

# VERBAL DUEL AND FLIRTATION FROM A COGNITIVE PERSPECTIVE: A CASE STUDY OF FILM NOIR

## "THE BIG SLEEP" (1946)

*Agnieszka Grząsko, Robert Kiełtyka\**

*University of Rzeszów, Poland*

*Corresponding author\**

**Bibliographic description:** Grząsko, A. & Kiełtyka, R. (2021). Verbal duel and flirtation from a cognitive perspective: A case study of film noir "The big sleep" (1946). In *Lege artis. Language yesterday, today, tomorrow. The journal of University of SS Cyril and Methodius in Trnava*. Trnava: University of SS Cyril and Methodius in Trnava, 2021, VI (1), June 2021, p. 2-39. ISSN 2453-8035 DOI: <https://doi.org/10.34135/lartis.21.6.1.01>

**Abstract:** In this paper, we examine a selection of dialogues from the film "The big sleep" (1946), with special attention devoted to those of a flirtatious nature. The chief purpose of the account is to suggest that verbal flirtation may be interpreted as a phenomenon resulting from the working of two conceptual processes, namely metaphor and metonymy as well as their interaction.

**Key words:** flirtation, seduction, film noir, metaphor, metonymy, "The big sleep".

### 1. Introduction

Lovers' discourse diverges considerably from the ways, in which friends and relatives communicate with one another. In this article, we aim to explore the somewhat underresearched area of flirtation, which may be labelled as a subgenre of seduction (see Fleming 2015: 20-21 and Hoffman-Schwartz et al. 2015: 1). If seduction refers to a process whose anticipated outcome is predetermined (power), then flirtation is, as argued by Freud ([1915] 1981), a purely innocent pastime with no victims involved. In what follows, an attempt will be made to briefly discuss the notion of flirtation on the basis of selected dialogues extracted from the film "The big sleep" (1946) from both the philosophical/psychological and cognitive points of view. We shall hark back to Freud's ([1915] 1981) and Simmel's ([1909] 1984; [1911] 1949) perceptions of flirtation, which will serve as our points of reference.

Furthermore, we believe that the Cognitive Linguistics paradigm, which emphasizes the role of metaphor and metonymy in the conceptualization of reality, including linguistic reality, may conclusively account for verbal flirtation. To be more precise, we need to discuss and characterize the metaphors and metonymies, which accompany this kind of verbal behaviour. Since this type of discourse has hardly been scrutinized from a cognitive perspective, we believe that our study will portray flirtation as an underestimated artistic tool worth investigating as it may only be performed by verbally skilful language users. However, we are not going to oversimplify the phenomenon of coquetry (the terms *flirtation* and *coquetry* will be employed interchangeably in the paper) and focus on the non-verbal behaviours. Instead, we attempt to delve into its linguistic potential and thus we aim to provide the readers with the dominant linguistic features of verbal coquetry. Our key objective is to substantiate the thesis that flirtation both as a type of behaviour and discourse may be interpreted as resulting from the working of conceptual metaphor and metonymy. We would like to show what Cognitive Linguistics has to offer as far as the analysis of verbal flirtation is concerned. The impact of conceptual metaphors and metonymies on cognition cannot be ignored. In fact, these conceptual mechanisms are ubiquitous and since, as emphasized by, among others, Kövecses (2017: 215), they have the power to connect the mind with the body, the body with culture, culture with language, and language with the brain, they influence our everyday language performance, including the use of verbal flirtation.

The article is organized as follows. Firstly, we present the distinctive features of film noir as displayed by one of its landmarks – "The big sleep". Secondly, we provide the reader with a short description of the studies devoted to flirtation, which reveals a paucity of cognitively-oriented sources targeted at verbal coquetry. Thirdly, we focus on the methodology, namely the cognitive framework adopted in the paper and the way we have obtained the data for our investigation. Section 5, in turn, gives a brief overview of Simmel's philosophical theory connected with flirtation. Specifically, we advert to the assumptions proposed by him in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century ([1909] 1984; [1911] 1949). The analysis of selected dialogues from "The big sleep" provided

in Section 6 of the paper follows the methodological tools offered by the Cognitive Linguistics paradigm. Last but not least, the major findings, conclusions, and implications for future research may be found in the last section of the paper.

## **2. "The big sleep" (1946) as a typical representative of film noir**

Film noir<sup>1</sup> is a term coined in 1946 by the French critic Nino Frank in order to describe a new type of American crime films. Having watched "The Maltese falcon" (1941), "Murder, my sweet" (1944), "Double indemnity" (1944), and "Laura" (1944), he observed that those crime thrillers shared some conspicuous features. Thus, what had formerly been known as "melodrama" started to be referred to as "film noir" (see Spicer 2002: 2). As far as the hallmarks of film noir are concerned, they include similar composition (imbalanced and asymmetrical), iconography (urban location, city at night, rainy weather, damp streets, narrow alleys, gaudy nightclubs), visual style (black-and-white films, dark lighting, the Dutch angle, chiaroscuro effect, high contrast, long shadows, blurred vision caused by mist, cigarette smoke or rain), and a complex mode of storytelling (multiple narrators, voice-over in the first person, oneiric narrative, ellipses, and flashbacks whose aim is to create an equivocal and unresolved ending) (ibid., 4).<sup>2</sup> Furthermore, the issues and motifs addressed in the films are of a specific nature. Thematically, the plot revolves around murders, illicit affairs, and protagonists' psychological problems, hence one can hardly ignore the Freudian implications (op. cit., 4). The fact that film noir is rich in Freudian motifs is connected with the growth of psychoanalysis in America in the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. As a result, protagonists are laden with grief, engulfed by fear, and overwhelmed by lust. In the vast majority – if not all – of the stories, an alienated anti-hero (often an investigator) meets a guileful femme fatale,<sup>3</sup> therefore the emphasis is put on, among others, their repressed sexual desires (ibid., 5; 23).

"The big sleep" (1946) is one of the most acclaimed examples of film noir. The film directed by Howard Hawks<sup>4</sup> is based on Raymond Chandler's novel of the same title from 1939. It casts Humphrey Bogart (private detective Philip Marlowe), Lauren

Bacall (femme fatale Vivian Sternwood Rutledge), and Martha Vickers (Carmen Sternwood, Vivian's younger sister). In a nutshell, General Sternwood hires Philip Marlowe to help to resolve the problem of his younger daughter's gambling debts. Soon, it turns out that the situation is more precarious and complex than the detective thought, because some people involved in the affluent family's matters are murdered. By the time the case is cracked, Marlowe has seen gambling, pornography, blackmail attempts, cold-blooded murder, and a stormy relationship, which might resemble love.

We believe that the poetic language of film noir is of particular interest, as it is abundant in fast-paced and multi-layered dialogues, self-reflexive and mordant sense of humour, sardonic remarks, puns, witty repartee, evocative suggestions, and double-entendre often rich in sexual innuendo. What distinguishes "The big sleep" from the vast majority of contemporary films is its variety of gritty amphibological ironic conversations. The dialogues are not an amorphous collection of random utterances, but they are like word play and verbal duels. Howard Hawks pays meticulous attention to the structure of the dialogues, which are the focal point of the film. It seems that no utterance in "The big sleep" is arbitrarily chosen. Moreover, it is worth elaborating on the characters' idiolects as they reflect not only people's individual and characteristic features but also attitudes towards the world. Take, for example, defensive irony<sup>5</sup>, which penetrates Marlowe's way of speaking, or child-like sentences, uttered by the seemingly infantile Carmen. Let us, however, first present a brief account of prior studies discussing flirtation and focus on the methodological apparatus, in terms of which our analysis will be couched.

### **3. Literature review**

As far as the phenomenon of flirtation is concerned, the topic tends to be of psycho-sociological or literary interest, given that psycho-sociology focuses on both verbal and non-verbal communication, whereas in literature flirtation serves as a sub-motif of love. Interestingly, the studies, in which verbal facets of coquetry are analysed from a purely linguistic point of view, by which we mean the scrutiny of specific dialogues

from, for example, TV advertisements, films, or real contexts, have been few and far between. Moreover, it seems that one can hardly find any linguistic or non-linguistic works analysing verbal flirtation from a cognitive perspective. We believe, therefore, that our study will shed new light on the phenomenon in question.

Let us briefly advert to a selection of seminal works, which examine flirtation from various points of view. One of the most thought-provoking books devoted to coquetry was published in 1994, when Adam Phillips alluded to the legacy of psychoanalysis in his *On flirtation: Psychoanalytic essays on the uncommitted life* (1994). He observes that flirting may be regarded as a pleasant pastime and a productive activity. The author puts forth a theory that literature and psychoanalysis are connected; thus, he refers to such representatives of the former as John Clare, Isaac Rosenberg, or Philip Roth. In the field of literary studies, Richard Kaye's *The flirt's tragedy: Desire without end in Victorian and Edwardian fiction* (2002) provides readers interested in flirtation in the nineteenth- and early twentieth-century novel with the most comprehensive work where he shows the changeable nature of coquetry. For example, in the books written by Jane Austin or Charlotte Brontë women learn the cardinal rules of sociability because they compete with coquette-doubles, whereas in the novels by Oscar Wilde coquetry is a type of dangerous game. All in all, novelists make use of flirtation to show significant social changes in society.

