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**THE ANTHEM IS MIGHTIER THAN THE SWORD.
“LA MARSEILLAISE” VERSUS “DIE WACHT AM RHEIN”:
A COGNITIVELY-COUCHEd ANALYSIS OF THE DUEL
OF THE ANTHEMS IN M. CURTIZ’S “CASABLANCA” (1942)**

Abstract. Music occupies a substantial role in the process of making a film and the choice of score is by no means accidental. Given its vast potential to convey emotions, it may be analysed not only from the musicological point of view. A battle of the anthems scene (German soldiers singing “Die Wacht am Rhein” versus French refugees drowning them out with “La Marseillaise” at Rick’s café) from Michael Curtiz’s “Casablanca” (1942) serves as the empirical material in the linguistic analysis made from a multimodal-cum-cognitive perspective. In this article we adopt the six-space model of conceptual integration developed by Brandt and Brandt in 2005 in order to show that a number of various elements, such as the situational context in which the meaning is coined, take part in the process of understanding the message. Specifically, as far as the battle of the anthems scene is concerned, the following mental spaces are involved in the process of meaning construction: semiotic space, presentation space, reference space, virtual space, relevance space and meaning space.

Keywords: Casablanca, anthem, conceptual blending, six-space model of conceptual integration.

Introduction

In order to make a film, one needs to combine a number of elements, such as make-up, costumes, scenery, a well-written script, score or visual effects, therefore we have grounds to say that a motion picture is one of the most elaborate meaning-making events. One can hardly predict the way a given film is to be received by the audience. There have been a multitude of pictures that fell into obscurity or were well and truly lambasted by the critics. Still, there have been a number of films that managed to withstand the test of time and they took their place in the pantheon of international cinematography.

Cliché as it may be, given its vast potential to convey and elicit emotions, music occupies a fundamental role in the film industry. We can barely imagine a marvellous piece of cinematography without music. It may constitute either part of the action or it may play a considerable role in the whole film production. Music may serve to create atmosphere, portray characters' emotions or comment on the scenes (for example, when a director wants to stress that a battle/war scene is heroic). It has a substantial influence on how the audience reacts to a certain scene, whether it finds it grave and solemn, or – quite the contrary – hilarious and sometimes ironic (Hoffmann, n.d.).

The score from “Casablanca” (1942) serves as the material in the linguistic analysis performed from both a multimodal and cognitive perspective. We adopt a cognitive viewpoint according to which it is meaning that becomes the nucleus of linguistic scrutiny (Kardela 1992, Evans and Green 2006). In order to decode it we take into consideration such elements as: various modes that create and partake in the process of communication; the situational context in which the meaning arises; the role of those who are involved in the process of communication and who are supposed to encrypt and interpret the information (Mierzwińska-Hajnos 2019: 85).

An attempt to analyse film from a linguistic standpoint presents a challenge for reasons of space. A motion picture is a multimodal event, but we need to bear in mind that it is the outcome of elaborate conceptual operations which enable the audience to comprehend not only a given scene, but the film as a whole. Obviously, in a single paper we may scrutinize only a fraction of what may be said about a given motion picture. The fraction that we selected is a short yet significant scene in which a group of German soldiers singing “Die Wacht am Rhein” is drowned out by refugees who under the command of Victor Laszlo start to sing “La Marseillaise”. In fact, what we see is not only just a duel of people singing two random anthems, but, most importantly, a battle of two opposing ideologies that clash with each other. Devoid of its context, which is World War II, the scene would not be as meaningful as it actually is.

Literature review

Inasmuch as “Casablanca” is an iconic film, it has been investigated by a number of film experts, literary scholars, historians and linguists, verbi gratia, Eco (1985), Raskin (1990), Eder (2008), Isenberg (2018) and Telotte (2021). In 2002 a special issue of *A Danish Journal of Film Studies*

(Raskin 2002a) was devoted to various facets of the film, such as the meaning of a single gesture made by the main character in Raskin's article (2002b), the problem of feelings in "Casablanca" in Holm's (2002) paper and political issues intertwined with the plot in Kothenschulte's work (2002).

As far as the score of "Casablanca" is concerned, it has been studied by, among others Langkjær (2002), Scheurer (2004), Anderson (2006), Dave-laar (2012) and Hoeckner and Nusbaum, (2013). The authors pay meticulous attention to the importance of music which accompanies the characters in the whole film. As stressed by Hoeckner and Nusbaum (2013: 242), music plays a significant role in the film under scrutiny, because it expresses characters' feelings, reinforces dramatic effect and provides the audience with ironic commentary on the events. Scheurer (2004) and Anderson (2006) lay emphasis on the fact that we are dealing here with the music of war, therefore the score plays a considerable role in the whole film.

Music itself or its relation with the other modes, such as vision or text, may also be analysed from the cognitive perspective, as in the works of Zbikowski (2008, 2009a, 2009b, 2015, 2017, 2018), Forceville (2009), Gór-ska (2018) and Mierzwińska-Hajnos (2019). In his works, Zbikowski juxtaposes cognitive science with various aspects of music theory. In turn, Forceville (2009) focuses on the importance of music in multimodal metaphor. Gór-ska's (2018) paper deals with an intermodal translation which goes in the following direction: music to language and then to music. Last but not least, Mierzwińska-Hajnos (2019) conducts a multimodal analysis of Vissi d'Arte aria of Puccini's "Tosca".

