



The Love Story and Taylor Swift's Stylization

Yuxi Cao^(✉)

Shenzhen Senior High School, Shenzhen, Guangdong, China

caoyx@cn-school.com

Abstract. Taylor Swift is an American singer-songwriter. Different from many artists, Swift composes all of her songs. She has her own highlighted features of narrative perspective and strong storytelling ability. These characteristics are factors that make Swift stand out and promote her career. As one of the artists who can represent the music industry, Swift has been at the top of the music market for an uncommonly long period. Love Story is one of the most representative songs of Swift's. To study Swift's styles and music characteristics, this essay uses Love Story as a sample to analyze. It concludes the analysis of the background, the lyrics, the arrangement, and the meaning of the Love Story.

Keywords: Love Story · Taylor Swift · Country Music

1 Introduction

Taylor Swift is an American singer-songwriter. She signed with Big Machine Record in 2005 and debuted her first album, Taylor Swift, in 2006. In this fast-changing music market, it is rare to see an artist being at the top for more than ten years. Swift created this miraculous phenomenon [1–3]. Swift first explored her music career in the country music genre, then she switched her music style to the pop genre and alternative genre. Through her genre changes and song production changes, it is interesting to see why Swift still stands at the top of the music industry. Love Story was released in her second country album as one of its singles. Swift wrote this song individually at a young age. She used her own experience as inspiration and took the classic story, Romeo and Juliet, as the setting. This song is a representative song of Swift and has special meaning for Swift and her fans. Many people first knew Swift through this song. Its meaning and the song itself have developed further along with Swift's career. Aside from the song production itself, Swift's songwriting concept and her identity as an artist have also been shown through the song.

2 The Love Story and the Changes in Style

Love Story has always been one of Swift's hottest songs. Love Story first came out as one of the singles from Swift's second country album Fearless. As well as her other songs, this song was written by Swift herself. Swift is famous for her first narrative writing style. Not like her other songs which are telling her own stories, this song was inspired by the

well-known story Romeo and Juliet. Following her writing habits, she still used the first narrative writing style. She stood in the perspective of Juliet who was also a teenage girl having a close age with Swift and depicted the story in her understanding. Although in the original version from Shakespeare, the story was a tragedy [4]. In Swift's version, she changed the tragic ending of this story into the kind of happy ending that she dreamed of. Swift only kept the basic setting of this story in this song. She changed the details into her version of understanding. The original story of Romeo and Juliet happened within Italian nobility. The place where Romeo and Juliet met should be in the castle, but, in Love Story, Swift changed it to "the outskirts of town" which is a classic scene in country music. This transition makes this song more suitable to the genre of country music and more suitable to Swift's cultural background. Swift expressed her understanding of love along with the story. In the original version, the story was focusing on group pressure and the pursuit of individuals. Because of the harsh oppression from both the two main characters' families, the sacrifice and pursuit of love and freedom of Romeo and Juliet stood out much more intensely. The escaping movement of the two characters was negative. Even if they succeeded in doing so, they have to hide and run for the rest of their lives. The focus of this love is grand and meaningful. In contrast, the love and pursuit described in the song are relatively light-hearted. It represents modern romance instead of romance back then. From the most well-known lyric, "Romeo take me somewhere we can be alone", the chasing of love and freedom is positive and hopeful. It is like Romeo and Juliet are going to greet their bright future [5, 6]. This love contains courage and confidence, which has a huge difference from the original version. Swift used this song to show her concept of love. Many people have problems with the "scarlet letter" used in the lyrics. They think that Swift used this phrase wrong because she compares herself with the main character, Hester Prynne in Hawthorne's "The Scarlet Letter" [7]. It depicts a tragic love affair that occurred in colonial North America. The heroine, Hester Prynne, is married to a doctor, Chillingworth, and they have no love. Bran falls in love with the Reverend Dimmesdale while alone and gives birth to a daughter, Pearl. Bran is publicly shamed by wearing a red "A" symbolizing "adultery" for public display [8]. Bran, on the other hand, is steadfast in his refusal to reveal the child's father. The novel employs symbolism, and the characters, plot, and language are all subjective and imaginative, frequently emphasizing human psychological activity and intuition. As a result, it is a seminal work of American psychoanalytic fiction as well as a masterpiece of American romantic fiction [9, 10]. In *The Scarlet Letter*, Hester Prynne was isolated from society for having a child with a man she didn't marry. Swift most probably used this character to show that this love was forbidden by her father in reality. The main character would be considered excluded and isolated instead of guilty and sinful. Although there isn't any clear explanation for this phrase, Swift must know and have her reason for using this phrase. The color was one thing that was worthy to be noticed. Another successful album is also named color Red. Taylor Swift considers this album to be the most important of her career. This album is a great testament to her transformation from country girl to pop diva. The first and second singles in the world were very good, the three specials in the world except for the United States did not sell well, but red gave her another hit in the global market, bringing the pavement in 1989. The combination of commercial and

music review results is essential. It is expected to be the Top one album to retain both musical and commercial value. Some music fans are very alert to the changes.

