhetoric had rationale and intent that supported a distinctive relationship pattern, purpose and scheme of the rhetor. The interpreted presentation of the rhetoric by Swift and her fans described the relevance and significance of the posts during the metamorphic time in Swift's career.

Following these two steps, the analysis of the interpretation was paired with the theory of parasocial relationships. Combining the analysis with the theory provided insight into how Swift retained her fanbase from one genre of music and expanded into another using social media. In a broader scope, the insights exemplified how social media interactions helped control the audience by an establishment of parasocial relationships with celebrities and brands.

<div align="center">**Social Media**</div>

The artifacts used for this research came from three social media platforms Swift utilized to announce the release of her album: Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter. Social media is a form of electronic communication through which people create online communities to share and exchange information, ideas, personal messages, and information (Merriam-Webster Dictionary, 2016, n.p.). Social media offers the users an

easy way to share content such as photos, videos, and messages accessed by computers, tablets, and smartphones.

Facebook

Facebook is a social networking site, created in 2004, that makes it easy for the users to connect and share with friends and family online (GCF, 2017, n.p.). Facebook has the ability for the users to share videos, pictures, status updates, and instant message other users simultaneously. Facebook's mission is "to give the power to build community and bring the world closer together. People use Facebook to stay connected with friends and family, to discover what's going on in the world, and to share and express what matters to them" (Facebook Newsroom, 2018, n.p.). In 2014, Swift posted pictures, status updates, and short video clips on her Facebook page.

Instagram

Instagram, launched in 2010, is a "simple way to capture and share the world's moments" (Instagram, 2018, n.p.). Users of Instagram can post photos and videos that can be edited with filters to brighten the moment. The photos and videos can be shared publically or privately, depending on the user's privacy settings for his or her account. Instagram allows for users to "follow friends and family to see what they are up to and discover accounts from all over the world that are sharing things you love" (Instagram, 2018, n.p.). Swift, who utilized Instagram's 2014 application abilities, posted filtered pictures and short 10-second videos.

Twitter

Twitter, launched in 2006, is an "online news, and social networking service on which users post and interact with messages knows as 'tweets.' *Tweets* are short messages of 280 characters or less, posted by the user received in the feed of anyone who follows them" (Gill, 2018, n.p.). However, in 2014 when Swift's tweets were created, Twitter's character limit per tweet was 140. Twitter believes in the freedom of expression, and every voice has the power to impact the world (Twitter, 2018, n.p.). On Twitter, users can follow their interests, be informed about breaking news, entertainment, sports, and politics, as well as share their posts of expression, photos, and videos (Twitter, 2018, n.p.). Registered users are the people who can post content on Twitter. However, unregistered users can read content. Gill (2018) argues, "People send tweets for vanity, attention and shameless self-promotion, and celebrities can use it too" (n.p.). Gill (2018) further explained Twitter is "low maintenance social connections and may influence other people in a small way" (n.p.). Gill (2018) states celebrities use Twitter to build a more personal connection with their fans (n.p.). Fans spread celebrity news using a feature called a retweet. To *retweet* is a process in which a registered user reposts, or forwards content, posted by another user furthering celebrity knowledge.

<div align="center">

Social Media Intricacies

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Hashtags

All three of the social media platforms have the commonality and popularity of the users employing a *hashtag*. A hashtag is a keyword or phrase proceeded by the actual hashtag symbol which is represented by "#." The hashtag phrase becomes a clickable link

leading the viewer to a listing of people or pictures of the same hashtag (Nations, 2017, n.p.). Additionally, "Anyone who sees the hashtag can click on it and be brought to a page featuring the feed of all the most recent posts that contain that particular hashtag" (Nations, 2017, n.p.). Hashtags create a way to find a connection with people with similar interests by a unifying phrase or word and being accessible to all people.

Trending

Social Media intricacies also involve *trending*. Trending is when a topic "experiences a surge in popularity on one or more social media platforms for a limited period of time" (BigCommerce, 2018). Trending topics often include popular cultural references, such as current events in the news, television shows, social concerns, and celebrity announcements (BigCommerce, 2018). Trending topics regularly appear in the practice of hashtags, but trending topics can also appear in the form of keywords or phrases that often are discussed on social media or searched on search engines, such as Google.

Photobombing

Another element of social media trending is the act of *photobombing*. Photobombing is spoiling a photograph of a person or thing by unexpectedly appearing in the camera's field of view as the picture is being taken. Photobombing is typically performed as a prank or practical joke (Oxford Dictionary, 2018, n.p.). The *photobombers* will usually make a silly face or pose in the background of the photo without the permission or acknowledgment of the main subject of the picture. The

photobomber's intention is to surprise the main subject photo at a later time, such as when the photo is posted on social media.

Follow and Feeds

In social media, a *follow* and *follower* represent a registered user who opts to see all of another registered user's content in his or her *feed* (BigCommerce, 2018). A feed, or *newsfeed*, is a data format used for providing registered users with frequent updates, summaries, and links to new content published on their respective sites (Springer Nature, 2018, n.p.). BigCommerce (2018) further explains, "Twitter, Instagram, and Facebook all have a form of newsfeed that delivers content to users."

 Selfie

A *selfie* "is an image of oneself taken by oneself using digital camera especially for posting on social media" (Merriam Webster, 2018). A selfie represents a "personal experience, that is also social, taken for the express purpose of sharing with others" (Rutledge, 2013).

<center>**Description of Artifacts**</center>

The artifacts consisted of the exact announcement posted via social media from Swift and a large sample size of fan responses. Swift's social media posts and all fan responses analyzed were posted the day of Swift's album release, October 27, 2014. Having the exact social media posts from Swift and the fan responses to the posts on the exact date of the album release was essential for this research; it provided rhetorical immediacy from Swift to connect with her fans efficiently so that she would maintain and create fandom during her genre change. The timeliness of the fan feedback was crucial

for this research. The fans instant expressions of support, acceptance, and rejection

provided a genuine rhetorical reaction without the variable of time hindering or

influencing the rhetoric. The timeliness of this one-day event was crucial in encapsulating

actual fan reaction. Exploring the instant rhetoric of the fan feedback clarified how

Swift's rhetoric was indeed successful in creating behavior that preserved her fandom.

The close textual analysis of the fan responses suggested how Swift's rhetoric was

successful, and in some cases was not successful. The immediacy of the rhetoric provided

the validity of the findings in the rhetorical critique and provided legitimacy to the

answered research question.

     Before Swift posted on her official release date, Swift released *1989* 47 minutes

early, making the release time 11:13 p.m., Eastern Standard Time, on October 26, 2014.

On Twitter at 11:13 p.m., EST, Swift tweeted, "IT'S OUT! IT'S OUT! THIS IS NOT A

DRILL GO GO GO #TS1989" (The Skinny World News Now, 2014). Fans were given

an "early present" as they were up all night listening to *1989* (The Skinny World News

Now, 2014).   This tweet and fan responses were not a part of the artifacts analyzed for

this study, as they fell before the 24-hours of the release date. However, they were

significant to mention because Swift began training social media users how to speak about

1989 early. Hernandez (2014), a contributor to *Mashable*, a global media company

specializing in digital content, collected fan Twitter responses to Swift's early release.

Fans were excited and shocked learning they could download *1989* 47 minutes early.

Samples of Twitter users responses were, "SHE DROPPED IT HALF AN HOUR

EARLY AND SHE LEFT US ALONE TO DIE #1989ListenSession #TS1989," "I was so

totally unprepared for this early release, my shock might throw me into a seizure #epilepticprobs #TS1989," "OH MY GOD IT DOWNLOADED EARLY I AM NOT PREPARED FOR THIS DON'T TALK TO ME UNLESS IT'S ABOUT TAYLOR BYE #TS1989," and "Yessss. Released 47 minutes early. #TS1989" (Hernandez, 2014, n.p.).

Specifically, on the morning of her *1989* album release, October 27, 2014, Swift posted a video on her Facebook page at 5:13 a.m., Eastern Standard Time. In the self-recorded video, Swift was accompanied by her mother and father riding in the car during the early hours of the morning. The family was on their way to be interviewed by newscaster Robin Roberts of *Good Morning America*, where Swift would discuss her album release. During the ride to the studio, Swift's newest single *Blank Space* was playing on the radio. Swift became excited and cheered. She then asked her mother and father to say "hi" to her camera. Swift's parents cheered and sent greetings to the camera, which became her first *1989* related social media post. Swift's caption for her video stated, "On my way to *Good Morning America* and THIS HAPPENS #blankspace #TS1989." Swift wanted to draw the attention of her viewers and announced something remarkable happened relative to her new album release.

The sample of the fan responses on Facebook was 603. Examples of the fan feedback to Swift's Facebook post included, "Love your new album. Thank you so much for everything; you are such a wonderful, amazing, talented person!" "Taylor, you are such an inspiration, seriously setting such a good example for people. The new album is wonderful. You're doing everything right!" "So cute that you are with your mom and dad!" "My daughter has dedicated her music life to you." "So cute that your mom and dad

are driving and you're not in a huge limo. #Grounded." "You never disappoint us! No matter county, pop, or whatever. So happy to see you successful." "Um, can you change your lipstick color to peach? Red is not suitable." "Aren't you rich? Why are your parents driving you? Whatever. Good luck." and, "This is cute that she can still be as excited as a kid hearing her song on the radio." Her video garnered both positive and negative responses. Everyone on Facebook expressed her or his opinions freely without censorship.

Following her Facebook post, Swift posted a photograph on Instagram of her holding her album inside a Target store. Her father was in the background photobombing the picture. Swift's caption for the photo entailed, "The deluxe #TS1989 is at Target & I just got my copy! 3 voice memos +3 extra songs and 13 Polaroid's. And hi, Dad."

The sample size of fan responses on Instagram was 750 comments. Examples of the fan responses on Instagram included, "Hi, Taylor's dad!" "I'm glad somebody finally understands me!" "Every time I hear one of your songs, I tell my mom or dad to turn it up," "My kids danced to your new album all the way home. You rock!" "You are so basic." "Photo bomber! This guy is like hey, I am in Taylor Swift's picture!" "Just bought this album to get through an insanely difficult breakup after 10 years. It is exactly what I needed." "Taylor, my daughter and I are going through a hard time in life right now, and money has become tight since I was laid off. But the one thing that is our escape right now is *1989*. Thank you for giving myself and my daughter that," and, "I want to take the time to thank you for saving me. For the longest time, I had nobody to go to. Nobody to listen to me when I was at my worst. But I just listened to this CD over

and over again, and it has made me feel better. I have self-harmed for years, and you're

my only sense of escape. I don't think I would be as happy as I am without you and your

music." Like Facebook, the fan comments on Swift's Instagram post contained both

negative and positive feedback by users who believed Swift would read their response.

Lastly, Swift posted a tweet on Twitter. Swift tweets throughout the release day

included, "Yes, it's a busy promo day. But if you think I'm too busy to cyber-stalk you,

you're WRONG. #TS1989" "I love the pics you're posting with the Polaroid's!

#taylurking" "Found some important photos while #taylurking" and, "Oh my God, guys,

you could not possibly be cuter, #TS1989." Swift's many tweets were complemented

with photos of fans holding their *1989* CD, posing with the Polaroid's, or celebrating this

release day with *1989* miscellaneous commodities such as homemade posters, t-shirts, and

even cakes, all celebrating Taylor Swift and her new genre album. Swift retweeted some

photos of fans rejoicing her and the release of *1989*.

The sample size of fan responses on Twitter was 224 comments. Some examples

of the tweets fans posted in response to Swift's tweet included, "Went shopping at Target;

the album was the most important thing on my list! #TS1989" "I'm SPEECHLESS! Best

album ever, Taylor!" "We got Taylor Swift's new album today! It's amazing! Listening to

it on repeat! #TS1989" "I spend my whole life trying to explain my emotions, and Taylor

Swift does it one chilling album. #TS1989" "Went grocery shopping; the album was the

most important item. #TS1989" "Thank you, Taylor, for putting out an album that is

incredible and life-changing. I love you. #TS1989" "I love Christmas morning, A.K.A.

album release day #TS1989" "As a celebration of #TS1989 release day, I am wearing my

#TS charm bracelet, #TS Keds shoes, and #TS shirt. Happy release day!" "It's Monday.

But it is also *1989* release day. This album is perfect. #TS1989" "I have waited 2 years

for this album #TS1989, and I love it. Been listening to it nonstop" and, "Everyone needs

this life-changing album in their life #TS1989." One Twitter user posted a four-picture

collage of her shopping at Target and tweeted, "Hello. I dragged my dad along to buy

your album merch. #TS1989." Some of the negative tweets on Twitter included users

posting pictures of trashcans with commentary stating this were what that user thought of

1989, Swift, and the hype of the day - it was all garbage.

The car video recorded by Swift was saved from Facebook to the critic's computer.

The Instagram and Twitter posts and fan response comments were screenshot and saved to

the critic's computer. The selection and sample size of the fan responses were collected

and organized sequentially. The collected samples were worldwide and separated by

social media platform. Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter samples were arranged in three

eight-hour increments. Social media commentary about Swift and *1989* was global in

scope, therefore the comments overlapped time-zones over the 24 hours on the release

day.

Research Question

How did Taylor Swift use social media to communicate with her fanbase about her

release of album *1989*?

