

## Conceptual Metaphors in Selected Song Lyrics of *Les Misérables* Original Broadway Soundtrack

Paskalina Dwi Intan Bui Lazar<sup>1</sup> & Barli Bram<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1,2</sup>Sanata Dharma University

Jalan Affandi, Mrican, Caturtunggal, Sleman, Yogyakarta 55281, Indonesia

<sup>1</sup>[intanyoseflazar@gmail.com](mailto:intanyoseflazar@gmail.com) & <sup>2</sup>corresponding author: [barli@usd.ac.id](mailto:barli@usd.ac.id)

### Abstract

In a musical drama, a good song certainly supports the performance of the musical. When writing lyrics, many songwriters use figurative language to make their songs more lively and meaningful. One of the types of the figurative language used is a metaphor. This paper aimed to discover the conceptual metaphors in *Les Misérables* original Broadway soundtrack's selected song lyrics and find the meanings of metaphors found in song lyrics of *Les Misérables* original Broadway soundtrack. In the data analysis, a qualitative approach was applied to find the literal meanings and metaphorical meanings of the conceptual metaphors. The data were collected from 10 selected songs of *Les Misérables*' original soundtrack. The results showed that there were 25 conceptual metaphors of 48 lyrics taken from 10 songs. More specifically, 14 conceptual metaphors are classified as structural metaphors, five as orientational metaphors, and six as ontological metaphors in the selected song lyrics.

**Keywords:** conceptual metaphor, *Les Misérables* Broadway, song lyrics

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Music has become a part of life. In everyday life indeed we can find elements of music in it. Listening to music is done consciously and unconsciously. Humans have diverse emotions, and a songwriter creates music from emotional feelings (Korsakova-Kreyn, 2010). Through a song, humans can feel what the songwriter is trying to convey. This is supported by Sloboda, which states that people tend to give a more emotional reaction through a song (2010). The lyrics of the song can also affect the meaning of the song.

The lyrics contained in a song can have an explicit meaning and also an implied meaning. The lyrics of a song can also be a personal experience of someone or from an experience that is then poured into a piece. The term *music preference* is used to avoid the view that the preference for a song genre is not better than other song genres (LeBlanc, 1982). The type of song is also decisive, where someone who is feeling sad will hear a song with a slow rhythm and has mellow tones and who is feeling happy will listen to a music with a fast rhythm and has a happy atmosphere. The lyrics in a song can make the listener understand the message that the song writer wants to convey.

Songwriters will use figurative language in songwriting. One part of figurative language that is often used in songwriting is metaphor (see Wibowo & Akbar, 2017). Saputri and Setiawan (2018) state that a metaphor uses connotation word in order to view concept of mind and pressurized idea. In interpreting metaphors, one's knowledge is essential. The way a person interprets a metaphor is based on that person's perspective because "the metaphor is built into the conceptual system of the culture in which you live" (Lakoff & Johnson, 2003, p. 64). Lakoff and Johnson mentioned in their book that there is a metaphorical concept that consists of target domains and source domains (1980). Lakoff and Johnson (1980) also classified conceptual metaphors into three types, namely structural, ontological, and orientational metaphors.

A lyric will give a different impression to the listener if the writer uses metaphors in his/her song. This is because one listener with another listener will produce different meanings in interpreting the songs they hear. Song lyrics and music were created to complement each other so that the lyrics could contribute to increasing the song's popularity (North et al., 2020). In this study, the author uses several songs that have been selected from "*Les Misérables Original Broadway*", to reveal what conceptual metaphors are used and the meaning of those conceptual metaphors that have been found.

*Les Misérables* is a Broadway musical whose story is taken from a novel by Victor Hugo, which also has the same title. *Les Misérables* tells the story of the history of French, which then portraits by the life of Jean Valjean, who was freed by Javert, the officer of the prison workforce. Valjean then reinvented himself as a factory owner and became the guardian of a child named Cossete. *Les Misérables*, whose story is taken place during the early 19<sup>th</sup> Century era, influence the writing of the script and also the lyrics of the entire soundtrack of this musical drama.

