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Hallelujah – **Leonard Cohen's song in the perspective of a semio-cognitive poetics**

Abstract
We briefly introduce the Aarhus school cognitive-semiotic blending (conceptual integration) model, which in contrast to the Fauconnier & Turner model builds on phenomenology, and apply it to the semiotic and semantic structure of Leonard Cohen's song Hallelujah, thereby showing how the singular value of the key word is built up through a process that blends erotic and religious content, and which places the music of the song in a decisive position. The musical and verbal auto-referential deixis is shown to play an important role in this process of meaning construction, typical of the way songs proceed. The analysis and its approach may thus be able to inspire research on the poetics of songs, especially in popular music, and the under-researched area of song lyrics more generally.

Keywords: Semiotic blending; *Hallelujah*; cognitive poetics; enunciation; song lyrics; deixis; auto-reference.

O. What is a song?[1]
Songs are just poems built into music, one might think. However, there are structural differences that have to be taken into account if we want an accurate description of both genres in modern culture.[2] By *enunciation*, we mean the interpersonal act and relation between the *personae* in communication, as represented in language.[3] There is special contract between *enunciator* and *enunciatee* in songs. The enunciation of poetry is characteristically situated close to that which use the autobiographical voice of the poet, including the use of pronouns referring to existing persons[4]; by contrast, the enunciation in songs, the *melic* enunciation, as opposed to most forms of *poetic* enunciation, includes role-playing strategies that make interpersonal references depend on the narrative situations signified, and situates melic semantics closer to drama and fiction. Songs are often performed collectively, which invites collective identification with roles represented in the 'drama' of the texts of songs; it is evidently easier for a collective singing subject to share in 'playing' the role of a fictive person that to identify

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[1] See Brandt (2017).

[2] The split between song and poem happened in Western culture in the Renaissance when the printing technique (Gutenberg) produced a separation of written and oral poetry: recital versus concert, so to speak. In the Ancient cultures, texts were not read silently, and people would gather to listen to the poet's lyre. Cf. the important work of Ong (1982).

[3] The term renders the French *énonciation*, used by the linguist Émile Benveniste in his ground-breaking chapter, "L'homme dans la langue", in Benveniste (1966).

[4] In poetry, personal references are generally gendered, so female poets will refer to themselves using the feminine gender in languages that have such distinctions (constructions like the French: "Je suis fatiguée...", feminine predicate), and male poets using the masculine gender. Germanic languages do not mark the distinction, but romance languages do.

with a biographical one.[5] The literal existence of poetry as text is therefore radically different from that of the textual existence of songs; in poetry, a suite of stanzas cannot be responsibly read while omitting parts or inverting their order, but in songs, the order of verses[6] are often changed, verses are skipped over, and lines are varied in performance. As we shall see, this is also the case in the song we will analyze in this paper.[7]

Given that the syllabic and the phrase structure can be mapped directly onto notes and musical phrase structure, songs project tonal gestalts onto verbal gestalts[8], in such a way that the tonal syntax over-determines the verbal semantics. In particular, the constellation of the same melodic phrase with different verbal content produces semantic similarity effects in the textual meaning. We are going to show how this principle works in the melico-textual meaning production of our song.[9]

1. The text.

By text, we mean both the music and the verbal text. For reasons of space, we will presume that the reader knows the melodic form of *Hallelujah*. It consists of a variable series of verses followed by the one-word refrain. The verses, comprising eight bars in a 12/8 meter (tempo 90), correspond to six lines of *grosso modo* iambic prosody with the following pattern of strong accents (Ø=empty):

$$// 4 / 4 / 4 + 2 + Ø\, Ø / 4 / 4 / 4 + 2 + Ø\, 1 //$$

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[5] So in Hallelujah, when you sing "I heard there was a secret chord", *you* personally are not supposed to have heard this piece of information, but only to perform and enact the first person's utterance as a line of a theatrical role. In poetry, apart from theater, the situation is different; poetry (lyrical) is not fiction and role-playing. Here, the first person refers to the biographical author. Poets know this better than modern academic critics that have learned to always separate the text from everything else.

