

The Meaning of Destiny and Work Ethic in the Lyrics “Manusia Kuat” by Tulus

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze the meanings of destiny and work ethic represented in the lyrics of Manusia Kuat by Tulus. The study employs a qualitative descriptive method using Geoffrey Leech's semantic theory as the primary analytical framework. The data source consists of words, phrases, and sentences found in the song lyrics that reflect the concepts of destiny and work ethic. Data were collected through documentation and note-taking techniques and analyzed using an interpretative semantic approach. The findings reveal that the lyrics contain various semantic meanings, particularly affective, connotative, thematic, and reflective meanings. The concept of work ethic is represented through expressions of perseverance, resilience, optimism, determination, and commitment to achieving personal goals. Meanwhile, the concept of destiny is reflected in expressions that emphasize acceptance of circumstances beyond human control and recognition of divine will. Furthermore, the study shows that destiny and work ethic are closely interconnected in the song. The lyrics suggest that accepting destiny should not lead to passivity but should encourage individuals to continue striving despite obstacles and uncertainties. Therefore, Manusia Kuat conveys a balanced life message that combines acceptance of destiny with continuous effort and perseverance.

Keywords: Semantics, Song Lyrics, Destiny, Work Ethic, Manusia Kuat

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INTRODUCTION

Song lyrics are a valuable subject for semantic study because they not only entertain but also convey messages, values, and perspectives on life. Through lyrics, songwriters express ideas, emotions, and experiences reflecting aspects of human existence. As literary works, song lyrics can be interpreted from linguistic, social, and cultural perspectives. Therefore, examining song lyrics reveals how language communicates both information and deeper meanings (Leech, 1981).

The song *Manusia Kuat* by Tulus is really something. It has a lot of things to say about life. *Manusia Kuat* by Tulus is about people dealing with times and not giving up. It tells people to keep going even when things get hard. The lyrics of *Manusia Kuat* by Tulus are like a reminder to always try again. *Manusia Kuat* by Tulus is a song to talk about when we think about what people can do and how they can grow. The messages in *Manusia Kuat*, by Tulus are important.

The ideas of destiny and work ethic are really important in our lives. Destiny is when things happen that we cannot control while work ethic is about being diligent and responsible so we can achieve what we want. In our lives we often have to deal with things that are not easy so we have to balance accepting what is happening with trying to make things better.

Some people have studied what destiny means in thought and they say that even though some things are meant to be we still have to try our best (Weber, 2005 is not really relevant here but other people like Admizal, 2021 and Nuraini et al, 2024 have written about this). We also see this idea in the song *Manusia Kuat*, where the lyrics talk about keeping going even when things are tough. We do not know what will happen. Destiny and work ethic are really. We see this in the way people think about Islamic thought and in the way we live our lives and even in the music we listen to like *Manusia Kuat*, which is all about being strong and persevering and also, about accepting that some things are just our destiny.

To look at what these things mean this study uses Geoffrey Leech's ideas about meaning. He says that meaning can be figured out by looking at a few categories like how something makes us feel what it reminds us of, what it is about and what it makes us think about. This is useful because the words in the song *Manusia Kuat* have meanings that go beyond what they say on the surface.

This study also looks at what Max Weber says about working and what Karl Marx says about how our lives turn out. Max Weber thinks that if you want to be successful you need to work be disciplined and really commit to what you are doing. On the hand Karl Marx thinks that what happens to us in life is affected by things outside of us like the world, around us and the society we live in.

These ideas help us understand how the song *Manusia Kuat* talks about what happens to us in life and how we work. The song *Manusia Kuat* has words that show us what the people who wrote it think about working and what happens to us in life.

People have looked at the song *Manusia Kuat* by Tulus in ways. Some people, like Azmi and his team found out that this song makes people feel good and want to do things. They said this in 2025. Another group, Gusmilati and Mardhiah found that the lyrics of *Manusia Kuat* are motivating. They said this in 2023. They saw that the song is about being optimistic and trying hard. The song *Manusia Kuat* by Tulus is really, about being strong and getting through times. The lyrics of *Manusia Kuat* have messages that tell people to keep going and not give up. (Gusmilati, Mardhiah. 2023)

Other people have looked at the language used in lyrics. Ulya and her team studied the way the words are used in the song *Manusia Kuat* in 2021 (Ulya et al. 2021). Oktaviana looked at the meaning of words in songs in 2025 and found that song lyrics often talk about important social and emotional things (Oktaviana. 2025). Rahmawati also did something in 2020 she used Geoffrey Leechs ideas about meaning

to understand the songs in Tulus Monokrom album and she found that song lyrics can have many meanings that we can figure out by looking at the words closely. Song lyrics like the ones, in Manusia Kuat and Tulus Monokrom album can be very deep, (Rahmawati. 2020).