As far as the rhetoric and aesthetic perceptions of coquetry are concerned, Hoffman-Schwartz's (2015) paper investigates flirtation on the basis of Billy Wilder's "Double indemnity" (1944). Similarly to our study, Hoffman-Schwartz's coquetry may be positioned between crime and romance. Both in "Double indemnity" and "The big sleep", flirtation seems to be a pleasant, but, at the same time, hazardous occupation. On the one hand, the parties involved in the activity itself derive pleasure from a multi-layered conversation, which may be the beginning of a love affair. However, on the other hand, we are referring to films, in which crime turns out to be inextricably tied to coquetry, because those who flirt are often cruel and merciless. Specifically, some

characters treat flirtation as a means used to take advantage of another person or even do harm to them (e.g. Vivian, Carmen from "The big sleep", Phyllis Dietrichson and Walter Neff from "Double indemnity"). As far as the non-verbal and verbal aspects of coquetry are concerned, Hoffman-Schwartz (2015: 16) pays meticulous attention to different filming techniques of flirtation and the tools employed by the characters in order to flirt (e.g., double entendre).

Nevertheless, it turns out that flirting strategies are an essential part of research devoted to sexuality and interpersonal romantic relationships. Simmel's ([1909] 1984; [1911] 1949) works are points of reference for Tavory (2009), who focuses on how flirtation is organized by refining Simmel's theory and understands coquetry as a relation, in which two-time frames are maintained within the same interaction. He analyses the management of interactional equivocality in flirtation as an explanation that allows him to investigate ambiguous interactions.

Weber, Goodboy, and Cayanus (2010: 184-191) performed an experiment to analyse the effectiveness of five types of flirtatious opening lines whose aim is to initiate a conversation with a woman. Their results confirmed that both the "third-party introduction" and "direct introduction" opening lines were the most suitable for such an occasion, while the "third-party introduction" turned out to be the most effective. The other forms of opening lines ("cute-flippant lines", "humour attempts", and "direct compliments") were found to be not only inappropriate but also ineffective.

In turn, in Meenagh's (2015) paper "Flirting, dating, and breaking up within new media environments", the author gains an insight into how adolescents negotiate their love relationships. While the aim of her previous research was to suggest that young people are inclined to use new media technologies to flirt with one another, the current paper discusses their patterns of mediated flirting or breaking up. In turn, Wade's study (2018) is concerned with autoclitics, namely those aspects of the spoken response that exert influence on the addressee's reaction to the rest of the response.

Another thought-provoking discussion of the notion of flirtation is presented in *Flirting in the era of #metoo* (Bartlett et al. 2019). The authors focus on various aspects connected with coquetry, for example, the importance of feminism and its view on flirting, threats linked with a seemingly innocent flirtatious dialogue (the issues of sexual harassment and abuse) or the role of contemporary films and media (especially those directed towards teenagers) in the creation of people's understanding of what is moral or amoral.

Haj-Mohamadi, Gillath, and Rosenberg's (2020) line of research confirms a hypothesis that people communicate and express their internal states non-verbally by means of facial expressions, thus the purpose of their research is to focus on women who are proved to employ a specific facial cue in order to flirt with men. It turns out that males are generally capable of identifying this expression and linking it with flirting. As far as our paper is concerned, we may say that, indeed, there are certain types of behaviour (not only facial cues) displayed by females who want to flirt or seduce the opposite sex (e.g., leaning into somebody's arms).

This brief literature review shows that, to the best of our knowledge, there is a dearth of studies on the analysis of verbal flirtation from the perspective of Cognitive Linguistics. We hope that this account may, at least in part, fill in the existing gap and cast some light on the conceptual motivation behind verbal coquetry.

#### **4. Methodology and data collection**

The theoretical framework adopted in this paper is that of Cognitive Linguistics, which emphasizes the role of conceptual metaphor and metonymy – the conceptual mechanisms that have been accounted for by many linguists (see Bierwiaczonek 2013; Goossens 1990; Grząsko 2020; Lakoff & Johnson 1980; Kiełtyka 2020; Kövecses 2008; 2015; 2018; Lakoff 1987; Lakoff & Turner 1989; Littlemore 2015; Radden & Kövecses 1999; Ruiz de Mendoza Ibáñez & Díez Velasco 2002 and others). Figurative language is part and parcel of our everyday communication, especially in the case of

tabooed topics, such as love and sex. People are inclined to employ various metaphorical expressions to disguise their real thoughts. In cognitive terms, however, metaphor is connected with concepts and not words, thus it is not about focusing on the aesthetic purpose of utterances, but rather on comprehending certain concepts. It turns out that metaphor is used by ordinary people regardless of their age, sex, or education (see Lakoff & Johnson 1980). Following Kövecses (2010: 4), we may understand a given conceptual domain in terms of reference to another one, for instance, people often talk and think about love in terms of madness or war. Let us take a look at the analysis of classic metaphors extracted from Lakoff and Johnson (1980: 49):

LOVE IS MADNESS

I'm *crazy* about her.

I'm *insane* about her.

He constantly *raves* about Harry.

LOVE IS WAR

He *fled from* her *advances*.

He *won* her hand in marriage.

He has to *fend* them *off*.

As far as conceptual metaphors are concerned, there are always two domains, namely a source domain and a target domain. The former is the one, from which we derive metaphorical expressions to comprehend another conceptual domain, whereas the latter refers to the wealth of experience understood in terms of the source domain (see Kövecses 2010: 4). Given the metaphors provided above, in both cases LOVE is the target domain, while MADNESS and WAR are the source domains. The aim is to understand the target domain referring to the source domain. In short, conceptual metaphors consist of a source domain and a target domain and, depending on the type of metaphor involved, the nature, the structure, or the specificity of the source domain are, by and large, employed as conceptual frameworks to account for the nature, the structure, or the specificity of the target domain. As argued by Kövecses (2015: ix), "conceptual metaphors consist of sets of systematic correspondences, or mappings between two domains of experience and [...] the meaning of a particular metaphorical

expression realizing an underlying conceptual metaphor is based on such correspondences".

In turn, conceptual metonymies involve only a single domain. The purpose of metonymy is "to provide mental access to a domain through a part of the same domain (or vice versa) or to a part of a domain through another part in the same domain" (Kövecses 2008: 381). Some scholars believe that metonymy is based on a "stand-for" relation, namely a *pars-pro-toto* transfer where a part stands for the whole within the same domain (see Lakoff & Johnson 1980: 35-40). Radden and Kövecses (1999: 128) proposed a definition whereby "[...] metonymy is a cognitive process in which one conceptual entity, the vehicle, provides mental access to another entity, the target, within the same idealized cognitive model". A handful of examples of metonymies discussed by Kövecses (2008: 381) are as follows:

SEX STANDS FOR LOVE metonymy (e.g., They *made love*.)

INTIMATE SEXUAL BEHAVIOUR STANDS FOR LOVE metonymy (e.g., She *showered* him *with kisses*. He *caressed* her *gently*.)

BLUSHING STANDS FOR LOVE metonymy (e.g., She *blushed* when she saw him.)

INCREASE IN BODY HEAT STANDS FOR LOVE metonymy (e.g., I felt *hot* when I saw her.)

Cognitive typologies of metonymy are offered, among others, by Radden and Kövecses (1999) – based on Idealised Cognitive Models; Blank (1999) and Koch (1999) – with reference to frames; Littlemore (2015) who studied various functions and uses of this conceptual mechanism at length in a book-format monograph. Most cognitive linguists agree with Kövecses (2006: 99), who believes that: "Metonymy is a cognitive process in which one conceptual element or entity (thing, event, property), the vehicle, provides mental access to another conceptual entity (thing, event, property), the target, within the same frame, domain or idealized cognitive model (ICM)". In the present paper, we also adopt Kövecses' (ibid.) view of metonymy.

In turn, Goossens (1990) analysed cases of the joint-operation of the two conceptual mechanisms, that is metaphor and metonymy in the form of metaphonymy. Various patterns of metaphor-metonymy interaction are also studied by Ruiz de Mendoza Ibáñez and Díez Velasco (2002).

