

# COMMODIFICATION OF TOXIC RELATIONSHIP IN ALL TOO WELL, SHORT MOVIE ADAPTATION BY TAYLOR SWIFT

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## Abstract

The study aims to explore the transformation of the first (2012) and latest song *All Too Well* by Taylor Swift into a short movie (2021) as the strategy to save the original work and commodify the song. The theories implemented in the study include the theory of adaptation by Hutcheon and social media discourse focusing on social media commodification by Sandoval. This study is qualitative research using multiple sources of data namely text, audiovisual and digital materials. To analyze the data, this study underwent some procedures namely to observe both version of the lyrics and find the transformation, then observe and examine the transformation in the short movie adaptation. Lastly, all data is analyzed to confirm the commodification of toxic relationship by observing digital materials related to the issue, including the response on Swift's YouTube channel. The study finds an expansion of theme in the latest version of the song by adding new lyrics that imply a toxic relationship issue. The toxic relationship issue is confirmed in the short movie adaptation by inserting narrative and cinematographic aspects. As a songwriter, producer, and director, Swift includes the toxic relationship issue in the adaptation work to commodify the trending issue. The commodification is validated by the release of the short movie adaptation on YouTube as social media that can monetize the uploaded content and gain more audiences.

**Keywords :** commodification, film adaptation, lyric, toxic relationship, taylor swift

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## INTRODUCTION

Lyrics as poetry is a literary work because it also has poetic devices to create a mood or feeling. However, the words in lyrics have different objectives particularly when it becomes a song (Singhi & Brown, 2014). Mostly, songwriters apply figurative language to imply the intentional message as well as to create artistic works (Arditami, 2017).

As one of the world's most renowned singer-songwriter who is acknowledged with numerous global music awards, Taylor Swift has produced critically-acclaimed songs, implicating powerful meanings towards her fans and wider communities. It is proven by how her songs are globally well-received, staging on the number one chart oftentimes. One of her songs, *All Too*

*Well (Taylor's version)* had managed to be on the number one chart of Billboard Hot 100 in 2021. The 10 minutes 13 seconds song was considered as the longest song on number one chart throughout the history of Billboard. *All Too Well* was first launched in the album named *Red* in 2012 without music video. The latest version *All Too Well (Taylor's Version)* was remade in 2021 and relaunched alongside its short movie with the same title on Taylor Swift's YouTube channel. The short movie has 84,740,127 views, 4.5 millions likes, and 129,931 comments.

A number of acclaimed media outlets in the United States had released articles implying that Taylor Swift wrote songs based on her personal experiences. On US Magazine, Nardino (2022) reported that

Swift has been inspired by her romantic relationships in writing her songs since 2006. Swift's songs indicating her romantic relationships with famous figures have been the most anticipated ones. In relation to *All Too Well* (2021), Nardino implied that Swift's fans presume the song narrates Swift's romantic relationship with Hollywood actor Jake Gyllenhaal.

Burns (1994) states that a music video is considered an adaptation. It is the visualization of song lyrics featuring the singer and aesthetic elements, mostly within 5-6 minutes in duration. On another note, Dancyger and Cooper (2004) observed that short movie is a form of narrative art using cinematic aspects such as plots, characterization, and more. Movies also have the ability to engage multiple senses and cognitive channels simultaneously (Yekti, 2017).

Generally, music video is a promotional tool to increase the sales of a song or an album. Compared to her fellow singers, Swift chose to produce a short movie for *All Too Well* rather than a music video, with a song as the soundtrack. It can be concluded that the *All Too Well* short movie adaptation has the same function as a music video, which is to promote the song. A short movie can also be a strategy to deliver interpretations. It consists of plots, dialogs, and characterizations built to interpret metaphorical lyrics. Publishing the short movie on Swift's YouTube channel is also another commodification strategy to gain more listeners. Commodification is the process to give economic value to something that previously does not have economic value to replace other social values (Levesque, 2015). The concept of commodification can also involve personal lives and relationships in order to achieve economic gain (Davis, 2003).

