

A SEMANTIC STUDY OF LUCKY DUBE'S SONGS.

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Abstract: -

The present article deals with a semantic study of Lucky Dube's songs, a musician from South Africa. In fact, a writer does not write only for the pleasure of writing. He can present a fact to teach or instruct people, criticize bad situations, praise important figures, entertain the community, sympathize with miserable individuals, and to name only those.

It is the same way with a musician through songs he does likewise, songs and chants being among elements including oral literature facilitating him in transmitting the message.

So, we have selected ten of the artist's songs to analyse in order to sort out the meaning or message conveyed in his lyrics.

Résumé

Le présent article traite d'une étude sémantique des chansons agrémentées par Lucky Dube, un musicien Sud-africain. En effet, un écrivain n'écrit pas par sentiment, mais plutôt pour un but précis. Il peut présenter un fait pour enseigner ou instruire les gens, critiquer les situations malsaines, glorifier des figures emblématiques, faire divertir la communauté, compatir avec le peuple misérable, et pour ne citer que ceux-là.

Il en est de même pour les chansons et chants, qui sont parmi les éléments constituant la littérature orale, facilitent un artiste musicien à transmettre son message.

Donc, nous avons sélectionné dix chansons entonnées par Lucky Dube pour l'analyse en vue de déceler la signification ou le message transmis à travers ses mots rythmés.

INTRODUCTION

As stipulated in the abstract, this piece of writing is focused on a semantic study of Lucky Dube's songs, a musician from South Africa. One should bear in mind that African people were slaves in America in 17th century where they were working in unfair conditions in cotton, sugar cane, and tobacco plantations. So, the expression of their ill-treatment was transmitted through Blues and Negro-spirituals- chants without musical instruments, which gave birth to jazz-music played with musical instruments like those of Lucky Dube.

Music is an art form, created by organizing of pitch, rhythm, and sounds made using musical instruments and sometimes singing. Music plays a tremendous part in human life. It is a form of expression and communication inherent to all cultures. It affects the lives of people of different ages. Music makes people feel good. It can comfort ill (people) or bereaved people.

Our interest in analysing this topic is due to the meaningful message transmitted through Dube's songs such as War and Crime, Children in the Street, Slave, the Hand that Giveth and others.

The aim of this work is to sort out the message conveyed by Lucky Dube through his lyrics, and communicate it in a written form, oral one being sometimes misunderstood. The main question to be asked here remains to be seen whether Dube teaches, criticizes, praises, and sympathizes or not.

From a question statement put above leads us to the following hypotheses: Lucky Dube as a famous musician through his lyrics has taught people, criticised bad situations, made entertained the community and sympathised with miserable individuals.

In writing this article, we are going to limit ourselves to providing a background of Lucky Dube and sorting out message conveyed through ten of his songs namely Children in the Street, Think about the Children, War and Crime, The Hand that Giveth, Together as One, Different Colours One People, God bless the Women, Crazy World, Slave, and Back to my Roots.

Apart from the introduction and conclusion, the present piece of writing is divided into two main parts: the background of Lucky Dube and Semantic study of Lucky Dube' songs. Part one includes the following points: Dube's early life, early musical career, discovering reggae, and his tragic death. Part two, which is the semantic study of Lucky Dube's songs deals with the songs as follows: Children in the Street, Think about the Children, War and Crime, The Hand that Giveth, Together as One, Different Colours One People, God bless the Women, Crazy World, Slave, and Back to my Roots.

To achieve this intellectual exercise, we have learned on Semantic Analysis and paraphrased each song under analysis to sort out the meaning conveyed by the musician through his lyrics.

Development

The first part to tackle is the background of Lucky Dube. The following points are going to be developed: Dube's early life, his early musical career, discovering reggae, and his tragic death.

II.1. Background of Lucky Dube

Background is information relevant to the current situation about the events. Here we are going to provide information about Lucky Dube's past events related to his life.

II.1.1. Dube's Early Life

Dube was born in Ermelo, a small town about 150 miles from Johannesburg, South Africa, in August 3rd, 1964. His mother had thought that she was unable to bear children, so when he arrived 'Lucky Dube' seemed like the perfect name he grew up in poverty, raised primarily by his grandmother, while his mother sought work elsewhere. He had two siblings, Thandi and Patrick (Lucky Dube /Biography and History /...<https://www.allmusic.com/artist/lucky-dube>).