Chapter 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Close Textual Analysis

Stelzner (1966) said, "The objective structure of a speech, as well as of a book, is a composite of subtly balanced meanings; all language is weighted toward something, hence away from something: for something hence opposed to something" (p. 421). Stelzner believed rhetorical acts are rich and complex, and our interests center on "the order, movement, meanings, and interrelations of the language: the object is to discover not only what goes on, but how it goes on" (p. 420). His big idea was discovering the full disclosure of text (p. 420). In his 1966 study of a Roosevelt 1941 address, Stelzner (1966) made the argument speeches provide clues of significance (p. 420). He expressed as critics we need to be concerned about how speech is, not how it came to be. He said, "We explicate. We try, inductively, a kind of statistical inspection to find out what goes on and how the on-going is generated" (p. 420). By exploring every possible line of significance in a speech, or any form of rhetoric, Stelzner found the choice of work arrangement of proper nouns, modified repetitions, lexical combinations, details of the language pattern involving syllables is microscopic, and this process will lead to great insights on other discourse research (p. 437). Studying the details of one specific rhetoric, such as a celebrity's social media rhetoric, may inspire critics to study the aspects of different rhetoric. The findings of the studied rhetoric may lead critics to discover the techniques of persuasion and motive of the rhetor. The results possibly clarify how the persuasion of the rhetor affects the audience.

The next step in the analysis was about 10 years later when Leff and Mohrmann led the way with close textual analysis. In 1974, Leff and Mohrmann analyzed the textual importance of Abraham Lincoln's 1869 Lincoln Cooper Union Address by emphasizing argument and style of speech, which "loom as important elements, since they disclose essential characteristics in the significant interrelationships among the main units of the discourse" (p. 348). Leff and Mohrmann (1974) claimed the focal point of the rhetoric is the speaker and the messages become a vehicle for improving ethos (p. 348). As this analysis was a campaign speech, the elements of significance were found to be surrounded by the motive of personal persuasion. The ultimate goal of the campaign was to promote oneself and create a general identification between the speaker and the audience (Leff & Mohrmann, 1974, p. 348). Leff and Mohrmann found echoed points as a stylistic element. Repetition accentuated the arguments, while personification developed into an argument aimed to reach to people beyond the sitting audience, which added confusion, and heated contentions that needed to be controlled (Leff & Mohrmann, pp. 351-353). By gaining control of the opposition, Lincoln stressed reasoning for his argument using refutational methods for each issue he raised by defining each issue with a series of rhetorical questions and then turned the argument against the adversary. This stylistic choice reveals a "momentous reply to attack that gathers momentum as the discourse proceeds" (p. 354). Leff and Mohrmann, closed by stating, "The political artistry and the rhetorical artistry are functions of each other, and an appreciation of this coalescence can only enhance our understanding of the Cooper Union Address" (p. 358). Close textual analysis illustrated

Lincoln's rhetorical persuasion and manipulation were embedded in the details of the rhetoric.

While paving the way for close textual analysis, G. P. Mohrmann, passed away and left his writing of rhetorical criticism unfinished. To prove and expand on Mohrmann's stance, Leff (1986) expressed, "The motive for textual criticism, is to divert attention away from theoretical constructions and to focus on the rhetorical action embodied in particular discourse" (p. 378). He continued by stating, "...the critic must attend to the elements contained within the text itself" (p. 378). A close reading of a text may expose an alarming number of significant elements involved in the rhetorical piece. "Texts simply do not yield up their own rhetorical interpretation. Critics must move from what is given in the text to something that they produce - and an account of the rhetorical dynamics implicit within it" (Leff, 1986, p. 378). This exercise of interpretation demanded a way to rationalize the identifications of important elements in the rhetoric and to explain the interactions among these significant elements (Leff, 1986, p. 378). Leff believed "theory becomes linked with a kind of activity, and its meaning approximates the early Greek sense of theoria," which is observing something as a whole to comprehend it (p. 383). By observing as a whole, the entire picture becomes more transparent and easier to understand and therefore be able to be expanded.

While the theory of close textual analysis has been around for several decades, close textual reading had only appeared in modern literature, according to Leff and Sachs (1990). Lucas (1988) explained this resurgence of interest in textual criticisms was due to

students becoming "more attuned to text and texture of messages" (p. 248). He continued by saying :

>...partly because of the explosion of language studies in general, partly
>
>because of the influence of structuralism, deconstructionism, and reader-
>
>response criticism, partly because it is one way to identify the special angle
>
>of vision of the rhetorical critic in contrast to that of the historian,
>
>biographer, or sociologist. (p. 248)

The world of education was ever changing and academia was expanding with new found interests and ideologies. Academics had the new found drive to explore further and define close textual analysis within the realm of rhetoric and textual criticism.

Lucas (1988) declared Leff to be at the forefront of the turn of textual criticism (p. 248). He urged rhetorical studies students, similar to Leff, to go beyond setting a speech in context and explaining what the speech says but to value the way rhetoric is structured and articulated, and what motives appeared in the textual features as the discourse unfolds. Lucas claimed texts created their internal context as they unfold in time and are processed by the audience (p. 249). Lucas stated, "Meaning and effect are produced, not by the text as a static entity, but by the progressive interaction of the audience with the temporal flow of ideational, dispositional, stylistic, and syntactical elements in the discourse" (p. 249). He stressed that each word, phrase, sentence, metaphor, and element of the discourse conditions a response from the audience. He believed the benefit of studying each of the textual features through close textual analysis is it permits "the critic to 'slow down' the

action within the text," which allowed the critic to remain focused on the internal happenings of the rhetoric and the artistry (Lucas, 1988, p. 249). By "slowing down," the critic may focus on all parts seeing the deeper meaning within the text.

Leff and Sachs (1990) further stated the focus of close textual analysis centered on the text itself and the rhetorical features embedded in it (p. 256). The features of the text combined to create what Lucas (1988) called textual criticism, defined as "an unfolding sequence of arguments, ideas, images, and figures which interact through the text and gradually build a structure of meaning" (Lucas & Sachs, 1990, p. 256). Close reading "disarms the tension between form and content and thus opens the way toward a more fluid understanding of rhetorical action" (Lucas & Sachs, 1990, p. 256). A close reading of a particular discourse often presents both data and method for comprehending larger discursive formations and shifting interpretations of culture (Lucas and Sachs, 1990, p. 257). Understanding the features and details combined with the motive of the rhetor of a particular rhetorical piece may aid in interpreting a broader genre of rhetoric, such as social movements or celebrity posts on social media.

Leff (1992) warned there were implications of close reading. If the focus of the criticism was too narrow, the theory of close reading "loses contact not only with other critical endeavors but with the social world where practice occurs (Leff, 1992, p. 230). Additionally, he warned if the focus was too broad it "loses the discipline required to engage texts with precision and comprehend the fundamentals of practice (Leff, 1992, p. 230). In Leff's version of textual criticism:

> ...the text becomes stabilized as a field of rhetorical action through
>
> a calculous that subsumed its extensional thrust within its
>
> intentional dynamics. This allows for a synthetic judgment about
>
> particular cases, but it also tends to fix the particular text outside
>
> the larger field of intertextual developments. (p. 226)

Balancing the focus of the criticism illuminates the interpretations of the intentional dynamics of the discourse by bringing awareness to the motive and persuasion to the forefront of the reader's attention.

Black (1984) critiqued a newspaper article about looters breaking into stores and stealing merchandise during a power outage using close textual analysis. Paragraph by paragraph, he analyzed terms, metaphors, how people were addressed, and patterns of emotion embedded in the text. Black found there was "loading of terms" to describe some of the characters in the article. The loaded terms used to describe the looters were, "dark young bodies" (p. 145), which offered the first impression of these terms might be taken at a literal meaning, but by dissecting the text carefully, Black concluded it was mere irony.

Black (1984) noted there was a passive construction of sentences that created a vagueness throughout the article. He critiqued some of the article's sentences by adding questions of clarification that can be identified in the brackets: "After the searing emotion [that who?] experienced in those few hour of our communal life, it is important now [for whom?] to go back and to be quite clear about exactly what is was we saw" (p. 146). When the rhetoric used phrases including words, such as "are" and "we," it was understood as some form of the first-person plural being addressed, even though the

address was "more archy" and "discrete" (Black, 1984, p. 146). Black wrote the function

of these terms was to "reference an experience without a specification of the subject who

does the experiencing joins the "picture in mind" of the initial sentence to sustain a focus

on subjective states rather than objective events" (p. 146). He added that tactics like these

might only be "we" experience searing emotions, but the looters, who are labeled as

"they," did not experience searing emotions (p. 146). This suggestion could have hints of

divisiveness. The text addressed people as "us," not "them" and Black explained, "it

leaves the subject of experience vague until it can develop control over our response and

bring us later to being attentive to 'their' emotions and suppressing our own" (p. 147).

Black interpreted the overall motive to "accumulate a detritus of shame" and "an origin of

liberal guilt may be in the rhetorical strategies that liberalism hides from itself" (p. 150),

thus showing by studying the word by word of the rhetoric, the critic should identify a

motive.

In the same fashion as Black (1984), Leff (1988) dissected Lincoln's 1865 Second

Inaugural Address looking for significant textual elements that led to a motive. Leff

(1988) found this discourse exhibited a "clear pattern of temporal flow" (p. 26). The

introductory remarks established an orientation divided into the past, present, and future,

and then "three tenses reappear in the body of the speech, each making out one of its

major divisions" (Leff, 1988, p. 26). Leff added,

> close reading demonstrates that this progression is more than a device for
>
> separating the gross structural units of these discourses. Temporal movement
>
> seems essential to their rhetorical economy; it frames the action of the various

argumentative stylistic elements, blends them into a unified field of textual

action... (p. 26)

He acknowledged temporal inflections that guide and lead the text are not commonly

mentioned in the existing literature, as pieces are not entirely studied as a whole (p. 26).

Leff said critics had focused so much on the historical context the stylistic elements were

overlooked (p. 26).

He argued Lincoln's use of temporal elements in his Second Inaugural Address

"directs the symbolic movement of the text and that no adequate interpretation can

disregard this chronological pattern" (Leff, 1988, p. 26). However, this temporal

movement demanded special attention, according to Leff (p. 29). He claimed to

appreciate the temporal shifts in this discourse, "we must consider the characteristic

differences between the secular and sacred time" (p. 29). Leff also annotated Lincoln's

use of religious references in this discourse; he refers this to the sacred times. Leff

noticed there was a change in perspective. The shift went from secular to sacred. The

religious themes retained the logical and emotional consistency as the political (p. 29). He

said Lincoln became "sermonic; virtually every sentence quotes, paraphrases, or alludes to

a passage in scripture" (Leff, 1988, p. 28). Leff also coded the tone of passivity and self-

effacement. He concluded Lincoln used temporal order to move forward, "but in a way

that blurs different temporal perspectives" and added elements of Christianity to influence

the listeners to evade malice and find lasting peace (Leff, 1988, p. 30).

While Leff focused on textual elements leading to a motive, Black (1994)

dissected each eloquent line of the 1863 Gettysburg Address for stylistic rhetoric. He

critiqued the textual eloquence in multiple ways to illuminate this masterpiece of stylistic

rhetoric from Lincoln. He questioned how this discourse functioned rhetorically. His

answer was, "The answer is in the details" (p. 22). One of the details Black (1994) took

notice of was the use of the word "here" and "how its toll was like a bell through that

period of fixation on the present moment" (p. 23). He counted the word "here," meaning

at the cemetery, appeared eight times in the speech. Two of those times "here" served as

function as a repetitious purpose, as well as to improve the "rhythmic solemnity of the

Address" (p. 23). Black also claimed the use of the word "here" served as a tool to bind to

a place and time, for example, here implied the occasion at the cemetery versus there

which implied a "different and less bounded time and place" (p. 23). He also noted the

word "but" served as a word of movement (p. 24), where the word "but" shifts and rivets

the speech both of time and place, the word "but" shifted from historical to moral and

from general audience to a more specific. Black also coded this word to also serve as a

"process of rejection" (p. 24).

  Regarding structure, Black ran some statistics on his discourse. Black counted 367

syllables (p. 26). In the first section of the discourse, he counted 146 syllables, and in the

second he counted 263 syllables (p. 26). Black said the speech was divided into twenty-

three lines consisting of nine lines of fact statements, followed by five lines which created

a natural pause, then nine lines that are of resolution (p. 26). Black claimed this stylistic

structure "is so close to perfection it's almost a formula" (p. 26). Another interesting facet

of Black's 1994 findings was the use of negativity in this piece. The words "cannot" and

"not" served as a way to refuse a digression, which was the primary purpose of this speech (p. 32). Black named Lincoln a master of stylistic rhetoric (p. 34).

Parasocial Relationships

The term parasocial relationship was coined by Horton and Wohl in 1956. A parasocial relationships is not considered to be a real relationship. It is a one-sided relationship where one party invests emotionally, and the other party, the persona, is completely unaware of the other party's existence, as seen in the fanbase of Taylor Swift. Horton and Wohl (1956) coined the term to name the "seeming face-to-face relationship between spectators and performers" (p. 215). The performer draws in the spectator to the illusional relationship, either being his or herself or a friend character, with contrived and cued performances. The performance may seem to speak directly to the at-home spectator, making it appear private and personal to the spectator. This staging fosters the illusion of intimacy between spectator and performer (p. 215). A live studio audience is drawn into this fictional relationship, as the actor subtly stages the performance to elicit anticipated responses. The interaction between performer and audience, a seeming tiny "simulacrum of conversational give and take" happens. This interaction is what Horton and Wohl called a parasocial interaction (p. 215). The entertainer is in control of the relationship with cues, gestures, and scripts. The spectator in the parasocial relationship has "little or no sense of the obligation, effort, or responsibility" to the relationship or performer (p. 215). He or she can quit at any time. However, Horton and Wohl said if the spectator chose to stay in the parasocial relationship, the involvement often included much fantasy with positive and negative effects (p. 215).