Over the last decade, social media has practically connected companies, products, and brands with potential customers (Jaakonmäki, Müller, & Brocke, 2017). YouTube has been one of most popular online platforms where musicians not only can sell their works but also

increase their engagement with listeners or fans. Chambers (2013) exposes that social media today has given access to users in building connection with famous figures and their fans. Therefore, the presence of social media concurrently pushes the emergence of virtual communities that drive social capital and determine social media trends.

As a public figure, Swift also benefits from social media use, as she is able to generate social capital to commodify her works. She usually publishes her works to her 245 million followers on Instagram and 51 million subscribers on YouTube. Evidently, her works often rapidly gain traction on social media, including *All Too Well*. The additional lyrics indicating her real-life romantic relationship and the short movie transformation are Swift's commodification strategy to expand her works further. This research aims to analyze how a romantic relationship is commodified in Taylor Swift's *All Too Well* short movie adaptation from song lyrics with the same title.

Sandoval (2014) explores the function of social media not only for socializing but also for managing business. Social media commodifies the social life of its users and influences them to make decisions that oftentimes benefit the capitalists. Social media trends have been the gate to gain more potential consumers.

Based on previous research reviews, there has not been a study assessing the transformation of *All Too Well* (2021) song lyrics into a short movie. However, there are two linguistic research using *All Too Well* (2012) as the corpus. Santoso (2018) and Wati (2014) focus on *Red*, the album in which *All Too Well* is included. Both researchers observed the multi-interpretation of songs listed in the album. Santoso (2018) analyzes the metaphors in *All Too Well*, while Wati observes the deixis in the lyrics of *All Too Well*. There are two other studies discussing the transformation of songs into music videos and movies. Saktiningtyas (2015) and Anggitapraja (2010) find modification and expansion of

theme when songs are adapted into movies and music videos. Saktiningtyas (2015) argues that the theme of the song *Nada Sou Sou* by Ryoko Moriyama is modified when adapted into a movie, although the background story of both works remain the same. Similar case is studied by Anggitapraja (2010) using the song *Malaikat Juga Tahu* by Dewi Lestari, which is adapted into a short story and music video. The researcher discovers that both the song and music video have a romantic theme; however, it is extended in the music video by showing two kinds of love stories: love between lovers, and between a mother and her son.

According to Hutcheon (2006), adaptation works are transpositions from other works. They are new works and not secondary works from the original. In adaptation works, the development of creative and interpretative processes extends the intertextuality of the original work. The theory of adaptation is required in this study to underline the transformation in the *All Too Well* short movie adaptation.

Adaptations from songs into music videos or movies are mainly commodified for promotional purposes by implementing various strategies. Schoppmeier (2015) finds a racial commodification in a few of Nicki Minaj music videos. Schoppmeier argues that Nicki Minaj builds her multicultural persona to engage with wider audience, both white and black people. Not only in music videos, the commodification of online video content are also found across YouTube. Gita & Gatot (2019) investigate that Kimi Hime's videos on YouTube commodifies sexuality through the use of sensual titles. In contrast to previous studies, this study is aimed to show the significance of literary adaptation in achieving the purpose of commodification, particularly by using YouTube as social media to publish. Therefore, this study observes how the original lyrics of *All Too Well* by Taylor Swift transforms to the new lyrics and adapted into a short movie and how the short movie

adaptation confirms the commodification of the relationship.

