

MEDIA LANG-/UP



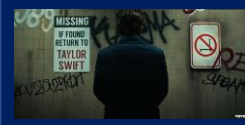
"I would be complex.
I would be cool"



"I'd be a fearless leader.
I'd be an alpha type"



"I'm so sick of running as
fast as I can"



"I'd be the man"



"They'd say I hustled,
put in the work"



"I'm so sick of them
coming at me again"



"I'd be a man"



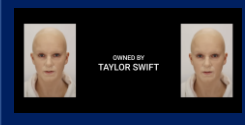
"And getting bitches and models"



"I'm so sick of them
coming at me again"



"I'd be the man"



OWNED BY
TAYLOR SWIFT

The tracking low-shot-to-close-up of the centrally framed and 'sited' 'Male' **Proppian Hero** with 'THE MAN' **intertitles** inside a city skyscraper office looking out at the cityscape gives the impression of a powerful and elite male businessman. The premise of the **narrative** video is Taylor Swift is **gender-bending** as an **elite male businessman** and **satirizes patriarchal** and **capitalist ideals**. The continued **tracking shot** as he turns, aligns the spectator towards his POV

The **wide-angle central framing** of 'The Man' with a raised arm **gesture code** towards his employees as they cheer and applaud in symmetry and obedient unison gives the impression of a powerful and elite male businessman. The premise of the **narrative** video is Taylor Swift is **gender-bending** as an **elite male businessman** and **satirizes patriarchal** and **capitalist ideals**. The continued **tracking shot** as he turns, aligns the spectator towards his POV.

The **wide-angle long shot** of 'The Man' **man-spreads** on the train, squashing nearby women as he rudely flicks ash from a cigar on a woman's lap illustrates **male entitlement** and reinforces Taylor Swift's **feminist ideology** through a **satirical** representation of **male privilege**. The 'The Man's' journey can be seen as a **narrative-based** rather than **performance-based** video, with **Equilibrium**, **Disequilibrium** and a **New Equilibrium** all featuring.

The **low-key lighting** of the **centrally framed mid shot** of 'The Man' urinating on a graffiti'd wall with 'Missing: If Found, Return To Taylor Swift' sign and 'This Man' as to represent 'The Man's' urine, reinforces the **toxic masculinity** portrayal of 'The Man'. His goal seems to be an ego power trip of a male rebel succeeding and getting away with it. The 'No Scooters' sign is an **intertextual reference** to Scooter Braun (Big Machine Records) who lost over Taylor Swift's music ownership (intellectual property).

The **high angle long shot** of 'The Man' arguing on a smartphone whilst on a superyacht with many women in yellow bikinis sunning themselves can be seen as an **intertextual reference** to Leonardo DiCaprio as Jordan Belfort in 'The Wolf of Wall Street'. The **casual objectification** of women to appeal to the **male gaze** for sexual pleasure (**scopophilia**) is mocked in Taylor Swift's MV as an example of **misogyny** that should be **satirized**.

The **tracking mid shot** of 'The Man' running in a corridor and high-fiving multi-coloured spandex-laden arms acts as a fantasy sequence within the music video **narrative**. The lyric "I'm so sick of them coming at me again" suggests that this dream of success could be in his imagination and could portray the failure of the American Dream from **fallen patriarchs** in a modern era.

The **shot-reverse shot** of 'The Man' at the park by a water fountain with his daughter, as other mother admire his 'parenting' with a 'World's Greatest Dad' sign behind him as everyone applauds him gives the impression of a sense of **irony**. The idea of a male father who is an active parent is portrayed as the act of a **Proppian Hero** rather than an expectation for all fathers. Taylor Swift may be ridiculing the low bar for **male heroism** as another example of **self-aggrandizement**.

The **wide-angle long shot** of 'The Man' partying with other men by drinking shots off women's semi-naked bodies whilst throwing money at them as if they were strippers reinforces its satire, with 'The Man' as a symbol of entitled **toxic masculinity**, that celebrates **misogynistic values** without consequence. The choice of an African-American male who drink shots off a woman's stomach could reinforce **Alvarado's Racial Stereotype of non-white men as 'dangerous'**.

The **wide-angle mid-shot** of 'The Man' playing a tennis for a 'Women's Charity' (anchored in the background) next to a Ball Girl, as he wins in **slow-motion**, and aggressively argues with the referee **satirizes the performative Male Feminism** to **self-aggrandize** as a 'Male Saviour', and is an **intertextual reference** to John McEnroe's anger at umpires. Taylor Swift uses the MV to challenge **Fake Feminists** in elite industry positions. The ball girls eye-roll **gesture code** reinforces the **satirical tone**.

The **intertitle** '58 years later' as 'The Man' as an old man marrying a young model in a Las Vegas style wedding chapel with a **close-up** of him kissing her cheek as she performs a smile for cameras acts as an **intertextual reference** to Playboy founder Hugh Hefner married 21-year-old Crystal Harris at 91. The **gesture code** of model flashing a giant diamond ring at the altar illustrates a **stereotype** of a **female gold-digger**, which could be a **post-feminist** statement from TS challenging **internalized patriarchy**.

The **wide-angle mid-shot** of Taylor Swift playing the role of 'The Director' on the MV set instructing 'The Man' to try and play the role 'sexier and more likeable' acts as a **countertype** and **role-reversal** of male director cliches when instructing an actress. Taylor Swift is **positioned as a Feminist matriarch** is subverts **women as passive** representations in media. This **cut** from the simulation to the making of the music video is a **postmodern trait** that takes spectators out of full immersion in the narrative.