II.1.2. Dube's Early Musical Career

Lucky Dube first discovered his talent for music when he joined the Choir at school. As a teenager, he and his friends experimented with borrowed instruments from the school band room and formed an informal band, the Sky Way Band that performed Mbaganga music, which was pop music with heavy traditional Zulu influences. While in school, he joined the Rasta movement. He continued to perform Mbaganga music for several years, even recording a great number of albums with his band, The Love Brothers (Lucky Dube - Biography-I M D b <https://m.imdb.com/name/bio>).

II.1.3. Discovering Reggae

In the early 1980s Dube discovered artist Bob Marley and Peter Tosh, began the switch from Mbaganga to Reggae. Initially, Dube simply performed an occasional reggae song with The Love Brothers, and when he realized the reception that these songs got, he eventually began performing Reggae almost exclusively. He started speaking about his lyrics too.

The socio-political messages about racism in Jamaican Reggae began to sonorate through in his music, which was extremely relevant to an institutionally racist South Africa.

Despite his record label's misgiving, Dube began to record album, 'Think about the Children' was an immediate hit. It achieved platinum sales status. He was a popular Reggae artist in South Africa and attracting attention outside of South Africa.

Apartheid –era Black South African could relate easily to the lyrical messages of Dube’s Reggae music, which gave voice to their struggles.

International audiences enjoyed Dube’s melodic and Afrocentric take on Reggae. He was propelled into the big time. Dube toured internationally sharing stages with artists such as Sinead O’Connor, Peter Gabriel, and Sting. He remained famous until his death.

The musician has produced twenty-two albums which are: Lengane, Ngeyethu, Kudala Ngikunsenga, Kuluwe, Abathakathi, Victims, Ngikwethembe Na? , Die Kaopse, The Rough Guide To Lucky Dube, Dans, Prisoner, Slave, Unadakeni, The Other Side, Rasta Nener Dies, Think About The Children, House Of Exile, Trinity, Taxman, Help My Krap, Together As One, Soul Taker, Captured Live, And Respect.

The albums cited above include the following songs:

- Affirmative Action
- Back To My Roots
- Big Boys Don’t Cry
- Born To Suffer
- Can’t Blame You
- Crazy World
- Crime and Corruption
- Crying Games
- Different Colours One People
- Don’t Cry
- Dracula
- False Prophets
- Feel Iric
- Fugitive
- God Bless the Women
- Good Girl
- Good Things
- Group Areas Act
- Guns & Roses
- Hold On
- House of Evil
- How Will I Know?
- Hungry Free Man
- I’ve Got You Babe
- Is This Freedom
- Is This the Way
- It’s Not Easy
- Jah Live
- Johnny
- Keep On Knocking
- Kiss No Frog
- Let the Band Play On
- Life in the Movies
- Little Heroes
- Love Me (The Way I Am)
- Lovers in a Dangerous Time
- Man in the City
- Man in the Mirror etc. (List of all songs by Lucky Dube A-Z songs-Tube.net.artist.).
- Etc.(Lucky Dube /Biography and History /...[https://WWW.allmusic.com/artist>biog.](https://WWW.allmusic.com/artist/lucky-dube)).

II.1.4. Dube’s Tragic Death

On October 18th, 2007, Dube was murdered in an attempted Carjacking. This senseless incident of random violence was common in South Africa. The artist was driving his Chrysher 300C, which the assailants were after. The assailants did not recognize him. They had brought an end to the life of one of the world’s most talented and popular musicians. He was forty-three years old and left his wife and seven children. His assailants were found guilty and sentenced to life in jail. About an hour after they pumped two bullets into Lucky Dube, the alleged killers returned to where the reggae superstar lay dead to see if any of the bystanders recognised them.