The theoretical model

In this article, we adopt a mental space framework derived from Conceptual Metaphor Theory, Blending Theory and cognitive semiotics. Given that we cannot provide a comprehensive multimodal analysis of an entire film in one paper, our aim is to reconstruct the meaning of a single pivotal scene in Curtiz's "Casablanca", particularly considering its political context. As such, the analysis is limited to an in-depth study of the "duel of the anthems" scene.

Conceptual Metaphor Theory was first proposed and explored by Lakoff and Johnson in 1980. In simple terms, the core of this theory is that figurative "meaning occurs in conceptual predication (where some A is conceptualized in terms of some B) when the source and target domains are different" (Brandt and Brandt 2005: 217). In turn, Blending Theory, as dis-

cussed by Fauconnier and Turner in 2002, introduces the concept of mental spaces, which replace domains. The very construct of a mental space was first proposed by Fauconnier (1994) and further developed in Fauconnier and Turner's Blending Theory (Turner and Fauconnier 1995, Fauconnier and Turner 2002).

Mental spaces may be described as conceptual structures that language users create when thinking or talking about a specific situation. They are not equivalent to domains but rather serve as scenarios structured by domains. In contrast to Conceptual Metaphor Theory, where projection occurs from a source domain to a target domain, Blending Theory projects from at least two ($2 \leq \dots$) input spaces to the blend (Turner and Fauconnier 1995, Fauconnier and Turner 2002). According to this view, "there is an internal process in a network of mental spaces that produces a 'fusion' or 'blend' of elements and thereby suppresses structure in one of the inputs, the target material, which yields to structure from the other input, the source material" (Brandt and Brandt 2005: 217).

The basic blending formula involves four spaces: two input spaces, a generic space and a blended space. The generic space includes common structures found in all input spaces, which, in turn, provide the information related to the situation. The blended space is a general structure containing not only some elements from the input spaces mapped onto it through the process of selective projection, but also a general structure from a generic space (Turner and Fauconnier 1995, Fauconnier and Turner 2002). The process of blending is complete when an emergent structure forms in the blended space (Fauconnier and Turner 1998).

For example, the metaphor "This surgeon is a butcher" discussed in Grady et al. (1999) can be explained in the following way:

Generic space: an abstract agent uses some means in general to attain a goal in general

Input space 1: the surgeon's input

Input space 2: the butcher's input

Blended space: the blended agent possesses the surgeon's goal and employs the butcher's means

In Grady et al. (1999), it is argued that the 'incompetence' results from the discrepancy between the surgeon's goal and the butcher's means, illustrating inadequate behaviour.

As observed by, *inter alia*, Oakley and Coulson 2008, Cienki 2008, Fauconnier and Turner's model does not fully account for the contextual circumstances in which blends are created, a critical aspect when analysing scenes from films. Therefore, in order to conduct an in-depth scrutiny of the

battle of the anthems scene, we decided to rely on a revised six-mental-space model proposed by Brandt and Brandt (2005). In this theoretical approach, we take into consideration such aspects as the situational context in which the blend is constructed. Moreover, we also pay attention to the communicative purpose behind the blend, and the relevance of the situation in shaping its meaning (Brandt and Brandt 2005, Mierzwińska-Hajnos 2019).

The model constructed by Brandt and Brandt (2005) consists of six mental spaces: semiotic space, reference space, presentation space, relevance space, virtual space and meaning space. All these spaces are interconnected through various relations, forming “a figurative and dynamic semantic network that is designed to derive the (...) meaning of the utterance” (Mierzwińska-Hajnos 2019: 89 quoting Brandt and Brandt 2005: 220). In short, the semiotic base space is where the act of *semiosis* occurs, with two participants sharing the event of communication: a speaker and an addressee.¹ The reference space is a topical space (it adverts to actuality) and is derived from the semiotic space. The content of the highly figurative presentation space is connected with the reference space. As stressed by Brandt (2010: 8), “The content of the presentation space is always about the content of the reference space”. Both the reference space and the presentation space serve as input spaces, and they blend in the virtual space. At this stage, there is no emergent meaning to be comprehended by the addressee. In order to understand what the blend is supposed to mean and how the elements in the reference space and presentation space may be fused, we need to establish a relevance space. This space encompasses the “knowledge of the issue the speaker has in mind when evoking the presentation as a sign for the reference” (Brandt and Brandt 2005: 234).

The metaphoric meaning (the meaning space) results from a mapping between the blend and a relevant schema, which constructs the blend. Once the interpretative process is completed, the emergent meaning is projected back to the base space, where the communicator and their “audience” share the conception of the topic.