The corpus of data used for our analysis is the script for the film "The big sleep" by William Faulkner, Leigh Brackett, and Jules Furthman, based on the novel under the same title written by Raymond Chandler in 1939. The screenplay was obtained from the website [https://sublikescript.com/movie/The\\_Big\\_Sleep-38355](https://sublikescript.com/movie/The_Big_Sleep-38355) (hereinafter TBS). As far as the method of data collection is concerned, we extracted all of the conversations between Marlowe and each of the women in the film. Out of the 23 dialogues between the detective and female protagonists encountered in the film, we selected eight, which are subject to analysis in this paper because they exhibit elements of flirting (conversations between Vivian and the detective) or attempted seduction (those between Carmen and the main male protagonist). The conversations between Marlowe and Carmen (five dialogues out of which four are analysed in the present paper) are devoid of flirting. In order to identify the cases of flirting, we examine the topic of the conversation. If a given dialogue is ambiguous, metaphorical, multi-layered, and (by some means) sexually-related (although not explicitly), we assume that we may label it as a type of flirtatious exchange. The way, in which Carmen approached the detective, reveals her coquettish attitude towards him. On a few occasions she tried to seduce Marlowe, but all her (seduction) attempts were futile. The man was indifferent or ironic towards her advances. On the other hand, six out of the nine conversations between Vivian and Marlowe (four of which are subject to analysis in this paper) are examples of mutual flirting. The juxtaposition of Vivian's and Carmen's conversations with the detective may illustrate the working of the FLIRT IS DANCE metaphor, which requires the active involvement of two parties/participants. Thus, the metaphor seems to motivate the analysed conversations between Vivian and the detective; however, since Carmen is the only active participant in the attempted act of flirting, the basic criterion is not met and her goal is not reached. At this stage one

might venture a hypothesis that the basic metaphor for flirting is FLIRT IS A DUEL or FLIRT IS A COMPETITION.

In this paper, only conversations between Marlowe and the Sternwood sisters (Carmen and Vivian) are subject to investigation. The dialogues with Carmen show her involvement and Marlowe's ironic attitude, while the conversations between the detective and Vivian exhibit the mutual interest of both. However, despite the different nature of the dialogues, they all seem to result from the working of metaphor and metonymy or the interplay of the two conceptual mechanisms.

## **5. Theoretical background behind flirtation**

First and foremost, the discourse of flirtation, which remains on the periphery of seduction, seems to be insufficiently theoretically studied, although the theory of flirtation itself has its roots in Plato's *Symposium* ([c. 385–370 BC] 2003). Obviously, the philosopher's view of flirtation is different from the modern perception of the phenomenon in question. To be more precise, the Platonic understanding of coquetry has its place in Enlightenment Romantic salon culture, whereas nowadays flirtation seems to be an ephemeral experience and not a set of rules (see Hoffman-Schwartz et al. 2015: 1-2), thus, given the evanescent nature of flirtation, researchers may find it difficult to obtain suitable data for its analysis.

Let us briefly discuss flirtation from the viewpoint of European thought in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, when the notion was of interest to Freud ([1915] 1981) and Simmel ([1909] 1984; [1911] 1949). According to Freud ([1915] 1981), flirtation is merely an inferior form of an erotic game, which leads nowhere, and by "nowhere" we mean no love affair and, as a result, no gain and no loss. Given that flirting parties neither win nor lose anything, Freud does not perceive the activity as a hazardous occupation. If there is no loss involved and one does not have to reckon with serious consequences, flirtation itself seems to be an innocent pastime (see Fleming 2015: 19-20). In turn, while Freud ([1915] 1981) attributes a lack of seriousness to coquetry, Simmel ([1909]

1984; [1911] 1949) upgrades its position and searches for congruity between flirtation and aesthetic experience. Thus, he finds there "purposiveness without purpose" (see Dalton 2015: 5-14 and Kant [1790] 2000: 145). In spite of the fact that such a logic may seem to be tautological, the activity in question is sheer pleasure that does not strive for physical gratification (see Fleming 2015: 19-24). Fleming (ibid., 20) observes that both Freud and Simmel agree that, as far as flirtation is concerned, sex is not the goal and as long as the conversation is innocent, we may talk about coquetry. However, what seems to be a weakness for Freud is a strength for Simmel.

In the theory proposed by Simmel ([1909] 1984; [1911] 1949), there is a key difference between coquetry and seduction. While the former is part of an aesthetic domain, the goal of the latter is predetermined. Moreover, flirtation is not about possession, and the parties are equal. According to Hoffman-Schwartz et al. (2015:1), "The discourse of seduction and the critique of seduction are unified by their shared obsession with a very determinate end: power. Flirtation, by contrast, is a game in which no one seems to gain the upper hand and no one seems to surrender". Interestingly, the very prototypical concept of a game assumes that there should be a winner and a loser, which contradicts our theory, according to which the flirting parties are equal. However, if we make an assumption that flirtation may be compared to such an activity, then there are no losers or winners and the interlocutors play to a draw. We may also put forward a hypothesis that the purpose of flirting is to surpass each other in the activity in question. As far as seduction is concerned, it revolves around the object and its possession; therefore, one can hardly talk about equality. In practice, it turns out that the boundaries between the two phenomena are fuzzy. It may happen that one of the parties involved in a flirtatious dialogue treats the intentions of the other too seriously. In that case, coquetry comes close to seduction, gently touches its borders but simultaneously abstains from crossing them (see Fleming 2015: 19-21; 28). According to Hoffman-Schwartz (2015: 15), "flirtation is structured by the possibility of the transgression of its own form and formality; flirtation would not be itself if it did not hold out the possibility, however distantly, of going beyond mere flirtation".

In other words, *to flirt* means 'to behave towards somebody as if you find them sexually attractive, without seriously wanting to have a relationship with them'<sup>6</sup>, whereas *to seduce* is 'to persuade somebody to have sex with you'<sup>7</sup> (see Oxford learner's dictionaries, *s.a.*).

To recapitulate, we may say that both flirtation and seduction are the two types of verbal and/or non-verbal behaviour whose prime goal is to attract someone. Both activities may be said to belong to psychology and sexology. However, they might be of interest to linguistics if one attempts to discuss and examine their rhetorical potential.

Below we are going to focus on the verbal representation of flirtation on the examples extracted from "The big sleep".

## **6. Analysis of verbal flirtation**

In what follows, selected dialogues from "The big sleep" will be discussed. The analysis is divided into two parts: firstly, we are going to focus on the detective's encounters with Carmen; then, we shall move on to his conversations with Vivian. On the basis of what they say, we attempt to show the differences between the women and, as a result, indicate that Marlowe's parleys with Vivian are of a flirtatious nature, whereas in his conversations with Carmen, he remains indifferent to her sexual advances.

### *6.1 On child-like Carmen and the metonymic interpretation of her behaviour*

Carmen Sternwood is the first female character that we see in the film. The viewers, however, are not aware of a very special position of the woman in the plot. In fact, she is present in the opening scene because, as a culprit, she initiates the narrative (see Shillock 2019: 59). Interestingly, given that the conversation held by her and Marlowe is, by and large, commented on and discussed from the investigator's point of view, the immediate impression that Carmen leaves us with may be misleading:

*"She was twenty or so, small and delicately put together, but she looked durable. She wore pale blue slacks and they looked well on her. She walked as if she were floating. Her hair was a fine tawny wave cut much shorter than the current fashion of pageboy tresses curled in at the bottom. Her eyes were slate-grey, and had almost no expression when they looked at me. She came over near me and smiled with her mouth and she had little sharp predatory teeth, as white as fresh orange pith and as shiny as porcelain. They glistened between her thin too taut lips. Her face lacked colour and didn't look too healthy"* (Chandler [1939] 2005: 2-3).

At this given point we fail to fathom that it is the first meeting of the femme fatale who is a ruthless criminal and her adversary (namely the detective) (see Shillock 2019: 59). Carmen is a very complex character. On the one hand, she appears to be very infantile and harmless, but, on the other hand, there is something sullen about her. What seems to be most thought-provoking is the fact that both Marlowe and the audience underestimate the girl, although we are given hints as to what can be expected from Carmen. Her childlike innocence seems to be only on the surface. However, deep inside she turns out to be a predatory femme fatale (ibid., 58; 65). In this respect, she may be argued to embody the conceptual metaphor HUMANS ARE ANIMALS represented by the more specific A WOMAN IS A PREDATOR schema. She fails to find the balance of her mind as she is neither a chaste girl nor a grown-up and independent woman. Shillock (ibid., 60) suggests that she may be either "undergoing or mimicking regression". In theoretical psychoanalysis, the term is defined as one of the defence mechanisms that are at work when someone's personality returns to an earlier phase of development. In such cases, an individual adopts some childish behaviours (see Loewald 1981: 22). If Carmen really reverts to childhood, then we may say that such a backward movement would mean that she has some mental problems. It is likely that the woman poses a threat to both herself and other people because of the aspects of her nature that are out of her control. However, if she is only feigning illness, then she would be a real ruthless femme fatale. Regression is also present in her idiolect; the woman's rudimentary structures and vocabulary prove that she may have considerable difficulties in stringing together and constructing complex sentences.

