

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

The experience of forming and losing emotional bonds is a universal aspect of human life that is often expressed through art. Music is no exception; in music, such experiences are articulated with profound emotional resonance through lyrics that capture the intricacies of love, regret, and separation. Taylor Swift's songs "Back to December" and Last Kiss are striking examples of popular music that vividly portray these sentiments. As an artist who draws primarily from her own experiences, Swift effectively transforms intricate emotions into lyrical narratives that unveil not only stories of heartbreak but also the deeper psychological patterns associated with attachment and loss.

This analysis delves into the manifestation of attachment styles in the lyrical compositions of "Back to December" and "Last Kiss". Both songs explore identical themes of failed relationships; however, they differ in the ways their speakers express regret and longing. "Back to December" poignantly conveys a sense of regret through its restrained emotional expression and the delayed recognition of loss, hinting at underlying avoidant attachment tendencies. On the other hand, *Last Kiss* articulates sorrow through a lens of vulnerability and emotional reliance, traits indicative of anxious attachment. These variations make the songs compelling objects of study, as

they highlight how different attachment orientations shape emotional responses to separation.

To examine these dynamics, the research adopts Owen Barfield's theory in analyzing intrinsic elements of the lyrics, such as diction and metaphor, which provide insight into how emotion is encoded poetically. Simultaneously, John Bowlby and Mary Ainsworth's attachment theory serves as the extrinsic framework, connecting the literary analysis to psychological dimensions of human relationships. Through this combined approach, the study explores how poetic techniques in Swift's songwriting embody attachment-related behaviors and emotional expressions.

The analysis is organized into three stages. The first identifies diction and metaphor in the lyrics that signal particular emotional tendencies. The second describes the different attachment styles and their indicators based on attachment theory. The third connects these findings to the emotional responses to separation in each song, revealing how the speaker's experiences mirror avoidant and anxious attachment patterns. This study seamlessly intertwines literary analysis with psychological theory, illustrating how the lyrics of popular music serve as a conduit for exploring human attachment and various types of emotional expression.

1.2 Research Questions

The following research questions are the basis for conducting this research:

1. How are the diction and metaphor structured in Taylor Swift's "Back to December" and "Last Kiss"?
2. How are the different attachment styles reflected in Taylor Swift's songs "Back to December" and "Last Kiss"?
3. How do Taylor Swift's "Back to December" and "Last Kiss" portray different emotional responses to separation in relation to attachment styles?

1.3 Research Aims

According to the research questions, this research has the following aims:

1. To analyze how diction and metaphor are structured in Taylor Swift's "Back to December" and "Last Kiss"
2. To identify the different attachment styles reflected in Taylor Swift's "Back to December" and "Last Kiss"
3. To compare how "Back to December" and "Last Kiss" differ in portraying longing as emotional responses to separation

1.4 Scope of the Study

To ensure that the discussion remains fit for purpose, limits are set by the writer. This thesis will focus on the attachment styles reflected in "Back to December" and "Last Kiss". These limitations are divided into intrinsic aspects and extrinsic aspects.

For the intrinsic aspect, the writer adopts Owen Barfield's theory regarding diction and metaphor. For the extrinsic aspect, John Bowlby and Mary Ainsworth's attachment theory is adopted.

1.5 Previous Studies

The writer found various previous studies regarding the object of the research, Taylor Swift's "Back to December", for instance, "Emotional Expression in Taylor Swift's 'Back to December' Using Halliday's Systemic Functional Linguistics" by Salsabila & Fidiyanti (2024). This research employs an analytical qualitative method to explore the emotional expression found in Taylor Swift's song "Back to December," utilizing the Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) framework as presented by Halliday. This analysis delves into the ideational, interpersonal, and textual functions of "Back to December," with a particular focus on its capacity to convey interpersonal meanings and evoke emotional resonance. Through the application of SFL, scholars can elucidate the methods by which artists, in this context, Taylor Swift, articulate their emotions through linguistic selections, thereby uncovering the profound emotional narratives entwined within their lyrics.

The second study is titled "A Pragmatic Analysis of Deixis and Reference on Taylor Swift Songs: Anti-hero and Back to December" by Sahusilawane *et al.* (2023). This study examines pragmatics, which is how writers convey meaning and how listeners interpret that meaning. It also delves into deixis, the linguistic elements that directly reference the personal, temporal, or locational characteristics of the context in

which an utterance is made, through the analysis of two Taylor Swift songs, “Anti-hero” and “Back to December.” This study delves into the various forms of deixis—namely person deixis, spatial deixis, temporal deixis, discourse deixis, and social deixis—and examines their significance in constructing meaning and fostering a connection between the songwriter and the audience.

The third study is a thesis titled “An Analysis of Love in Taylor Swift’s Songs ‘Love Story,’ ‘You Belong With Me,’ and ‘Back To December’” through Figure of Speech” by Putri (2014). This thesis examines Taylor Swift's songs, including "Love Story," "You Belong with Me," and "Back to December," as a representation of human thought, feeling, and experience. It analyzes the role of Swift's lyrics as modern poetic expressions, encompassing human stories of love, loss, and emotional growth, while exploring how rhetorical devices amplify emotional impact.

The fourth study is a dissertation thesis entitled “Communication for Personal Relationships: A Qualitative Study on Taylor Swift’s Music Videos and Message-Design Logics Theory” by Magliocca (2023). The research examines Taylor Swift's music videos, including “Back to December” utilizing Barbara O’Keefe’s Message Design Logics theory employing expressive, conventional, and rhetorical communication approaches. The research underscores Swift's considerable cultural influence, worldwide acclaim, and personal narrative, affirming her significance in communication studies.