## METHOD

This study uses qualitative method using multiple sources of data namely text, audiovisual and digital (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Three sources of data include the original lyrics of *All Too Well* by Taylor Swift (2012), the new lyric of *All Too Well* by Taylor Swift (2021), and *All Too Well*, short movie adaptation by Taylor Swift (2021) that is published on Swift's YouTube Channel. This study picks *All Too Well* as the corpus due to several reasons. Firstly, it is interesting that among Swift's works, *All Too Well* (2021) is the only song transformed into a short movie, gaining the highest numbers of views within six months after its release. Secondly, in contrast to other popular songs which normally are visualized by music videos, *All Too Well* (Taylor's Version) is formatted as short movie, casting two renowned Hollywood actors, Sadie Sink and Dylan O'Brien who implicitly represent Swift and Gyllenhaal as to confirm the rumor.

In short, *All Too Well* tells a story about a woman who is reminiscing the good and bad experiences of having a romantic relationship with a man. After their relationship ends, the memory of those experiences remains intact as they are "too well" and unforgettable. In the short movie adaptation, the narrative of the song is emphasized by plots and characterization, while the lyrics have neither of them.

Prior to analyze the data, this study underwent some data collecting procedures. First is to read the original and latest version of *All Too Well* lyrics and find the transformation. Then, interpreting the transformation. The next phase of the research is to analyze the transformation of the lyrics into the short movie using adaptation theory by Hutcheon (2006).

Lastly, this study also examines how the publication of the short movie on YouTube confirms the commodification of toxic relationship by applying the social media discourse theory, particularly the

social media commodification by Sandoval (2014, p.144-159). The first step to infer the confirmation is to observe digital materials related to the topic of toxic relationship including websites and social media in order to prove that toxic relationship becomes current trends among digital natives. Next is to examine the responses on *All Too Well* short movie adaptation that is published on Swift's YouTube Channel regarding the issue.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### *The expansion of a toxic relationship in All Too Well (2021)*

The lyrics of *All Too Well* in the first (2012) and second version (2021) tell the same story about phases of a romantic relationship, which entail the bad and good memories. Both versions also suggest that, despite the breakup, the relationship was worth to remember and difficult to forget. Nonetheless, the issue of a toxic relationship appears in the second version released in 2021. This issue is an expansion of the theme from the first release (2012). The term *toxic relationship* was discussed for the first time by Glass (1995). It is best described as a dysfunctional relationship between two people, where one party usually undermines and disrespects the other. Moreover, Smith and Segal in Grado (2021) finds that a toxic relationship mostly involves abusive behaviors physically, verbally, or emotionally. It is signified by manipulation, gaslighting, possessiveness, excessive jealousy, over judgement, and co-dependency.

#### Verse 1

*I walked through the door with you,  
the air was cold  
But something 'bout it felt like home  
somehow  
And I left my scarf there at your sister's  
house  
And you've still got it in your drawer, even  
now*

In the first verse of both versions, the first-person speaker represented by the "I"

pronoun portrays how she remembers the moments she shared in the past with her ex-boyfriend. The first three lines are expressed in past tense to demonstrate this situation. From this verse, the listeners know how the speaker felt about her ex-boyfriend in the past. The sentence "*it felt like home*" shows that the speaker feels comfortable with him in the relationship. The word "*home*" in this line represents not only a physical structure in which someone feels comfortable living but also a person who makes someone feels so; a place to return to and a place where a person feels the utmost comfort. Meanwhile, the last line of this verse implicitly presents the speaker's assumption of her ex-boyfriend. She thinks her ex-boyfriend still has feelings for her because he keeps her scarf after the breakup.

#### Verse 2

*Oh, your sweet disposition and my wide-eyed gaze  
We're singing in the car, getting lost  
upstate  
Autumn leaves falling down like pieces into  
place  
And I can picture it after all these days*

In the second verse of both versions, the speaker still remembers the past, denoted by the last line "*And I can picture it after all these days*". The word "*picture*" is another word for "*remember*", and "*after all these days*" means the period after the breakup to date. This verse gives a favorable impression of her ex-boyfriend and the good memories during their relationship. In the first line, she expresses her admiration for her ex-boyfriend's personality. "*Your sweet disposition*" represents her ex-boyfriend's romantic, sweet, and kind personality, and "*my wide-eyed gaze*" expresses her admiration for his personality and action, as if one's eyes wide open when surprised by something. The speaker also expresses that she fell in love with him by metaphorically saying "*autumn leaves falling down like pieces into place*". The phrase "*autumn leaves*" is a poetic substitution of the word "*fall*", just as leaves

falling in autumn. Besides, in autumn, leaves change colors from green to red or brown, which symbolizes the color of love.