As far as her behaviour and appearance are concerned, in this case we are dealing with the embodiment of two conceptual mechanisms, that is metaphor and metonymy. On

the one hand, being perceived as a predatory femme fatale, she represents the already mentioned HUMANS ARE ANIMALS metaphor. On the other hand, however, being a paragon of the femme fatale, Carmen seems to metonymically embody a typical representative of this group of strong women. Additionally, one may also refer to the two aspects (innocence and deviousness) of one and the same conceptual domain (human characteristics), which makes it possible to formulate the conceptual metonymy AN INSTANCE OF A CATEGORY FOR ANOTHER INSTANCE OF THE CATEGORY realized as INNOCENCE FOR DEVIOUSNESS. Initially, she gives the impression of being virginal and pure, but she turns out to be ruthless and devilish. Judging by the fact that the conceptual mechanism we are referring to in this case is veiled rather than conspicuous but still it is latently present, its working might be termed *covered* or *disguised metonymy*. There are a number of correspondences and/or mappings portrayed in Table 1 that hold between the metonymic source (vehicle) and the target:

Table 1. INNOCENCE FOR DEVIOUSNESS metonymy

Metonymic source (vehicle): INNOCENCE	Metonymic target: DEVIOUSNESS
small and delicate	calculating and manipulative
ethereal	strong, predatory
gentle disposition	vampire-like disposition (cold and bloodthirsty)
taut lips	voluptuous lips
harmless	dangerous and provocative
positively-loaded features	negatively-loaded features

However, the source (vehicle) and target of the metonymic projection that may also be verbalized as A HUMAN CHARACTERISTIC FOR ANOTHER HUMAN CHARACTERISTIC (INNOCENCE FOR DEVIOUSNESS) might be approached from the point of view of Lakoff and Johnson's (1980: 14-21) orientational metaphors. Specifically, the positively-loaded traits presented above may be argued to result from the working of the conceptual metaphor INNOCENCE IS UP, which is a more specific variant of the VIRTUE IS UP metaphor. In turn, one may seek the motivation for the negatively-loaded values in the DEVIOUSNESS IS DOWN metaphor based on the DEPRAVITY IS DOWN metaphor (ibid., 16). Obviously, to be innocent is to act and look according to some rules set by

society. We link delicacy and harmlessness with innocence, because such is the stereotypical perception of a virgin. When a woman behaves differently than she is stereotypically expected to, that is when she is perceived as a hunter (which stems from A WOMAN IS A HUNTER metaphor) rather than a prey (the embodiment of A WOMAN IS A PREY/VICTIM metaphor), our mind-set changes drastically and we start to associate her with a devil (motivated by A WOMAN IS A DEVIL metaphor). What is interesting here is that both metonymic source (vehicle) (INNOCENCE) and target (DEVIUSNESS) are metaphorically motivated and they result from the schemas A WOMAN IS A PREY/VICTIM and A WOMAN IS A HUNTER or A WOMAN IS A DEVIL. One may, therefore, postulate a conceptual interaction between metaphor and metonymy, also known as metaphonymy (see Goossens 1990) in that metonymic projection is preceded by metaphorical mappings. In this respect, however, it might be worthwhile noting that, in Radden's (2002) view, mappings between UP and DOWN and HAPPY and SAD may also be viewed as metonymic rather than metaphorical (see Panther & Thornburg 2007: 244).

Taking into account Carmen's behaviour, we may observe seemingly innocent gestures and actions, which, in fact, are nowhere near as childlike as she wants people to believe. When the woman sees Marlowe, she is sucking her thumb, which, on the one hand, may signal her childishness, but, on the other hand, may be perceived as a vulgar sexual act as well (see Shillock 2019: 59-60). It is her first futile seduction attempt. Moreover, it is another example of the working of metonymy. The motivation behind the figurative nature of the activity in question seems to be determined by the fact that both body parts (thumb and penis) have a similar shape. Both may also be sucked, but the finger is only licked by a child, which is a purely innocent pastime. However, when performed by an adult woman, it acquires a new lewd meaning. One may thus speak of a metonymic projection whereby one body part (thumb) provides mental access to another body part (penis). Additionally, the action of sucking a thumb may metonymically stand for a vulgar sexual act. As a result, one may posit the working of two metonymies (a metonymic chain) displayed in Table 2:

Table 2. Co-occurrence of two metonymic projections

Stage 1	BODY PART FOR ANOTHER BODY PART metonymy <i>thumb for penis</i>
Stage 2	INTIMATE (SEXUAL) BEHAVIOUR FOR PHYSICAL LOVE (SEX) metonymy <i>sucking thumb for fellatio</i>

Suffice it to say that Carmen is magnifying her erotic availability (ibid., 65-68). She easily transforms into a predator, although at first sight she seems to behave like a child. As already mentioned above, in this respect, one might allude to the general HUMANS ARE ANIMALS metaphor and its specific A WOMAN IS A PREDATOR realisation. In fact, there is a glaring discrepancy between Carmen's sexually depraved deeds and the way she expresses herself verbally. She may be a sex-addled grown-up, but the way she speaks reveals her immaturity and ignorance. Let us look at her first colloquy with Marlowe (see Appendix, Extract 1).

Carmen is the metonymic epitome of duality. On the one hand, she represents the spiritual, emotional (she is impulsive, fickle, and volatile, and she changes her mood quickly) and verbal emptiness of a child (simple affirmative and negative structures as well as limited and poor vocabulary, e.g., *cute*); on the other hand, we are witness to her ruthless behaviour, perverted sexual desire, and murderous inclinations (see Cash 2016). When she feels piqued by Marlowe's witty replies, she accuses him of being a joker and she behaves melodramatically when playfully swooning into the gentleman's arms. Marlowe seems to be unimpressed by her advances. The figurative use of the sentence "You ought to wean her" alludes to her infantile behaviour, as, according to him, it is time she grew up. In this skirmish, however, it is Carmen who turns out to be more cunning. Her ploy to mislead the detective works, because he believes that she is too naïve a girl to harm anyone (see Shillock 2019: 60).

From the cognitive perspective, in this case we may refer to the working of the conceptual metaphor ADULTHOOD IS CHILDHOOD. CHILDHOOD and ADULTHOOD

constitute two separate cognitive domains and a number of mappings are established between them. Thus, through the working of conceptual metaphor, the source domain CHILDHOOD acts as a vehicle, through which the target domain ADULTHOOD is understood. In other words, the sense of *weaning* ('to cause a baby or young animal to stop feeding on its mother's milk and to start eating other, especially solid food, instead' see Cambridge dictionary (*s.a.*)<sup>8</sup>) is characteristic of CHILDHOOD. In turn, growing up (reference to ADULTHOOD) is inseparably linked with the fact that we do not rely on supplied food, but instead it is us who provide ourselves with sustenance. Marlowe's ironic repartee adverts to the age of Carmen, who should have already stopped being immature. The metaphorical mapping discussed here is presented graphically in Table 3:

Table 3. ADULTHOOD IS CHILDHOOD metaphor

Metaphorical source: CHILDHOOD	Metaphorical target: ADULTHOOD
<i>to wean a baby</i> 'to stop breastfeeding a baby'	<i>to wean somebody</i> 'to cause to grow up'

Marlowe discerns Carmen's dual nature and mental state, which is revealed when he describes his meeting with the woman to her father, "Then she tried to sit on my lap while I was standing up" (TBS). In the novel, she is a nymphomaniac, but given the censorship rules of that time, it was not allowed to talk about woman's libido. Thus, Marlowe uses those specific words to show his understanding of Carmen's mental disorder. Again, on the one hand, she seems to be like a child who wants to sit on a parent's lap, but on the other hand, she possesses certain features of a sexually aggressive female who wants to seduce a man. Even though Marlowe is impervious to her advances, she keeps trying to trap him. In this respect, we may also refer to the metonymic interpretation of her behaviour. Again, our discussion pivots on two aspects of one domain/frame (HUMAN BEHAVIOUR), namely CHILDISH BEHAVIOUR (the metonymic source/vehicle) and SEXUAL BEHAVIOUR (the metonymic target). As Table 4 shows, in this case reference to one reference to one domain/frame is made, that of HUMAN BEHAVIOUR, and our analysis shows that one aspect of this domain (CHILDISH

BEHAVIOUR) provides mental access to another aspect of this domain (SEXUAL BEHAVIOUR):

Table 4. CHILDISH BEHAVIOUR FOR SEXUAL BEHAVIOUR metonymy

Metonymic source/vehicle: CHILDISH BEHAVIOUR	Metonymic target: SEXUAL BEHAVIOUR
to sit on somebody's lap	to be sexually provocative and aggressive
to stand	to ignore, to resist the temptation
spoilt/naughty	lascivious, dissolute

The metonymic projection CHILDHOOD/CHILDISH BEHAVIOUR FOR SEXUALITY/SEXUAL BEHAVIOUR seems to be motivated by Carmen's mental problems with growing up and fending for herself. Such a perception of sexuality is by no means part of the process of growing up. Naturally, children learn how their bodies function, but there is nothing forbidden or tabooed about that. If it becomes aggressive and crosses certain boundaries at a later age, we may speak about a disorder.