3 The Comments by Fans Who are Aware of Style Change

The original song is optimized for some, but the original version of the three pop gods is all downgraded. When listening to 22, it is clear that many parts of Taylor can restore the original tone, but once in the chorus do not know how to mix the very dull, not at all original version of the feeling of smooth and dreary. Three long we faded away from the original bitchiness, the other parts are not much different from the original. (I don't know what mood Ms. Mould was in when she sang "with some indie record that's much cooler than mine", I suggest changing it to with some indie record that I knew you were trouble for me personally is simply the worst existence in the whole re-recording, used to listening to the original version of Ms. Moldy thin but very aggressive white voice after, now she added material voice to record electro dance music instead of a kind of muddy feeling, especially you found me when you walked In, and the second section of the chorus in front and bridge can be called a disaster like yeah, originally dripping yeah to the head, now yeah half was held down hard, I do not believe that she is not sung, the probability is deliberate, do not know the intention, is trying to imitate the electro-acoustic drop? And the goat call is not as strong as the original version. The new songs (how many? I think the fearless re-recording of Mr. Good and don't you are better than them, all too well ten minutes of the version than I thought it was good, but also more split than I thought, often feel that the previous song suddenly cut a new one in the middle of the song, just like the concert new years day and long life, maybe the original version is too deep in my heart. The original version is too deep in my heart. And some fan just cast their disappointment by underestimating the change in her style.

One of the fans commented: I feel like all the parts that didn't appear in this 10min version were either newly added by mold or changed a lot of what was there. The whole lyrics/melody are very close to folklore and evermore, I don't know if you guys feel that way... I feel that the style of All Too Well has changed a bit, like a skewer. I'm not saying the change is good or bad, I can't comment on that, I'm just a little sad to hear it, I just feel like I can hear the sound of the time. Taylor's singing is better, the voice is more rounded, the previous red period occasionally sounds thin and harsh problems now through no longer, but so long ago, her music creation preferences and state of mind are different, still feel unable to return to the original feeling. Again, did not say bad, each stage of moldy music has her charm, just for me personally, I look forward to the I've been looking forward to the original for a long time, to resurrect the 22-year-old Taylor, to take us back 9 years ago to this song All Too Well, it does make me feel the sadness of that classic that will never return.

4 Analysis of Love Story

The song starts with playing the most memorable melody pattern using an acoustic guitar. Instead of using drums to emphasize the rhythm, Taylor chose guitar scratches to play the rhythm in the first half verse. Taylor had a callow voice during her country era. She didn't

have much singing technique at this time, but this plain voice fit her self-positioning of a naive teenage girl. In general situation, most country singers have the traditional vocal texture of the country music genre. These singers can be easily distinguished from singers of other genres. However, Swift didn't have the most traditional country vocal texture. It would be hard to tell that her songs are in the country genre if people listen to them without knowing the background knowledge. The main factor that makes Swift stand out is her storytelling ability. Swift is talented in using limited lyrics to express a touching story. Many of her fans are attracted by this talented skill she has. As a result, even though Swift has changed her music genre several times, her fans continue to support her and her music. In *Love Story*, the narrator's tone was nifty and youthful, which was assembled to Swift's personality. She greatly showed her characteristic as a teenage girl through the lyric of this song. In the early era of her career, this unique perspective of a teenage girl is one of the reasons which contribute to her success.

The drum beat came in at pre-chorus along with many other instruments flourishing the accompany. Swift used many acoustic instruments in this song. She added backing vocal singing simple harmony during the chorus and embellished the accompaniment by highlighting the electric guitar playing the standout melody at the gaps within the vocal. After the second abundant chorus, Swift made a drop for the bridge because the story was going to reach its climax. She used simple acoustic guitar to play the harmonic movement. With her clear voice, the story came to a tragic part where Juliet thought that Romeo was not going to come to her. Then, along with the boosting of the plot, more and more instruments were added to the accompaniment to build up the climax. The final chorus rose a key higher than the original key to emphasize the most highlighted part and to bring the audience a new listening experience. Throughout the whole song, although Swift produced it at a very young age, she completed the song well and embellished the song with multiple remarkable designs. The outstanding production of *Love Story* is one of the reasons for this song being one of its biggest songs by Swift. The music video of *Love Story* replicated the story described in the song. In the music video, Swift dressed as Juliet which matched up with her first perspective of Juliet in this song. The white dress outfit has become one of her classic looks throughout her career.