In this research, the objects of this study are some selected songs from the soundtrack *Les Misérables* Original Broadway. Lyrics from selected songs will be the data of this research. The lyrics in *Les Misérables* Original Broadway caught the attention of the writer because the lyrics in the songs contain several conceptual metaphors that are used to express the message of the song. Lyrics that contain conceptual metaphors will then be analyzed to find the meaning.

### 1.1. Research Questions

Based on the background above, the researchers formulated the following two research questions:

- 1). Which types of conceptual metaphors are found most often in the selected song lyrics of *Les Misérables* Original Broadway soundtrack?
- 2). What are the meanings of conceptual metaphors found in the selected song lyrics of *Les Misérables* Original Broadway soundtrack?

## 2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Related topics, such as metaphor, conceptual metaphor, structural metaphor, orientational metaphor, ontological metaphor will be discussed in the following

paragraphs. Metaphor is a part of language's figures which applied to comparing two things indirectly. Metaphors are commonly used in literary works. Metaphors are used by literary authors to embellish their writing in their literary works. Metaphor is a series of words that become a concept and then compared with other concepts. According to Lakoff and Johnson, most people viewed metaphor not as a thought or action but as characteristic of language (1980). Kovecses states that metaphors are understanding a conceptual domain that is written in another conceptual domain (2010).

Conceptual metaphors are a theory of concepts in which a term (conceptual domain) can be understood in other terms that are not relevant. Lakoff and Johnson describe the metaphor in these words:

*"The essence of metaphor is understanding and experiencing one kind of thing in terms of another"*.

Metaphors are not an ambiguous concept, but whether a written metaphor does not have the same meaning as written (Di Pietro, 1970). Di Pietro explained simply "the metaphorical statement can be symbolized as  $A \rightarrow B$ , or  $A$  is  $B$ ." (1970). Conceptual metaphors can be understood as  $A$  is  $B$  or  $A$  as  $B$ , where  $A$  and  $B$  are conceptual domains that are different from one another. In their book *Metaphor We Live By* (1980), Lakoff and Johnson give several examples of conceptual metaphors, including ARGUMENT IS WAR, TIME IS MONEY, LOVE IS JOURNEY. ARGUMENT, TIME, and LOVE is the part known as the target domain. WAR, MONEY, and JOURNEY are the part known as the source domain. The target domain is the domain which the source domain is trying to understand. The source domain here works to support the literal meaning of the expression.

In analyzing the data found, the author will only use one theory, namely Conceptual Metaphor Theory by Lakoff and Johnson (2003). according to Lakoff and Johnson (2003), there are three types of conceptual metaphors: structural metaphors, orientational metaphors, and ontological metaphors. Of the three types of conceptual metaphors, some conceptual metaphors will be determined in the lyrics of the songs that have been selected. Lakoff & Johnson uses the source domain and target domain to determine the meaning of the conceptual metaphor found.

Structural metaphors have a function to help readers understand the concept of target  $B$  through the domain concept of  $A$ . Kovecses (2010: 37) provides an example, namely the concept of time which is depicted in the structure of motion and space. Like the following example:

*Time passing is motion of object*

*The time for our meeting **has arrived**.....*

*Halloween is **coming** up on us.....*

*I'm **looking** ahead to Easter.....*

*The time for consultation **will come** when.....*

*Time **flies** by.....*

The examples above show that time is an object, where the future moves forward and the past moves backward. According to Kovecses (2010) the understanding of time

in basic concepts as understood by humans is generally motivated by the understanding that present time is in the same location.