[6] In songs, the terminology distinguishes 'verse' and 'refrain', where poetry has 'stanzas.'

[7] Leonard Cohen (1932-2016) first published as a poet, *Let Us Compare Mythologies* (1956), *The Spice-Box of Earth* (1961), and continued to write two novels, *The Favourite Game* (1963), *Beautiful Losers* (1966), before going to Nashville to record his first album *Songs of Leonard Cohen* (1967). He continued his life both as a publishing poet and singer-musician, saying *au revoir* just prior to his passing with the album *You Want It Darker*. Cohen's melo-poetic œuvre of course may blur the distinction between song and poem.

[8] A 'gestalt' is a perceived whole of parts. For example, the ticks of the metronome can be heard as following a 4/4 or a 3/4 meter; such a 'grouping' is a gestalt.

[9] Leonard Cohen's song "Hallelujah" lived a quiet life for many years before becoming one the most well-known and loved songs in contemporary popular culture, now recorded in more than 300 cover versions and featured in a number of films, TV series and talent shows. The song was first released in 1984 in Canada (in Europe 1985), on the album *Various Positions*. Columbia Records refused to release the LP in the US, considering it not commercially viable.

In 1991 John Cale released the first cover of the song on the tribute album to Leonard Cohen, *I'm Your Fan*. Cale also provided a live version on his 1992 record *Fragments of a Rainy Season*. This version of the song was also used in the film *Shrek* (2001), while a version by Rufus Wainwright is used on the audio release of soundtrack.

John Cale's recording of the song includes verses that are not in Cohen's original song lyrics but nevertheless written by him. Cohen has said that he worked with the song for more than five years and wrote 80 verses. His original recording from 1984 consist of four verses. In 1988 John Cale asked Cohen to see the lyrics and received 15 pages in his fax machine. Out of these he selected three previously unrecorded verses that are now officially included in the song's canon (see the following note). There is no official record of the other seventy-plus verses.

The refrain has five bars in the same meter, covering four Hallelujahs, of which the fourth partly inhabits two bars.

The chord sequence is the following (in C):

verse: // C Am / C Am / F G / C G / C F G / Am F G / G *E7* / Am //
refrain: // F / Am / F / C G / C (G) //

The chord sequence is interesting, since the first verse in all versions refers to its own chords: " It goes like this: the fourth [F], the fifth [G], the minor fall [Am], the major lift"; and the "secret chord" in the first line could refer to the solitary *E7* in the seventh bar, the chord that hits the important word *broken*.[10]

The precise wording of the song's lyrics is variable, but if we follow the maximal list of verses and their order in Cohen (1993)[11], we get the following seven standard stanzas, which will be our reference corpus:

HALLELUJAH
[1]
[12]I've heard there was a secret chord
that David played to please[13] the Lord,
but you don't really care for music, do you?
It goes like this: the fourth, the fifth
the minor fall, the major lift;
the baffled king composing Hallelujah!
[2]
Your faith was strong but you needed proof.
You saw her bathing on the roof;
her beauty and the moonlight overthrew you.
She tied you to a[14] kitchen chair
she broke your throne, she cut your hair,
and from your[15] lips she drew the Hallelujah!
[3]
You say I took the Name in vain;
I don't even know the name.
But if I did, well, really, what's it to you?
There is a blaze of light in every word;
it doesn't matter which you heard,
the holy, or the broken Hallelujah!
[4]
I did my best;[16] it wasn't much.
I couldn't feel, so I learned[17] to touch.

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[10] This is the only seventh chord in the song, and as such it stands out. A variant, Em, is found on the internet in a score signed "Ludy".

[11] The lyrics is found on pp. 347-348. Cohen was actively engaged in editing the book. The careful punctuation is noticeable. Referring to our numbering of the stanzas 1-7, only 1-4 appeared on the original recording from 1984. Then John Cale got a hold of more stanzas, faxed by Cohen. Of these he choose to use number 5-7, but left out 3-4. His version – the first cover – thus consists of 1-2 and 5-7, and this became canonical for another 300 covers! Jeff Buckley follows Cale in his equally powerful version.