As mentioned above, Carmen's simple vocabulary reflects her seemingly childlike approach to life. She is inclined to overuse the adjective *cute*. Her line "You're cute" uttered several times on various occasions to compliment the detective is like a desperate plea of a woman who is searching for his attention. Carmen attempts to extort a certain reaction from Marlowe; therefore, we may say that her sexual appetite is both unwholesome and insatiable (see Appendix, Extracts 2, 3, and 4).

Marlowe does not yield to Carmen's will and repels her advances with his pointed remarks and quick wit. We cannot take his utterances in a literal sense. His tone is either critical or even self-critical, but this is the tool he employs against the woman's unwanted sexual attention. When talking with Carmen, the detective seems to regret being tall and handsome (see Cash 2016: 5). Carmen proves her ignorance when she admits she has never heard of Peter Pan. There is certain irony in the way the detective treats her. For him, she is a spoilt child even though she turns out not to be as innocent a girl as he thought. As far as Marlowe's linguistic irony is concerned, he extracts the

adjective *cute* from Carmen's speech and employs it as a device to create evident irony directed at her (see Linder 2001: 103).

As far as Simmel's flirtation theory is concerned, the relationship between Marlowe and Carmen is far from romantic. Coquetry involves equality between two parties. Flirtation can only be sustained if the other responds to it. However, in the case discussed above there are only a few futile seduction attempts initiated by the woman and triggering no sexual reaction. Moreover, Carmen's aim is not to flirt with the detective but to deceive him and, when the opportunity arises, to have sexual intercourse with him. Still, we need to bear in mind that she is not in love with him and it is her insatiable libido that seems to rule her life.

To recapitulate, Carmen is a complex character, which is when we compare her puerile speech with her sex-addled behaviour. A patently unintelligent and emotional woman manages to deceive both the investigator and the audience. Her idiolect (reflected in, for example, simple structures, unsophisticated vocabulary, overuse of the adjective *cute*) fails to go hand in hand with her ruthlessness and calculation. However, we need to bear in mind that children are not necessarily as slow-witted as we might believe. In fact, they may be aware of how to manipulate somebody if they want to achieve their goal. Similarly, even though Carmen's deeds may be characterized as childish (e.g., sucking her thumb, being ignorant), she employs some elements from the metonymic source of CHILDHOOD to conceal some facts and lead her opponents astray.

### *6.2 On Vivian and the RACEHORSE metaphor*

As far as Marlowe's conversations with the older Sternwood sister are concerned, it is worth noting that, contrary to his dialogues with the younger one, Vivian is put in a position of intellectual equality with the detective. Unlike her sister, Vivian is strong and she never behaves like a child. Aware of her sexual allure, she tries to take advantage of the man and during their first encounter, she attempts to discover why the detective has been summoned to her father's mansion. Much to her surprise, it turns out

that Marlowe remains impassive and immune to her wiles (see Cash 2016: 6). Their discussions seem to be like a game of power; a match which always ends in a draw (see Appendix, Extract 5).

As observed by Linder (2001: 102), Marlowe's verbal skills are impressive. The power of his irony seems to exceed his physical strength. Armed with witty remarks, the detective always remains cool. Self-criticism, sarcasm, and unflinching honesty are only a few of the weapons that he possesses. Vivian is perplexed by the fact that the detective puts loyalty to her father before desire. Marlowe is both self-critical and he disapproves of Vivian's attitude towards him. Even though he may be perceived as an anti-hero or even anti-detective, he is loyal to his principles and he refuses to reveal the motive behind his visit to Sternwood's house (see Cash 2016: 6).

Another interesting conversation held by Vivian and Marlowe takes place in a restaurant, where the leading characters engage in a notable, cunningly flirtatious exchange, in which they conceal their real feelings under a veneer of the metaphorical language and terms associated with the racetrack. The woman makes a thinly veiled allusion to him being a lover and compares the man to a racehorse, or, to be more precise, a thoroughbred. She envisages that Marlowe probably has many assets as a lover. In spite of the fact that nothing is explicitly stated, the dialogue is suffused with sexual innuendo. Their conversation is one of the most notable examples of a double entendre, which is a figure of speech based on a specific way of wording concocted in such a way that it can be grasped in either of two ways. Such a construction has a double meaning: the first one is literal and may be easily read from the context, whereas the other one is implicit and requires more thought from an interlocutor (see Baldick 1990). According to the Oxford English Dictionary Online (OED), a double entendre is employed to 'convey an indelicate meaning'<sup>9</sup>, thus we have grounds to say that in this case we are dealing with sexual, offensive, or socially awkward overtones. All in all, it is sexual innuendo that a double entendre is most often associated with. In order to convey the oblique meaning, the figure of speech in question frequently makes use of

puns, hence we may say that it hinges on such elements as homophones, ambiguity of words, and various interpretations of the original senses of lexical items (see Appendix, Extract 6).

It is Vivian that begins the colloquy with a polite act of gratitude. Then, she proceeds with a simple question concerning the way he spends his free time. After a slight moment of hesitation expressed by the interjection *mm*, Marlowe replies that he is engrossed in playing the horses and fooling around. Contrary to the first activity, which might seem to be devoid of sexual innuendo at first sight, the second one may be comprehended in two different ways. Firstly, it might allude to wasting time; secondly, and most probably, it refers to having sexual relationships with people who are not your regular partners. Vivian appears to be very outspoken in her replies. She wants to know whether her interlocutor is with somebody, therefore she asks the question "No women?", which triggers a slightly ironic reaction, "Well, I'm generally working on something most of the time". The woman is very direct; she needs to know whether the metaphor *working on something* refers to her. The man confesses that he is partial to her, which pleases the lady, but, at the same time, annoys her, as even though he is not indifferent to her, he is not wooing her. Marlowe sarcastically replies that her behaviour is passive too. Such an ironic and witty discussion, devoid of impudent crudeness, is known as *asteism*. Following the Oxford English Dictionary Online (OED), one notices that the term comes from Greek and may be defined as 'genteel irony, polite and ingenious mockery'<sup>10</sup>.

The female character returns to the topic connected with horses, but it is obvious that she is not really talking about the animals. In fact, who she is talking about are men, thus we may speak about a general conceptual metaphor HUMANS ARE ANIMALS and a sub-metaphor A (MALE) HUMAN BEING IS A HORSE. She divides both horses and men into two groups, namely favourites and those who come from behind. Before she chooses a partner, especially a sexual one, she looks for his driving force. Marlowe is aware that she is talking about men, so he wants to know whether she has worked out his

tactics. Vivian is telling him that, at least in her opinion, he does not want to be tied down. In all likelihood, he is very passionate at the beginning of the relationship, but then he gives up and returns home both single and unencumbered. Indeed, taking into consideration the fact that Marlowe often flirts with women ("I collect blondes in bottles, too"<sup>11</sup>) who find him irresistibly charming, sarcastic though he is, the detective may be considered as a player, which makes it possible to allude to the domain of SPORT and formulate the general conceptual metaphor FLIRTING IS SPORT represented here by the more specific metaphorical schema: A FLIRTING MAN IS A PLAYER.

Interestingly, Marlowe has ceased to maintain the pretence that they were still talking about horses. Now, she is being assessed. He gently compliments her, but without laudatory adulation. The man admits that his interlocutor is stylish, but he is not sure if the game is worth playing. She might only be teasing him and not want to have an affair with him, or, to be more precise, make love with him. Vivian returns to the horse metaphor, but she confesses that her sexual response to a large extent depends on the man. All in all, she rates him as a potential sexual partner, employing a horse analogy to tell him in a veiled way about her feelings towards both men and coitus. At the end of the conversation, Vivian continues the horse metaphor. She compares herself to the animal and suggests that, in contrast to the horse, sugar fails to be an incentive for her. If any man wants to see her run, he should try to be more imaginative. The metaphorical schema SEX IS HORSE RACE is presented graphically in Table 5.

Table 5. SEX IS HORSE RACE metaphor

Source domain: HORSE RACE	Target domain: SEX
racehorses	people
play horses	flirt and make love
front-runners	favourites, winners
(those that) come from behind	those that catch up and overtake, probably win (despite having been <i>underdogs</i> ); those that are engaged in a doggie style sexual position
card	asset
to be rated	to be assessed and classified
how far they can go	the limits
jockey	a lover
sugar	cheap flirt, compliments

In this case, a horse race serves as a concealing mechanism to talk about sex, which is depicted as a pleasure-oriented and sybaritic activity. Using linguistic terminology, we may say that the conceptual domain HORSE RACE consists of a number of subdomains, to list only a few of them: PLAYERS, RULES, EQUIPMENT, etc. All in all, given the linguistic expressions listed above, we may formulate the SEX IS HORSE RACE metaphor. The motivation behind the figurative development of the lexical items whose senses are connected with the horse race seems to be determined by the fact that lovemaking is very often compared to sport. Both people and horses may be divided into favourites and *underdogs*, they also need to have some assets and tactics. The expression "who is in the saddle" uttered in this context serves as an example of amphibology. The phrase is very equivocal, and it refers both to a sexual position and being in a settled position of power. As noticed by Kurowska (2019: 132), both SPORT and GAME metaphors, by and large, concentrate on one facet of sex, namely the sensual pleasure that the activity gives. On the one hand, the application of the playful elements may degrade the sexual act; but, on the other hand, it is the woman who provokes the discussion and compares human beings to horses. In this case both sex and a horse race concentrate on the pleasure that those involved may obtain.