Structural metaphors are abstract metaphors with a mental concept which are then incorporated into the structure of the concrete concept. Huford, Heasley, and Smith (2007) provide examples of structural metaphors as follows:

*Example: Ideas are Money*

1) *Jane put in her **two cents' worth***

2) *John is **rich** in ideas*

3) *That book is **a treasure trove** of ideas*

4) *Mary has a **wealth** of new ideas*

The orientational metaphor was used for matters related to spatial orientation. It is helpful for expressing a complex and abstract term. Fedriani in Embodiment in Latin Semantics explains that the relationship between a body and its constant and dynamic environment forms a habit to interpret a concrete experience with spatial orientation, such as Inward/ Outward, under / up (2016: 116). Furthermore, in his book, Fedriani gives the following example, HAPPY is a positive event, while SAD is a sad event. Therefore, it can be concluded that HAPPY is UP and SAD is DOWN (p.117). The human ability to understand the concept of space has existed since primitive times and is still valid today. The metaphor of orientation regarding vertical orientation is denoted by the UP-DOWN position and horizontal orientation inward-outward according to anthropocentric world space (Zabavnova & Zamaletdinov, 2017).

When an event, feeling, or idea can be understood as an object or thing, it is called an ontological metaphor. Lakoff and Johnson (1980) categorized ontological metaphors into two types of metaphors, namely 'entity and substance metaphors' and 'container' metaphors. For example, the conceptual metaphor INFLATION IS AN ADVERSARY, which is used in the sentence "if there is much more inflation, we will never survive. We need to combat inflation" (Lakoff & Johnson, 2003).

Metaphorical meanings are formed from things that are correlated in everyday life experiences, which then being arranged in such a way as to become a conceptual metaphorical mapping. Lakoff and Johnson used the source domain and the target domain in analyzing the meaning of the metaphors found (2003). The source domain is a direct foundation that will explain the selected target words. Source domains are usually easy to understand and familiar for people to understand. Lakoff & Johnson states that the source domain is used to provide a reason for the target domain (2003: 254). Refer to terms target domain that was expressed in other words that have nothing to do with it. Usually, the target domain will be abstract and implicit.

### 3. METHODS

A qualitative approach was used in this research to find the meaning of each metaphor found in song lyrics. According to Burnar (1995), self-reflection from

researchers is the most important thing in carrying out qualitative research. In finding the meaning of the metaphor found, the writer interprets it according to the reflection knowledge of the writer. Because this research focuses on sentences, phrases, and writings, the researcher prefers to use qualitative research to be more flexible and accurate in analyzing metaphors and their meanings. After finding the metaphors in the song lyrics then the metaphors are used to find the meaning of the metaphors themselves. The researcher uses content analysis to answer the research questions previously.

To answer the questions from this research that have been made previously, the data was immediately collected. In collecting data, researchers used a purposive sampling technique. Researchers chose several songs from the original Broadway "*Les Misérables*." After selecting several songs to be observed, the researchers then examined the lyrics of the songs one by one to find the conceptual metaphor in them. To detect the conceptual metaphor used, the author refers to the conceptual metaphor theory that has been determined. Then after the researchers managed to find the song lyrics that contain conceptual metaphor, the authors identify the population of all metaphors and classify them into three types of conceptual metaphor according to the theory of conceptual metaphor explained in the previous chapter. Then the researcher will begin to interpret the meaning of the metaphors found in the lyrics.

The data from this research is in the form of song lyrics. The lyrics are from the selected songs of Original Broadway "*Les Misérables*." Researchers chose songs from this musical because of its fame among live theater enthusiasts. The song lyrics are taken from <http://www.genius.com>. This source is a trusted source because it has been used by many people and has proven its accuracy for providing song lyrics from various artists.

In this research, the objects of this study are some selected songs from the soundtrack *Les Misérables* Original Broadway. Lyrics from selected songs will be the data of this research. The lyrics in *Les Misérables* Original Broadway caught the attention of the writer because the lyrics in the songs contain several conceptual metaphors that are used to express the message of the song. Because the place and time setting of *Les Misérables* was in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century and was located in France, so the language style used at that time still uses many metaphors that were used.

#### 4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

To answer the first and second questions about types of conceptual metaphors and the meaning of the conceptual metaphors, the researcher used conceptual metaphor theory by Lakoff & Johnson (2003). There are three types of conceptual metaphor, which were structural, orientational, and ontological, according to Lakoff and Johnson (2003). Further, the researcher used conceptual metaphor theory to identify which metaphor is belonging to. Later to answer second question, the researcher determine and interpret the meaning using conceptual metaphor theory.