[12] Jeff Buckley (1994) begins lines 1 and 4 with the word "well." Other singers, including Cohen, also put in words (in different spaces) like well, but, and, um etc. that do not change the semantics.

[13] John Cale (1992) changed "to please" into "and it pleased". It has become the standard.

[14] Buckley (1994) sings "her" instead of "a."

[15] k. d. lang (2010) sings "her" instead of "your." So who is crying victory or submission (hallelujah) here? Is the answer to be found in verse 5?

[16] k . d. lang (2010) adds "I know" between phrases.

[17] Wainwright's variant: "tried."

I've told the truth, I didn't come[18] to fool you.
And even though it all went wrong,
I'll stand before the Lord of Song
with nothing on my lips[19] but Hallelujah!
[5]
Baby[20], I have been here before.
I know[21] this room, I've walked this floor.
I used to live alone before I knew you.
I've seen[22] your flag on the Marble Arch,
but[23] love is not a[24] victory march,
it's a cold and it's a broken Hallelujah!
[6]
There was a time you let me know
what's really going on[25] below
but now you never show it to me, do you?
I remember when I moved in you,
and the holy dove[26] was moving too,
and every breath we drew was Hallelujah!
[7]
Now maybe there's a God above
but all I ever learnt[27] from love
is how to shoot at someone who outdrew you.
And it's no complaint[28] you hear tonight,
[29]and it's not some pilgrim[30] who's seen the light –
it's a cold and it's a broken Hallelujah![31]

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[18] Cohen, beginning in 1988, adds "all this way" after "come."
[19] Cohen changes "lips" to "tongue" already in 1985. The only difference by then to the original recording.
[20] Wainwright (2001) sings "Maybe."
[21] Buckley and lang change "I know" to "I've seen."
[22] lang changes ""I've seen" to "Then I saw."
[23] Lang changes "but" to "our."
[24] Cohen (1988) changes "a" to "some kind of."
[25] Wainwright: "what's real and going on below". It may change the meaning of 'below'. From 'in your sexual life' to 'behind the surface' in your thinking, in general.
[26] Wainwright changes "dove" to "dark"; Allison Crowe (2004) instead sings "ghost." Cohen (1988) adds "she" after "dove."
[27] Cohen (1988) sings "seem to learn" instead of "learnt."
[28] Cohen (1988) changes "no complaint" to "not a cry." Cale sings "not a cry." lang sings "not a crime that".
[29] Cohen (1988, San Sebastien) changes the verse into: "not the abandoned laughter of someone who claims to have seen the light." Cohen (1988, Reykjavik): "not some laughter from some newborn mystic who's seen the light".
[30] Cale changes "pilgrim" to "somebody."
[31] In a live recording from Warsaw 1985, Cohen sings verses 1-4, as on the record:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qF8MrGyeeqg
A version from Montreux 1985, also has verses 1-4:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S6KLK_8Tg6Y
1988 Live San Sebastien, verses sung 5-6-7-5 (slight change of lyrics in 7)
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ke77LhLGQ6o
1988 Live Reykjavik, verses sung, 5-6-7-5/6 (the last verse sung begins with first three lines of 5 and ends with last three lines of 6).
1988 Live St Austin, verses sung, 5-6-7-4.
1993 Live Barcelona, 5-6-7-4.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FC1dqx0urmE
2008 Live Montreal, 1-2-7-5-6-4.
2009 Live London, 1-2-7-5-6-4.
2013 Live Oakland, 1-2-4-3-6-4.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oFqOAJkIUIo

2. A semio-semantic model.

The scenario of the performance is a source of the meaning production taking place during the singing. The performer always sings *to* the audience as actors on a stage, and his *you* and *I* are roles theatrically played within the dramas of the text, in front of the audience as a resonant chorus. The minimal and normal extension of each such drama is the verse. Enunciation patterns (types of address, prayer, question, statement, etc.) and semantic filling of personal pronouns often change from verse to verse. Musicians and singers on stage or in the studio deliver the *signifiers to* the audience, which participates in the imaginary unfolding of the *signified* panorama that the performers then metonymically embody, especially in concert performances.[32] And new signifiers incorporating the returned signifieds follow, so that a circular process of feeding and feedback spirals into a shared experience of semantic saturation, a phenomenology of melo-dramatic communication and, almost, aesthetic communion, which gradually fills the space in question with structure and emotion.