Another example of the catchy repartee and double entendre takes place after Marlowe brings the drugged Carmen to the Sternwood mansion and leaves her in Vivian's bed. He utters a few negations, which make Vivian perplexed. She accuses him of being too insolent and Marlowe sarcastically replies that she should not have said such words to a man leaving her bedroom (see Appendix, Extract 7).

In our view, the metonymic projection ONE TYPE OF BEHAVIOUR FOR ANOTHER TYPE OF BEHAVIOUR may be represented graphically as shown in Table 6:

Table 6. ONE TYPE OF BEHAVIOUR FOR ANOTHER TYPE OF BEHAVIOUR metonymy

Metonymic source/vehicle: BEHAVIOUR (MOTION)	Metonymic target: BEHAVIOUR (RUDENESS)
You go too far	You are insolent; you are crossing the boundaries

In this particular case, the metonymic vehicle MOTION provides mental access to the metonymic target RUDENESS within the same domain/frame (HUMAN BEHAVIOUR).

Yet another interesting example of a flirtatious dialogue between Vivian and Marlowe, which shows her conversational mastery, is the following (see Appendix, Extract 8). The dialogue may be viewed as a perfect example of the embodiment of the well-known HUMAN BEING IS A MACHINE metaphor. There is a great deal of convincing evidence (e.g., *You need to upgrade your brain, Hack your life!*<sup>12</sup>) that human bodies are frequently conceptualized as machines (e.g., HUMAN BRAIN IS A COMPUTER, COMPUTER OPERATIONS ARE MENTAL OPERATIONS) where things/parts/elements can be broken, upgraded, hacked, or fixed, and a human body as such can be viewed as being in or out of balance. Vivian's use of the polysemous verb *fix*, whose senses range from 'establish', 'organize', or 'mend' to 'concentrate' or 'deal with' is another revealing example of her intelligence, linguistic skills, and ability to participate in flirtatious verbal exchanges.

As far as Marlowe and Vivian's conversations are concerned, we may put forward a plausible hypothesis that their dialogues are perfect examples of flirtation. The characters are put in equal positions, there is a tension between the content of their verbal exchanges and the way they address it. Almost all the responses hinge on sarcasm, but there is no victim. Their utterances may be interpreted in more than one way; thus, we may conclude that they are multilayered (amphibology). Marlowe's language mirrors his irreverent attitude towards the surrounding world. His irony is defensive and it says a lot about the America of that time. In turn, Vivian seems to perfectly understand his state; thus even though they do not trust each other, they seem

to respect each other. Vivian is very intelligent, as, unlike her sister, she is a master of conversation.

## **7. Conclusions and implications for future research**

In this article, we have analysed eight dialogues extracted from the film titled "The big sleep" and one excerpt from the novel of the same title in order to show the role of conceptual mechanisms (metaphor, metonymy, and the joint operation of these two mechanisms) on the language of flirtation. We have observed that not only flirtation (as in the case of Vivian) but also seduction (as in the case of Carmen) may be metaphorically or metonymically motivated. We have demonstrated that the methodological tools (metaphor, metonymy, metaphonymy) offered by Cognitive Linguistics facilitate the understanding of flirtation. It is crucial to stress at this point that the corpus of data subject to our scrutiny enables us to draw only tentative and general conclusions concerning the language of flirtation. Given that the analysis is based on one film only, it is obvious that further study on a larger corpus is essential to support or reject the hypotheses constructed above.

Given that the conversation connected with horses held by Marlowe and Vivian is a perfect example of flirtation, we may formulate several general conclusions as far as the linguistic potential of flirtation is concerned. Firstly, a well-composed piece of flirtation may include such elements as verbal irony (whose aim is not to hurt), witty remarks, allusions, puns, and double entendre accompanied by sexual innuendo and amphibology. Secondly, a seemingly innocent dialogue may often have both literal and figurative layers. Thirdly, a sense of humour and an element of surprise are also part and parcel of such a conversation. Fourthly, as the parties are equal, neither of them uses verbal abuse. Naturally, not every conversation of a flirtatious nature does or should necessarily consist of all these elements.

Comparing the sisters, we may say that Carmen is not what we expect her to be. She is the most complex character, somewhat lost in the surrounding world. She talks and

makes gestures like a child (CHILDHOOD FOR ADULTHOOD metonymy), but she behaves like a merciless predator (HUMANS ARE ANIMALS metaphor). She keeps trying to flirt with the detective, but he remains immune to her advances. Conversely, the older sister is mature and smart. Her sexuality is not as aggressive as Carmen's, although Vivian is the epitome of the femme fatale. In fact, we may formulate the metonymy VIVIAN/CARMEN FOR FEMME FATALE, as both characters share some features typical of the stock character in question. One can hardly feel completely indifferent to Vivian's magnetism; thus even Marlowe never underestimates her personality and her intelligence. Furthermore, we may say that the perception of a woman in film noir is quite interesting, as in this case neither of the female characters is presented as a victim or the weaker sex (A WOMAN IS A HUNTER metaphor and A WOMAN IS A DEVIL metaphor). The activity of flirting itself evokes allusions linked with sport. Thus we may construct the FLIRTING IS SPORT metaphor, and, as a result, A FLIRTING MAN IS A PLAYER metaphor.

Taking into account Simmel's understanding of flirtation, we may safely say that in "The big sleep" it is an entertaining game played by two equal parties, namely Vivian and Marlowe. Given that one needs to be intelligent enough both to utter a witty remark and to respond to one in a slightly provocative manner (FLIRTATION IS PROVOCATION/CHALLENGE metaphor), it seems that not everyone is capable of concocting such a dialogue based on oblique allusions. Flirtation turns out to be a multilayered structure, as it may be comprehended not only literally but also figuratively (e.g., horse metaphor). We may put forward a hypothesis that Marlowe and Vivian seem to flirt from their very first meeting, although it is Carmen who attempts to seduce the detective. Nevertheless, there is a widening gulf between the girl and the detective. As already mentioned, flirtation demands equality. If the parties fail to be equal, then we cannot talk about coquetry, which eliminates victims and torturers. Flirtation may be regarded as a kind of flattery, which does not aspire to anything but pleasure.

As far as future vistas are concerned, one needs to focus on the idiolects of the main characters. Specifically, it would be worthwhile to analyse Marlowe's irony, which seems to characterize the protagonist and reflect his attitude towards the surrounding world. Moreover, given the potential offered by the language of film noir, it would be revealing to submit to scrutiny the verbal duels and the language of flirtation in other representatives of this genre (e.g., "Scarlet street" (1945) or "The lady from Shanghai" (1947)).

## Notes

1. On the concept of film noir see, among others, Sanders (2006), Ballinger and Graydon (2007), Hanson (2007), or Naremore (2008).
2. See also the website <https://www2.bfi.org.uk/news-opinion/news-bfi/features/infographic-what-makes-film-noir>.
3. A femme fatale is a stock character of an exquisite and dangerous sexual seductress who lures men into traps. Although the roots of the archetype trace back to Greek mythology, it was in the 1940s and early 1950s that the idea of femme fatale flourished during the film-noir era (on femme fatale see, among others, Doane 1991 and Grossman 2009).
4. On the storytelling of Hawks see, among others, Mast (1982) and Wilson (2013).
5. According to Baldick (1990: 114), irony may be defined as "a subtly humorous perception of inconsistency, in which an apparently straightforward statement or event is undermined by its context so as to give it a very different significance". As elucidated further, there are a few types of irony: verbal irony occurs when there is a gap between what is uttered and what is really meant; in turn, in structural irony we are dealing with a naïve hero whose perception of the surrounding world is different from the real events that take place around him; in dramatic irony spectators can predict the course of events because they know more about the character than he himself is aware of; thus the ending differs from the hero's expectations. In turn, defensive irony may be defined as a verbal weapon employed to hide one's thoughts and make a pretence or not make a

pretence of not caring about the surrounding world, so it will not affect us (defined by the authors of the article).