As already mentioned, Brandt and Brandt’s six-space model draws from both Conceptual Metaphor Theory and Blending Theory. From the former, it adopts the directional view of the relations between source and target (a mapping that connects the content of the reference space to the content of the presentation space), whereas from the latter, it incorporates “a blended space that imports structures from both spaces” (Brandt and Brandt 2005: 218). Additionally, from the semiotics, Brandt and Brandt derive a semiotic space of communication (the first stage of the analysis).

Fauconnier and Turner (Turner and Fauconnier 1995, Fauconnier and Turner 2002) underscore the concept of conceptual blending, where concepts from two or more distinct spaces fuse (blend) to give rise to a space in which we encounter ideas or phenomena selectively drawn from the input spaces. Brandt and Brandt's six-space model emphasises the semiotic processes. Their amendments to Fauconnier and Turner's blending theory address an additional input which seems to be missing in the original blending theory. Therefore, Brandt and Brandt investigated the idea of conceptual blending within the context of semiotics and spoken discourse.

To recapitulate, in the case of the surgeon-butcher metaphor, Brandt and Brandt's model takes context into account (in this case, an ethical schema), which the authors believe is crucial to "achieve the relevant framing which grounds the normative evaluation" (Brandt and Brandt 2005: 218). The authors were concerned with how a given metaphor acquires meaning through conceptual integration. In a nutshell, Fauconnier and Turner's approach focuses mostly on how concepts might be combined, whereas Brandt and Brandt focus on how they are combined to create meaning.

A brief history of "La Marseillaise" and "Die Wacht am Rhein"

A national anthem is an official and governmentally authorized musical composition whose goals are to: convey patriotic feelings, sustain a sense of national identity, unite people and make them take pride in their country's history. National anthems may eulogize and allude to historic battles or uprisings as in the case of the French "La Marseillaise"; they may take the form of a prayer for the monarch, for example "God save the Queen" (alternatively "King") approved in most Commonwealth realms; or they may give vent to deep patriotic feeling, such as "O Canada".²

"La Marseillaise", reportedly written by Claude Joseph Rouget de Lisle in 1792, has been the national anthem (or, to be more precise, one of the national anthems) of France since 1795.³ The piece was written on the night of 25 to 26 April 1792 when France was in jeopardy and the motherland was threatened by invasion, hence the original title "Chant de guerre pour l'Armée du Rhin" ("War Song for the Army of the Rhine"). The anthem owes the change of its title to "La Marseillaise" to people marching from Marseille to Paris to fight for the country.⁴ The song was composed during the French Revolution and given that it praises freedom, people were forbidden to perform it in the north of France during World War II. Back then, "La Marseillaise" remained the anthem for people fighting for the liberation

of France from the Nazi occupation. In turn, in the south of France (Vichy), which was under occupation from 1942, a collaborationist government allowed it to be performed only after special permission was obtained. Only selected parts of the song could be sung in public (Fancourt n.d.).

It is worth noting that “La Marseillaise” has been employed as a protest song across the world and has been performed to galvanise protestors into action. Unlike any other song, it gained popularity as a symbol of freedom and resistance, often sung against authoritarian regimes. Particularly during World War II, it was often chosen by the Resistance and adversaries of Hitler.⁵ We may hazard a guess that in Curtiz’s “Casablanca” its bold performance marks one of the turning points between the occupiers and the occupied, who are courageous enough to express their opposition to Hitler’s dominance.

In the film, the piece metonymically represents Free France and the Allies. Given that an anthem is part and parcel of the national identity of a given country, in the context of “Casablanca”, we may formulate the “LA MARSEILLAISE” FOR FREE FRANCE (AND – by extension – THE ALLIES) metonymy. The song proves to be powerful because a group of refugees not only from France but also from elsewhere in Europe turns out to be brave enough to sing it as a gesture of defiance against the Nazis and the occupation. The film was released in 1942, but obviously, had been filmed earlier when Hitler seemed to be unbeatable. Therefore, the refugees’ courage even to try to drown out “Die Wacht am Rhein” is undeniably impressive.

“Die Wacht am Rhein” (“The Watch on the Rhine”) is a patriotic German composition, first sung in 1854, but its words were written by Max Schneckenburger in 1840. As far as the origins of “Die Wacht am Rhein” are concerned, they are deeply ingrained in the French-German enmity that arose in the 16th century and was reignited during the Franco-Prussian War (1870–1871) (see Gardner Feldman 2012). One of the animosities was the upshot of France’s attempt to annex the Left Bank of the Rhine, initiated by King Louis XIV. While “La Marseillaise” was composed to praise the French Revolution, “Die Wacht am Rhein” was strictly connected with another historic event, namely the Rhine Crisis. In a nutshell, the lands of the Left Bank of the Rhine were the subject matter of the dispute. Both the German Confederation and the Kingdom of France claimed the right to these territories. In consequence, it took 200 years (especially from the Thirty Years’ War to the defeat of Napoleon) of constant invasions of the German land until people living in the vicinity of the Rhine could feel relatively safe (see Brophy 2013 and Pásztorová 2022). During World War II

the song was the unofficial German anthem, which was the reason why it was sung by the officers in “Casablanca”. Since the German anthem stands for Germany, we may argue that it acts as a vehicle to conceptually realize the “DIE WACHT AM RHEIN” FOR THE NAZIS metonymy.