This anchoring scenario is what we call the *semiotic base space* of meaning production. Semantic content spaces, also called mental spaces, are set up mentally by the participants according to a principle called conceptual integration or blending.[33] The participants share the phenomenology of the scenario they are participants of, and behind this, to a certain extent they share their musical culture, their language, and their life-world, from which an undetermined number of semio-cognitive schemas can be mobilized as relevance-makers in the process of meaning production.

We think it is a major discovery that there are two semantic 'input' spaces that are created, or 'set up', by the communication in base space, namely a *'presentation space'* and a *'reference space'*, and that these will enter into two sorts of interrelations, first a *mapping* of contents and then a *projection* of contents to and a *merging* of these contents in a new space of virtual meaning, then blending space, where new meaning can be stabilized by *relevant schematization* also drawn from base space.[34] In metaphor, the presentation space will contain the imagery, whereas the reference space will hold the items that the speaker intends (and the hearer would understand in the context) the metaphor is 'about'. In non-metaphorical utterances, the presentation space will still hold the conceptual imagery, in a *metonymical* key, and the reference space will contain the intended 'message'. In everyday language, the blends are often not even noticed, but rather experienced as evident, natural, that is, naturalized, meanings of what is

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[32] *Signifiers* and *signifieds*: expressions and their contents.

[33] A first generation blending model is presented in Turner and Fauconnier (2002). The second generation model we will use in the present analysis is explained in Brandt & Brandt (2005), and in depth, in L. Brandt (2013). The main difference between the two models is that the former has no base space and does not stabilize its blends by relevance schemas; this is due to its lack of phenomenological grounding and semiotic perspective. However, the idea of centering the semantic analysis on *mental spaces* instead of itemized contents is the merit of this pioneer model. The second generation model allows us to understand the process of meaning production in greater detail and within the framework of a shared canonical semiotic space structure that precedes its filled 'slots'. The canonical part is the default setting of input spaces to the blend.

[34] We apologize for the compact explanation here. The described mental space structure is shown in detail for metaphorical meaning in Brandt & Brandt (2005) and in L. Brandt (2013).

uttered.[35] In artful and ritual communication, especially in literature, there is an eventual instance of blending, where the total imagery of the text, in presentation space, is mapped onto a 'deeper' existential meaning, and the resulting blend can be experienced as the emotional 'output' of the work in question, that is, the semiotic effect that returns to base space as the final meaning, which (literary) interpretation is expected to detect. In this case, the formal patterns of the text deliver the relevance schemas that eventually stabilize the blends as emerging new meanings. Here (fig. 1) is a graphic representation of the blending model itself:[36]

Fig. 1.