*Pre-chorus (1)*

*And I know it's long gone and  
That magic's not here no more  
And I might be okay, but I'm not fine at all*

*Chorus (1)*

*'Cause there we are again on that little  
town street  
You almost ran the red 'cause you were  
lookin' over at me  
Wind in my hair, I was there  
I remember it all too well*

Contrary to the first and second verse, the pre-chorus and chorus reveals the speaker's situation at the present time, after the breakup. In the pre-chorus, the speaker uses present tense in expressing the situation. On the first and second lines, the speaker accepts the breakup; however, the third line shows that despite convincing herself that she is all right, she still struggles with it. Additionally, the first, second, and third lines of the chorus state how the speaker is tempted to get back with her ex-boyfriend, although she knows it does not work well. It is shown by the idiom "almost ran the red", meaning passing the danger. At the end of the chorus, the title of the song is mentioned to emphasize the speaker's struggle to forget her ex-boyfriend and the bittersweet experience as she remembers everything too well. The phrase "remembering everything too well" can also be translated as "hard to forget" because when we remember something too well, even after a while, it means the experiences, both good and bad, are imprinted deeply in our memory.

According to Appen dan Frei-Hauenschild (2015), a *chorus* demonstrates the key message of a song. The melody in the chorus is usually created differently from the verses. In the pre-chorus, the melody is gradually set in high tone prior to transitioning to the chorus with faster rhythm and tempo. Therefore, the melody in these two parts is created more intense

to emphasize the key message of the speaker in *All Too Well*.

Verse 3

*Photo album on the counter, your cheeks  
were turning red  
You used to be a little kid with glasses in a  
twin-sized bed  
And your mother's telling stories 'bout you  
on the tee-ball team  
You taught me 'bout your past, thinking  
your future was me  
And you were tossing me the car keys,  
"fuck the patriarchy"  
Key chain on the ground, we were always  
skipping town  
And I was thinking on the drive down, any  
time now  
He's gonna say it's love, you never called it  
what it was  
'Til we were dead and gone and buried  
Check the pulse and come back swearing  
it's the same  
After three months in the grave  
And then you wondered where it went to as  
I reached for you  
But all I felt was shame and you held my  
lifeless frame*

The expansion of theme in the second version of *All Too Well* is shown through the third verse. The first version stops at the fourth line, while in the second version, the lines are extended and added by a toxic relationship issue. In the fifth line, for instance, the phrase "fuck the patriarchy" is an irony addressed to her ex-boyfriend because he tossed the car keys. The speaker indicates that the action of tossing the car keys is seemingly a patriarchal move as he actually could pass the car keys without having to toss it harshly. The word "fuck" is categorized as a swearing word, generally uttered when someone feels outraged with something or someone. In this context, "fuck" is used to intensify the speaker's emotions toward her ex-boyfriend because she feels disrespected. The toxic relationship issue in this verse is also supported by the lines afterwards. In the ninth and tenth lines, the speaker gives an exaggerated impression of

their fight by saying *'Til we were dead and gone and buried*” (line 9) and *“Check the pulse and come back swearing it's the same”* (line 10). These two lines depict the bad side of their relationship, as if until they die, they would have still been in a fight, swearing to each other. Therefore, the word *fuck* and the exaggeration of their fight involving swear words imply that the speaker experienced verbal and emotional abuses, an indication of a toxic relationship.