Horton and Wohl (1956) suggested the parasocial relationship and the real world, or as they call it "ortho-social" relationship, may only differ by "degrees" of involvement in fantasy, not by the kind of fantasy (p. 215). "The crucial difference in experience obviously lies in the lack of reciprocity" (Horton & Wohl, 1956, p. 215). The audience/spectator cannot compel a new affiliation, but can only "choose among the relationships offered" by the performer (p. 215). Parasocial interaction is basically "one-sided, non-dialectical, controlled by the performer, and not susceptible to mutual development" (p. 215). The fan of the persona is happy with this fantasy because they are being given the feeling of friendship and connection, while the persona is being validated by growth of their successful fandom.

The T.V. persona/celebrity, according to Horton and Wohl (1956), exists in the media only for the parasocial relationship with the audience/spectator (p. 216). The television camera enhances the illusion of intimacy, and the devotee or "fan" actually thinks he or she has a close relationship with the persona celebrity, and "appreciates his (the persona's) values and motives" (p. 216). However the "intensification of loyalty, ...a growth without development," is a one-sided connection without mutual formulation of values (p. 217). "Reciprocity between the two [devotee and persona] can only be suggested" (p. 217). The mass media makes great effort to "strengthen the illusion of reciprocity and rapport" so the audience does not realize or recognize how impersonal it all is (p. 220). The audience/fans partake in the fantasy now by continuing to believe in the illusional relationships and "by rewarding the persona's 'sincerity' with 'loyalty'" (p. 220). The duty of the performer/persona is to act out his or her reciprocal role very

adaptly, as if holding "up a magic mirror to his followers" that idealizes the reciprocity and the illusional relationship" (p. 222). As a result of the persona's actions, the fan believes in the fantasy relationship and may now "play his part completely in imagination" (p. 222). The persona governs and directs the parasocial interaction as the audience reacts to the performance (p. 228). Horton and Wohl suggest the fundamental reason for the "guidance and control" exerted by the celebrity "lies in the imputation to the spectator or a kind of role complementary to that of the persona himself" (p. 228). The persona is in complete control of the construction of the received relationship. The persona acts how she or he would like to be perceived and guides the audience to consume and accept the persona as is presented, leading to three forms of social interaction.

In a follow-up paper to the 1956 Horton and Wohl study on parasocial relationships and interactions, Horton and Strauss (1957) examined and contrasted three forms of social interaction. The three forms were personal interaction, vicarious interaction, and parasocial interaction. Personal interaction is a face-to-face exchange between the performer and the audience member. It is a truly reciprocal relationship. It is intimate and private because of the in-person interaction (Horton & Strauss, 1957, p. 579). Vicarious interaction occurs when the audience member/spectator does not interact with the performer, but only watches, unacknowledged by the performer (p. 580). Parasocial interaction seems like a personal interaction, but differs as the spectator's experience is illusionary and one-sided.

Rubin and McHugh (1987) devised a three-step process for the development of parasocial relationships. First social and task attraction must be presented, then parasocial

interactions occur, which lead to "a sense of relationship importance" (p. 279). Rubin and McHugh used uncertainty reduction theory and interpersonal communication theories in their investigation of parasocial development. Rubin and McHugh explained that communication was a key process in the development of an interpersonal relationship (p. 281). The more communication is increased, the more uncertainty decreases, which fosters "increased liking of the other," which is the social attraction of the viewer to the performer in parasocial interaction (p. 281). They suggested a formula in parasocial relationship development, fundamentally using three key factors: communication, liking, and intimacy (p. 281). The attraction had three elements that were interpersonal with the amount of exposure to the media figure and the parasocial interaction. The desirability of developing parasocial interaction was a social attraction, physical attraction, and task attraction, which lent credibility to the performer/media figure. Rubin and McHugh claimed even though both interpersonal and mediated relationships seemed to develop along similar lines, the media relationships were often understood to be "functional alternatives to real interpersonal relationships" (p. 288).

Perse and Rubin (1989) further discussed the fantasy friendship which parasocial relationships entail. Since parasocial relationships manifest over a period of time, spectators often feel a "sense of friendship with the persona they watch and have come to know" (p. 61). Both parasocial relationships and friendship are voluntary and personal, "but the personal focus is what moves a viewer from detachment to parasocial interaction" (p. 61). Friendship is about companionship and filling a social need for affection, much as the same as many viewers see their particular persona as a companion of sorts.

"Parasocial interaction may mirror social interaction" because it reduces the level of uncertainty and gives the spectator the illusion of a "deeper perceived intimacy with and liking of the mediated characters" (p. 63).

The spectator of the television program feels his interaction with the performer is reciprocal and personal, but the performer does not, as the interaction is purely in the spectator's head (Horton & Strauss, 1957, p. 580). "Parasocial interaction is governed by the convention of non-interferences; the performer fully controls the course of action" (Horton & Strauss, 1957, p. 580). Horton and Strauss suggested with large audiences, the personal interaction of spectators with the performer changes to a parasocial interaction, as the performer literally cannot interact one-on-one with each audience member (p. 580). They continued by stating, "Parasocial interactions are especially favored by mass media which permits enormous audiences, yet each member is addressed in relative privacy, almost as though the speaker were present" (p. 580). Each member feels they are personally addressed, leading to greater fan belief and social media following.

Horton and Strauss (1957) claimed technology controls what the spectator sees and hears, but the performer "is competent at eliciting appropriate responses in his audiences" (p. 583). The performer or celebrity uses familiar formality and routines to which his audience is accustomed. The performer can then introduce innovation to the show, where the audience reacts properly, and attribution occurs. "Familiarity with the media prepares viewers for new formats" (p. 583). Parasocial relationships develop even deeper as the audience becomes well versed in what to expect from the performer. The performer's act has become successful over the months and years, and "the program gets a history" (p.

584). The performer has disclosed particulars about himself to the spectators through parasocial interaction, and the fans come to expect a certain level of entertainment from the star. The fan/spectator has some indirect control in the parasocial relationship through the use of fan mail and telephone calls to the media headquarters. Horton and Strauss noted the success of any given performer hinges on "audience ratings and the success or failures of advertising campaigns" (p. 586), which is linked to the reciprocal parasocial relationship.

Alperstein (1991) researched viewers' reactions and relationships to celebrities in television commercials in America. While not saying the relationships were parasocial interactions in nature, Alperstein phrased the viewer responses to celebrities in TV ads as "beyond emulation toward pseudo-social interactions" (p. 43). The viewers "may reach beyond the intended message" of the commercial to tie in information, gossip and prior exposure to celebrity to the responses, which become part of the individual's social construction of reality (p. 43). Alperstein recited Horton and Wohl (1956) by stating social interaction that advertisements wish to "create the illusion" of personal contact from the celebrities by which they "speak directly out of the television" to the audience, producing "intimacy at a distance" (p. 43). This is exactly what Horton and Wohl (1956) termed parasocial interaction. Alperstien said this is "artificial involvement" of the audience reacting to the messages (p. 44).

Alperstein (1991) wrote "an imaginary social relationship" can bring together the audience/viewer to the performer/celebrity appearing in the commercial (p. 44). Caughey (1984) suggested, "'this illusion is an important part of everyday American life in which

'media consumption directly parallels actual social interaction'" (as cited in Alperstein, 1991, p. 44). The illusion of intimacy suggested by the advertisement between celebrity and viewer, according to Schickel (1985), "explains how celebrities become viewers' friends" (as cited in Alperstein, 1991, p. 44). These imaginary relationships parallel actual social relationships because of the level of interest and intimacy one feels in the relationship. In modern American culture, according to Allen (1982) "knowledge of media figures is an important part of everyday social interaction" (as cited in Alperstein, 1991, p. 44). Caughey (1984) believed, "People characterize unmet media figures as if they were intimately involved with them, and in a sense they are - - they engage in pseudo-social interactions with them" (as cited in Alperstein, 1991, p. 44). Knowledge and interaction of media figures keep consumers up to date with celebrity news, as well as media figure's credibility, by being relatable and relevant through the appropriate connection of contemporary interest.

Giles (2002) restated Horton and Wohl's (1956) initial research on parasocial interaction as "the interaction between users of mass media and representations of humans appearing in the media, which can produce a form of parasocial relationship, to which the user responds as though in a typical social relationship" (p. 229). Giles (2002) said Horton and Wohl (1956) called for social psychologists to research how parasocial interaction become incorporated in "usual social activity," (p. 280) which he stated he found little research of over the forty years since Horton and Wohl (1956). Despite the lack of research, Giles agreed parasocial interaction is a "dimension of normal social behavior" (p. 286). Parasocial interaction throughout history and across cultures is well

documented, especially by Coughey (1984) where he enumerated many examples of parasocial interaction in individuals with imagining people [as in a novel] or with political figures like kings and gods. The research points to the use of powers of imagination for the parasocial relationship development. Giles stated, "parasocial interaction can be regarded as an extension of normal social cognition, specifically regarding the use of imagination" (p. 287). Giles (2002) adds, "psychological processes acting at the individual level parallel those used in ordinary social activity and relationship building" (p. 288). Giles found some media figures only appeared in one specific type of media format, such as a newscaster on television, who would rarely, if ever, interact with viewers outside the news show. However, a pop star or film star, or other mass media celebrity, will cross media outlets and appear on television and radio shows in performance mode and "chat" or interview mode. The celebrity will also use the mass media of magazine interviews, as well as newspapers, columnists to also strengthen the parasocial interaction with that celebrity. If the star has recorded audio or visual, the repeated viewing and hearing of the star's performance or message will "intensify aspects of parasocial interaction with that star" (Giles, 2002, p. 292).

Auter and Palmgreen (2000) presented their paper on audience and persona interaction scale in 1992 and again in 1997. Following the work of Horton and Wohl (1956) on parasocial interactions between media characters and spectator, they sought to devise a measurement scale for parasocial interactions in a quantitative way. Over the decades since Horton and Wohl, many researchers have proposed measurement constructs for parasocial interaction. These researchers include Rosengren and Windhal (1972),

Norland (1978), Levy (1979), Houlberg (1984), Rubin, Perse and Powel (1985). Auter and Palmgreen (2000) sought to use Horton and Wohl's (1956) original four factors of parasocial interaction sub-dimensions (p. 83). These are identified with a favorite character, interest in the beloved character, group identification, and the problem-solving ability of the favorite character (Auter & Palmgreen, 2000, p. 83). The results of Auter and Palmgreen scale showed it was a "multi-dimensional measure of the multi-dimensional construct of parasocial interaction" (p. 87). Being able to measure parasocial interaction on this scale would allow researchers opportunities to examine many related subsets of parasocial interactions such as relatability, authenticity, and trust.

Cohen (2003) stressed the importance of the fantasy friendship aspect of parasocial relationships and the emotional breakups viewers can have with the persona. This relates to Auter and Palmgreen's (2000) scale in regards to relatability, authenticity, and trust. Cohen pointed out parasocial relationships were "simulated interactions" which extended past the viewing time, and spectators saw the media figures as "close friends they would like to meet" (p. 191). Parasocial interaction strengthened the effects of the mass media (p. 191). Cohen noted a "Parasocial breakup is quite common" (p. 192). Cohen claimed the dissolution of the viewer and TV celebrity was as sad and "significant and recurring feature of viewers emotional lives in general and of their experience with the media, more specifically" (p. 192). Cohen (2003) argued since parasocial relationships were documented as common and meaningful to viewers, similar to real social relationships, a breakup of the parasocial relationship would be as "psychologically trying" as a genuine dissolution of a real social relationship (p. 192).

After more than fifty years of research studies on parasocial interactions and parasocial relationships introduced and refined by Horton and Wohl (1956) and Horton and Strauss (1957), Schramm and Hartmann (2008) suggested designations of parasocial interactions and parasocial relationships have often been interchangeable (p. 386). Schramm and Hartmann called for clarity of the two terms which would distinguish the boundaries of each construct, thus leading to more categorical studies and measurements. Parasocial interaction is confined "to the interpersonal processes between persona and users that take place during media exposure," and this process of interaction is "restricted to the duration of the media exposure" (Schramm & Hartmann, 2008, p. 386). A parasocial relationship represents "the cross-situational relationship a viewer or user holds with a persona," which contains elements of perception and judgment, influence and feeling or emotions and behavior stimulation of the viewer" (p. 386). A parasocial relationship is often sustained by the viewer "beyond the single exposure sequence, like a friendship that exists between two persons beyond their face-to-face communication sequences" (p. 386). Schramm and Hartmann furthered explained parasocial interaction and parasocial relationship sequencing and causality factors based on the world of Gleich (1997) and the boundary clarification just given. They contended the initial parasocial interaction between the user and mediated figure was the antecedent to the development of the parasocial relationship. The parasocial relationship would then affect the viewer's "future motivations and selection processes, as well as a parasocial interaction processes in subsequent media exposure sequences" (p. 386). Both parasocial relationship and parasocial interaction are therefore agents of causality with each other, separate constructs

resulting from media exposure sequences. In today's world, the "media offerings [products/consumables] that are built around media persons, dominate the media landscape" (p. 397). Since parasocial interaction is automatic during the viewer/persona encounter, the interaction also is immediate and automatic when the viewer is exposed to "mediated offerings" (p. 397). Schramm and Hartmann (2008) stated, "Parasocial interactions belong to the constitutional (essential) elements of person-centered media exposure" (p. 387). Schramm and Hartmann concluded, "Especially for the exploration and explanation of audio-visual media usage, the parasocial interaction concept is of central importance" (p. 397) as it would provide a mutualistic and consistent experience between both parties.