6. [https://www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/definition/english/flirt\\_1?q=flirt](https://www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/definition/english/flirt_1?q=flirt)

7. <https://www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/definition/english/seduce?q=seduce>

8. <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/wean>

9. <https://www.oed.com/view/Entry/57032?redirectedFrom=double+entendre+#eid>

10. <https://www.oed.com/view/Entry/12108?redirectedFrom=asteism#eid>

11. Marlowe has a weak spot for women and alcohol, which is confirmed in, for example, a library scene, where Marlowe flirts with a librarian by saying, "I collect blondes in bottles, too" (TBS).

12. <https://www.lifehack.org/articles/lifestyle/10-essential-ways-to-hack-your-life-instead-of-letting-life-hack-you.html>

### List of abbreviations

OED – Oxford English dictionary

TBS – *The big sleep*. [Movie, directed by Hawks, H. in 1946]. Available at: [https://sublikescript.com/movie/The\\_Big\\_Sleep-38355](https://sublikescript.com/movie/The_Big_Sleep-38355)

### References

Baldick, C. (1990). *Oxford concise dictionary of literary terms*. Oxford – New York: Oxford University Press.

Ballinger, A. & Graydon, D. (2007). *The rough guide to film noir*. London: Rough Guides.

Bartlett, A., Clarke, K. & Cover, R. (2019). *Flirting in the era of #metoo. Negotiating intimacy*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.

Belmont, J. (2013). *10 Essential ways to hack your life (instead of letting life hack you)*. Available at: <https://www.lifehack.org/articles/lifestyle/10-essential-ways-to-hack-your-life-instead-of-letting-life-hack-you.html>.

- Bierwiazek, B. (2013). *Metonymy in language, thought and brain*. Sheffield: Equinox.
- Blank, A. (1999). Co-presence and succession: A cognitive typology of metonymy. In *Metonymy in language and thought*. Panther, K.-U. & Radden, G. (eds.). Amsterdam: John Benjamins, p. 169-191.
- Cambridge dictionary*. (s.a.). Available at: <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/>
- Chandler, R. ([1939] 2005). *The big sleep*. London: Penguin Books.
- Cash, P. (2016). Raymond Chandler. The big sleep. In *English association bookmarks*, 79, p. 1-15. Available at: <https://www2.le.ac.uk/offices/english-association/publications/bookmarks/79-raymond-chandler-the-big-sleep>
- Dalton, S. (2015). How beauty disrupts space, time and thought: Purposiveness without a purpose in Kant's *Critique of judgment*. In *Electronic journal for philosophy*, 22 (1), p. 5-14.
- Doane, M.A. (1991). *Femmes fatales: Feminism, film theory, psychoanalysis*. New York: Routledge.
- Double indemnity*. (movie). (1944). Directed by Wilder, B. Available at: <https://www.moviefone.com/movie/double-indemnity/1009825/main/>
- Fleming, P. (2015). The art of flirtation: Simmel's coquetry without end. In *Flirtations: Rhetoric and aesthetics this side of seduction*. Hoffman-Schwartz, D., Nagel, B.N. & Stone, L.S. (eds.). New York: Fordham University Press, p. 19-30.
- Freud, S. ([1915] 1981). Thoughts for the times on war and death. In *The standard edition of the complete psychological works of Sigmund Freud*. Translated and edited by Strachey, J. London: Hogarth Press and the Institute of Psycho-Analysis, p. 275-301.
- Goossens, L. (1990). Metaphonymy: The interaction of metaphor and metonymy in expressions for linguistic action. In *Cognitive linguistics*, 1 (3), p. 323-342.
- Grossman, J. (2009). *Rethinking the femme fatale in film noir ready for her close-up*. Basingstoke – New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Grząsko, A. (2020). To devour one's love: The concept of TASTE in the world of endearments. In *SKASE Journal of theoretical linguistics*, 17 (3), p. 118-129.

Hanson, H. (2007). *Hollywood heroines: Women in film noir and the female Gothic film*. London – New York: I.B. Tauris.

Hoffman-Schwartz, D. (2015). Barely covered banter: Flirtation in *Double indemnity*. In *Flirtations: Rhetoric and aesthetics this side of seduction*. Hoffman-Schwartz, D., Nagel, B.N. & Stone, L.S. (eds.). New York: Fordham University Press, p. 13-19.

Hoffman-Schwartz, D., Nagel, B.N. & Stone, L.S. (2015). "Almost nothing; almost everything": An introduction to the discourse of flirtation. In *Flirtations: Rhetoric and aesthetics this side of seduction*. Hoffman-Schwartz, D., Nagel, B.N. & Stone, L.S. (eds.). New York: Fordham University Press, p. 1-10.

Haj-Mohamadi P., Gillath, O. & Rosenberg, E.L. (2020). Identifying a facial expression of flirtation and its effect on men. In *The journal of sex research*, p. 1-9.

Kant, I. ([1790] 2000). *Critique of the power of judgment*. Translated by Guyer, P. and Matthews, E. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Kaye, R. (2002). *The flirt's tragedy: Desire without end in Victorian and Edwardian fiction*. Charlottesville: Virginia University Press.

Kiełtyka, R. (2020). The role of historical context responsible for the figurative use of common words derived from place-name. In *Lege artis. Language yesterday, today, tomorrow. The journal of University of SS Cyril and Methodius in Trnava*. Trnava: University of SS Cyril and Methodius in Trnava, V (1), June 2020, p. 457-479. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.34135/lartis.20.5.1.02>

Koch, P. (1999). Frame and contiguity: On the cognitive bases of metonymy and certain types of word formation. In *Metonymy in language and thought*. Panther, K.-U. & Radden, G. (eds.). Amsterdam: John Benjamins, p. 139-168.

Kövecses, Z. (2017). Conceptual metaphor theory. In *Routledge handbook of metaphor*. Semino, E. & Demjén, Z. (eds.). London – New York: Routledge, p.13-27.

Kövecses, Z. (2006). *Language, mind and culture: A practical introduction*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Kövecses, Z. (2008). Metaphor and emotion. In *The Cambridge handbook of metaphor and thought*. Gibbs, R.W. (ed.). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p. 380-396.

Kövecses, Z. (2010). *Metaphor: A practical introduction*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Kövecses, Z. (2018). Metaphor in media language and cognition: A perspective from conceptual metaphor theory. In *Lege artis. Language yesterday, today, tomorrow. The journal of University of SS Cyril and Methodius in Trnava*. Warsaw: De Gruyter Open, III (1), June 2018, p. 124-141. DOI: [10.2478/lart-2018-0004](https://doi.org/10.2478/lart-2018-0004)

Kövecses, Z. (2015). *Where metaphors come from. Reconsidering context in metaphor*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Kurowska, K. (2019). "Did he get to the second base?" – Baseball metaphor as a means of describing the degree of physical intimacy in *The Fifty Shades Trilogy*. In *Zeszyty naukowe Uniwersytetu Rzeszowskiego. Seria filologiczna. Glottodydaktyka*, 11, p. 126-135.

Lakoff, G. (1987). *Women, fire and dangerous things*. Chicago – London: The University of Chicago Press.

Lakoff G. & Johnson, M. (1980). *Metaphors we live by*. Chicago – London: The University of Chicago Press.

Lakoff, G. & Turner, M. (1989). *More than cool reason: A field guide to poetic metaphor*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

*Laura*. (movie). (1944). Directed by Preminger, O. Available at:

<https://www.rottentomatoes.com/m/1012007-laura>

Linder, D. (2001). Translating irony in popular fiction: Raymond Chandler's *The big sleep*. In *Babel*, 41 (2), p. 97-108.

Littlemore, J. (2015). *Metonymy. Hidden shortcuts in language, thought and communication*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Loewald, H.W. (1891). Regression: Some general considerations. In *The psychoanalytic quarterly*, 50 (1), p. 22-43.

Mast, G. (1982). *Howard Hawks. Storyteller*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Meenagh, J. (2015). Flirting, dating, and breaking up with new media environments. In *Sex education*, 15 (5), p. 1-14.

*Murder, my sweet*. (movie). (1944). Directed by Dmytryk, E. Available at:

<https://www.amazon.com/Murder-My-Sweet-Dick-Powell/dp/B000244EX8>

Naremore, J. (2008). *More than night: Film noir in its contexts*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Berkeley – Los Angeles – London: University of California Press.

Oxford English dictionary. Available at: <https://www.oed.com/>

Oxford Learner's dictionaries. Available at:

<https://www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/>

Panther, K.-U. & Thornburg, L. (2007). *Metonymy*. In *The Oxford handbook of cognitive linguistics*. Geeraerts, D. & Cuyckens, H. (eds.). Oxford: Oxford University Press, p. 236-263.

Patrick, M. *Infographic: What makes a film noir?* Available at: <https://www2.bfi.org.uk/news-opinion/news-bfi/features/infographic-what-makes-film-noir>

Phillips, A. (1994). *On flirtation: Psychoanalytic essays on the uncommitted life*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Radden, G. (2002). How metonymic are metaphors? In *Metaphor and metonymy in comparison and contrast*. Dirven, R. & Pörings, R. (eds.). Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter, p. 407-434.