Semiotic blending: the processual network of meaning production
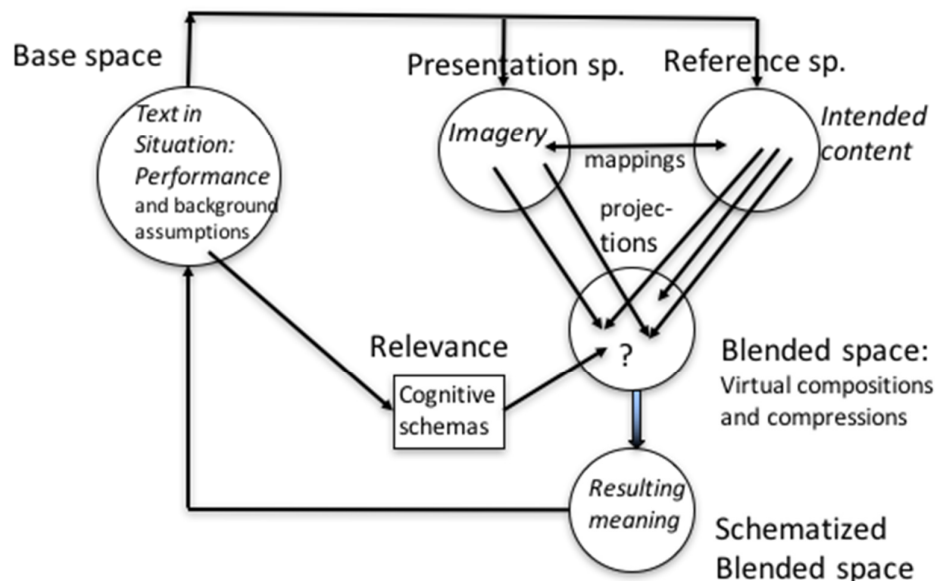
The network constitutes a circular flow from the base space to the elementary input spaces, Presentation space and Reference space, and back to base space (as experienced meaning) from the schematized space of blending. New schematization of the blend is necessary, because the schemas from imagery and intended content are generally incompatible when imported to the blend; the re-schematization is the factor explaining the emergence of new meaning through the process. Once the spaces are set up and invested semantically, *their network stays active* and receptive to more inputs from base

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[35] The contents of mental spaces correspond to what the Paris school of A.-J. Greimas called *isotopies*, that is, coherent semantic wholes, or scenarios from some semantic domain. See Greimas & Courtés (1979).
[36] In the diagrams, mental spaces are indicated by circles, and all other relations or processes by arrows. Diagrams like this one may illustrate the general disposition of the elementary blending network and its instances. They also serve as heuristic tools helping the researcher focus on specific parts of the analyzed processes.

space, so that the space of the blends will contain a growing and changing mass of virtual meanings, gradually stabilized in the course of the performance of the text.

3. The blending process at work.
Let us show right away how the model works by looking at the auto-referential first verse of *Hallelujah*. David, the psalmist king, plays to the Lord and is baffled by a chord that he finds by chance while composing his psalms (the *Tehillim*). That is the reference; the presentation has a first person (*I've heard*) who explains to a second person (*but you don't*) what David did, in terms of fourths and fifths etc. In the blend, the first person with his guitar becomes David and the contrast between *you* and the Lord becomes dramatic, unless the Lord in fact cares as little as the present second person about the secret chord and music in general. The music actually played, with the fourth occurring on the word *fourth,* the fifth occurring on the word *fifth,* and so on, emotionally creates and supports the blend of the present and the ancient moment compressed into one and the same magical instant, where the role of *you* is thus *contrasting or merging with* that of the Lord as 'pleased' listener to David's psalm. The word 'hallelujah'[37] follows immediately the 'secret chord' (*E7* in our analysis) on 'com-*posing'*. When the question sounds: *do you?,* one may already hear: *do yah* – as in *hallelujah*.[38] In the first-person to second-person address, we will by default hear an intimate exchange between persons who know each other (*you don't really care for music...*). So the uncertainty of the second person's response becomes both erotic and religious.

The network will look like this (fig. 2):

Fig. 2.

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[37] From Late Latin hallelujah, alleluia, from Greek allelouia, from Hebrew hallalu-yah "praise ye Jehovah," from hallalu, plural imperative of hallel "to praise", also "song of praise," from hillel "he praised," of imitative origin, with primary sense being "to trill." Second element is yah, shortened form of Yahweh, name of God.

      G. F. Haendel's great oratorio *Messiah* (1741) has made this word and the chords that carry it in the final hymn unforgettable.

[38] All verses, 1 – 7, have this */u: ja/* ending in third line: *overthrew you/ to you / fool you / knew you / do you / outdrew you.* This makes it possible to note the rhyme structure of the verses: a a b cc b.