This was the chilling evidence of a state witness, who also revealed on Tuesday that the two men on trial for the murder did not recognise him and thought he was a Nigerian. State witness Mpho Maruping said her husband had confessed his involvement in Dube's batched hijacking and gave her details on what led to the multi-award-winning superstar's death. As Dube's relatives sobbed, the woman told the Johannesburg High Court of the night Dube was shot as he dropped off his son and daughter in Rosettenville. Maruping is the wife of Thabo Maruping. He was initially charged with Dube's murder but turned state witness. She said her husband and three men on trial for murder, robbery, attempted robbery and

illegal possession of firearms-S'fiso Mhlanga, Ludwe Gxowa and Mbiti Mabe had been on the prowl, hunting for a Chrysler to hijack. After their search proved fruitless, they parked their V W Polo and waited. Then a Chrysler drove up and stopped not far from them. They pounced. Two shots were fired. Dube tried to drive off but he crashed his car into a tree and died on the spot. Maruping said that on October 18, the day Dube was killed, she and Thabo were in Sandton at a timeshare meeting. Thabo kept receiving phone calls and later arranged to meet the three accused in the Joburg City Centre. The four men drove home in the couple's bakkie. Later, the four returned to the Maruping Townhouse and Thabo asked for the keys to the bakkie. When she asked him what he wanted them for, she realised that the Pole was damaged. Thabo's explanation was that a taxi had driven into them while they were at a filling station. Maruping said her husband, Mhlanga, Goxowa and Mabe drove off into two cars- the couple' bakkie and an unidentified red vehicle-leaving the damaged V W at the towmhouse complex. Her husband called Mabe the night after murder, asking him to return the bakkie. Mabe returned the vehicle, but Maruping had to take him home. When she got back she expected to find her husband ready to go to the East Rand Mall. Instead he was glued to the TV. The wife then asked him why he was not ready. He said that Mabe had just called and told him to watch the previous night's incident on TV. I also sat and watched. They showed Lucky Dube singing, as well as a car that had collided with a tree."

Maruping testified. After the TV programme, Thabo told her how Dube was murdered. Her husband told her that he and the three accused drove around Rosettenville, then stopped. A Chrysler C 200 came into view and halted. Mhlanga and Gxowa got out of the Polo and approached it. Thabo said that while in the car he had heard a gunshot. Mabe told him to see what was going on. He went to the chrysler and put his hands on yhe roof and looked inside. A second gunshot rang out as he went back to the V W. Mahlanga and Gxowa then returned and told him to drive off. Maruping said she had asked her husband why Dube had been shot. He said Mahlanga told him he did not see that it was Dube and had thought he was a Nigerian. When i asked why he later returned on the night of October 18 and wanted the bakkie, he said it was because they could not drive a car that had been involved in collision. He also said they took the bakkie and returned to the scene to see whether anyone had seen them and also to see what was going on.

Earlier, David Mohlabai, a penelbeater from springs, said that on October 20 he had received a call from Mabe, who wanted to repair his car's bodywork. When they met, Mabe who was driving a Polo was with someone else, who was driving a bakkie. The hearing was to continue on Wednesday(Why Lucky Dube was killed /I O L News <https://www.iol.co.za/news/south-africa>).

This part has discussed Lucky Dube's background. It dealt with the following points: Dube's early life, his early musical career, discovering reggae, and his tragic death. We have noticed that all along his life, he was a famous musician who worked hard to bring people to a right way. The second part to tackle is A Semantic Study of Lucky Dube's Songs.

II.2. A Semantic Study of Lucky Dube's Songs

At this level, we are going to select ten of Lucky Dube's songs presented in quotation, analyse and paraphrase them to convey the message or meaning to the audience through the artist's lyrics. The following songs are under study:

Children in the Street,
 Think about the Children,
 War and Crime,
 The Hand that Giveth,
 Together as One,
 Different Colours One People,
 God bless the Women,
 Crazy World,
 Slave, and
 Back to my Roots.

II.2.1. Children in the Street

Through this song, Lucky Dube is sympathizing with tramps children who are vagabonding here and there, while others are going to school. He is alarming to parents in taking care of children for their future, it is they who wanted to have children.

It is not good for parents whose children don't study to go to the bar to drink too much, love boyfriends or girlfriends. This is what is happening in Democratic Republic of the Congo in general and Kisangani town in particular. Here below the refrain:

Sitting by the door one morning looking at the children going to school many then I thought about the ones in the street moving up and down no where to go no education no future. Then I thought about their parents man, why do they suffer so much. If they have parents why/ if you really don't want no children why do you have them, why we can fight and overcome we can stop children from the street. It's a cold winter man, moving back cooler down Khilo street man. His father is relaxing in the best bar in town asking them to fill his glass man. His mother is kissing on another man. If you really don't want no children, why do you have them? If you can't care with them, why?(Paroles de Lucky Dube:87 chansons-All The Lyrics).