The **stop motion shots** of Taylor Swift's transformation through prosthetics into 'The Man' with the final **intertitle** 'No Men Were Harmed During The Making Of This Video' highlights the technical wizardry of the previous shot (where Taylor Swift and Taylor Swift as 'The Man' feature in the same frame) with **visual effects** handled by Ingenuity Studios.

ANDREW GOODWIN'S MUSIC VIDEO THEORY APPLIED

Taylor Swift - 'The Man'

Key relationship between lyrics and visuals	Lyrics have a satirical edge with Taylor Swift as the male 'Tyler', with first person narrative full of self-adulation about his 'winning' masculinity ("alpha type", "fearless leader") and challenging his haters with "I'm sick of them coming at me again" and "I'd be the man". The visuals represent him as incompetent, selfish and foolish.
Music video type	Narrative-based - through Taylor Swift's alter-ego character 'Tyler' in a synth-pop music video.
Star iconography	Taylor's counter-typical representation has a Feminist agenda which plays into her star status satirising toxic masculinity.
Voyeurism	Women are objectified for the male gaze (women in bikinis, men drinking shots off of naked torsos, multiple women parading in men's arms, half-naked in Tyler's bed) to satirise rather than condone male voyeurism.
Intertextuality	References to Jordan Belfort of The Wolf of Wall Street (played by Leonardo DiCaprio), John McEnroe, Scooter Braun (Big Machine Records, Hugh Hefner)
Technical aspects of MV	Elaborate references in the MV's mise-en-scene posters of Tyler and props (graffiti referring to her past albums) etc. point to the heightened spectacle of the Music Video.
Typical genres	Gender stereotypes are satirically employed, that challenge the conventions of male-dominated, voyeuristic music videos.

REPRESENTATION

Messages and values/Ideology - 'The Man' music video can be seen as an extension of Taylor Swift's **Feminist ideology** that challenges the **entitlement of patriarchy** and satirises **toxic masculinity**, **misogyny** and **casual sexism**. The ridicule of this **alpha male persona** of 'Tyler' can be seen as a **satire** of a male backlash against Feminism (Donald Trump, Andrew Tate, Jordan Belfort, Hugh Hefner)

Stereotypes and countertypes - Taylor encodes **gender stereotypes** in order to give a **counter-typical** message **satirising patriarchal** norms.

Male Gaze - voyeurism is evident in the portrayal of women for **female body spectacle** (**scopophilia**) which includes women in bikinis parading on a boat around the protagonist 'Tyler', a half-naked woman draped in cover on Tyler's bed, a woman with a bare midriff as Tyler and friends down shots off of her stomach. These **hypersexualised** representations of women are employed to highlight **predatory** norms in the male representation of women.

Alvarado's Racial Stereotypes and Absent Representation - one can argue that the absent or **tokenistic** portrayal of non-White ethnicities in the Music Video may either relate to reinforce the White Male stereotype, or act as a reinforcement of **racial hierarchies**. In the MV, one African-American male friend of 'Tyler' drinks shots off of a woman's stomach. This **tokenistic** portrayal of Black men could be seen as **conforming to the stereotype of Black men as 'dangerous'**, unless Swift intended to **satirise** this **stereotype**.

INDUSTRY

Release date - recorded 2019 but released January 2020 on 'Lover' album, with a February 2020 Music Video release.

Taylor Swift Net Worth - \$1.6 billion

Record label ownership - Republic Records, self-ownership of **intellectual property rights**

Genre - Pop/electro-pop/synth-pop

Sales and streaming figures - YouTube (105 million), reached #29 in UK Top 40, went platinum in UK (600k) and US (1 million), 850 million **streams** on Spotify

Digitally convergent streaming platforms - Spotify, YouTube Music, Apple Music, Amazon Music.

Regulation - Court case with Scooter Braun of Big Machine records over the **intellectual property** of her records - she re-recorded and re-released her old music to regain the rights to each of them.

Controversy - Tabloid speculation on her relationships - Taylor Swift's boyfriend is NFL player Travis Kelce - Taylor Swift was recently bowed at the NFL Super Bowl, where she remains less popular with more conservative audiences (NFL is known for being more conservative than liberal).

Synergetic partnerships - whilst Taylor Swift has collaborated with many artists, she is known for **synergetic partnerships** with brands including LEI Jeans, CoverGirl, Elizabeth Arden, and was an ambassador for Diet Coke.

Brand identity

Social media convergence - YouTube/X/Facebook/Instagram - official profiles for her music, merchandise, music videos, streaming platforms, tour dates, news etc. exist across multiple social media platforms to broaden her demographic.

AUDIENCE

Target audience - primarily 16-30 year old women.

Demographics - Swift has a **global reach** with demographics that include **ABC** as well as **2D** across ethnicities, genders and cultures.

Psychographics - Swift's music appeals to **Mainstreamers** and **Aspirers** in particular.

Uses and Gratifications

Entertainment - the spectacle of Tyler's exploits in the MV amuse spectators who appreciate the **satirical edge** to caricatured portrayals of toxic men.

Knowledge - **intertextual references** such as Jordan Belfort, Scooter Braun, John McEnroe and Hugh Hefner act as 'in-jokes' to the informed, and add a layer of appreciation for the spectator.

Personal Identity - spectators may endorse Swift's **Feminist message** and identify with the root agenda behind the **satire** of the alienating 'Tyler' (Swift's **alter-ego MV persona**).

Social Interaction - spectators may debate the messages of the music video with peers and gain allegiance with each other over aligning values.

Reception

Preferred - fans will endorse the **feminist empowerment message** of the MV that underpins the satire.

Negotiated - audience may enjoy the music video but may not fully understand the reference or fully agree with the satire of patriarchy.

Oppositional - audiences may reject the Feminist messages of the MV leading to a **backlash**.