Labrecque (2014) maintained parasocial interaction was not limited to existing in the usual mass media of television, radio, and movies. He argued parasocial interaction would develop "through messages in an online environment that are designed to bring the viewer closer to mediated persona," such as a brand or celebrity (p. 135). Just as the social interaction illusion in the typical parasocial interaction for viewers seems reciprocal, the consumer's interactions with the brand or celebrity on social media sites are most often "one-way conversations," with scripts and guidelines, yet give the illusion of a two-way conversation between the viewer and the persona/brand representative (p. 135). The viewer/consumer perceives interactivity through the social media use of one-sided messages, verbal and non-verbal, thus promoting the parasocial interaction (p. 136). Labrecque said there were two cued "messages components" that convey the usual mediums, such as television, radio, and movies, to "online environments," where the

parasocial interaction develops (p. 136). The first cue was "perceived interactivity of the persona with the viewer" where the messages signal "responsiveness and listening" on the part of the persona (p. 136). The second message component for parasocial interaction in the online arena was "openness in communication" where the persona appears to "reveal information about himself to the viewer" (p. 136). This level of intimacy is found in parasocial relationships. Openness was the second cued message and refers to the illusion of intimacy shared between persona and viewer. Openness was represented in all parasocial interactions.

The parasocial relationship has often been described as a friendship of sorts, and it is no different when the parasocial interaction occurs in a social media context where the persona gives the viewer details of his private life though message context. The viewer feels she, or he now has an intimate relationship with the celebrity. Perse and Rubin (1989) said the viewer "'perceived self-disclosure'" promotes parasocial interactions, as the viewers feelings of intimacy rise and feelings of uncertainty in the illusional relationship decrease (Labrecque, 2013, p. 136). Porter and Dunthu (2008) argued as trust and viewer cooperation in the social media environment grows, "individuals are likely to reciprocate with personal disclosures and increased loyalty intentions" (as cited in Labrecque, 2014, p. 136). Message cues of interactivity and openness in communication drive the formation of parasocial interaction in the social media setting, and the desired outcome of the parasocial interaction between consumer and brand/celebrity (Labrecque, 2014, p. 140). Labrecque found the viewer's "sense of feeling connected with the brand (or celebrity) through the interaction goes beyond the interaction itself and drives feelings

of loyalty and willingness to provide information to the brand" (p. 139). Speed or timely response, along with "personalization" of message content influence perceived interactivity between the target viewer and the persona on the social media front (p. 140). The parasocial interaction was discovered to be highly "manipulated" due to the seemingly "personalized, direct response" to the consumer via social media programs (p. 143). For parasocial interaction to develop in the social media setting, both openness in communication and perceived interactivity must precede its evolution. The content of the messages can be manipulated to further a sense of parasocial interaction by including personal details, which in turn facilitate the sense of open communication between the persona and the viewer (p. 145).

Tsay-Vogel and Schwartz's (2014) research clarified the role of authenticity in a classification scheme for media figures, no matter what genre of media the persona was from (p. 67). Figure authenticity or realism is "the degree to which a media character adheres to the laws of the physical world" (p. 67). The viewer association of authenticity of the media persona was a strong objective factor indicating parasocial interaction was present (p. 67). Ruben and Perse (1987) concluded the more realistic, or authentic, the media content was subjectively perceived by the spectator, the higher the levels of parasocial interaction were displayed (as cited by Tsay-Vogel & Schwartz, 2014, p. 69). Tsay-Vogel and Schwartz wanted to develop a modern classification scheme for media figures applying to all entertainment genres, not just the historical genres of television, radio, and the motion picture that was available during the original period of the parasocial relationship and interaction study by Hoton and Wohl (1956). As advances in

technology occur, so do new ways to facilitate parasocial interactions. New personae may

be identified with, as there are more media outlets for the viewer to interact in a parasocial

manner. These new media outlets are called "new media climate" (p. 69). The study of

parasocial interaction and parasocial relationships have evolved from the climates such as

radio and television which Horton and Wohl used in their research. Some new media

climates include MP3 players, DVR's, and the internet, which can be accessed on several

devices including tablets, laptops and cellular phones across the globe.

Classens and Van den Bulck (2015) helped mitigate the shortcomings of parasocial

interactions and parasocial relationships by adding in the element of European consumer

diversity. Classens and Van den Bulck sampled 1,000 Flemish adults from northern

Belgium, whose gender was evenly divided, ages ranged from eighteen to fifty years old

and were educationally diverse. Classens and Van den Bulck's questionnaire was to name

any celebrity from any genre as the respondent's favorite. Classens and Van den Bulck

recognized the globalization of celebrities allowed by the technology in new media

formats, and local audiences now have access to international personas (p. 61). The

favorite celebrity names in this study were not only from TV and film, but also music,

sports, politics, and local media figures (p. 43). Classens and Van den Bulck noted

"contemporary celebrities culture extends to a wide range of domains," and were of great

significance to the diverse audiences who saw celebrities as "social companions" and

formed "personal connections" through parasocial interaction and parasocial relationship

constructs (p. 45). Parasocial relationships are similar to social relationships because of

the "emotional connection, encompassing empathy, sympathy, intimacy, and

apprehension" (p. 46). Parasocial relationship connections have all the trappings of a real-world social relationship (p. 46). Boon and Lomore (2001) said, "Celebrities are part of people's social world and are similar to friends or family members" (as cited in Classens & Van den Bulck, 2015, p. 46). Celebrities are encouraged by their fans to be part of their everyday social media obsessions.

A Likert-type survey of nineteen statements, developed by Classens and Van den Bulck, examined parasocial relationship connections of the respondents to his/her favorite celebrity. The survey focused on relational items the respondent could have with their favorite celebrity. Some of these relational items included friendship, feelings of empathy, or family, interest in knowledge acquisition about the celebrity on social media, and desire to meet the celebrity (p. 49). A verbatim sampling from the Classens and Van den Bulck 2015 survey were as follows: 1) "I feel like I know my favorite celebrity well," 2) "My favorite celebrity could be my friend," 3) "I can empathize with the emotions of my favorite celebrity," 4) "I often have the same point of view as my celebrity," 5) "I talk about my favorite celebrity like I talk about my friends," 6) "My favorite celebrity is like a family member to me," and 7) "Sometimes I actively search for information on my favorite celebrity" (p. 49). The data from this study indicated emotional connection and similarity to social relationships were two principle constituents of parasocial relationships (p. 60). "The empirically validated definition of parasocial relationships as illusions of long-term friendships between audience members and celebrities, which are one-sided and created by the media, but encompass an emotional connection and are similar to real-world social relationships" (p. 60). Classens and Van den Bulck concluded

"this study demonstrated the relevance of parasocial relationships with celebrities in audience's everyday lives" regardless of gender, age, and education level (p. 62).

Chapter 3

DATA

Chapter Three provides the data regarding the frequency of rhetorical patterns, essential phrases, and negativity of the text from three social media platforms. Three sets of eight-hour intervals were annotated from Swift's and fans' Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter. Chapter Four will provide an in-depth analysis of the data presented in Chapter Three.

Swift's Facebook Rhetoric

Swift's Facebook post was two-fold. It was a 12-second video clip presumably filmed from her cellphone, with audio of Swift, her father, and mother expressing excitement over the release of the new album. One of her album's songs was playing on the radio, it was her release day, and they were on their way to *Good Morning America* to do an interview. The second part of Swift's Facebook post was the rhetoric she typed about the video. A short text caption to accompany the video posted on Facebook described the excitement and the significance of the moment she filmed.

The 12-second video clip was set before sunrise in a car with Swift's parents driving to the *Good Morning America* studio in New York. Swift's father was driving the car, her mother was in the front passenger seat, and Swift was sitting in the back seat. Swift said, "Z-100! They're playing *Blank Space* on Z-100! Say hi, Dad! Say hi, Mom! It's album release day! [We are] On our way to *Good Morning America*. What's going on?" In the background, the radio screen displayed the name of the song, *Blank Space*, and the radio station, Z-100. Her father's hands were filmed driving the car, and there was

the unobstructed view out the front windshield showing the early morning traffic of New York City.

Swift was very enthusiastic and surprised to hear her song on the radio on her way to *Good Morning America*. Because the video clip was only 12-seconds long, her audio message needed to be short, quick, and direct to the point of the social media post. Swift mentioned the name of the radio station, Z-100, twice and the name of the song from her new album, *Blank Space*. Swift was sure to include in the message where she and her family were driving, as well as that it was released day for her new album. Swift repeated the same request to her mother as she did with her father: "Say hi, Dad," and "Say hi, Mom." Swift's repetitious command for her parents to say hello to the camera was simplistic in language and brief in the time allowed. These were phrases the viewers could relate to. Swift's language style was used for the announcement of where they were headed and to explain the day was unique because it was her album release day. Her language style was simple, straightforward, direct, and quickly spoken.

Facebook allows its users to post a description or additional commentary to explain the picture or video of the visual or audio posts. The rhetoric allowed to complement the media post has no limit on how many characters can be typed and can have clickable hashtag links. Swift added, "On the way to Good Morning America and THIS HAPPENS #blankspace #TS1989."

Swift's description was ten words long and consisted of two hashtags. Her description of the video she posted was basic and short, immediately calling attention to the viewer that something significant just happened. Swift called immediate attention

from her fans by capitalizing the words "THIS HAPPENS." The large letters captivated

the viewer's awareness of the video as the letters stood out in size next to the all the other

lowercase letters in words to the left of them. The two hashtags identified the keywords

and Swift's interest in her post: the song *Blank Space* and her new album to be released,

1989. These two hashtags instantly became clickable links for all users of Facebook, not

just those who currently followed her. Anyone could have looked up those keywords and

found the post. The hashtags were simple words, meaning not too many words were

connected through the hashtag, which made it easy to distinguish the joint words and

abbreviations like TS (Taylor Swift). The simplicity of her vocabulary and clear hashtags

presented no challenge for any viewer to understand or to have any previous knowledge of

Swift's past country career. Her rudimentary rhetoric was not targeting any specific music

genre fan, such as country music fans. Her rhetoric was inclusive yet vague, so all

Facebook users could appreciate the post was relevant and open for everyone to watch and

enjoy. This hashtag would soon appear in her other social media platforms and act as a

"follow the leader" prompt on how to speak about all things *1989.* The hashtag #TS1989

which started on Facebook, commanded the tone and trend for how Swift wanted *1989* to

be discussed on social media.

The text in Swift's video caption was simple in vocabulary level and sentence

structure. The simplicity of the rhetoric helped capture the audience's attention and

effortlessly conveyed her call to action to purchase her album and participate in the *1989*

discussion. Fan's responded with a message of their own stating their interest of the

album and her. The rhetoric attracted the audience's attention by announcing in so little

words something exciting just happened without stating what that something was. The

viewer had to play the video clip to be made privy to the entire message. The rhetoric

advertised not only was it album release day, but her new single was playing on the radio,

and she was on her way to *Good Morning America*. At the same time, it also advertised

her family dynamic was relatable, as they traveled together. Her family supported

significant moments while sharing this milestone on social media.

The text trained Swift's audience how she wanted her video clip to be perceived

and conditioned her audience to discuss further the family-oriented clip and also discuss

all things *1989* on Facebook. The hashtag Swift used in her Facebook caption was a

prelude to her other social media posts. The hashtag #TS1989 first appeared on Facebook

and then on her other social media posts. Using #TS1989 was not only an introduction to

the specific hashtag but was an instruction to use this hashtag when conversing about

1989 or to search for other feeds about *1989*. The simplicity of the hashtags and rhetoric

was understandable and social media user-friendly. The text did not have any tricky terms

or particular jargon only country music fans, or her Facebook followers would understand.

The advantages of her using simple text were two-fold. The simple text allowed for easy

viewer comprehension and subtly directed the viewers to use the hashtag in their

discussions of *1989*.

The rhetoric in Swift's video was also short and simple. Swift's rhetoric in her

video directed her viewers to acknowledge three concepts. Initially, it was the *1989*

album release day. Secondly, her new single was playing on the radio concurrent with the

video. Lastly, she wanted it to be known she was not only with her family on album

release day, but her parents were fully supporting her while driving to *1989* promotional

events. The concise message was marketed to all social media users, not just those who

followed Swift. The rhetoric of the video coordinated with the text of her caption framed

how to perceive and consume Swift and her family on album release day. Additionally,

the coordination of the video and captioned text directed her viewers on what topics to

discuss regarding the video and album, thus Swift controlled the narrative.

Swift's Instagram Rhetoric

Swift's Instagram post was a picture post of her at a Target store in front of a

display of her album, holding her deluxe album which included three extra songs, three

voice memos, and collectible Polaroid photos of Swift. The deluxe *1989* album was

exclusively sold at Target (Target, 2018, n.p.). Swift covered her face with her album,

only exposing her eyes. Swift's father was in the background photobombing her selfie,

spoiling the photo by making a silly face with his unexpected appearance. Swift

captioned her selfie at Target by saying, "The deluxe #TS1989 is at Target. I just got my

copy! 3 voice memos + 3 extra songs and 13 Polaroids. Anddddd (sic) hi, Dad."

Like her Facebook caption, Swift's Instagram caption was short in length and

rudimentary in vocabulary. The total count of words including the hashtag for Swift's

Instagram post was 22. The length of the post was not long, considering her rhetoric

served as an advertisement for Target, her album, and her new identity. A central

keyword in the Instagram post that differed from her Facebook post was the word deluxe.