As a result, there are two patriotic compositions which, like no others, are part and parcel of two countries and all the values associated with them. Given their symbolic nature and unambiguous associations with particular nations, the audience immediately understands why these two songs were chosen by the director of the film to represent Free France and Germany. Interestingly enough, if we take into account the original French title, we see that these two pieces have more in common than one might expect. They are connected by the notion of the Rhine, as the southern half of the river forms the border between France and Germany.

Duel of the anthems – “La Marseillaise” vs. “Watch on the Rhine” (Free France vs. The Nazis): The analysis

In spite of the fact that we can hear the national anthem of France a few times in the film, it is its performance at Rick’s Café that is vividly etched into our memory. “La Marseillaise” is sung by people in the café who under Laszlo’s command try to drown out German officers triumphantly and gleefully singing “Die Wacht am Rhein”.

First and foremost, we shall establish the *semiotic (base) space*, which serves as the scene of communication. It involves the interlocutors who partake in the process of meaning construction. In the case of the analysed excerpt from “Casablanca”, the act of *semiosis* occurs when the audience (whether now or, more specifically, back in 1942, when the outcome of the war was uncertain and the reception of the film might have been different)⁶ watches the film in question, or – more precisely – the duel of the anthems scene.⁷ *Semiosis* is the foundation on which we build the spaces. Langacker (1999: 7) explains that ‘ground’ refers to the act of communication, the participants involved, and the immediate circumstances.

Given that we are dealing here with a specific form of communication based on the interaction between a collective speaker (the actors playing their roles) and a collective hearer (the audience and public opinion), we need to stress that the communicative situation under scrutiny deviates from Langacker’s (2009: 153) “face-to-face two-participant interaction”.⁸ Taking into account the unique nature of the communication event, we may construe the ACTORS (ASSUMING THEIR ROLES) FOR THE DIREC-

TOR metonymy, as it is ultimately the director or, to some extent, even the scriptwriter(s), who are responsible for the concept and the guiding idea of the whole scene. Michael Curtiz, in particular, evokes the metaphor SINGING AN ANTHEM IN A TIME OF WAR IS FIGHTING, which will be discussed in this paper. However, for the sake of clarity, we will focus on the actors, as they establish the direct contact (the very act of communication) with the audience and public opinion.

The overriding aim of the characters/actors (collective speaker) is to relay a message to the audience which – in turn – is supposed to decode it. By performing the roles of, among others, band members, Nazi officers, the French, visitors at Rick's Café and Rick himself, the actors/the speakers attempt to portray the situation which unfolded during World War II, and in particular the attitude of ordinary people and officers towards it. The fact that people decide to stand up and sing "La Marseillaise" shows their defiance, patriotism, unification and hope. The duel of the anthems is, in fact, the duel of two ideologies: anti-Semitic, anti-communist, undemocratic Nazi versus liberal Free France and its allies. Therefore, in search of the conceptual motivation behind the scene evoking the duel of the anthems, we may construe the SINGING AN ANTHEM IN A TIME OF WAR IS FIGHTING metaphor.

It needs to be stressed that we cannot separate the battle of the anthems scene from the plot of the film and all the events set during World War II as they provide us with a number of pertinent pieces of information for the act of *semiosis*. The here-and-now moment of two parties trying to drown each other out is deeply embedded in the *pheno-world* (an outer sphere) which "consists of everything that can serve as objects of thought, regardless of any belief in their existence outside of the minds of the cognizers" (Brandt and Brandt 2005: 226). As stressed by Mierzwińska-Hajnos (2019: 91), the *pheno-world* enables us to comprehend the "conceptual mechanisms that govern the semiotic space".

Once we have set up the *semiotic space*, we need to establish the *presentation space* and the *reference space* (a topical space). These are two types of functionally different input spaces; the former serves as a source, whereas the latter as a target. Let us stress at this juncture that the *reference space* proceeds from the *semiotic space* and, in our analysis, it pertains to the event under scrutiny occurring in Casablanca; to wit, the scene in which Victor Laszlo hears a group of German officers sing "Watch on the Rhine"⁹ and orders the band standing nearby to play "La Marseillaise" (Laszlo: "Play the Marseillaise! Play it!"¹⁰). Having Rick's approval (the man's nod), the musicians start playing the French anthem and Laszlo starts to sing it.¹¹ Ma-

jor Strasser is not willing to turn a blind eye to that behaviour, therefore he conducts the German officers to sing “Watch on the Rhine” as if it was a competition between two rival parties. It turns out, however, that the onlookers (the French and refugees) rise from the tables, join Laszlo and they manage to drown out the Germans, who ultimately surrender to the crowd, stop singing and sit down. Laszlo succeeds in inspiring people at the café to demonstrate their feelings towards the Nazis. Even Rick’s one-night lover, a cynically loose Frenchwoman Yvonne, who comes to the café with a German officer, shouts “Vive La France! Vive la democracie!”,¹² which proves how powerful, dramatic and inspiring music may be.