II.2.2. Think about the Children

The musician is teaching the parents through pieces of advice to take care of their children. The future depends upon the framing of children by parents. They should always show them a good way and rebuke them against a wrong one. The parents should also teach children to know God. Without parents, children are misled.

Here below lyrics:

The parents are the people we're dependind on for the growth of the children. If they treat them right, we gonna have brighter future.

If they they treat them wrong we gonna have brats in the world.

If they grow up without the parents, who's gonna tell them this is right ?

You've got to fast your while just think about your children

If they grow up without the parents, who's gonna tell them this is right ?

Without the mother, children are suffering

Without the mother, children are suffering

Without the parents, children are suffering.

Born to suffer, born to suffer (5×).

You've got to wacht out my son if your mother doesn't care for you.

You've got to wacht out my girl if your mother doesn't care for you

Question yako is there it is gonna take care

They need parental care

They need spiritual care.(Paroles de Lucky Dube:87 chansons-All The Lyrics).

II. 2.3. War and Crime

In this song, Dube is criticizing War, Crime, racial and tribal discriminations. He wishes this practice should be barred down. When the world started we were not there. Why dispute between white and black mem? The children and women are killed any time who are inocent. He is claiming for freedom. Here below the evidence:

Everywhere in the world people are fighting for freedom, freedom yeah!

Nobody knows what is right .

Nobody knows what is wrong.

The black says it's the white man, the white man says it's the black man.

Indians say it's the colour, the colours say it's everyone.

Your mother didn't tell you the truth cause my father didn't tell you the truth

Nobody what is wrong and is right.

How long this is gonna last cause we've come ve' come so far so fast

When it started, you and I were not there so why don't we bury down war and crime racial discrimination tribal discrimination you and I were not there when it started we don't know where it's coming from and where it's going so why don't we

I'm not saying this because I'm a coward but I'm thinking of the lives that we lose everytime we fight killing innocent people somen and children yeah who doesn't know about the government who doesn't know about the wars

So why don't we bury down apartheid fight down war and crime rarial discrimination tribal discrimination

Knock! Knock! Knocking on the heaven's door, we gonna knock! knock! !Knocking on the heaven's door,! !

(<https://www.allthelyrics.com>lyrics>>Lu...>).

II.2.4. The Hand that Giveth

Lucky Dube is teaching people to share with they who don't have anything. To share richniss why not knowledge. He doesn't want people to be selfish, but algruist.

Don't be happy while others are suffering. You should just help. And the hand that gives is more blessed than the one that receives. He doesn't wish only ask but also share.

This song supports what is stated above:

What type of rich man are you

Who doesn't care about the poor people?

What type of rich man are you

who doesn't care about the helpless people?

There you read it in the Bible

But don't understand what it says

It says blessed is the hand that giveth than the one that taketh (2×)

Does it make you feel happy

When you see another man starving?

Does it make you feel happy

When you see another man with no food?

Does it make you feel great maybe?

To see another man without a thing ?

You read about it in the Bible

But didn't understand it

blessed is the hand that giveth than the one that taketh (<https://www.allthelyrics.com>lyrics>>Lu...>).

II.2.5. Together as One

Through this song Lucky Dube is criticising strongly apartheid which ruined South Africa for a good while. So, he wants us to ban such a practice and favour unity.

Here below the extract of his song.

*In my whole life
My whole life
I've got a dream
Too many peole
hate apartheid
Why do you like it?
Why do you like it?
Hey you rasta man
Hey European,
Indian man
We've got to come together as one
Not forgetting the Japanese...
The cats and dogs
Have forgiven each other
What is wrong with us?
All these years
Fighting each other
But no solution. (<https://www.allthelyrics.com>lyrics>>Lu...>).*

II.2.6. Different colours One People

In this song, the artist is condemning the racial discrimination. He argues that, God has created man in his image, hedidn't say black or white, different colours one people.