The word deluxe signaled to her Instagram followers this unique album with bonus

features, and collectible items could only be purchased at Target. The word deluxe alerted

her Instagram follower*s* this version of the *1989* album was unique and elite. Swift not only announced and advertised Target rhetorically in her caption, but she also promoted it in her photo by being inside the Target store in front of her album display. Swift's advertisement and commentary about Target was a call to action to her followers to purchase their copy of *1989* at Target. Swift declared she bought her copy of the album at Target when she could have purchased it elsewhere. Her actions influenced followers to buy *1989* at Target too, and also portrayed Swift as a relatable shopper, as she, like many Americans, shopped at Target too. It was a unique call to action to purchase her album and additionally promote Target.

Swift furthermore posted a selfie including her father photobombing it. Swift could have retaken the selfie to post one not spoiled, but she chose this one to publish of her father making an unexpected appearance. Often people do not realize their picture was spoiled until after the photo had been posted on social media because the photobomber was sneaky with their spoiling tactics.

Moreover, she went shopping with her parents as some fans might do with theirs. This photo displayed the attempt of Swift to look relatable, similar, and friendly to her fans so that they would feel more connected to the new Swift. The posted photo of Swift's father photobombing her selfie, gave the illusion of a more natural moment at Target, versus a professionally staged photo. Swift's effort created a fantasy relationship through illusioned commonality, stemmed from presuming fans shop at Target and may also shop with their parents. The fantasy illusion of commonality this social media post presented inspired many fans to purchase their deluxe *1989* album at Target. Lastly, Swift added the

hashtag #TS1989. This hashtag first appeared in the Facebook video clip earlier in the morning. Like the Facebook hashtag, the Instagram #TS1989 was also a clickable link for all users, not just those who followed her Instagram account.

Swift's Instagram rhetoric was a call to action for her fans to react and proceed with fandom in her desired ways. Swift wanted to advertise and advise her Instagram followers to purchase their copy, namely the exclusive deluxe copy, at Target. Swift made it known to her followers she purchased her copy of *1989* at Target. Swift, herself, was the advertisement for Target and *1989,* and she simultaneously and strategically led by example by buying her own deluxe album at Target. It was a social media version of following the leader, or rather, purchase for the leader. Swift captioned, "Oh hi, Dad" referencing his photobomb appearance in her Target selfie. Swift mentioning her dad and his photobombing called attention to a few factors. The first factor was yet again she was spending her release day with her family. Photobombing was a familiar social media happenstance as it occurred on many social media platforms. The photobombin*g* and commentary by Swift regarding the photobombing demonstrated Swift was relatable because she shopped at Target and had a family dynamic people appreciated. Publishing a photobombed post confirmed she was modern with social media trends. Posting Swift's photobombed selfie was a strategic and genius move to soften the apparent push to buy her *1989* album. Her father acted as an agent of distraction from Swift's command to buy at Target, and as an agent of relatability because families shop together at Target. Swift again added the hashtag, #TS1989. This hashtag created a clickable link for all Instagram users, not just those who followed her, to view her post and to purchase the album. The

hashtag worked as an instructional aid as to how she wanted her fans to talk about *1989* on their Instagram. She showed her post having the hashtag, insinuating she wanted her followers to do the same; she led, they followed. The visual and textual messages by Swift coached her audience where to purchase her album, strongly suggesting which version of the album to buy, and provided a layer of trust for her audience with the illusion she was a relatable friend because of her family dynamic and style of her social media post.

Swift's Twitter Rhetoric

Swift posted four messages on Twitter about her album release. Another important element on Twitter was her interactions with her fans. She chose to retweet or repost fan photos of themselves purchasing her album and Polaroids included with the deluxe edition, and photos of other ways fans were celebrating the album. The first tweet Swift posted entailed, "Yes, it's a busy promo day... But if you think I'm too busy to cyber-stalk you, you're WRONG. #TS1989." The total amount of characters including the hashtag was 101, substantially fewer characters used than Twitter's maximum limit at the time being 140. Underneath the tweet, Swift posted a four-picture collage of four female fans holding copies of the album and the Polaroids included with deluxe edition of *1989*. Swift's second tweet said, "Oh my God, guys, you could not possibly be cuter. #TS1989." The total amount of characters, including the hashtag in this tweet, was 57, which was again far below the Twitter maximum character limit a user can use. Underneath Swift's second tweet was another four-picture collage of four female fans standing inside a Target store next to the Swift's *1989* album display. Swift's third tweet

exclaimed, "Found some important photos while #taylurking just now... #TS1989." The total character count in the tweet was 65. This tweet included two hashtags. In addition to the tweet, yet again, Swift posted another four-picture collage of fans posting pictures of themselves with copies of the album. She even posted a picture of a *1989* cake a fan made in tribute to the significant day and new album. The final tweet posted by Swift stated, "I love the pics [sic] you're posting with the polaroids. #tayluking." The final tweet's character count including the hashtag was 61. Twitter allowed at the time for their users to utilize a total of 140 characters. Swift used considerably less. Her short and basic words made the tweet easy to read and the message she wanted to convey come across precisely. The tweets were brief and to the point: to consume and accept her new sound and identity as a pop star. Having a more extended tweet could have risked Swift's message getting lost in the muddle of loaded and maxed character tweet. Some users may have been new to this platform and unfamiliar with how it functioned, some users may not have preferred long tweets, and some users may not have been fluent in English.

The rhetoric of Swift's tweets displayed the attempt to show it was indeed her using her account by using the word "I," or other phrases including a variation of the word of ownership such as "If you think I'm too busy to cyber-stalk you, you're WRONG" in half of her tweets. Showing validity it was her was important for establishing a fantasy connection, relationship, and interaction with her followers. There were five instances in the four tweets where Swift said the words "you" or "your." The words "I" and "You" showed an attempt to display a fantasy relationship and dialogue between Swift and her fans. Swift acknowledged it was her promo day, an important day, but claimed this day

was not as important as recognizing her fans acknowledging her. Using the specific pronouns like "I" and "you," when addressing fans, provided an added element to the illusion, making the individual fan feel like Swift was speaking directly to them and established a relationship specifically with them. The collages Swift made all included at least one picture of a fan holding the deluxe version of the album, the Polaroids, or of a fan standing in a Target store. Swift also mentioned the Polaroids in every tweet, which exaggerated the importance and alleged popularity of this album and collectibles, mixed with subliminal Target store advertising and promotion.

Like her other posts on the other social media platforms, Swift used the hashtag #TS1989 in three out of four of her tweets. This hashtag allowed for all users and non-twitter account users to view Swift's tweets. Unlike her other social media posts, Swift added a new hashtag #taylurking. This hashtag was Swift's way of displaying a playful fantasy interaction by letting them believe she saw all of the #TS1989 feed to include the fan commentary and pictures. "Tay" was a shortened form of her first name, Taylor, and "lurking" was to mention she was lurking or spying on her fans. This hashtag was another clever way for Swift to interact with her fans and thus made them feel like the fantasy interaction was a more personal experience because they were included in her personal life. It was worthwhile to note Swift had the option to post either a worded tweet or post her collage of photos. Instead, Swift decided to pair the two options to create a loaded tweet to inform the audience that the day was a special day, and she noticed the celebration and excitement the fans had over the new music genre album. Swift utilized all facets of a tweet to engage with the audience fully.

Swift's text on Twitter was a perfectly executed example of a reciprocal fantasy relationship. Swift announced though she was busy promoting her new album, she was not too busy to check her Twitter and see her fans tweeting about it. Swift selected fans' photo tweets to retweet. Swift created the illusion she saw all the tweets and pictures, and she was continually monitoring the tweets under #TS1989 by saying she was lurking over her fans. The lurking created the idea or hope that these fans would be noticed and retweeted by Swift if they posted their *1989* album tweet under #TS1989. Swift's text not only acted as an agent of hope, but it served as a means of action. Swift wanted her fans to believe she was observing everyone by selecting some people to retweet when she wanted Twitter users to continue to show devotion to her and celebrate her album by posting under the #TS1989 hashtag. Swift wanted it to appear that Twitter was a platform where both parties could benefit from the #TS1989 hashtag and interact with one another as if it provided a mutual dialogue. If fans used #TS1989 hashtag, they were hopeful Swift might retweet them, and Swift benefited by obtaining more affirmation she was still accepted, and her fandom did not deplete because of her music genre change.

Fan Reaction Rhetoric

Similarly, fans and social media users had a lot to say about the release of *1989*. A sample of 1,577 comments was analyzed of fan rhetoric in response to Swift's posts. The fan rhetoric analyzed consisted of 603 Facebook comments, 750 Instagram comments, and 224 Twitter tweets. All the sampled fan rhetoric comments progressed throughout the album release day and were only in response to Swift's social media posts. Those

comments contained both positive and negative feedback about Swift and her *1989* album release.

Fan Facebook Response

The first eight hours of comments after Swift posted her Facebook video primarily consisted of messages of endearment because she was riding with her parents on the way to *Good Morning America.* Fans commented on how "cute" her excitement was hearing her song on the radio by commenting, "This is cute that she can still be as excited as a kid hearing her song on the radio," and made comments on what an inspiration she was by commenting, "Taylor, you are such an inspiration, seriously setting such a good example for people. This album is wonderful." Other Facebook users described where in the world they were watching this video from, such as "Greetings from Portugal!" Her Facebook audience repeatedly mentioned how they "loved" the song *Blank Space* and "loved" even more that her parents were driving Swift. Comments such as, "It is so precious your parents are taking you. That's how you know she is the real deal," "So sweet. Family bonding," and "She is with her parents on release day! How nice!" Swift's followers were shocked she was with her family on the album release day and that her father was driving her to her promotional events. The term "sweet" appeared 37 times, and the term "cute" appeared 32 times. However, there were comments of criticism over her parents driving her instead of Swift using a limo service. A follower commented on how "pathetic" it was to see her family drive her considering how rich she was. Followers repeatedly commented how "sweet" and "genuine" Swift was because she wanted to share this moment with her parents by asking them to say hello to the camera. Fans expressed

how happy they were for her and how they could not wait to purchase their copy of the album later that day. Fans repeated how much they "love" Swift's music and enjoy her humor, her excitement, and strength to stand up to her meanest critics. One follower said, "Thank you for being an inspiration. When some people crumble under pressure, you spread your wings!" Another follower commented on how Swift's music saved her life and got her through the worst days of her life by commenting, "I never thought I would get through my breakup. Your music got me through the most depressing time in my life. I love you!" Some followers mentioned how they woke up hours earlier than their normal routine to drive to the closest store and be the first in line to buy the *1989* album and added they were not embarrassed by that. The word "love" was in nearly every comment in some fashion, either expressing the fans' enjoyment of Swift as a person, an artist, or her music. The term "love" appeared 53 times. Followers repeated how Swift was their idol; she is the epitome of "perfection." Terms such as "idol" and "role model" appeared 21 times, while "perfection" was tallied at 19. Comments on the geographical location of the fans was also a large portion of the messages. Fans would comment, "All love from Turkey," "Love you from Pakistan," and "Vietnam loves Taylor Swift!" denoting that Swift's fanbase existed beyond the United States.

The next eight hours after the video post, fan comments followed a similar tone, but the trend of hateful comments appeared more frequently. Similar to the first set of eight hours, fans in the following eight hours adored Swift for how endearing it was she was riding in the car with her parents, sharing the special day with them, and how "sweet" it was to see her so excited to hear her song on the radio. A follower wrote, "This is why

we all love Taylor. She appreciates the little things, and she shares those little things with us." Terms such as "sweet" appeared again, tallying at 27 times, and "cute" appearing again, tallying at 12 times. The word "love" plastered all over the comments again as well, surfaced 44 times. Swift's followers mentioned how Swift was a "True success story," and "such an inspiration!" Terms "idol," "inspiration," and "role model" tallied a combined 46 times. An example of a comment that resembled one of those terms was, "Taylor, you are my number one idol. I love all your music. Blank Space is my new favorite song. I love *1989*!" Her followers commented in this set of eight hours again where they were from, such as the comment that stated, "Peru would love to see you here for the tour. We love you! Please come to Peru!" There was a consistent trend in these types of messages from various countries around the world. In this second set of eight hours, followers became more invasive and aggressive with their commentary. One fan commented, "Who is your boyfriend these days?" While another follower advertised how she worked for the Michael J. Fox Parkinson's Disease Foundation and could use some help from Swift in making a difference with the patients either by physically visiting or financially. Followers commented their sacrifices they made to get this album. One follower mentioned how she was late for work, but it was worth the write-up. Another follower said how she went to Target to get dinner items but left with two copies of *1989* and no dinner items.

The inclusion of negative feedback was vital, as it was essential to provide the opposite opinions of Swift and her new music. The negative comments became more numerous in this set of eight hours. Some comments were vulgar. Those comments

included, "[F**K] YOU" and "You're such a disgusting [b***h]." Less vulgar negative comments included things such as, "What is this garbage?" and, "How did this stupid video get in my feed?"