Another relevant study was conducted by Subhan, Firdaus, and Yatmikasari, entitled Gen Alpha Slang in “Last Rizzday Night” Lyrics: A Semantic Analysis. The study examined semantic meanings reflected in contemporary song lyrics and demonstrated that song lyrics can serve as a rich source for linguistic and semantic analysis. Although the object and focus of the study differ from the present research, the findings support the use of semantic approaches in uncovering meanings embedded in song lyrics. This study extends previous research by focusing on the concepts of destiny and work ethic in the lyrics of Manusia Kuat by Tulus.

Research on work ethic and destiny has also been conducted in different contexts. (Asiyah, n.d.) emphasizes that diligence, responsibility, and perseverance are important values in Islamic work ethic. Likewise, studies by Yusuf, Abubakar, and Arsyad highlight that hard work and responsibility are integral parts of Islamic teachings. Meanwhile, studies concerning destiny in Islamic thought suggest that human beings remain responsible for making efforts despite the existence of divine determination (Admizal, 2021; Harioh & Alif, 2025; Nuraini et al., 2024). These perspectives support the present study in understanding the relationship between human effort and circumstances beyond individual control.

This study is about Manusia Kuat and how the song talks about destiny and work ethic. Some people have looked at these things before. They have not really looked at how they are connected. Most people who study these things look at motivation or the style of the music or what the words mean. They do not look at how destiny and work ethic work together.

This study wants to look at how the song Manusia Kuat by Tulus talks, about destiny and work ethic. It will use a way of understanding the words, called semantic theory that was thought of by Geoffrey Leech. The study will try to figure out what the song is saying about destiny and work ethic and how these two things are connected in the song. It will look at the lyrics of Manusia Kuat. See how they use words to talk about destiny and work ethic and what message the song is trying to send.

METHOD

Subject

The study is about the lyrics of Manusia Kuat, a song by Tulus. We are chose these lyrics because they have expressions that show what destiny and work ethic mean. The data includes words, phrases and sentences from the song that talk about destiny being strong working hard and struggling in life. These lyrics are important because they help understand Tulus Manusia Kuat. The songs words, phrases and sentences are used to see how Tulus describes destiny and working hard. The lyrics of Manusia Kuat by Tulus are the focus. They show how hard work and destiny are connected in the song. The study looks at how Tulus uses words to describe struggles and hard work, in Manusia Kuat.

Instruments

This study used documentation and note-taking to collect data. The lyrics of Manusia Kuat were analysed. The researchers listened to the song times to understand its content, emotional tone and messages. They. Recorded words, phrases and sentences that showed destiny and work ethic for further analysis. The Manusia Kuat song was used as the document.

Data Analysis Procedures

This study used a qualitative interpretative approach in analyzing the data. The analysis was conducted through several stages. First, data reduction was carried out by selecting lyric excerpts relevant to the research objectives. Second, the selected data were categorized based on the themes of destiny and work ethic. Third, semantic analysis was conducted using Geoffrey Leech's theory of meaning to identify conceptual, connotative, affective, social, reflective, collocative, and thematic meanings. Fourth, the findings were interpreted by relating them to Max Weber's theory of work ethic and Karl Marx's perspective on destiny. Finally, conclusions were drawn to explain the overall meanings conveyed in the song lyrics and the relationship between destiny and work ethic.

FINDINGS

The study looked at the lyrics of Manusia Kuat. Found that they talk about working hard and destiny in different ways. If we look at what Geoffrey Leech says we can see that the lyrics have types of meanings like how they make us feel and what they are really saying. The lyrics of Manusia Kuat have meanings that're about feelings and also meanings that are more about what the words are associated with. The lyrics of Manusia Kuat also have themes and reflective meanings. All these meanings, in the lyrics of Manusia Kuat help show that we should keep trying be strong and decide to do things when things are tough. The lyrics of Manusia Kuat also show that we should accept things that we cannot change.