#### Chorus 2

*'Cause there we are again in the middle of  
the night*

*We're dancing 'round the kitchen in the  
refrigerator light*

*Down the stairs, I was there  
I remember it all too well*

*And there we are again when nobody had  
to know*

*You kept me like a secret, but I kept you like  
an oath*

*Sacred prayer and we'd swear  
To remember it all too well, yeah*

The expansion of theme conveying a toxic relationship issue also appears in the Chorus 2 (line 5 to 8) in the latest version of *All Too Well*. In line five and six, the speaker indicates an irony. *“I kept you like an oath”* translates how the speaker is committed to her ex-boyfriend and to the relationship, represented by the word *“oath”*, meaning a solemn promise. Meanwhile, her ex-boyfriend tends to be secretive about their relationship. These two lines represent the emotion of the speaker, as she feels being played by her ex and hence the victim in the relationship. It is emphasized in the Bridge line three to five:

#### Bridge

*Well, maybe we got lost in translation  
Maybe I asked for too much  
But maybe this thing was a masterpiece  
'Til you tore it all up  
Running scared, I was there  
I remember it all too well*

In *“Til you tore it all up”*, the speaker addresses that *“you”*, referring to her ex, is the one who ruined the relationship by metaphorically stating *“tore it all up”*. It is as if a paper has been torn; it is damaged and unfixable. However, the speaker also demonstrates a gaslighting tendency in line two. The speaker thinks it was her fault because she was asking too much. She blamed herself for the breakup even though she felt like a victim at the same time. Stern (2007) explains that gaslighting is a manipulative action, making the victims question themselves when they are the ones being abused by their partners.

#### Verse 4

*They say all's well that ends well, but I'm in  
a new Hell*

*Every time you double-cross my mind  
You said if we had been closer in age  
maybe it would have been fine*

*And that made me want to die  
The idea you had of me, who was she?*

*A never-needy, ever-lovely jewel whose  
shine reflects on you*

*Not weeping in a party bathroom  
Some actress asking me what happened,  
you*

*That's what happened, you  
You who charmed my dad with self-  
effacing jokes*

*Sipping coffee like you're on a late-night  
show*

*But then he watched me watch the front  
door all night, willing you to come  
And he said, "It's supposed to be fun  
turning twenty-one"*

#### Verse 6

*And I was never good at telling jokes, but  
the punch line goes*

*"I'll get older, but your lovers stay my age"  
From when your Brooklyn broke my skin  
and bones*

*I'm a soldier who's returning half her  
weight*

*And did the twin flame bruise paint you  
blue?*

*Just between us, did the love affair maim  
you, too?*

*'Cause in this city's barren cold  
I still remember the first fall of snow  
And how it glistened as it fell  
I remember it all too well*

The fourth and sixth verses of *All Too Well* (2021) are also an addition. The fourth verse shows all the bad sides and memories of the speaker's ex-boyfriend. This verse is played with more intense and faster tempo to amplify the message of the lyrics. The speaker in this verse indicates how she was emotionally disturbed by stating "They say all's well that ends well, but I'm in a new Hell" (line 1). The letter "H" in word "Hell" is capitalized to emphasize its meaning and her emotion. She also exaggerated her feeling by saying "that made me want to die" when her ex-boyfriend told her that their relationship probably would have been fine if they had been closer in age (line 3). The exaggeration shows that the speaker thinks her ex-boyfriend is being deceptive by giving a nonsensical excuse to break up.

On the other hand, the sixth verse represents the impact of the breakup on the speaker's wellbeing. In the fourth line, "I'm a soldier who's returning half her weight" is an analogy made by the speaker to say that if she was a soldier returning home from a war, she would have shed blood and sweat. Now she is still in recovery to be someone she used to be. Accordingly, the additional lyrics in the latest *All Too Well* (2021) signifies a toxic relationship issue, represented by how the speaker positions herself as a victim experiencing emotional and verbal abuses by her ex-boyfriend.