The extract below supports what is said above

*Breaking those barriers
All over the world
Was not an easy thing
Yesterday your mouth was shut
Yeah Couldn't make a sound
Eh boy
But it's such a good feeling today
When I can hear them freem
Accross the Ocean singing this song
That the whole world should be singing all the time.
We're different colours one people.
Hey you government
never try to separate people
Hey you politician
Never try to separate people.
They were created in the image of God.
And who are you to separate them?
Bible says, he made he made man in his image
But he it didn't say black or white.
Look at me you see black
I look at you
I see white.
Now is the time to kick that away,
And join me in my song. (<https://m.guardian.ng>life>music>Luc.>).*

II.2.7. God Bless the Women

This song tells us how a woman is addressing God to have pity of women who suffer too much without abandoning their responsibility especially taking care of children.

Here below the passage.

*In the middle of the night I heard her pray bitterly
And so softly yeah...
She prayed for their education,
Then she prayed for the man that left her with children.
We praise heroes everyday*

*But there are those that we forgot to praise the women of this world.
 They don't run from anything
 They stand and fight for what's right
 Even when times are so hard
 They are so cool, calm and collected.
 They stand and fight for what is right (Paroles Lucky Dube: Paroles de chansons, traductions et nouvelles...)*

II.2.8. Crazy World

Lucky Dube is telling us to pray before sleeping because we don't know the future, we are living in a crazy world. Let's have a look on the text below.

*So far so good we still living today
 But we don't know what tomorrow brings in this crazy world
 People dying like flies every day
 You read about it in the news
 But you don't believe it you'll only know about it when the man in the long black coat knocks on your door
 Cause you're his next victim as you're living in the world.
 Leaders start wars every time they want some
 Some for their rights.*

II.2.9. Slave

Dube is giving pieces of advice to people who are slaves of wine. Even if pastors tell them not to be drunk, they don't understand. A very bad situation is that when they are drunk, they bring trouble home. Their wives and children get trouble.

This is the evidence supporting the idea:

*Ministers of religion have visited me many
 times to talk about it.
 They say tome I gonna leave it
 I gonna leave it
 It's a bad habit for a man
 But when I try to leave it
 My friends keep telling me I'm a fool amongst fools
 I'm a slave, I'm a liquor slave, I've lost my dignity
 Every night when I'm coming back home my wife gets worried, she has got trouble.*

II.2.10. Back to my Roots

Lucky Dube is advising us not to forget our origins. We should recourse ourselves to authenticity. He was invited somewhere to follow the music in a party, he went there, but unfortunately he was not glad of that. So, he decided to come back to his Reggae music which is considered to be his roots.

The extract below supports what is stated above:

*I went to a party the other night
 Then said it's gonna be elrie there.
 But when I and my friend go to a naughty party. I was disappointed, yeah.
 All we could hear there was the crackadoo
 All we could hear there was their shoobee, doobee, yeah
 And the music they played there was not good for a rasta man yeah
 It was not good for a Jah man.
 I'm going back to my roots, yeah, yeah Reggae music is all that I need. (<https://www.discogs.com>>artist>tracks).*

III. Conclusion

The present article is focused on A Semantic Study of Lucky Dube' songs. They play a tremendous part in human life. Songs allow people to remember a situation or a person lived in the past. They can also allow people in problems to sympathise with. Songs permit people to relax themselves. They reconfort ill-people.

This piece of writing has sorted out the meaning depicted in Lucky Dube' songs. So, ten of his songs have been selected namely Children in the street, Think about the children, War and Crime, The Hand that giveth, Together as one, Different colours one people, God bless the women, Crazy world, Slave, and Back to my roots.

Apart from the introduction and conclusion, this piece of writing has been divided into two main parts: The Musician's background and A Semantic Study of Lucky Dube's songs.

Concerning part one focussing on Background of the musician, the following points have been tackled: Dube's early life, his early musical career, discovering Reggae, and his Tragic Death.

The next part has dealt with A Semantic Study of Dube's songs. Ten of them have been on the center of description .

All together, we have noticed that Lucky Dube was an African libery, identity, and human right fighter. It is clearly seenable through his songs: Children in the street, Think about children, Slave, and God bless the women.

So, he has taught people, criticized ill situations, made entertain the audience, and sympathized with miserable people. It is observed in his songs: Together as one, Different colours one people, and Back to my roots. This article has provided light to the audience and searchers to go over what we have just achieved.

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