As far as the *presentation space* is concerned, we may venture a claim that, as put by Brandt and Brandt (2005: 227), it “is highly figurative”. The duel of the anthems scene may be metaphorically interpreted as conducting warfare between the Nazis and Free France (and its allies who are represented by the crowd at the café). The scene shows what ordinary people feel about it. In other words, the scene refers to the fact that Germany is trying to conquer other countries, which provokes and fuels discontent among free people. The French are obviously against the Nazi ideology; therefore, they want to fight for what is an integral part of their cultural identity: *liberté, égalité* and *fraternité*. When they start to sing, they want to express strong opposition to the Nazis’ oppression. The scene shows that people need someone (be it an individual or a group) who will lead them to victory as they are not afraid of taking up arms against their enemy. And Laszlo is, indeed, such a person given his connections with the Czech underground resistance movement. Since Laszlo metonymically represents both occupied Europe and the resistance movement, we may construe two conceptual metonymies based on the PART FOR WHOLE formula, that is LASZLO FOR OCCUPIED EUROPE and LASZLO FOR THE RESISTANCE MOVEMENT. However, if occupied Europe can also metonymically stand for the resistance movement, we might opt for the working of the metonymic chain LASZLO FOR OCCUPIED EUROPE FOR LASZLO FOR THE RESISTANCE MOVEMENT.

We may identify several correspondences or mappings between the input space of SINGING and the input space of FIGHTING. Moreover, we may distinguish two modes which play a crucial role in the shared meaning construction: the visual and vocal/auditory ones. As far as the visual mode is concerned, we can hardly ignore the fact that Rick’s café resembles a battlefield, with the onlookers/refugees joining Laszlo like brave soldiers who decide to fight. Laszlo himself appears as a commander resisting the Germans.

The performances of the two songs are part and parcel of the vocal/auditory mode, but it is important to note that they are also intertwined with the visual mode. When the onlookers start to sing “La Marseillaise” they stand up. German officers react in a similar way, those who previously were sitting also rise, but as the voices of the people blend together “The Wacht am Rhein” is drowned out, and the Nazis sit down, surrendering. This act of drowning out the Nazis symbolically represents winning. This behaviour may be approached from the point of view of Lakoff and Johnson’s (1980: 14–21) orientational metaphors. Specifically, positive elements such as winning and defiance are connected with upward movement (hence the POSITIVE IS UP and WINNING IS UP metaphors), whereas negative elements like losing or giving up are linked to downward movement (NEGATIVE IS DOWN and LOSING IS DOWN metaphors). When people stand, it means that they are fighting, while sitting down implies capitulation.

Furthermore, using one’s voice as a weapon leads to the construal of another conceptual metaphor verbalized as A HUMAN VOICE IS A WEAPON USED IN A WAR or VOICE IS AN INSTRUMENT OF BATTLE. The onlookers at Rick’s café, particularly the refugees, are armed with their voices and “La Marseillaise”, which becomes a powerful weapon against the Nazis. Although these ordinary people are not accoutred with any physical weapons, they resist with their voices. The notion of using one’s voice as a weapon interacts with the physical loudness of music, a perceptual quality essential to our analysis, as it helps us to construct the blend in the virtual space. The louder voice wins and symbolically “crosses the Rhein” to overpower the enemy.

Music is an intrinsic constituent of the analysed scene. On the textual level, “La Marseillaise” is a very universal patriotic anthem opposing tyranny (“Contre nous de la tyrannie” / “Against us stands tyranny”).¹³ Despite its strong ideological undertones, the first stanza and refrain do not specify the enemy or the precise location of the homeland. The refrain’s simple and memorable patriotic slogans (“Aux armes, citoyens, / Formez vos bataillons, / Marchons, marchons!” / “To arms, citizens, / Form your battalions, / Let’s March, let’s march!”)¹⁴ unite people and can be sung with or without instrumental accompaniment.¹⁵ Originally written “for the Army of the Rhine”, the change of the title made it more universal.

On the musical level, “La Marseillaise” may be described as a marching song with a lively pace inspiring enthusiasm. As argued by Richard (n.d.), several musical features contribute to its status as a protest song performed in different parts of the world. Its melodic structure, rhythm and harmony

unite voices and give it a lively, military tone. “The Marseillaise’s” lively pace spurs enthusiasm and it seems to have been composed to be played to the sound of cannons. Moreover, despite its classical origins,¹⁶ it can be easily sung by ordinary people due to its one-octave range.

In contrast, while Germany seemed unbeatable in 1942, the odds of “Die Wacht am Rhein” “winning” at Rick’s café were non-existent. “Die Wacht am Rhein” is a patriotic composition whose lyrics focus neither on liberty nor on tyranny but on defending the German Rhine. Like “La Marseillaise”, it emphasizes unification but its focus is on defending German territory. The fatherland is not abstract; it is very concrete and refers specifically to Germany. The Germans, especially the youth, need to unite to defend the river against an enemy (the French) approaching the river. The rival crossing the river would be equal to losing. The scenario described in the song materialised in 1945, three years after “Casablanca” was released and roughly 100 years after the lyrics were written by Schneckenburger.