The third and last set of eight hours of the analyzed follower commentary of Swift's Facebook video clip was equal in content to the previous sets. Followers continued to profess their "love" for Swift, how she was their "hero" or "idol" and shared stories such as how Swift had made an impact on their lives when they were depressed and upset. A follower wrote, "You are my angel, my queen. Without you, I would not be here today," and "You are so perfectly imperfect, and I love you so much!" The terms such as "idol" reappeared 23 times, and the word "love" remained the most frequently used word, being tallied at 39 times. Followers continued to praise the album saying it was the best album she had released. A follower wrote, "You never disappoint. No matter country, pop, or whatever you do. I am so happy for you. Congratulations on your new release!" The followers commented the word "congratulations" 19 times. A large number of followers continued to mention her riding in the car with her parents and how "sweet" that was. Followers wrote comments such as, "You're riding with your parents. You are so normal, even in your private life," and "I love how you are sharing your special day with your parents. So sweet. Family blessings to all!" The term "sweet" appeared 17 times, referencing Swift riding in the car with her parents. A comical commentator wrote, "Well... I guess a ride to work is a ride to work." The admiration and excitement for the album did not die down in this third set of analyzed comments. Followers were consistent in expressing their obsession for this album with comments

such as, "Well, I found my new life album. #TS1989." The mention of their family became a popular response of followers as well. Comments such as "My little family is so pumped for this album. We have been driving around town just to finish playing the album," and "My 12-year-old daughter has been getting good grades. I think taking her to see you on tour would be a great motivation for her to maintain the great grades. Thank you for being a role model for my family." The term "family" was used and elucidated the notion Swift engaged with the audience in a way that provided a more personal or intimate interaction. Sharing about their families provided a sense of familiarity with Swift and inclusion in their family life.

Other followers have mentioned they had watched this video several times with their friends, and numerous followers suggested they would purchase the album as soon as possible. The term "friends" appeared nine times, and the word "purchase" or "purchased" appeared a combined 16. The fan comments mirrored Swift's rhetorical style of simplicity and directness, thus validating Swift was effectively communicating on Facebook. The followers outside the United States continued to send posts including their geographical location as well. Fans in Portugal, Australia, and the Philippines were making their fandom announced on their response to Swift's post. Swift's Facebook video-clip achieved global status and appreciation.

Negative feedback continued to appear in the last set of analysis for this post. Examples of the negative feedback included, "What a waste of my life is watching this," "Watching paint dry is more entertaining than this video," and "Shut up." Although the naysayers were not her target audience, they felt compelled to comment on her post, even

though the option to ignore her post was viable. Though the comments were negative, they added to the conversation growth of *1989*.

The general trend of repetitious rhetoric was the overwhelming use of the word "love."   "Love" was used in multiple ways to show admiration for Swift's character, talent, and existence. The simple, yet consistent words by the fans used displayed the sense of familiarity they felt with Swift. The word "family" was frequently mentioned. Followers stated how great it was to see Swift share this important day with her family. The Facebook comments regarding Swift with her family had a different tone to their messages. These comments were not displaying feelings of an obsession with Swift, but instead of enamorment of Swift and her close family dynamic. The fans were delighted and satisfied with Swift's disclosure of her family time, family celebration, and family support. It was perceived as pure and wholesome. It lent a perception that perhaps the comments regarding her family were written by a different fan base than the comments regarding an obsession with Swift that usually included the term "idol." The rhetoric of the fan comments was basic level writing. The comments were short in length, and included elementary level vocabulary; however, the comments were concise in displaying a coherent message, even the negative ones.

The rhetoric provided proof there was a high level of unwavering commitment to Swift and her new music. An outstanding trending topic the fans commented about was Swift riding in the car with her parents. The rhetoric acknowledgment about Swift with her parents was validation that Swift was relatable, despite her high celebrity profile status. Like many people experience, Swift rode in the car with her parents. It was a

relatable family dynamic and activity. The endearment towards Swift was also validation that Swift was still in the fans' good graces with her genre music change – the fans still adored and accepted her.

Fan Instagram Response

A total of 750 responses to Swift's Instagram album release post were analyzed. The responses to Swift's Instagram post of her purchasing her copy of the album at Target, with her father photobombing, received similar feedback to that of her earlier Facebook post. In the first hours after the Instagram post, followers praised Swift in a similar style and tone as the Facebook comments by using simple vocabulary and sentence structure. A 16-year-old fan commented saying, "I know you are very busy today, but I wanted you to know that I never felt brave enough to follow my dreams. But you inspire me, and I hope one day I can follow all my dreams as you have." Followers commented with the words "idol," "inspire," and "hero" 36 times. Followers commented on their devotion and celebration for this album. Followers would make comments such as, "Got to Target as soon as I could. I am in love with you, and everything that is *1989*," and "I absolutely love *1989*! I bought 2 deluxe copies and 2 regular copies. I can't have enough of this album," and "*1989* is the best album money can buy!" Followers would also comment how beautiful Swift was and how gorgeous her eyes were. Followers commented the word "beautiful," or related words such as "gorgeous," 25 times. Followers used the word "love" to describe their admiration for Swift or the album 44 times. Followers took notice of where Swift was shopping to purchase her copy of *1989*. Followers noted they had or will soon purchase their copy of *1989* at Target. "Target"

was mentioned 17 times in the first hours after the post. Swift's father was also a focal point of discussion, not just from Swift, but also from her followers. Fans acknowledged Swift's father 31 times and used the word "photobomb" when referencing him 24 times. Such comments included, "Your dad is hilarious," "Hi, Taylor's Dad," and "Your dad photobombed you! I wish my dad were this cool!" The hashtag #TS1989 appeared 25 times in the first set of eight hours analyzed.

Followers' communication with Swift appeared to be more vulnerable on Instagram. One follower posted a personal story about how they lost a child recently but related the baby would dance inside the mother every time the song "Shake It Off" would play. The follower wrote, "We lost our infant son recently, but while I was pregnant, he would go crazy to "Shake It Off" when it would come on the radio. We're going to play it every night at home and smile big." Personal stories of loss, depression, and heartache appeared eight times. Followers would state how Swift music in some has way saved their lives, got them through rough times, or was the support system they needed. The words used to share their personal story were casual and straightforward, similar to the type of verbiage used when speaking with a close friend. The intimate nature of the messages displayed the intended reaction was successful; fans were talking to Swift just as she wanted them to, with the idea that they held a close intimate parasocial friendship. Building the fantasy relationships with fans through Instagram, provided Swift with the level of devotion from users, which was crucial for her at this time while changing music genres.

Similar to Facebook, Instagram comments showed a significant number of international fans announcing the country where they lived. It was vital for international fans to hail their fandom from their country to Swift. Their fandom was to be included along with the American fans, not excluded and overlooked. The number of international fans announcing their fandom appeared to be an act to rally other international supporters. The rally proved Swift's fandom was not exclusive to the United States and the international fans could and would contribute to the *1989* album release commentary. Swift's influence was multinational and transcended not only geographical locations but culture as well. The Instagram followers outside of the United States were proud to support *1989*. The text of those Instagram messages from those viewers established Swift's fandom was global and devotion was international. Many celebrities' fame exists in several countries. The international fans made it a point to bring their devotion to Swift's awareness by contributing to the *1989* dialogue equally with the American fans. The text provided conversation and proof Swift's fandom was genuinely multinational and essential for the international fans.

The next eight hours analyzed of Swift's follower feedback showed similar trends and patterns as the first set. Swift's father was again a fan favorite. He was mentioned 36 times, and his photobombing was tallied 24 times. Often the words "Dad" and "photobomb" were together in the same sentence, such as, "Great photobomb by your dad!" They were seen as separate and solo hashtags such as #photobomb or commentary such as "Your Dad is the real M.V.P." The location Target was commented 12 times, with the follower stating they had already gone to Target to purchase the album or would

eventually later that day. The word "love" regarding Swift or her new album continued to grow as it was counted 51 times in the second set of hours. Her fans continued to show their excitement, appreciation, and dedication to Swift and the *1989* album by thanking for her new music 11 times. Dedication to learning all the lyrics on the album appeared five times with statements such as, "I will learn all these lyrics even if takes me all week! I will repeat this album shamelessly!" The pattern of mentioning what country the follower resided in resurfaced in the second set of Instagram analysis. Followers continued to state their home countries, such as Indonesia and Mexico, and informed Swift these countries "loved" her and hoped her tour would come through there.

The last eight-hour analyzed of follower responses to Swift's Instagram post followed the same patterns of messages as the previous two sets. The word "love" was counted 41 times, and "inspire" was close behind with a tally of 36. The use of the word "inspire" added another dimension to the fantasy relationship between Swift and the audience, as it indicated Swift was deemed a hero or idol. By using the word "inspire," the audience displayed a hierarchy within their perceived relationship with Swift; she was superior to them. This dynamic was unique because, although they granted her superiority, the followers still familiarly commented to her, which established a perceived personal relationship with Swift. It was a unique juxtaposition between considering Swift as a peer or friend and considering her as a superior or idol.

Followers continued to appreciate Swift's father and his presence in the photo. Followers greeted him 27 times, and one follower referred to him as "Mr. Swift" instead of "Dad" when referencing him. Swift's father's photobombing continued to be a

prevalent topic, as followers mentioned the single-worded hashtag "#photobomb" 31 times. The store Target continued to be mentioned. Followers referenced Target 11 times. Although Target and Swift's father were only asides from the main focus of Swift's message, followers commented on them as well, displayed just how deep their engagement was with the photo. Followers commented to Swift as if she was a friend, focusing on all aspects, and casually commented using simple terminology. The followers' mention of her father or Target demonstrated the focus was not just on the new album, but the interest also focused on what Swift was doing, where she was, and whom she was with. It was a much more intimate response.

The words "thank you" regarding producing her new album, or for saving their life in some capacity, reached a high of 19 counts. Two male followers stood out by highlighting the fact they were males who previously ignored Swift's country music, but now "loved" her *1989* album. One male follower even presented Swift with the details that *1989* even appealed to "black guys," such as himself. The word "male" was an interesting choice of words because it spoke to how male followers wanted Swift to know men were enjoying *1989* as well. The other noted male follower mentioned, "I am a man. I never liked you before, and I feel like I am handing over my 'man card' by saying this, but I like *1989*. I need to go reevaluate my life now." Though low in count, "male" was significant because Swift's typical fan was a white, college-age female. It was also noteworthy because both men mentioned they were never a fan of Swift before, but they appreciated the music on this new pop album. The term "man card" inferred the male

follower was somehow less of a man, or no longer a man for listening to and enjoying Swift's music.

The famous red colors in Target display in Swift's photo were a call to action for her fans to purchase the deluxe album at Target. Followers responded confirming they were "ditching high school," "left early" before work, or "immediately" heading to Target. Followers even committed to purchasing the deluxe album despite having to drive a substantial distance to the closest Target location. The words used by the followers on Instagram illustrated their devotion to copying Swift's activities by purchasing the album at Target. Fans not only wanted to get her album, but they wanted to experience the purchase such as she did at Target with the deluxe version. Fans desired to imitate Swift's Target shopping experience. The fans shopping at Target displayed a sense of interpersonal relationship with Swift, as the shopping experience was now a commonality.

While the vast majority of the Instagram comments where short and straightforward, there were fans who decided to type an extended message expressing a life story. Unlike Twitter, Instagram does not limit its users on character use. Whether the user chose to leave a short and direct message or an extended comment, the verbiage remained straightforward and uncomplicated, just as Swift originally chose to deliver her communication at the start of her album release day. Followers replying to Swift's posts emulated her short and direct communication style. The followers' replication of Swift's posting style showed it was necessary for her to maintain it because it was casual and social media user-friendly.

It was important to note there was a trend of negative comments as well. Not all were supportive or kind. Some followers told Swift, "You are so basic," "She has small nails. She looks like an alien, haha," and "Your CD sounds like [sh*t]!" A follower attacked Swift by saying, "Try dating somebody not famous. Oh, wait. You can't. You wouldn't have a career. Get a life." Followers even attacked her father, calling him ugly, old, and how he ruined what could have been a beautiful picture of Swift. The choice of words used in the negative comments displayed two elements about Swift's audience. First, they used a simplistic style of writing as Swift did. Secondly, whether it was negative or positive, they were engaged in and furthered the *1989* conversation. They wanted to be heard and wanted to attack in an interpersonal tone. The commentators posted offensive comments like, "you're basic," and attacked her personal dating life possibly because they felt comfortable doing so on social media, presuming Swift might have been similar in age, thus familiar with slang. Additionally, Swift's intimate life was public, consequently fair game for social media users to post a contrary opinion.

The hashtag #TS1989 validated the social media users conformed to Swift's subliminal instructions on how to post on Instagram when discussing all things regarding the album *1989*. The clickable link acted as a larger advertising mechanism for all users to view, including potential new fans. The more followers who posted about *1989* using the hashtag, the more posts would be seen when clicking the link and the more publicity, the better for Swift. The copious use of the #TS1989 hashtag was a visual affirmation to Swift that she did not lose her fanbase, she was still adored and accepted, her advertising plan was working, and she was potentially gaining new fans.

Swift's fans numerously declared their "love" for her. This "love" was perceived to be platonic, as no romantic declarations were expressed. Friendship is an expressive relationship where companions convey their level of trust and respect while supporting each other's worth. Friends bring to each other a natural level of comfort and support. Friends exist because each party has shared values, and they find each other useful and enjoyable. Friendship is a form of love, bonding parties deeply, emotionally, and the bond develops stronger over time. Swift's fans used the term "love" when expressing their feelings for Swift and were an emotional expression of trust, respect, and comfort they felt with Swift, their celebrity friend. Swift's music and personality had consoled them during their tough life trials and found Swift to be relatable. Swift's fans enjoyed her perceived personality of a spunky and trendy pop star and her "sweet" family values, as they were both critical and inspiring. The expression of "love" for Swift was an expression of trust and respect in a shared fantasy bond amid Swift and her fans. The followers "loved" Swift. They "loved" how her music comforted them, they "loved" how relatable and enjoyable her persona was, they "loved" how Swift had similar interests and values. They "loved" their celebrity friend.