Table 1 : Work Ethic Values in the Lyrics of *Manusia Kuat*

N	Lyrics Excerpt	Type of Meaning	Work Ethic Value
1.	"Tapi tidak mimpi-mimpiku"	Affective Meaning	Persistence in pursuing goals
2.	"Manusia-manusia kuat, itu kita"	Affective Meaning	Collective resilience
3.	"Jiwa-jiwa yang kuat, itu kita"	Affective Meaning	Mental strength and determination
4.	"kan kutemukan jalan yang lain"	Thematic Meaning	Adaptability and problem solving
5.	"Kau takkan gelapkan apapun"	Connotative Meaning	Optimism and confidence
6.	"Kau bisa merebut senyumku, tapi sungguh tak akan lama"	Connotative Meaning	Emotional endurance
7.	"Kau bisa patahkan kakiku, patah tanganku, rebut senyumku, hitamkan putihnya hatiku, tapi tidak mimpi-mimpiku"	Reflective Meaning	Commitment to dreams
8.	"Kau bisa runtuhkan jalanku"	Connotative Meaning	Facing challenges and obstacle

Table 1 shows that the lyrics of Manusia Kuat have different ways of talking about work ethic. The line "Tapi tidak mimpi-mimpiku" shows that you should keep going and not give up on what you want even when things get tough. The lines "Manusia-manusia kuat, itu kita" and "Jiwa-jiwa yang kuat, itu kita" are

saying that we are people and we can handle hard times. These words tell the people listening to keep going when they have problems.

The line "Kan kutemukan jalan yang lain" shows that you can change and find a way to do things. The lines "Kau takkan gelapkan apa pun" and "Kau bisa merebut senyumku, tapi sungguh tak akan lama" are saying that you can stay happy and strong when you are sad. The lyrics of Manusia Kuat really show that you should never give up on what you want like, in the line "Kau bisa patahkan kakiku... Tapi tidak mimpiku" which means that even if bad things happen to you you should still try to reach your goals and the lyrics of Manusia Kuat are saying this.

Table 2 : Representation of Destiny in the Lyrics of *Manusia Kuat*

No.	Lyric Excerpt	Type of Meaning	Representation of Destiny
1.	"Bila bukan kehendak-Nya"	Affective Meaning	Acceptance of God's will
2.	"Tidak satu pun culasmu akan bawa bahaya"	Connotative Meaning	Recognition of factors beyond human control

Table 2 shows that the idea of destiny is explained through words that say things happen because of circumstances that people can not control. The song line "Bila bukan kehendak-Nya" means that people accept what God wants and it shows that people believe some things happen because of a power. This song line also makes people feel trust, surrender and acceptance of what happens in life.

The song line "Tidak satu pun culasmu akan bawa bahaya" also says that what people do is not the thing that decides what happens. It means that there are things outside of what people can do that affect what happens in life. It is not just about what people do themselves destiny also plays a role in the concept of destiny and how it affects peoples lives and the concept of destiny is very important here.

The Relationship between Destiny and Work Ethic

The lyrics of Manusia Kuat show that Manusia Kuat and hard work are really connected. The song says that Manusia Kuat is real and that there are things that happen that we cannot control. At the same time Manusia Kuat says we should keep trying and not give up. We should just keep going even when things get tough. So Manusia Kuat is saying that we should accept that some things are meant to be. That does not mean we should just sit back and do nothing. Instead Manusia Kuat says we should keep working towards what we want even when it is hard. That way Manusia Kuat and hard work go together to make our lives what they are.

Discussion

The findings indicate that the lyrics of Manusia Kuat contain various semantic meanings that represent the concepts of destiny and work ethic. Based on Geoffrey Leech's theory of meaning (Leech, 1981), the dominant meanings identified in the song are affective, connotative, thematic, and reflective meanings. These meanings contribute to the delivery of motivational messages and life values embedded in the lyrics. The affective meanings found in expressions such as "Tapi tidak mimpi-mimpiku" and "Manusia-manusia kuat, itu kita" convey feelings of determination, confidence, and perseverance.

Meanwhile, connotative meanings appear in lyrics that symbolize obstacles and challenges in life, allowing listeners to interpret deeper messages beyond the literal meaning of the words.