Hallelujah, first verse
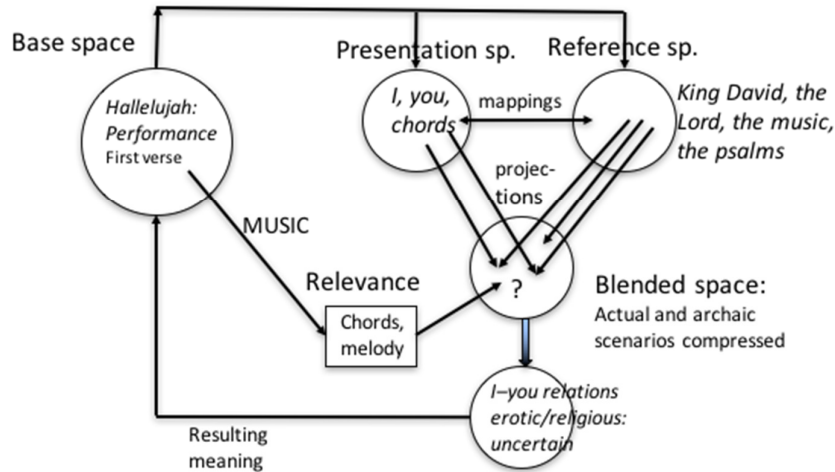
This network will run for as many verses as the singer chooses to perform; and the emotional meaning arising will be built on the changing inputs and the (ideally, shared) memory of the semantics already invested in the spaces.

In the second verse, the enunciative personal pronouns have a non-embodied first person and a scenario involving second person and third person, supposedly a male and a female character, respectively. The first person could be a (male) narrator addressing himself as *you*, the male. The first line's religious reference ("your faith was strong...") recalls the religious reference in the first verse, but the female "bathing on the roof" must be "proof" of a different relation, an erotic attraction that becomes a power play ("she tied you...", "broke your throne", "cut your hair" as the traitorous Delilah did with the faithful fighter Samson, (*Book of Judges,* 16), ending in submission. From this biblical but actualized erotic show in Presentation space, we therefore get a mapping to a corresponding religious drama in Reference space, and the *Hallelujah*[39] in the same musical position as before, again sounds ambiguous, this time forming an explicit erotico-religious blend. The mirror relation between traitorous earthly love and betrayed divine love is established; the love relations in both spaces are 'broken', and the tension will yield a *broken* Hallelujah in the third verse.

A new *you* blames a new *I*, in this verse, for taking "the Name in vain" (Leviticus 24, a capital sin: you get stoned to death). Maybe the second person character coincides with the one appearing in the first verse (*do you?*), and we are clearly back in the intimacy of quarrelling.[40] Maybe it is a female reproach addressing the male character

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[39] The exclamation can be attributed to the male or to the female character, depending on the chosen possessive pronoun (see note 9). The general framework except in the second verse supports the male *hallelujah* and the female *you*, pronounced *yah* in the rhyme of the third lines. So the second person "rhymes" on the divinity.

[40] "In the late eighties, Dylan performed "Hallelujah" on the road as a roughshod blues with a sly, ascending chorus. His version sounds less like the prettified Jeff Buckley version than like a work by John Lee Hooker. "That song 'Hallelujah' has resonance for me," Dylan said. "There again, it's a beautifully constructed melody that steps up, evolves, and slips back, all in quick time. But this song has a connective

who had ironically answered "hallelujah" to something she had said? The ironical version is then the broken one. We swear when we quarrel. We invoke divine entities in the swearing. Hence, in this verse, we may venture that the religious second person activates the sacred (Reference) space, while the ironizing first person activates the profane intimacy (Presentation) space, which he enriches with the claim that in principle, *every word* is enlightening, contains a *blaze of light*. It does not matter if the "hallelujah" is *holy* or *broken*, which might mean that the relation to the Lord is critical, in a state of breaking.