#### *The confirmation of a toxic relationship issue in the All Too Well (2021) short movie adaptation*

The theme of a toxic relationship issue in the latest version of *All Too Well* (2021) is supported by its short movie adaptation, in which cool color palettes of blue, green, and beige are set to symbolize such issue. Petrie and Boggs (2012, p.197) mention that colors in films create certain impressions to translate the ambience of a

scene. Furthermore, Lawrence on Petrie and Boggs (2012, p.199) states that blue palettes are often applied to imbue an intense situation. In *All Too Well* short movie adaptation, the blue palette is applied to create a symbolism in delivering the major theme of this movie. The short movie adaptation begins with the presence of two main characters: a man and a woman lying down and staring on each other on a bed covered with a dark blue sheet. The woman wears a brown top and the man wears a green top. Both colors represent how "cold" and melancholic the relationship is.

Moreover, the structure of narration in this movie is linear. The storyline is set forward, presented by the titles of seven divided segments: "An Upstate Escape", "The First Crack in The Glass", "Are You Real", "The Breaking Point", "The Reeling", "The Remembering" dan "Thirteen Years Gone". Each segment's title describes the phase of the characters' relationship, started by the honeymoon phase showing good memories, the conflict phase indicating a toxic relationship, the breakup, and the post-breakup phase demonstrating past memories. The storyline is ended with a flash-forward, 13 years later.

The "An Upstate Escape" segment's title tells the intimacy between the two characters while spending time together in the nature. When the segment title is on the frame, the song *All Too Well* (2021) is played to signify that the short movie visualizes the song *All Too Well* (2021). On the other hand, "The First Crack in The Glass" portrays the beginning of the conflict in the relationship, as told by the segment's title itself. This scene shows the man drops the woman's hand on the dinner table while talking to his friends. In 2:55 the scene switches to a flashback when the man gets off the car and throws the car keys at the woman harshly. Then the scene returns to the previous one, after they have dinner with his friends. This scene (3:38-3:48) has intense cool colors, dominated by dark blue, and low lighting to symbolize the intense vibe between the two characters. The fight

starts as the woman argues that her boyfriend treated her differently around his friends. When arguing, they use the expletive “fuck” towards each other, being emotionally reactive. Only in this scene, the song stops and the focus is set on the dialog.

The characters’ breakup is visualized in *“The Breaking Point”*. In this muted scene, the audience can see the woman’s emotional reaction to the man who breaks the relationship. After that, the scene displays how miserable the woman is after the breakup, followed by the next phase *“The Reeling”*. In this scene, the woman is in her room expressing her anxiety and sorrow. The next segment, *“The Remembering”*, presents flashbacks between the two characters when they were together: their intimacy, their fight, and their breakup. The short movie is ended with a flash-forward, signified by the *“Thirteen Years Gone”* segment title, where it shows that the woman has grown up. She launches a book entitled *“All Too Well”* and also does the public reading. The scene is ended by setting the camera to pan out, taking a long shot to blur the woman, and showing the man from his back, who is looking straight into the woman. The man is depicted wearing a red scarf, which is mentioned in the first verse of the song.

Generally, the *All Too Well* short movie adaptation is the rendition of the latest version of the song. Hutcheon (2006) explains that an adaptation work is a reproduction of the original work. At the beginning of the song (0:45), the *All Too Well* short movie adaptation demonstrates the lyrics. The woman and man enter a house, but then the woman leaves the scarf there. The lyric “getting lost upstate” is also visualized by the *“An Upstate Escape”* segment’s title. As in the song, this segment portrays how the two characters fall in love and share intimacy. The reproduction of the song into the movie also appears when the man gets off his car, throwing his car keys at the woman. This visualization confirms a toxic relationship issue in the latest version of the song.