The findings also demonstrate that the lyrics strongly represent the concept of work ethic. According to Max Weber (2005), work ethic is characterized by discipline, perseverance, responsibility, and commitment in achieving goals. These values are reflected in several lyrics of *Manusia Kuat*. For example, the lyric “*Kan kutemukan jalan yang lain*” illustrates persistence in seeking solutions despite difficulties. Similarly, the lyric “*Tapi tidak mimpi-mimpiku*” emphasizes commitment to personal aspirations even when facing adversity. These findings support Weber’s (2005) argument that success is closely related to continuous effort, discipline, and determination. Therefore, the song promotes a positive attitude toward challenges and encourages individuals to remain productive and resilient.

In addition to work ethic, the findings reveal the representation of destiny through several lyrical expressions. The lyric “*Bila bukan kehendak-Nya*” reflects the acknowledgment that certain aspects of life are beyond human control. This finding can be interpreted through Karl Marx’s perspective, which emphasizes that human life is influenced by external conditions and social realities (Marx, 1852). Although Marx does not define destiny in a theological sense, his perspective suggests that individuals do not determine their lives entirely through personal choices because they are affected by circumstances inherited from society and history (Marx, 1852). Consequently, the song presents destiny as a condition that individuals must recognize while continuing to strive for improvement. This interpretation is also consistent with studies on destiny in Islamic thought, which emphasize that human beings are required to make efforts despite the existence of divine determination (Admizal, 2021; Hariroh & Alif, 2025; Nuraini et al., 2024).

The relationship between destiny and work ethic is one of the most significant findings of this study. The lyrics do not portray destiny as a justification for passivity or resignation. Instead, destiny and effort are presented as complementary elements in human life. While individuals may encounter circumstances beyond their control, they are still encouraged to maintain determination, resilience, and hard work. This perspective is evident in the contrast between lyrics that acknowledge divine will and lyrics that emphasize perseverance in pursuing dreams. Therefore, the song conveys a balanced message that combines acceptance of life’s uncertainties with continuous effort to achieve personal goals.

The findings of this study are consistent with previous research. (Azmi et al. 2025) found that *Manusia Kuat* evokes positive emotions and motivation among listeners. Likewise, Gusmilati and Mardhiah (2023) identified values of optimism and perseverance in the song lyrics. The present study supports these findings by demonstrating that such motivational messages are conveyed through specific semantic meanings. Furthermore, the results align with Rahmawati’s (2020) study, which showed that Tulus’s song lyrics contain multiple layers of meaning that can be analyzed through Geoffrey Leech’s semantic framework. The findings are also related to Ulya et al.’s (2021) study, which highlighted the important role of language in constructing meaning within the lyrics of *Manusia Kuat*.

However, this study differs from previous research because it specifically examines the relationship between destiny and work ethic in the lyrics of *Manusia Kuat*. While earlier studies primarily focused on emotional responses, motivational values, language style, or semantic meanings independently (Azmi et al., 2025; Gusmilati & Mardhiah, 2023; Ulya et al., 2021), this study integrates semantic analysis with sociological perspectives derived from Max Weber (2005) and Karl Marx (1852). As a result, the study provides a broader understanding of how song lyrics communicate messages about human effort, resilience, and the influence of external conditions on life experiences.

Overall, the discussion demonstrates that Manusia Kuat is not merely a motivational song but also a reflection of human life. Through various semantic meanings, the song conveys messages about perseverance, responsibility, resilience, and acceptance of circumstances beyond human control. These values encourage listeners to maintain a strong work ethic while recognizing the realities that shape human existence.

CONCLUSION

This study looks at what the song Manusia Kuat by Tulus says about destiny. Work ethic through its lyrics. It uses Geoffrey Leech's ideas about meaning to understand the song. The study found that the song has different meanings, like how it makes us feel and what it is really saying about life. These meanings help show what the song thinks about destiny and work ethic.

The song talks about destiny by saying we should accept things that're outside of our control. It talks about work ethic by showing us that we should keep trying be strong and stay positive when things get tough.

The study also shows that destiny and work ethic are connected in the song. The lyrics say that just because we accept our destiny it does not mean we should give up. Instead we should keep working towards our goals even when things are hard or uncertain. So Manusia Kuat is saying that we should accept what happens in our lives. We should also keep trying to achieve our dreams. It shows us that being strong and persistent is important if we want to reach our goals.

Other researchers can look at songs to see what they say about similar ideas using different ways of understanding the meanings and values, in music.

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