Curtiz juxtaposes these two songs for a few reasons. First and foremost, the anthems are deeply connected to the histories of both nations. Both are also linked to the concept of the Rhine. Perversely, “Die Wacht am Rhein” refers to the period when the French and not the Germans were the invaders. In “Casablanca” it is quite the contrary.

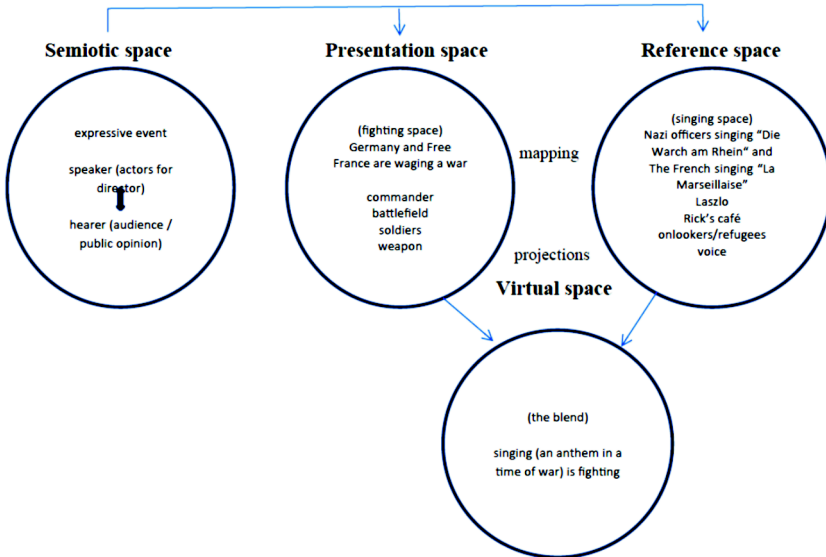
The scene in the film portrays a battle in which the louder voice wins. Those who “cross the river” first (those who succeed in drowning out the rival), are the victors. The fact that the refugees managed to drown out the Nazis marks a turning point in the film. The Nazis have asserted their control over Casablanca but Laszlo’s bold act of defiance openly challenges their dominance. Like a commander on a battlefield, Laszlo inspires people and gives them hope. Indeed, unification brings victory. The Nazis’ triumphant performance of “Die Wacht am Rhein”, being a display of their power, is interrupted by one man’s bold defiance, rousing people to take a stand. This open defiance “forces” the people to choose a side in the occupation.

Let us stress again that the *reference space* refers to the actuality (the scene in the film), whereas the *presentation space* focuses on the figurative meaning of the content of the *reference space*. After the *presentation space* is established, in order to comprehend how the duel of the anthems scene achieves meaning through conceptual integration, we need to establish a *blended space*. As couched by Brandt & Brandt (2005: 227):

In the blended space, ‘the blend’, the referent (A) is presented *as if* it were identical with the content in Presentation space (B). This identity link is *virtual* by definition; if it were actual there would be only one space, a Reference space. It is in this virtual sense that A can be said to be B: in the blend A is B.

Virtuality is what defines a blend. This mental space is characterised by “as-if-ness” (Brandt and Brandt 2005: 227). By means of the content presented in the *reference* and *presentation spaces*, we create the blend. In Langacker’s (1999) terms, the duel of the anthems scene is part of the “actual plane”,¹⁷ whereas what we are supposed to decipher from watching it is part of the “virtual plane”. In other words, the input from the singing space is blended with the input from the fighting space in a virtual blend. At this point, the conceptualization involves a rudimentary mapping between the two input spaces. The *virtual space* consists of projections from both input spaces. No emergent meaning has been fully understood, and we do not yet know how the elements from the source and target spaces will merge in the blend.

Figure 1



Having established a blend of the singing space and the fighting space (Figure 1), we may now proceed to interpret its meaning. It is important to stress that, following Brandt and Brandt (2005: 230), meaning is context-related. Therefore, we must take into account factors such as the situational context in which the act of communication takes place. In order to achieve this, we need a relevant framing of the singing space to establish mappings between the inputs. The framing in question refers to the historical context of World War II. Therefore, the story in the *reference space* motivates our framing of the fighting space.

It is worth noting that during World War II, the political situation in France was complex. The country was divided into Vichy France, a German client state established in 1940, and Free France (La France Libre), with a provisional government based in London. Vichy France remained officially neutral (while unofficially supporting Germany) until it was fully occupied by the Axis in 1942. Free France, with Charles de Gaulle as its leader, attempted to control unoccupied and liberated territories. It also fought on the Allies' side (see Kedward 2003: 391–408).