This movie is a modification of its original version, but without an ideology change. The creative process behind adaptation works always involves reinterpretation and recreation of the original work, because adaptation works are the expanded version of the original works. Transposition in adaptation works must occur to adjust the narrative transformation in different medium (Hutcheon, 2006). In the *All Too Well* short movie adaptation, the narration is linear, although flashback scenes are shot to convey the characters’ emotions. Meanwhile in the song, the narration is set in a non-linear way as the speaker recalls the bittersweet memories with her ex-boyfriend. Another transformation in the movie is demonstrated by the fight scene (3:39-6:36) to highlight the verbal and emotional abuses happening in the relationship. The two characters argue using the word “fuck”, where the man utters it eleven times and the woman utters it twice. Smith and Segal (2021) find that a big fight involving swearing words indicates a toxic relationship.

In the same scene, the form of gaslighting is also confirmed. The man denies his girlfriend’s complaint about how he treated her differently around his friend by saying *“I don’t think I’m making you feel that way. I think you’re making yourself feel that way”* (04:51-04:53). Then he attacks his girlfriend back by telling that she is being selfish and claiming his night is ruined because of her. His reactive response invalidates the woman’s feeling, denoting a manipulative trait that is also considered as gaslighting. At the end of the scene, the man apologizes by saying *“Come on.. I don’t want to fight. I’m sorry. I’m sorry I dropped your hand. Come on... I’m sorry.”* His apologize does not seem to sound sincere. The statement *“I don’t want to fight”* shows that he says sorry just to end the argument instead of owning his mistake, not because he accepts her girlfriend’s claim that he has hurt her. Additionally, when he says *“I’m sorry I dropped your hand”*, he addresses the wrong issue as it is not about dropping



his girlfriend's hand but treating her differently around his friends. This can be considered a manipulative behavior as he denies his mistake and digresses from it. By forcing her girlfriend to end the argument, followed by intimate gestures of hugging and kissing her, he successfully manipulates her, as the woman says *"I'm embarrassed"*. She feels embarrassed of expressing her emotions toward her boyfriend although it is actually valid. At the end of the scene, the camera angle is set to zoom in and display the facial expression of the woman as she shows doubt and distress, even though the man has apologized. This scene visualizes the gaslighting behavior in the latest version of the song *All Too Well*.

Therefore, the transformation in *All Too Well* short movie adaptation confirms a toxic relationship issue in the latest version of the song. Adaptation works can convey the same message, ideology, or story as the original works use different methods in delivering it (Hutcheon, 2006). Both in the latest version of the song and in the movie adaptation, *All Too Well* mirrors similar message, which is about an unforgettable relationship, particularly a toxic one, which deeply hurts the speaker in the song. Furthermore, Hutcheon also finds that adaptation works can expand intertextuality of the original works. The lyrics of *All Too Well* (2012) are expanded in the latest version released in 2021. Moreover, the expansion of intertextuality occurs when the lyrics in the latest version of the song are transformed into a short movie.

#### *Commodification of toxic relationship in the All Too Well short movie adaptation*

Aware of her fans' interests in her love affairs with fellow public figures and the trend of toxic relationships in recent years, Swift released *All Too Well* in 2021 alongside its short movie as a strategy to market the song that had not yet peaked on sales or music charts. Both the latest versions of the song and the short movie adaptation were released on the same day,

November 22<sup>nd</sup> 2021. Based on the data collected by Billboard, from November 12-18, *All Too Well* has been streamed online for 54.4 million times in the U.S., played in the radio for 286,000 times, and earned 57,800 downloads. The speculation of Swift and Gyllenhaal's relationship in 2012 is implicitly confirmed in 2021 with the addition of a toxic relationship issue in the lyrics that is visualized in the short movie.