#### 4.1. The Types of Conceptual Metaphors in *Les Misérables* Original Soundtrack

From the data, the researchers found that structural metaphor is frequently used in *Les Misérables* original soundtrack. The number of structural metaphors is 31. Further, orientational metaphors has appeared six times. Lastly, ontological metaphors are found eleven times in the object of this research.

##### 4.1.1. Conceptual Metaphor

Researchers found that orientational metaphor is rarely found in the lyrics of selected songs because the players chose to use a structural metaphor to describe their feelings or position. Although many lyrics talk about a person's status, this is not directly related and is not in accordance with the orientational metaphor. See table 1.

**Table 1. Conceptual Metaphor in *Les Misérables* original soundtrack**

No	Type	Quantity
1.	Structural	31
2.	Orientalional	6
3.	Ontological	11
<b>Total</b>		<b>48</b>

##### 4.1.2. Structural Metaphor

**Table 2. Structural Metaphor in *Les Misérables* original soundtrack**

No	Metaphor	Quantity
1.	World is wheel	2
2.	Man is Animal	7
3.	Head is house	1
4.	Love is Journey	2
5.	Life is journey	4
6.	Blood is water	1
7.	Life is competition	7
8.	Ideas are grave	1
9.	Action is natural phenomenon	1
10.	Feeling is journey	1
11.	Time is motion object	1
12.	World is human	1
13.	Life is theater	1
14.	Season is human	1
<b>Total</b>		<b>31</b>

From table 2, it could be seen that the most common structural metaphors were 'Man Is Animal,' 'Life is Competition,' and 'Life is Journey.' The following were some of the lyrics which contain the three structural metaphors previously mentioned

### *Man is Animal*

E1: "Before you chain me up."

#### **Data Context**

The data above was spoken by one of the main characters named Jean Valjean. The lyrics were sung when Valjean was taking Fantine to the hospital, and he met Javert. Javert is obsessed with catching Valjean, who escaped from prison.

#### **Meaning**

Target domain: Valjean pronounced the lyrics "before you chain me up" because he remembered his previous life, which held in chains like an animal.

Source domain: the source domain of the lyric "Before you chain me up" was "chain". the word 'chain' was used to describe the suffering of Valjean during his time in prison.

Here at the time, Valjean was a successful master of a factory and master of hundreds of slaves. Valjean compared himself to an animal to explain how miserable he was in prison.

### *Life is Competition*

E2: "There's a new world for the winning"

#### **Data Context**

The data above occurred when the citizens of Paris, who were mostly slaves, worked together and united to fight against government officials so that no oppression would be experienced by the slaves.

#### **Meaning**

Target domain: the lyrics "there is a new world for the winning" describe the possibility of a new, more peaceful situation if the battle day goes well.

Source domain: the source domain of the lyric "there is a new world for the winning" is 'winning.' The word 'winning' was used to describe the victory when the resistance day happened.

The victory will later lead the demonstrators to a more decent life.

### *Life is Journey*

E3: "This never-ending road to Calvary."

#### **Data Context**

These lyrics can be found in the song One Day More. The lyrics occurred during the events of resistance that many people carried out. The lyric "this never-ending road

to Calvary" uses a structural metaphor because Valjean wants to compare how much effort people need to achieve independence.

### Meaning

Target domain: target domain in the lyric "this never-ending road to Calvary" is the endless efforts of the people to achieve independence.

Source domain: source domain in the lyric "this never-ending road to Calvary" is "road to Calvary." Calvary was a place that Jesus had to go to for His crucifixion. The journey taken was arduous and torturous.

'Never-ending road to Calvary' illustrates that it is tough to achieve independence. There is a lot of pain and suffering to go through to accomplish all of that.