Fan Twitter Response

A total of 224 tweets of rhetorical texts paired with photographs were analyzed. All tweets were found searching the hashtag #TS1989, which Swift used in her tweets. Swift placed a call to action with her tweets for her followers and commenters to include the hashtag in their tweets, just as she had directed on the previous social media platforms.

The critic obtained a sample of the Twitter dialogue by searching the specific hashtag #TS1989 on Twitter.

The first set of data analyzed under the hashtag had similar patterns previously noted on the other social media platforms. The word "love" was counted 21 times and the word "obsessed" was counted seven. A Twitter user tweeted, "I'm so obsessed with Taylor and this picture [album cover], and this album! #TS1989."

Twitter did bring a wave of new keywords the other social media forums did not. Some of these new terms included, "release" or "release party," "Monday," and "red lippie," and "bought." Twitter users used the phrase "release party" five times. Users would mention how they were throwing their own *1989* release party at their house with a small group of friends and even having a release party at a restaurant with a specific time if anyone else would have been interested in joining. One male Twitter user tweeted, "My album release party! #TS1989." He had a four-picture collage of a candlelight dinner with old Swift country album merchandise scattered on the table, and with two copies of *1989* with Polaroids next to the candles. The specific use of "release party" indicated the Twitter users holding these parties felt a sense of community with Swift and her Twitter followers. Some Twitter users posted tweets about *1989* parties as an open invitation to other fans, and the use of the term "release party" indicated a sense of closeness to Swift herself because she was celebrating too.

The Twitter users were excited to get their deluxe album, which included the collectible Polaroids. The term "deluxe" was tallied 12 times. The term "Polaroids" was more common on Twitter and was counted 15 times. The deluxe album was only

available at Target, and the term "Target" was counted 13 times. One Twitter user posted a photo of the Polaroids taped to her wall and tweeted, "I need more Polaroids! #TS1989."

1989 was released on Monday, October 27, 2014. For the first time in the social media forums studied, the word "Monday" made an appearance and held significance to the social media users. The Twitter users commented on how "Today was such a good Monday. No school and I got this beautiful album in my hands. #BestMondayEver #TS1989," and "Thanks for such a great Monday and album! #monday #albumrealseday #TS1989." "Monday" was mentioned five times. The most repeated term in this set of data, of course, was the word "bought." Users made sure to boast how they bought their album and were enjoying it. The term "bought" was counted 21 times.

Twitter allowed users to tweet pictures or solely just worded rhetoric.   The four types of pictures that trended were pictures of the users at Target in front of the deluxe album display, the user holding their copy of the album inside of a Target, selfies of the user holding their album elsewhere, and pictures of the collectible Polaroid's. Pictures of Target stores appeared 25 times, selfies were tallied 40 times, and the collectible Polaroid had appeared 29 times. The specific use of those terms contributed to the notion that the unique method of advertising executed by Swift was successful. Swift retweeting pictures of random Twitter users holding their deluxe albums and shopping at Target inspired other Twitter users to post their tweets doing the same, thus provided free advertising for Swift, Polaroid, and Target.

"The case of the Monday's," meaning filled with difficulty, had appeared again in the second data set of the #TS1989. "Monday" was tallied four times. Twitter users

would say, "Monday is brought to you by #TS1989 and spilled coffee," and "I wish every Monday were as glorious as this release day! #TS1989." The key terms paired together again were "Polaroid's" and "Target." Twitter users shared their joy of the collectible pictures 15 times and mentioned the store, Target, 12. In this set of data, the key term "release day" trended heavily. Twitter users ranted and raved about the significance of this date being release day 18 times. Users would say tweets such as, "Release day is a beautiful day to wake up to! #TS1989" and "I love Christmas morning, A.K.A. release day! #TS1989." Before the album release, Swift had made her new makeover look public displaying her short hair and red lip accents. A new repeated term that surfaced was "red lippie." The term "red lippie" appeared 10 times. Three Twitter users were inspired by her new look and tweeted pictures of themselves sporting the red lipstick look in honor of the *1989* release. Additionally, Twitter users declared they were going to play this album on repeat all day or all week until every word of every song was memorized, or because it was their new life anthem.

Thirty-eight Twitter users posted selfies with their copy of the album. The Polaroid pictures continued to be popular to showcase with 29 tweets tallied. Target stores were still a popular choice to take photos. Twitter users posted their Target pictures 22 times. Though only appearing once, one Twitter user posted a picture of her Swift release day outfit, which included a pair of shoes from the Taylor Swift by Ked's collection, a Taylor Swift bracelet and t-shirt. Her outfit displayed the extreme dedication she had to Swift and celebrated the excitement of the release day.

The use of a generic term like "Monday" allowed *1989* advertising to capture a wider audience, as everyone experiences Monday every week. If a Twitter user were searching to see how others were spending their Monday, they would have seen tweets about Swift's album and perhaps been intrigued to listen to it or look further into the topic, much like a domino effect. This was exemplified by the continued patterns of word usage in the third set of data.

Similarly, the term "Monday" appeared eight times in the third set of data. Twitter users tweeted, "The best way to get through a Monday is to listen to 1989 #TS1989," and "It's not just any kind of Monday, it's album release Monday! #TS1989". This was not a Monday filled with blues; rather it was a Monday filled with celebration, excitement, red lips, and devotion to Swift. The keywords, "release day" remained at a high tally of 10. Twitter users would tweet, "This has been the best album release day, ever #TS1989," and "This day is for everyone. I went around school saying, 'It's album release day!' Only a few people figured it out. #TS1989." In the spirit of being excited for the day, the term "celebrate" was counted six times. Twitter users would say, "We celebrated #TS1989," paired with a picture of two friends having margaritas with the album in the background, and "Everyone at work took a Polaroid picture of themselves to celebrate release day #TS1989," along with a picture of a wall covered in Polaroid selfies of employees from that establishment. The tweets mentioned the collectible Polaroid was three times, purchasing the album six times, and Target, five.

Twitter users trended displaying their extreme Swift fandom pictures. Though none were alike, they did share the same pattern of extreme Swift fandom. One Twitter

user showed off her Taylor Swift tattoo covering her forearm, while another took hundreds of pieces of white ribbon and tied "Taylor Swift *1989*" on an overpass fence overlooking a freeway. Though not as extravagant as getting a tattoo or decorating an overpass, equally as creative, two friends tweeted celebrating the day by getting alcoholic drinks with a copy of the album in the background. Polaroid pictures were once again popular with a tally of ten. Selfies of Twitter users with their album were counted seven times, and Target pictures were tallied at five. The tweeted photos posted by fans served as advertising for Target, Polaroid, and of course Swift. The photos captured the hype and excitement of the release of the album.

The language in the tweets posted by Twitter users was simple and underdeveloped, possibly because of the 140 character cap at the time, thus limiting

Twitter was also a place for its users to express their displeasure with Swift and her album. Those particular Twitter users were not fans of Swift's new look or her new music. Negative comments included, "Got Taylor's new album #TS1989" paired with a picture of a garbage can. Another user voiced displeasure of Swift not selling her album on the internet page Spotify, and said, "I was almost considering listening to T-Swift's new album, but it isn't on Spotify, so I took that as a sign #TS1989." Although these comments were negative, they still served as publicity as they fed into the trending Twitter feed. Those who saw these negative comments may have been intrigued by the subject matter, but ultimately the negative comments still helped sell Swift's new album. All publicity is good publicity, because as long as Swift's name was tweeted and *1989* was discussed, she stayed relevant as an artist now in pop culture.

The language in the tweets posted by Twitter users was simple and underdeveloped, possibly because of the 140 character cap at the time, thus limiting

expanded commentary. The confinement of writing short messages on the Twitter platform reinforced Swift was ingenious to use basic language in her tweets, as the use of simple language showed to reach a wider audience expanding beyond her current loyalists.

The tweets and pictures from the fans showed and provided homage to Swift. The message content of the tweets illustrated loyalty and allegiance to Swift, despite the music genre change. The tweets were acts of dedication to Swift by showcasing how fans celebrated the new album, *1989*. Fans showed tribute by throwing release parties at home and in restaurants, baked *1989* themed cakes, wore Taylor Swift apparel, and sported the new iconic red lip look. Fans also showed their loyalty by posting pictures of tattoos they got in honor of Swift and her music. Twitter acted as a platform to pay tribute and to further a mutualistic cyber relationship. Fans may have been under the impression that by using Twitter and the hashtag #TS1989, there was a possibility Swift would see their tweet and retweet it. However, Twitter and the #TS1989 were strictly a platform and means to show Swift loyalty. The text and pictures affirmed Swift's fans did not leave her despite the music genre change. They were more devoted to her now than ever before. Swift's retweeting a select number of fans further drove the illusion that everyone on the Twitter feed was part of her community and held a perceived personal relationship with her.

The statistics listed were gathered in eight-hour intervals across the three social media platforms. The numbers represented in the data reflected how often specific terms were used relating to Swift and the *1989* release. The numbers showed there was a critical

underlying parasocial relationship between Swift and social media users. Chapter Four

expands upon the data from Chapter Three, and interprets the emotional exchange

between Swift and the social media users and how it benefited her.

Chapter 4

DISCUSSION

Social media for Swift had to be the new standard for audience engagement since online was where the majority of her audience was interacting. Swift used social media to connect with her core audience as well as new potential fans. Social media was where her audience was present, and where Swift could persuade her followers and new fans to feel connected to her. Swift had to create rhetoric that would influence mass amounts of people to provide support for Swift herself and her new album. Swift also created rhetoric used to control the narrative surrounding the album *1989* release.

The text from Swift persuaded and created emotion and action in her followers and viewers. The content style and words selected for the construction of her messages were basic and comprehensible. Swift's simple rhetoric enabled her to reach out to a wider range of audience, expanding past her usual fanbase. The content and form were simplistic and rudimentary so it would be easy to understand by social media users. Jargon usually reserved for her country fans, such as posting lyrics of her country songs, was not used; instead Swift used language that made social media users feel included. She used universally understood social media cultural references, such as hashtag and photobombing.

To effectively communicate with her fans, Swift had to go where her fans were: online. Instead of waiting for fans to discuss *1989* on their own accord, Swift initiated, controlled, and monitored the *1989* conversation by meeting her fans on social media. Swift posted first on social media because it was essential for her to train the social media

users how to discuss *1989* on social media. This training actually commenced on October 26th, 2014, at 11:13 p.m. EST, where Swift posted on Twitter that *1989* was being released 47 minutes early, ending her tweet with the hashtag #TS1989. Swift knew by developing and guiding the conversation on the major social media platforms Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter, she had a better opportunity to reach out and instruct her target audience how to behave. By reaching out to her target audience, as well as keeping the dialogue open and flowing with her new audience, Swift kept the conversation of *1989* under her control while simultaneously growing her fan base and album sales. Online was Swift's jackpot for sustaining and increasing her fandom and album sales. When Swift met her audience online, they were able to continue the conversation about *1989* in a controlled environment under Swift's created hashtag, #TS1989. Swift was the puppet master, social media users were the puppets, the #TS1989 hashtag was her prop, and social media platforms were her stage. She controlled how her followers consumed, reacted, and posted about *1989*. She manipulated the audience's reactions by creating a parasocial relationship for them to believe in, while simultaneously displayed the power she had over the audiences' social media behavior and rhetoric.

Swift, using social media to connect with her already loyal fans and new mass audience, humanized her celebrity status. Social media allowed users and followers to view her celebrity status as more of a celebrity friend, as they could interact via comments on Swift's posts in the same fashion they could follow and interact via comments on their real-life friend's posts. They were able to see their real-life friend's post in the same feed as seeing what Taylor Swift posts, making Swift viewed less like an unapproachable

celebrity and more like a friend. The followers saw Swift use hashtags, photobombed photos, as well as posts including her family. Those social media references and family-related posts from Swift were familiar and popular to social media users, as they were trendy to see on those platforms. The familiar social media cultural references, such as the hashtag or photobombing, connected Swift to her fans in a relatable and emotional way. The relatability to Swift persuaded her fans to perform specific actions of devotion and confirmation she was accepted now as a pop star.

Social media had allowed Swift to develop a celebrity-friend persona which controlled the parasocial relationship between herself and her followers. On Twitter specifically, Swift took the parasocial relationship tactic to a new level by selecting a few fans' *1989* pictures to retweet. On Twitter, fans came to expect that Swift was to be "lurking" on their #TS1989 tweets. Swift created the illusion she personally took an interest in fans' lives by retweeting their tweets. With the visibility of Swift retweeting a few followers, her entire Twitter fanbase anticipated she would interact with them if they too participated in the conversation about her and *1989*. The retweeting appeared to be an interactive and reciprocal relationship between Swift and the selected followers, albeit only from the fans' perspective because no actual dialogue existed. Swift retweeting the fans was the parasocial relationship in action.

Swift started the hashtag #TS1989 as a "follow the leader" instruction; meaning the hashtag was used to instruct other social media users to utilize it. Swift also used the hashtag #TS1989 to gain attention for her and her new album, as well to drive the *1989* conversation. She continued to use #TS1989 on her Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter

posts. Use of the hashtag on all platforms persuaded and trained her followers to use this hashtag when they discussed *1989*. The hashtag was an essential tool in communicating with her fanbase about the release of her new album. The hashtag was employed to advertise her album, promote sales, monitor, and have power over how others posted about *1989* on social media.

The hashtag #TS1989 paired with the other social media cultural references, like photobombing and posts with her family, served two purposes for Swift's motive. The first was to create and sustain a parasocial relationship through the control and supervision of her fandom. Swift was a social media manipulation master. She had complete control over crafting the delivery and consumption of her *1989* narrative, identity, and how the fans responded to her. Swift constructed and executed a powerful parasocial relationship on a global scale.