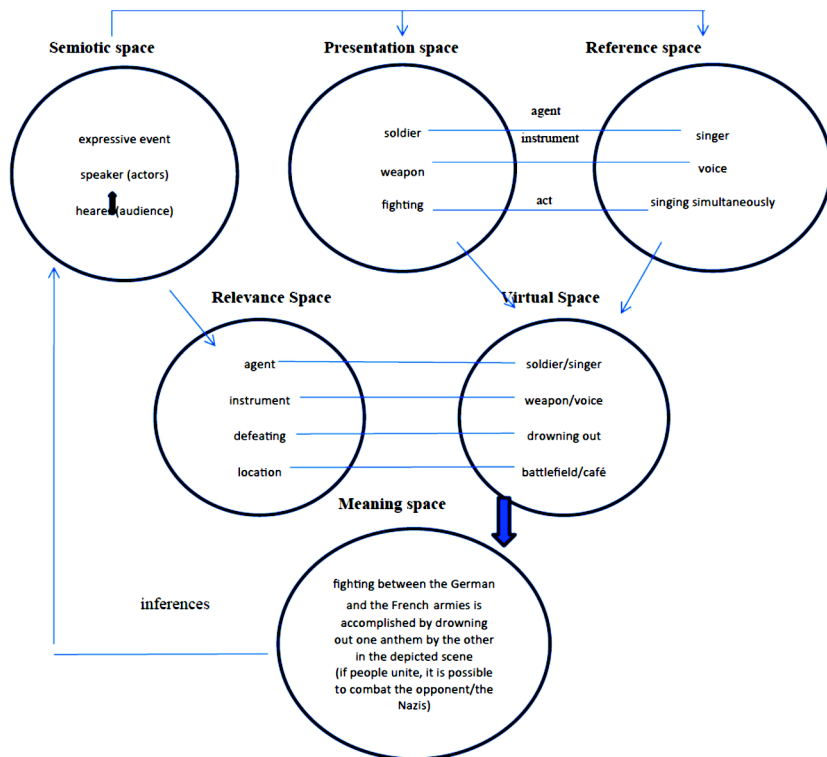
The crowd at Rick's café consists of both French people and those of various other nationalities (who represent the Allies). The choice of "La Marseillaise" in this scene is by no means accidental. There is no song that conveys more patriotic feelings than the French anthem, which simultaneously has functioned as a protest song against an oppressor. The act of drowning out (singing louder than) the Nazi officers symbolizes the war and the idea that people may unite and defeat the enemy. In order to fully comprehend the metaphor, it is essential to understand the political context of the scene. As Brandt & Brandt (2005: 234) explain, "[...] *relevance space* [...] contains knowledge of the issue the speaker has in mind when evoking the presentation as a sign for the reference".

The reference space consists of a story in which two opposing sides, gathered at Rick's café (the Nazis and the refugees/onlookers), engage in a figurative battle where their voices serve as weapons. Both sides participate in a "singing" competition, and drowning out the opponent's voice symbolizes defeating the other party. This abbreviated narrative included in the reference space serves as the motivation for framing the presentation space. And so, in the scene under scrutiny, two collective agents use a specific instrument (their voices) in order to defeat the opposing agent in a particular location. Our attention is directed to what happens to the other agent and, more importantly, how it is accomplished. The story in the reference space allows us to motivate our framing in the fighting space. We know that we are dealing here with a metaphorical meaning, because we know the context of the scene.

In the blend, we see collective agents (soldiers/singers), an instrument employed by them (weapons/voices), the process/action of defeating (via drowning out), and the location (battlefield/café). Given the historical context of the film, we believe that the concept of drowning out is one of the crucial elements of the analysis. As already mentioned, the louder voice wins, thus loudness is connected with physical strength. In this scene, the battle between the Nazis and the Allies (represented by the French and the refugees) is accomplished through the act of drowning out one anthem with another, specifically, a protest song.

Following Brandt and Brandt (2005: 234), in order to explain the cognitive mechanism that allows the figurative meaning to occur in the blend, we must consider the background “knowledge the speaker has in mind when evoking the presentation as a sign for the reference” (Brandt and Brandt 2005: 234). This is presented graphically in Figure 2.

Figure 2



At the final stage of our analysis, which is the *meaning space*, we reach the blend that is ultimately experienced and understood in a specific way. The meaning we obtain here is the result of the entire interpretive process. The content of the space in question is the blend, structured by the emotional schema. The emotionally-loaded performance of “La Marseillaise” (serving as a protest song) is meant to evoke hope for victory (the possibility of defeating the Nazis or, more broadly, the enemy), inspire people to resist their opponents, and justify the war effort. Let us stress again that in order to fully comprehend the metaphor, we must remember that in 1942 the political situation was highly uncertain and the outcome of World War II was unpredictable. Thus, the mobilization of both anti-Nazi governments and ordinary citizens was of paramount importance.

There are alternative interpretations of the scene under discussion, depending on the context. Naturally, in 1942 its emotional content was far more potent than it is today. During World War II, the scene directly referenced a specific situation and targeted a specific audience. The film's purpose was not merely to entertain but to convey certain emotions and encourage resistance. Michael Curtiz captured the volatile political landscape of 1942 and it was the emotionally charged rendition of "La Marseillaise" that left a lasting impression on viewers. Nearly 85 years later, audiences still understand the message conveyed by the director. Although the political situation has changed, conflicts and wars persist, and scenes like the one discussed in this article have stood the test of time.