### 4.1.3. Orientational Metaphor

**Table 3. Orientational Metaphor in *Les Misérables* original soundtrack**

No	Metaphor	Quantity
1.	Do not Have Power is Down	1
2.	Low Status is Down	1
3.	High Status is Up	1
4.	The Past Event is Down	2
5.	Unfortunate Event is Down	1
<b>Total</b>		<b>6</b>

From table 3, it can be seen that the orientational metaphor that is most commonly found is 'The Past Event is Down', and the other four are the same. The following are some of the lyrics which contain the orientational metaphor previously mentioned.

#### *The Past Event is Down*

E1: "All I did was steal some bread"

### Data Context

These lyrics can be found in the song *Who Am I?* sung by Valjean when he managed to run away from Javert. It wasn't long before Valjean finally turned himself into court because someone else was blamed for his past actions. The sentence "All I did was steal some bread" used orientational metaphor because the word "steal" describes negative activities which are oriented to "down."

### Meaning

Target domain: the target domain in the lyric "All I did was steal some bread" was implicit because there was no domain found in the lyrics.

Source domain: the source domain in the lyric "All I did was steal some bread" was 'steal' because it was used to describe Valjean's condition at the time.

Valjean was hesitant at first. He is happy because finally, he can be free from pursuing Javert, but on the other hand, he feels sorry for an innocent person who is accused of wrongdoing in the past. The lyric "All I did was stealing some bread" categorized as an orientational metaphor because stealing is a negative activity, and this happened in the past

#### *High Status is Up*

E2: "I am the master of hundreds of workers"

### Data Context

The lyric "I am the master of hundreds of workers" was sung by Valjean when an inspection took place at the factory. Valjean is the owner of a factory that employs hundreds of workers. The sentence "I am the master of hundreds of workers" uses the orientational metaphor because the term used in these lyrics is a position or position.

### Meaning

Target domain: the target domain in the lyric "I am the master of hundreds of workers" is implicit because no domain is stated in the lyrics.

Source domain: source domain is in the lyrics "I am the master of hundreds of workers" was 'master' because it describes the Valjean caste.

Valjean built his own factory with great effort. The factory later became successful and had many workers. The lyric "I am the master of hundreds of workers" shows that Valjean wants to show that he is not an ordinary person. Other people do not have the right to act arbitrarily because of the high caste. "I am the master of hundreds of workers" was belongs to the orientational metaphor because the word 'master' showed a high position of someone. The high position is positive, so the metaphor is UP.

#### *Unfortunate Event is Down*

E2: "I am reaching, but I fall."

### Data Context

The lyrics "I am reaching, but I fall" are sung while Valjean is in the church. Valjean regretted his past actions. He did not think that his trivial actions could bring bad things to him. Valjean almost reached his end, but he is still grateful for those around him who always help him. The lyric "I am reaching, but I fall" uses the orientational metaphor because the word "fall" is synonymous with "down."

### Meaning

Target domain: the target domain was implicit because there is no domain found in the lyric.

Source Domain: the source domain in lyrics "I am reaching, but I fall" was 'reach & fall.' these were used for explaining the situation faced by Valjean.

Valjean regretted his time wasted while he was in prison. Valjean is holding a yellow paper that explains the crime that fell on him before. The words 'reach' and 'fall' illustrate how Valjean's success is already on the verge of collapse. Even if he tries to reach the top, he will always fail.

### 4.2. Ontological Metaphor

**Table 4. Ontological Metaphor in *Les Misérables* original soundtrack**

No	Metaphor	Quantity
1.	Relation is paper	1
2.	Love is human	2
3.	Time is container	1
4.	Feeling is entity	5
5.	Afterlife is entity	1
6.	Dream is expandable object	1
<b>Total</b>		<b>11</b>

From table 4, it can be seen that the most common ontological metaphor found is "Feeling is entity," and the second most is "love is human," the fourth is the same. The following are some of the lyrics which contain the orientational metaphor previously mentioned.