This first person stays stable throughout the remaining verses, 4 – 7. In the fourth verse, there is in the erotic space a statement of break-up (from: *I did my best,* to: *it all went wrong*), and then, in the religious space a 'standing before the Lord', presumably in the moment of dying, with nothing but praise – that is, maybe: gratitude for life and admission of personal incompetence.[41] This is again an emotional attitude that maps directly from the situation in erotic intimacy to the situation in religious intimacy with a difficult, maybe capricious divinity. So in the blend, and in the perceived flow of words and music by which it reaches us, there is no difference between the two experiences. The love relation is over, or the life is over, the feeling is the same: irreversibility and some sort of embittered happiness.[42]

Whereas verses 3 and 4 are more explicit on the religious than on the erotic side, in verses five and six the erotic space is foregrounded. *I* am alone again, and love was less triumphant (*Marble Arch*) than *you* thought it would be.[43] Loneliness, lack of communication (*now you never show it to me*), and fleshly, carnal knowledge (...*when I moved in you*) gone and now just a memory, albeit a sacred one (*every breath we drew was h.*). Carnal love is of course the topic of the Song of Songs, or Song of Salomon, a celebration of desire and sex, and in the Jewish tradition an allegory of the relationship of God (the male) and Israel (the female), as in the Christian tradition it becomes an

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chorus, which when it comes in has a power all of its own. The 'secret chord' and *the point-blank I-know-you-better-than-you-know-yourself aspect of the song* has plenty of resonance for me."" Dylan on Cohen, The New Yorker, October 2016. We italicize.

[41] The Lord of Song – how do we understand this expression? Is it, as in the Greek polytheism, the god of music, poetry, and truth (verse 4, *I've told the truth*...), namely Apollo? Greek and Jewish theology, locally blended.

[42] Compared to the Greek tragedy's *anagnorisis*, there is no purification and no illumination here. No *epiphany* or sudden insight.

[43] Cohen bought a house in 1960 on the Greek island of Hydra, where he worked on his art especially in the 60s and 70s. Every year there is a *victory march* over the Turks, *Miaoulis Day*: Captain Miaoulis was a hero in the war of independence. The local *flag* is then on display; its heroic inscription goes back to the ancient Spartans. It says: "With it or on it". It means, referring to the shield of the warrior, "Come back bringing it back, or come back on it [dead]".

The Roman Arch of Constantine spans the *Via triumphalis*, the way taken by the emperors when they entered the city in triumph. The Marble Arch in London was displaced, set aside, so to speak, being too narrow for the royal carriage to pass...

Cohen was a great admirer of Federico Garcia Lorca. In concert he used to introduce his homage "Take this Waltz" with a quote from his hero: *"I want to pass through the arches of Elvira, to see your thighs and begin weeping"* (From the poem Gacela del Mercado Matutino). The Elvira Arch in question is situated in Granada, Spain, Lorca's city of birth. Cohen also significantly named his daughter Lorca. For a fine book on Cohen and Lorca, see Manzano (2012). Beyond our scope here, we hope to return with more research on this subject.

allegory of the relationship between Christ and his Church. It is the last part of the *Tanakh*, and it is very much appreciated and read; but Jews are not allowed to interpret it as not being allegorically a representation of the divine loving union, that is, a huge metaphor. The network of spaces we have suggested captures directly this macro-metaphor as Cohen's likely underlying structuring principle. Still, this Salomonic love song is, by contrast, *cold and broken* – as modern love songs are and probably must be.

In the seventh verse, the first rhyme again juxtaposes divinity (*a God above*) and earthly love, from which not much was learnt (how to be jealous? – *shoot at someone who outdrew you*), but then there is a significant return to the auto-referential mode of the first verse: what *you hear tonight,* namely this very song, is neither a complaint nor the expression of an illumination, but... a certain form of a *Hallelujah*. The reference to the song itself, in the song, is what we will call the *deictic* moment – since it can only happen momentarily.[44] The deictic moment in the first verse (*a secret chord... it goes like **this**...*) and here in the seventh verse (*it's no complaint **you hear tonight,*** namely: now) are verbally explicit, but the musical unfolding of the key word, the reiterated, exclamatory *Hallelujah!,* always coupled, in the verses, to the second person by the rhyme on */u: ja/,* represents an even stronger form of deixis: in the moment of hearing the word and its chords in the refrain following each explanatory verse, the existential, erotico-divine state of mind in question is *called into being* within the musical here-and-now. The deictic function of music is in fact always *calling* – re-calling, e-voking, making things present in the imaginary of the here-and-now.