Love Story is the song that Swift has sung the most, and it appears on all of Swift's world tours. Swift placed this song in a very important position. Although she once said she was tired of performing this song, she would always add this song to the performance list because this was one of the songs she had the most connection with her fans. During the *Fearless* world tours, Swift placed the scene on the stage according to the setting of the story. She set the stage like a castle based on the plot where Romeo and Juliet first met and dressed like Juliet in a red palace dress. There were dancers wearing palace dresses dancing around the stage simulating the dance party in the story. Swift and the dancers were like performing a play. All the choreography was set to serve the plot of the song. Between the bridge and the final chorus, Swift set a surprise for the audience. Her dress was custom-made. There was a white wedding dress inside the red palace dress. When she was singing the lyric "pulled out the ring", the arrangement changed and the dancers came to take off the red palace dress. The white wedding dress was then shown, which matched up with the lyric of choosing a white dress.

The princess's dressing style was continued on her next world tour, the Speak Now world tour. Although this song is not from the album *Speak Now*, Swift still placed this song in an important position. This song was the ending of the *Speak Now* tour. To interact with most of the audience, Swift designed a small platform where she could stand on the platform and fly through the whole stadium. This has become one of the traditions of Swift's world tours later on. Matching up with the story in this song, the small platform was designed like the balcony of a castle. Swift was dressed in a beautiful princess dress standing on the platform and interacting with her fans. The arrangement of this song didn't change much, but the song was given another meaning of the connection between Swift and the audience [11].

Swift continued this tradition of interacting with the audience during this song. In her 1989 World Tour, she stood on a rotatable platform which allowed her to get in touch with the audience who sit away from the main stage. She played the piano while singing *Love Story*. During this world tour, Swift recomposed this song into the pop genre which matched up with her album *1989*. The remix version started with backing vocals singing harmony. The drums changed from acoustic drums to electronic drums, and the drum beat appeared at the very beginning of the song along with the backing vocals. Swift gave up the original main melody playing acoustic guitar in the country version arrangement, and the choir has become the most memorable part of the arrangement. Instead of using the guitar, Swift herself played the harmonic movement using the electronic piano. Along with growing of age and practicing vocal, Swift's vocal was much more mature than she was before. Her vocal texture had a positive change throughout time, and her singing technique changed into pop singing cooperating with the change in her music genre. This newer and deeper vocal texture refreshed the whole song and brought a completely different listening experience for the audience. Swift also performed the pop version of *Love Story* on the radio show. Since *Love Story* is one of her biggest songs, the new pop version of it follows up with the current most popular music genre so that Swift can further promote this song.

On her reputation tour, *Love Story* not surprisingly became one of the performance songs. On this world tour, Swift mashed up *Love Story* with *Style* and *You Belong with Me*, another hottest song of Swift. In this version, Swift kept the original guitar melody and tried replicating the original country version in a more pop style. She cut the second verse and chorus of *Love Story*, which meant that the first chorus connected directly with the bridge. After the final chorus of *Love Story*, the song changed to *You Belong with Me*. In this part of the concert, Swift invited her band to come out and perform with her, and she expressed her gratitude to her band. The tradition of interacting with the audience continued. At the ending part of this mashup, there was a camera filming her fans, and the scene projected the audience instead of casting Swift.

5 Conclusion

The meaning of the song *Love Story* has changed along with the development of Swift's music career, changing from a business purpose to a special connection with the audience. It first came out as one of the singles of Swift's albums. Swift devoted lots of time and effort to this song to let this song stand out and become one of her representative works.

Using *Romeo and Juliet* as the basic setting of the story presented in the lyrics makes the song different from other love songs. Swift artfully borrowed the structure of the classic story and combined it with her personal experience to finally convey a love story with a happy ending. She expressed this story using the narrative perspective of Juliet which was novel. Swift expressed her belief in love which was courageous and free through this song. Since many people first knew her by this song, Swift then gave this song a special connection with fans during her performances. Through her live performances, this song has gradually become a bridge that connects Swift and her fans. Love Story has become one of the traditions of Swift's concerts. Swift has also remixed this song into a different genre to better fit with her concert and the current trend.

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