#### *Feeling is Entity*

E1: "We live on crumbs of humble piety"

#### Data context

The lyric "we live on the crumbs of humble piety" was sung by the slave characters in the song Look Down. There are several versions of this song, and the current version was on a scene when officials pass through a crowd of vagrants and slaves. The lyrics "we live on the crumbs of humble piety" were included in the ontological metaphor category because they compare a person's feelings to an object that can be seen with the eye.

### Meaning

Target domain: target domain on the lyrics "we live on crumbs of humble piety" was implicit because no domain could be found in the lyric.

Source domain: the source domain for the lyrics "we live on crumbs of humble piety" was "crumbs" because this word is used by the slaves to describe their life and condition.

The word 'crumbs' is synonymous with bread and the like. Meanwhile, "humble piety" describes how difficult it is for slaves to get good treatment. Many dogs or wild animals eat leftovers from the table, including breadcrumbs. 'Humble piety' is something that arises from within a person's heart. With that, the slave characters want to describe how hard it is to get kindness and generosity from nobles or officials.

### ***Love is Human***

E2: "Love is blind."

### **Data Context**

The lyrics of "love was blind" are sung by the character Fantine. At that time, Fantine was in an area for commercial sex workers. She was forced to go to that place because she was shunned and thrown away by the other workers. Fantine needs money to support herself and her daughter, Cosette, so she has to sell herself in the area. Fantine's words "Love was blind" were categorized as ontological metaphors because the word "love" gets a personified figure.

### **Meaning**

Target domain: target domain in Fantine' 's utterance "Love was blind" was implicit because there was no domain placed in this lyric.

Source domain: source domain in Fantine's lyric "Love was blind" was 'love,' because it was used by Fantine to describe that she loved someone from her deepest heart.

Fantine describes the human characteristics of "love" by using the word "blind." The word 'blind' is considered a condition that might happen to someone whose eyes could not see anything. This is similar to Fantine's love story, where she loves someone and does not care about the bad things that person has.

### ***Relation is Paper***

E3: "How can I live when we are parted?"

### **Data context**

The sentence "how can I live when we are parted?" sung by Marius happened when Marius had to part with Cosette. At that time, Cosette was in a rush situation because her father, Valjean, was getting ready to go to their new residence to avoid Javert. The sentence "how can I live when we are parted?" was categorized as an ontological metaphor because of inanimate a situation as a solid entity.

## Meaning

Target domain: target domain in the lyric "how can I live when we are parted?" was implicit because there was no domain found in the lyric that can help explain the meaning.

Source domain: source domain in the lyric "how can I live when we are parted?" was "parted." They see a relationship as a paper that could be tear apart.

Marius and Cosette met in the middle of crowds, they saw each other in a blink of eyes, and they already fell in love with each other. They tried to find each other, but it is impossible. Marius and Cosette felt that they could not be separated.

## 5. CONCLUSION

The conceptual metaphors found in the lyrics of a classic Broadway play suggest that metaphors can be used flexibly, in the sense that they are independent of a specific time. There were fourteen conceptual metaphors found in the analysis of this study. They were World is wheel, Man is animal, Love is human, Life is journey, Relation is paper, Blood is water, Life is competition, Head is house, Dream is expendable/single use object, High status is up, Low status is down, The Past Event is Down, Having control is up, and Injustice is down. The fifteen conceptual metaphors are then regrouped into three types of conceptual metaphors: structural metaphor, ontological metaphor, and orientational metaphor. The meaning of the conceptual metaphor also describes the relationship between the target domain and the source domain. From the analysis process carried out, it can be seen that the metaphor is used as a tool to express expressions and create their interpretations in each individual. Metaphors are also used so that the lyrics of a song can be heard and look beautiful. Lyrics written with a metaphor will make it easier for people to imagine the message the song wants to convey.

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Lazar, Bui, Intan, Dwi, Paskalina & Bram, Barli. (2021). Conceptual Metaphors in Selected Song Lyrics of *Les Misérables* Original Broadway Soundtrack  
*IJOTL-TL* (2021, September), 6(3): 248-260. DOI: [10.30957/ijotl-tl.v6i3.681](https://doi.org/10.30957/ijotl-tl.v6i3.681).

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