The last word of the verses, followed by four repetitions of it in the refrain, yields a total of five hallelujahs, and these are expressed, first through the 'falling' Am, then the 'rising' F major, then again the 'falling' Am, the 'rising' F major, and finally the melodically 'falling' (e-d-c) but harmonically 'raising' cadence: C-G-C, which thus fulfills the merge of deception and praise in one deictic word.

4. Conclusion.
The following general semantic investment of the mental-space model of semiotic blending summarizes the meaning production that is happening in the song. From verse to verse, the effect is reinforced by the core deictic exclamatory carried by the music. Verses can be repeated or omitted, as long as the chemical process, so to speak, of the meaning fabrication is stabilized as an intuitive framework shared by performers and audience. After the last verse sung, the refrain is repeated, and it now carries the load of the entire semantic narrative and theological inventory mobilized, in its one and only word. As we just saw, this word *(H.)* becomes, in the blending space, itself an instantaneous blender of *deception* (D.) and *praise* (P.), those apparently contradictory concepts that now merge: *D. + P. := H.* – into a feeling that is no longer a concept, but rather an unnamed emotional state, embodied by the musically connected persons in base space. In the graph (fig. 3), we tentatively call this 'meaning effect' an (erotico-religious) *reconciliation*. In this effect, a love story *is* a life story, and what we experience

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[44] Deixis is the 'pointing' effect of certain linguistic entities like 'this', 'that', 'now', 'here', etc. or of non-linguistic signs that are sometimes called indexical, like an actual pointing finger. See Brandt (2016).

in relation to others in intimacy *is* what the relationship or exchange with the divinity is and means.

Fig. 3.

Hallelujah, through the verses
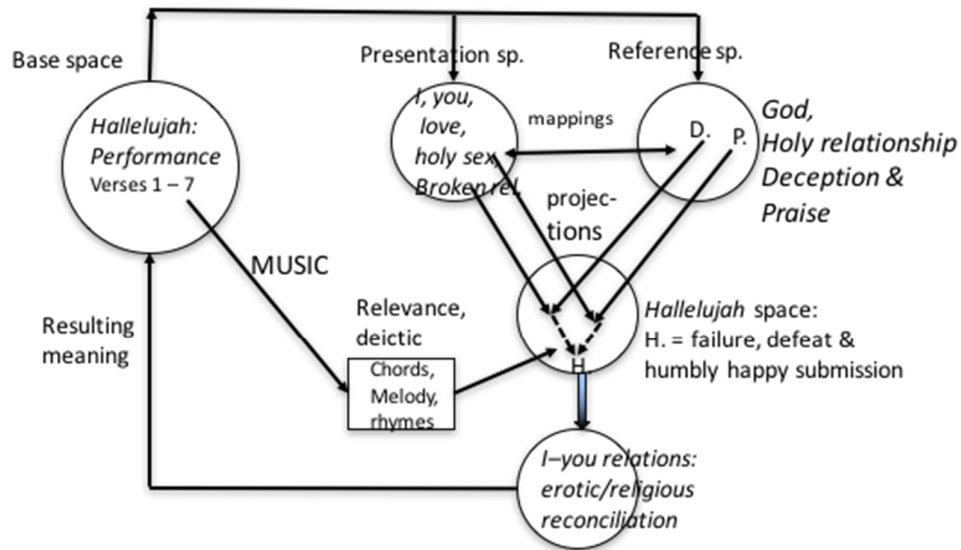
Through this analysis, we hope to show the principal process of the on-going meaning production but of course not all details. As the song – this song as any other that lives on beyond the first instances of performance – may still be subject to variations on the musical or the verbal side, an exhaustive account of its details is not our main interest. We hope to have exemplified an approach to the study of songs that is prepared for integrating the musical and the verbal developments and discover the forces of their interaction.

The semantic (content) and semiotic (signifying) structure of a song can be much more complex than it is in this beautiful case, networks can be embedded in other networks, and the music can affect the verbal meaning in many other specific ways.

Our interest is to develop a cognitively and semiotically informed poetics that can finally do justice to the most important and probably the oldest of all human cultural manifestations, the use of the voice – and of language and music – we call *singing*.

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