Conclusions

In "Casablanca" a love story is intertwined with political issues. In this paper we deliberately put the latter in the foreground and ignore the love motif. There are a number of metaphors and symbols in "Casablanca", but we decided to choose the one connected with the political situation of the time, because it enables us to put the scene/duel into the political context. In all likelihood, some inexperienced viewers may not decipher the duel of the anthems scene and therefore they may understand it literally. The figurative sense may only be understood if the audience is acquainted with the political complexities and intricacies of the 1940s.

In this paper we have discussed the meaning of a specific metaphor (duel of the anthems scene) and we introduced it into the revised six-space model of conceptual integration put forward by Brandt and Brandt in 2005. The model was constructed to "mirror, in diagrammatic form, how we cognize metaphoric blends" (Brandt and Brandt 2005: 242). According to Brandt and Brandt (2005: 242), the aim of the method is to "slow down our imagination so we can describe how a meaning is arrived at cognitively, from a phenomenological perspective". We believe that the model allows us to distil the essence of blending and frame it within a communicative context. As we can see there are a few elements that partake in the process of meaning decoding and deconstruction.

Thus, we also search for different factors that determine the meaning of the metaphor. As we can see, the meaning relies heavily on the context. Sometimes one may find it difficult to understand a multimodal event (in this case the scene and the film) if we lack some background. By the same token, we cannot underestimate the role of the interlocutors who

should both encrypt and decode the meaning of the message. It turns out that the circumstances in which the message was coined are also important. The process also involves various modes which are at the speaker's disposal.

N O T E S

¹ Note that in some cases we may speak about a collective speaker and/or a collective addressee.

² <https://www.britannica.com/topic/national-anthem>

³ "La Marseillaise" became the official anthem of France in 1879 (Richard B. <https://www.cheminsdememoire.gouv.fr/en/la-marseillaise-song-war-song-freedom>).

⁴ See Halsall (1997).

⁵ Richard (n.d.) <https://www.cheminsdememoire.gouv.fr/en/la-marseillaise-song-war-song-freedom>.

⁶ We need to bear in mind that although "Casablanca" was directed at the audience and public opinion of its time, the core message of the film and the scene under scrutiny remains unchanged. While its reception in 1942 was undoubtedly influenced by the events connected with World War II, the ultimate message conveyed by the actors is universal.

⁷ It is important to emphasise that we are focusing on and analysing the entire scene, which lasts approximately two minutes, rather than specific expressions uttered within it. If we were to consider the sentence uttered by Laszlo to the band ("Play the Marseillaise! Play it!!" <http://www.vincasa.com/casabla.pdf>), the expressive act, the situation, and the pheno-world, and, as a result, the semiotic space would be different.

⁸ Cf. Mierzwińska-Hajnos (2019).

⁹ "Es braust ein Ruf wie Donnerhall, / wie Schwertgeklirr und Wogenprall: / Zum Rhein, zum Rhein, zum deutschen Rhein! / Wer will des Stromes Hüter sein? / Lieb Vaterland magst ruhig sein, / lieb Vaterland magst ruhig sein: / Fest steht und treu die Wacht, / die Wacht am Rhein! / Fest steht und treu die Wacht, / die Wacht am Rhein!" English translation: "The cry resounds like thunder's peal, / Like crashing waves and clang of steel: / The Rhine, the Rhine, our German Rhine, / Who will defend our stream, divine? / Dear fatherland, no fear be thine, / Dear fatherland, no fear be thine, / Firm stands the Watch along, along the Rhine! / Firm stands the Watch along, along the Rhine!" (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Die_Wacht_am_Rhein).

¹⁰ <http://www.vincasa.com/casabla.pdf>

¹¹ "Allons enfants de la Patrie, / Le jour de gloire est arrivé !/Contre nous de la tyrannie / L'étendard sanglant est levé, (bis) / Entendez-vous dans les campagnes/Mugir ces féroces soldats? / Ils viennent jusque dans vos bras / Égorger vos fils, vos compagnes! / Aux armes, citoyens, / Formez vos bataillons, / Marchons, marchons! / Qu'un sang impur / Abreuve nos sillons!" English translation: "Arise, children of the Fatherland, / The day of glory has arrived! / Against us stands tyranny / Her bloody standard has been raised, (repeated) / Do you hear, in the countryside, / The roar of those ferocious soldiers? / They come right into your arms / To tear the throats of your sons, your wives! / To arms, citizens, / Form your battalions, / Let's March, let's march! / So that an impure blood waters our furrows! (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/La_Marseillaise).

¹² <http://www.vincasa.com/casabla.pdf>

¹³ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/La_Marseillaise

¹⁴ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/La_Marseillaise

¹⁵ Richard (n.d.) <https://www.cheminsdememoire.gouv.fr/en/la-marseillaise-song-war-song-freedom>.

¹⁶ “It is claimed that the inspiration for “the Marseillaise” came from a theme in Mozart’s Piano Concerto No 25 in C major, or from another piece of music by one of the sons of Johann Sebastian Bach” (Richard (n.d.) <https://www.cheminsdememoire.gouv.fr/en/la-marseillaise-song-war-song-freedom>).

¹⁷ The notions of “planes” and “mental spaces” are equivalent.

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