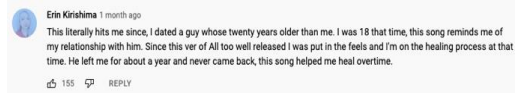
Graham (2022) observes that the word "toxic" in America has been popularized by Britney Spears because her song, *Toxic*, was released in 2009. In this song, the word "toxic" refers to a destructive behavior of someone in a romantic relationship. When someone shows signs of a toxic person, she or he has the tendency to develop an unhealthy relationship. Toxic relationship has been a trending topic and become a part of popular culture in America. The word "toxic" became the "Word of the Year" in 2018 (Steinmetz, 2018). The popularity of this topic is supported by numbers of articles on



the internet and social media contents. On Instagram, for instance, there are 195,000 posts using #toxicrelationship.

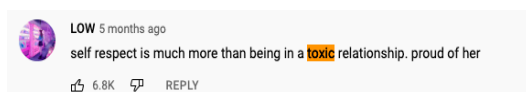
Similarly, the transposition of *All Too Well* (2021) into a short movie is another commodification strategy in order to save the original works in 2012 besides gaining business profit. Furthermore, Swift published the short movie adaptation on her YouTube channel not only to increase her subscribers but also to lure advertisers into investing in her channel. YouTube has an ad feature which allows users to monetize their content, so the more people subscribe to their account, the more profit they gain. Videos on YouTube stay for a long term, and they will remain monetized as long as they are viewed by new people.

Boyd in Sandoval (2014) states that social media is an online software that gives access to individuals or a group of individuals to socialize, share information, and collaborate. Facebook, Twitter,



YouTube, and even Wikipedia have the criteria to be social media platforms. By this definition, fandom, an online community site for fans, can also be categorized under social media because it also gives access to communities to share information, socialize in forums, and collaborate in creating content. Through fandom sites formed in a website and social media accounts, communities can shape their own narratives around their idols' personal life. In case of Swift, her fans also contribute to building narratives around her and her works. Their narratives go viral when social media captures potential topics to capitalize. Sandoval (2014) argues that many media platforms, whether they are print or online, have a destructive ideology. To gain more attention from audiences and advertisers, social media content needs to be twisted. Swift's controversial song that is presumably based on her romantic relationship with Gyllenhaal is produced as a capitalized viral content. When Swift's content is published, her fans play a significant part as a social capital, meaning that they voluntarily work as distributors, consumers, and producers who create content using Swift's song. Swift's strategy to rerelease her song, include a trending issue (toxic relationship) in the latest version, and transform the song into a short movie is considerably successful as Swift's content on YouTube gains a lot of acceptance. It is proven by the viewers' reaction on the comment section:

**Image 1.** Comment on All Too Well Video on Taylor Swift's YouTube Channel



**Image 2.** Comment on All Too Well Video on Taylor Swift's YouTube Channel

**Image 3.** Comment on All Too Well Video on Taylor Swift's YouTube Channel

## CONCLUSION

Based on the result and discussion above, it can be concluded that the original lyrics (2012) was expanded in the new lyrics (2021) by inserting lyrics indicating toxic relationship issues that has been a trending topic across social media. The narrative and cinematographic aspects in the short movie adaptation confirmed and emphasized the toxic relationship issue. By transforming the original lyric to a new release and to short movie adaptation, Taylor Swift as a songwriter, producer and director not only saves the original lyrics that had not yet been pivoted but also create new works to achieve the purpose of commodification. The lyrics transformation and short movie adaptation constitute a new marketing strategy to reach wider audiences and gain more profit. Particularly because it includes a trending topic that attracts more audiences and is published on YouTube that has monetizing feature and unlimited amount of time to exist on the platform. By conducting study about movie adaptation, it is expected for readers to have better understanding about literary adaptation as well as the exploration and objectives behind the transformation.

However, this study only focuses on the lyrics of *All Too Well* by Taylor Swift, its short movie adaptation, and the commodification of romantic relationship using YouTube. Therefore, to continue the critics about *All Too Well*, short movie adaptation, it is possible to observe about feminism that is related to the toxic relationship issue covered in this study.

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