The fifth study is a journal article titled “Rhetoric Style in Taylor Swift’s Back to December” by Jati (2018). This analysis delves into the rhetorical language in the lyrics

of Taylor Swift's "Back to December," with particular emphasis on its stylistic elements. The study employs textual analysis alongside Chapman's stylistic approach to elucidate the lines of the lyrics, integrating both linguistic and literary descriptions of rhetorical elements. The analysis yields a plethora of conditional and figurative expressions, encompassing imagery, symbolism, personification, and irony. The study seeks to enhance the general readership of music and poetry, as the lyric embodies both musicality and poetic form, rendering it a stylistically captivating work.

The sixth study is a journal article entitled "*Exploring Figurative Language in Taylor Swift's Songs*" by Firdausyi, E. (2024). In this research, figurative language is examined in six "From the Vault" tracks from *Speak Now (Taylor's Version)*. The simile is most prevalent in 22 of these cases. The findings demonstrate that figurative language—particularly similes—improves song lyrics' imagery and emotion and can help ESL students increase their understanding.

The seventh study is a thesis titled "An Analysis of Figurative Language Found on The Song Lyric by Taylor Swift's 'Speak Now' Album" by Listiani (2015), which focuses on the descriptive analysis of metaphorical language in the song lyrics of Taylor Swift's "Speak Now" album. The aim of the study is to identify the sorts of metaphorical language employed in the song lyrics of Taylor Swift's "Speak Now" album. Upon analyzing the lyrics, the writer identified the most used figurative language, which is hyperbole, and the least used being synecdoche and oxymoron.

The eighth study conducted by Mansfield and Seligman (2021) examined 149 songs by Taylor Swift in their study called "I Knew You Were Trouble: Emotional

Trends in the Repertoire of Taylor Swift,” employing quantified metrics of happiness (H) and relationship commitment (R), which demonstrate a significant correlation between emotional positivity and relational strength. “Back to December,” from the *Speak Now* album, has a poor rating on both metrics, especially in the “Glass Half Full” category, owing to its somber visuals and themes of remorse. The study emphasizes that previous albums, such as *Speak Now*, frequently depict less stable relationships and greater emotional upheaval, corresponding with Swift's personal development and the autobiographical essence of the song.

The ninth study is a journal article titled “Deixis Analysis on Comments of Taylor Swift’s YouTube Channel” by Setiawan, M. D., & Adrallisman. (2023). This research utilizes a descriptive qualitative technique and Levinson’s theory (1983) to examine the sorts of deixis and analyze the meanings of utterances based on deixis discovered in comments on Taylor Swift’s YouTube channel for "Back to December." There are 11 instances of person deixis, 2 instances of place deixis, 1 instance of time deixis, 10 instances of discourse deixis, and 8 instances of social deixis. The author finds that the remarks predominantly feature person deixis, highlighting the song's emotional resonance and significance in online interpersonal communication.

1.6 Research Method

1.6.1 Research Approach

Based on the background of this research which explores psychological phenomena related to attachment in human beings, the writer decided to employ a

psychological approach to analyze Taylor Swift's songs "Back to December" and "Last Kiss." According to Wellek and Warren, the psychology of literature refers to the psychological analysis of the writer as an individual, the study of the creative process, and the psychological aspects found within literary works (1949:75). In this research, the writer applies John Bowlby and Mary Ainsworth's attachment theory to examine how different attachment styles are reflected in the lyrics. This approach allows the study to interpret the speaker's emotional responses, particularly the feelings of longing and separation, as expressed in the songs.

1.6.2 Method of Data Collection

This research uses a qualitative method because it fulfills the characteristics of a qualitative research problem, which are: (a) the concept or the research object is considered "immature" due to a conspicuous lack of theory and previous research; (b) a notion that the available theory may be inaccurate, inappropriate, incorrect, or biased; (c) a need exists to explore and describe the phenomena and to develop theory; or (d) the nature of the phenomenon may not be suited to quantitative measures (Morse, 1991)

Related to this research thesis, there are two types of data sources; primary and secondary. The primary data in this research are the complete lyrics of Taylor Swift's song "Back to December" and "Last Kiss" which were released as part of her "Speak Now" album in 2010. Secondary data includes journal, theses, online documents, and other internet sources regarding attachment theory.

1.7 Organization of the Writing

This research is arranged into four chapters and each chapter has its subchapters. Here is the organization of the writing of this thesis:

I. Introduction

This chapter contains the background of the study, research problems, objectives of the study, previous studies, the scope of the study, and the organization of the writing.

II. Intrinsic Theoretical Framework and Method

In this chapter, only the intrinsic aspects will be discussed. The intrinsic aspects include metaphor and diction based on Owen Barfield's book, *Poetic Diction: A Study in Meaning*.

III. Extrinsic Theoretical Framework

This chapter includes the examination of the extrinsic elements, concentrating on the attachment theory by John Bowlby and Mary Ainsworth.

IV. Results and Discussion

This section presents a summary of the study's principal findings, examines their relevance to the research questions, and analyzes the broader implications by contrasting the results with previous research while highlighting their significance within the field.

V. Conclusion

The conclusion explains the summary drawn from the results of the analysis completed in Chapter 4.