Swift utilized the popular social media cultural references to look relatable, believable, and likable, leading to the success of her first motive of creating a parasocial relationship. Swift's all too familiar and relatable posts developed a parallel social media interaction linking the fans' feelings for Swift and their feelings for their real-life friends. The "relationship" with Swift through social media "mirrored" the fans' real-life relationships, lending realism to their "relationship" with Swift. Additionally, Swift enabled the settings on her posts to allow the fans to leave comments. Fans' interaction on Swift's posts was parallel to having the ability to comment on their real-life friend's posts. Being perceived as a celebrity friend with whom followers could interact with produced the parasocial relationship between Swift and her followers. The audience expressed their

admiration for Swift and celebrated her success. They said hello to Mr. Swift, and they let Swift know, though they are miles apart and across different time zones, she was thought about and loved on this particular day. The characteristics, such as the fondness and affection towards Swift, were representations of a friendship. In keeping with the parasocial relationship definition, Swift had no awareness of her fans as individuals. She had no investment in these followers on a personal and individual level. The emotional investment in the relationship was one-sided, and it came from the followers towards Swift only. The fan display of emotional investment was what Swift required. Swift manipulated and controlled her followers to display strong emotional feelings and sentiments towards her and *1989.* The control of her follower's emotions led to album sales and increased Swift's fandom with the acceptance of her new image and sound. The visible investment of the followers validated that Swift was still relevant, her new music genre was approved, and her fandom was not only unwavering but increasing.

The second motive for Swift's use of social media to communicate with her fanbase was to control the narrative surrounding the *1989* album release. Swift wanted to sustain and grow her fandom during this genre change, and the way to do so was to control the commentary about all things *1989*. Swift essentially put up guard rails on what topics to discuss and how to address them. Swift supplied the audience with topics to focus their comments on, like Target, the deluxe album, her father photobombing, and her spending time with her family. Swift trained her viewers to use the hashtag #TS1989 when discussing *1989*. Fans perceived this hashtag to be trendy and important because Swift had been using it on her social media posts, therefore, they must use it too. In

actuality, the hashtag #TS1989 was a tool for Swift to monitor her fandom. The unique

purpose of this hashtag was to group all posts in one location containing the same hashtag.

Swift was able to keep a watchful eye on what others were saying about her and her album

since hashtags group posts containing the same hashtag together in one feed on each

platform. As this hashtag was a clickable link, it allowed the feed content to viewed by

any user, especially Swift. The hashtag was a tactic to oversee users' posts and to direct

how and what they posted. Swift wasn't their real-life friend; she didn't know them, but

she did control them.

Swift further controlled her audience through the access of the clickable hashtag

link. The feature of the hashtag being clickable, allowed all social media viewers to

access and consume Swift's posted content, as well as *1989* content posted by others.

Hashtags are open for everyone to click and view the content; therefore, Swift used it as a

tool to recruit new viewers, followers, and fans. Those followers and viewers who were

not familiar or fond of her previous work clicked on the hashtag and viewed Swift's

content showcasing her revamped look, attitude, sound, and that she used social media to

communicate with other people just like them. The data indicated the easy clickable

feature of the hashtag was a successful recruitment tool. It was successful because some

users who did not fit the typical Taylor Swift fan mold, like the men who did not like

Swift or her country music, admitted to enjoying her new sound and utilized the #TS1989.

The new recruits boosted Swift's album sales and added to her growing fandom and the

1989 dialogue. Though these viewers and fans were new to Swift and her pop music, they

were not exempt from her manipulation. The new fans followed suit like Swift's core

audience, by posting about *1989* within her subliminal guidelines by using the hashtag #TS1989. Swift was accessible to everybody online, and in return, she controlled everybody online. Swift's commentary was global. Social media users from around the world, including the naysayers, were influenced to use the hashtag, thus contributing to the attraction and growing popularity of this social media event for the album release.

Swift's short, yet incredibly compelling, social media commentary successfully persuaded her audience to not only use the #TS1989 hashtag when discussing *1989,* but masterfully directed the narrative of the viewers' commentary. To keep the discussion about *1989* centered and in line with growing her fanbase, Swift set up guard rails to guide the social media commentary. Swift strategically posted specific content involving her family, her father photobombing, shopping at Target and "lurking" on other social media users. These limited topics kept the social media users focused by following Swift's directions as to how she wanted the *1989* dialogue to proceed.

Swift's rudimentary language was a stylistic choice that benefited her goal sustaining her fanbase regardless of her music genre change. Her language was basic, short, and reached any audience members willing to view her social media posts. The rhetoric did not include any unique jargons, phrases, or insider information which only her prior country music fans would have understood. Keeping the rhetoric short and to the point possibly prevented the loss of viewers who would not be invested in reading lengthy posts. Swift's basic language and brief messages were styled to expand her fandom into a new music culture, without the abandonment of her country music fans. The simple and concise rhetoric was styled to embrace the fans who had been there for Swift throughout

her country career and to recruit pop music fans in hopes they would be intrigued by her new image and sound. A more mature and edgier version of Taylor Swift emerged. The revamped Taylor Swift was accepted and celebrated globally. The new Taylor Swift masterfully claimed respect and relevance in the pop music genre through her ingenious promotion of the hashtag #TS1989 and brief stylistic rhetoric on social media.

Chapter 5

CONCLUSION

Insights on Communication and Parasocial Relationships

Social media platforms have become a mainstream form of social interaction

worldwide. With social media being young in culture, the amount of research has not

reached an optimal level for exhaustive research. With the continuous advances in

technology, the art of communication on social media is ever changing. For example, in

2014, Twitter had a maximum character limit of 140, whereas today the character limit is

280 and could expand in the future. Additionally, just a few years ago, uploading content

to social media was more intricate and time-consuming as each was a distinct and separate

platform. Today, social media users can simultaneously upload content to multiple

platforms with one click. The simultaneous uploads allow communication to reach to a

mass audience faster, which may have both benefits and detractions.

In this research specifically, communication that was direct, brief, and consistent

from the rhetor [Swift] showed to be essential in creating a focus for message receivers.

Providing guard rails for topic discussion kept the responding commentators' dialogue on

track. An ebb and flow of communication drive social media. The message sender may

control the content, jargon, and style of the posted content, but providing limited topics

keeps the communication from going "off the rails." A controlled tool Swift used to

maintain a focused dialogue was the hashtag #TS1989. Hashtags are a modern form of

rapid communication. The nature of social media is instantaneous gratification and

obtaining immediate knowledge, and utilizing hashtags facilitate capturing information

with one click. Hashtags group ideas for easy assimilation and have spread across all social media platforms. The core audience Swift was primarily targeting expected quick communication and brevity, and the hashtag was the correct tool to fast-track her communication as it was her hook, line, and sinker.

Through social media platforms, parasocial relationships influence social media users' behavior both online and offline. The persona's social media communication may direct social media users' opinions, interests, and values, as well as galvanize an endorsed behavior. In this particular study, social media users performed emotional investment to Swift online by participating in her controlled dialog. Offline, social media users acted upon their emotional investment to Swift by purchasing the album as subliminally suggested on Swift's posts. With the advent of technology and social media, parasocial relationships have added another dimension to performing fantasy relationships. The online aspect of parasocial relationships is global and intangible; therefore personas must continue the illusioned emotional connection by creating new ways to sustain the parasocial relationship. Effective ways to maintain a parasocial relationship online, as demonstrated in this study, is to utilize social media intricacies that are popular and relatable on multiple platforms. Using social media intricacies aids the persona to appear more friend-like and approachable, thus the parasocial relationship is sustained and controlled by the persona.

Swift's Master Plan

Taylor Swift used social media to communicate with her fanbase about her release of the album, *1989.* The findings illustrated how Swift used popular social media cultural

references like hashtags, photobomb, and family posts. Using these references made her social media posts more relatable and friend-like. Her followers saw and interacted with Swift's post exactly as they viewed and interacted with their real-life friend's posts. Swift's social media posts were parallel in structure and substance to followers real-life friends, creating an emotional connection to Swift. The emotional connection quickly led to Swift becoming a celebrity-friend in the parasocial relationship, as only one party, the audience on social media, invested emotions, time, and interest into Swift. Given the one-sided parameters of the parasocial relationship, the followers were oblivious to the instruction and guidelines set forth by Swift on how to discuss *1989*. Swift, on the other hand, was not cognizant nor had an emotional investment in fans on an individual or reciprocal level. They were not friends.

Swift realized she had to communicate on social media as the newer generations were an ever-expanding audience interacting through social media. Swift used social media platforms to reach out to a broader audience, not just her current fanbase but all social media users, by using basic level language on her posts. Swift's concise rhetoric were easily understood by all viewers, as they were brief, without complex terminology or jargon from her previous music genre. The posts were appealing and appreciated by a broad and global audience showing growing interest in the new Swift and *1989*.

Swift utilized the hashtag #TS1989, photobombing, and posted about her spending the day with her family as a tool in controlling the narrative of what was to be said about her and her album. She directed her audience with topics to comment about, such as Target, deluxe album promotion, the continuing hashtag #TS1989, her father

photobombing her picture, and spending the album release day with her parents. Steering

her audience to her specified topics was important. Without Swift's discussion guidelines,

the audience may have generated their own off-topic thoughts, which could have hindered

the narrative regarding the 1989 album acceptance. The followers abided by Swift's

subliminal instructions by sticking to the topics of Target, her father, how sweet she was,

and how devoted they were to her and this new album.

The hashtag #TS1989 also allowed Swift to monitor the commentary and narrative

of the audiences posts' on each platform. Since the hashtag was a clickable link, it

directed Swift to the page containing the feed of all content posted about the hashtag.

Swift was able to oversee and confirm her strategy to control the conversation was

effective. The clickable hashtag link also served as a recruitment tool because it allowed

users who did not follow Swift to witness the excitement and celebration of *1989* through

the public social media conversations. The visibility of admiration seen in the posts

validated Swift now as a pop music artist, confirming she was still relevant and her

fandom had not decreased due to her music genre change.

Swift used social media to communicate with her followers similar to how a friend

would. She turned her celebrity status into a fantasy friend persona for her current

followers and the new audience to invest in. Swift used social media as a device to

control the conversation about *1989* and monitor the fandom that encompassed her and the

new album. She led, and they followed. Her communication was structurally simplistic

and inviting in style and nature, which attracted a worldwide viewership. Social media

was the essential tool Swift utilized to create, sustain, and grow her fanbase during the release day of her pop album, *1989*.

Limitations

"The fact that criticism is a humanistic activity implies more than that it will be less exact than some of the sciences" (Black, 1965, p. 9). Black (1965) further stated, "the goal of criticism: the understanding of man himself" (p. 9). Rhetorical criticism has no exact formula to provide precise and undebatable conclusions. Rhetorical analyses are based on the perception of the receiver of the message and the critic's understanding of the rhetoric through interpreted data collection. Studying the rhetorical acts of Swift and fans using close textual analysis can lead to interpretation errors. Each method of rhetorical criticism has its unique technique and artistry that help enhance the understanding of communication. What one variation of rhetorical criticism technique may discover after an analysis, another may not. Where one version of rhetorical criticism method may have certain shortcomings, the application of another method may more accurately interpret the motive. Each rhetorical practice has its population of critics with different perspectives and approaches. It would be negligent not to mention the critic has an unconscious bias. The personal experiences, background, and cultural influence of the critic can have an impact on the critic's actions during the reading of the rhetoric and interpretation phase of the method.

Other limitations of this study would be the sample size of the fan comments from each social media platform. Though each sample size in this study was a sufficient amount to gather relevant data, an even more substantial amount might produce results

that could reproduce the findings, or could modify the analysis. However, accessing the

social media posts to obtain larger samples is no longer possible. After Swift's *1989*

World Tour, Swift took a break from the media and stayed hidden from the public eye. In

the late summer of 2017, Swift deleted all of her social media activity. She removed all

her posts and deactivated her accounts.

Future Research

In the fall of 2017, Swift reappeared on Instagram, where confusing pictures with

no captions were posted. Under her personal social media account settings, the *turn off*

commenting option was activated, thus eliminating an essential aspect of parasocial

relationship behavior, as it disallowed viewers to add commentary to her new narrative.

The illusory reciprocal relationship between Swift and her fans was gone. Swift used

social media again to tantalize the audience about her new album, *Reputation*. However,

Swift used social media differently when promoting *Reputation* and reconnecting with her

fanbase. Swift used Instagram to post uncaptioned photos of snakes, and reposted the

pictures on Facebook with the same disabled commentary setting, leaving fans confused

and without the familiar parasocial relationship they felt during the *1989* release. Swift

again had 100% control of her new narrative. Future research would inquire how

celebrities use social media to communicate with their fanbase when they disabled the

opportunity for fans to comment back on social media. How does the disablement

influence the fantasy relationship previously created on social media when prior

interaction had been allowed, encouraged, and dictated by the celebrity? Studying the

phenomenon of celebrities using parasocial relationships on social media to connect with

and market to a broader audience with the disablement of fan commentary would further document how social media impacts parasocial relationships.

Additionally, future research may be conducted on different fan types based on demographics and how to decipher characteristics of the fans based on their style of writing in online comments. For example, someone who writes about sweet familial relationships may be in a different age bracket than someone who writes about being obsessed with a celebrity. Studying the vernacular rhetoric of social media users from different demographics may answer how different demographics influence the style of rhetoric when adding commentary to a celebrity's post.

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