Radden, G. & Kövecses, Z. (1999). Towards a theory of metonymy. In *Metonymy in language and thought*. Panther, K.-U. & Radden, G. (eds.). Amsterdam: John Benjamins, p. 17-59.

Ruiz de Mendoza Ibáñez, F.J. & Díez Velasco, O.I. (2002). Patterns of conceptual interaction. In *Metaphor and metonymy in comparison and contrast*. Dirven, R. & Pörings, R. (eds.). Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter, p. 489-532.

Sanders, S.M. (2006). Film noir and the meaning of life. In *The philosophy of film noir*. Conard, M.T. (ed.). Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, p. 91-106.

*Scarlet street*. (movie). (1945). Directed by Lang, F. Available at:

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ph\\_NZtXb4AU&ab\\_channel=TimelessClassicMovies](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ph_NZtXb4AU&ab_channel=TimelessClassicMovies)


Simmel, G. ([1909] 1984). On flirtation. In *Georg Simmel, on women, sexuality, and love*. Oakes, G. (ed.). New Haven: Yale University Press, p. 133-152.

Simmel, G. ([1911] 1949). The sociology of sociability. In *American journal of sociology*, 55 (3), p. 254-261.


- Plato. ([c. 385–370 BC] 2003). *The symposium*. Translated by Gill, Ch. London: Penguin.
- Shillock, L. (2019). From decadence to degeneration: The big sleep, its forceful plot, and a femme fatale "Still in the dangerous twenties". In *Moveable type*, 11. Zubair, S.-J. (ed.). London: Department of English Language & Literature University College London, p. 58-73.
- Spicer, A. (2002) *Film noir*. London – New York: Routledge.
- Tavory, I. (2009). The structure of flirtation: On the construction of interactional ambiguity. In *Studies in symbolic interaction*, 33. Denzin, N.K. (ed.). Bingley: Emerald, p. 59-74.
- The big sleep*. (movie). (1946). Directed by Hawks, H. Available at:  
[https://sublikescript.com/movie/The\\_Big\\_Sleep-38355](https://sublikescript.com/movie/The_Big_Sleep-38355);  
<https://www.moviefone.com/movie/the-big-sleep/20021263/where-to-watch/>
- The lady from Shanghai*. (movie). (1947). Directed by Welles, O. Available at:  
[https://www.rottentomatoes.com/m/the\\_lady\\_from\\_shanghai](https://www.rottentomatoes.com/m/the_lady_from_shanghai)
- The Maltese falcon*. (movie). (1941). Directed by Huston, J. Available at:  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9ieq2sfn1R0&ab\\_channel=YouTubeMovies](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9ieq2sfn1R0&ab_channel=YouTubeMovies)
- Wade, J.A. (2018). (I think) you are pretty: A behavior analytic conceptualization of flirtation. In *Perspectives on behavior science*, 41, p. 615-636.
- Weber, K., Goodboy, A.K. & Cayanus, J.L. (2010). Flirting competence: An experimental study on appropriate and effective opening lines. In *Communication research reports*, 27 (2), p. 184-191.
- Wilson, B. (2013). The film dialogue of Howard Hawks. In *Film dialogue*. Jaeckle, J. (ed.). London – New York: Wallflower Press, p. 116-125.

## Contact data

### Author #1

	<i>name:</i> <i>academic title / rank:</i> <i>department:</i> <i>institution:</i>  <i>e-mail:</i> <i>fields of interest:</i>	<b>Agnieszka Grząsko</b> PhD (Linguistics) Assistant Professor Department of English University of Rzeszów 2B, al. mjr. W. Kopisto, Rzeszów, 35-315 Poland <a href="mailto:mgrzasko@op.pl">mgrzasko@op.pl</a> Cognitive linguistics, semantics, literature.
---	--	---

### Author #2

	<i>name:</i> <i>academic title / rank:</i> <i>department:</i> <i>institution:</i>  <i>e-mail:</i> <i>fields of interest:</i>	<b>Robert Kieltyka</b> dr hab., prof. UR (Linguistics) Associate Professor Department of English University of Rzeszów 2B, al. mjr. W. Kopisto, Rzeszów, 35-315, Poland <a href="mailto:bobkieltyka@wp.pl">bobkieltyka@wp.pl</a> Cognitive linguistics, history of the English language, morphology-semantics interface, diachronic semantics.
--	--	---

## Résumé

The paper focuses on the discussion of selected dialogues and tête-à-têtes, specifically those that exhibit elements of flirtation and seduction, from the film "The big sleep" (1946) directed by Howard Hawks. In terms of the methodology, the overriding aim of this account is to identify cases of conceptual motivation behind verbal flirtation, which, as the paper suggests, may be interpreted with the aid of such tools offered by the Cognitive Linguistics paradigm as metaphor and metonymy. The reader is provided with a brief description of the studies devoted to flirtation as well as of the selected corpus, methodology, and data collection procedure. In the body of the paper, we offer a brief overview of Simmel's philosophical theory connected with flirtation by alluding to his assumptions proposed in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The analysis of selected dialogues from "The big sleep" couched in terms of the methodological tools offered

by the cognitive framework has enabled us to draw some conclusions, which confirm the conceptual nature of verbal flirtation and may be said to be underlain by conceptual metaphor, metonymy, or the interplay of the two. What is more, one of the purposes of the article is also to provide the readers with various linguistic features, which are part and parcel of verbal duels. Given that the structure of the conversations in some respects resembles swordplay, we may hazard a guess that the characters are skilled at verbal sparring. It turns out that the study of multilayered dialogues is worthwhile not only from the cognitive but also from purely linguistic perspectives.

**Key words:** flirtation, seduction, film noir, metaphor, metonymy, "The big sleep".

## Appendix

Table 7. The dialogues from "The big sleep"

Extract	Dialogue
1	<p><i>"Carmen: You're not very tall, are you?</i>  <i>Marlowe: Well, I tried to be.</i>  <i>Carmen: Not bad looking, though you probably know it.</i>  <i>Marlowe: Thank you.</i>  <i>Carmen: What's your name?</i>  <i>Marlowe: Reilly. Doghouse Reilly.</i>  <i>Carmen: That's a funny kind of name.</i>  <i>Marlowe: You think so.</i>  <i>Carmen: Uh huh. What are you? A prizefighter?</i>  <i>Marlowe: No, I'm a shamus.</i>  <i>Carmen: What's a shamus?</i>  <i>Marlowe: A private detective.</i>  <i>Carmen: You're making fun of me.</i>  <i>Marlowe: Uh, huh.</i>  <i>Carmen: [she leans back and falls into his arms] You're cute.</i>            [...]  <i>Marlowe: [to the butler, Norris] You ought to wean her. She's old enough." (TBS)</i></p>
2	<p><i>"Carmen Sternwood: Is he as cute as you are?</i>  <i>Philip Marlowe: Nobody is." (TBS)</i></p>
3	<p><i>"Carmen: Well, what does the hat-check girl get for a tip?</i>  <i>Marlowe: I'm trying to think of something appropriate. How'd you get in here?</i>  <i>Carmen: Bet you can't guess.</i>  <i>Marlowe: I'll bet I can. You came in through the keyhole like Peter Pan.</i>  <i>Carmen: Who's he?</i>  <i>Marlowe: A guy I used to know around a pool room.</i>  <i>Carmen: You're cute.</i>  <i>Marlowe: I'm getting cuter every minute. How did you get in?" (TBS)</i></p>

4	<p><i>"Carmen: You're cute. I like you.</i>  <i>Marlowe: Yeah? What you see's nothing. I got a Balinese dancing girl tattooed across my chest." (TBS)</i></p>
5	<p><i>"Vivian: So you're a private detective? I didn't know they existed, except in books. Or else they were greasy little men snooping around hotel corridors. My, you're a mess, aren't you?</i>  <i>Philip Marlowe: I'm not very tall either. Next time I'll come on stilts, wear a white tie and carry a tennis racket.</i>  <i>Vivian: I doubt if that would help. [...] You know, I don't see what there is to be cagey about, Mr. Marlowe. And I don't like your manners!</i>  <i>Marlowe: I'm not crazy about yours. I didn't ask to see you. I don't mind if you don't like my manners. I don't like'em myself. They're pretty bad. I grieve over them long winter evenings, and I don't mind your ritzing me, or drinking your lunch out of a bottle. But don't waste your time trying to cross-examine me.</i>  <i>Vivian: People don't talk to me like that!</i>  <i>Marlowe: Oh!</i>  <i>Vivian: Do you always think you can handle people like trained seals?</i>  <i>Marlowe: Uh-huh. I usually get away with it too.</i>  <i>Vivian: How nice for you." (TBS)</i></p>
6	<p><i>"Vivian: We're very grateful to you, Mr. Marlowe. And I'm very glad it's all over. Tell me what do you usually do when you're not working?</i>  <i>Marlowe: Play the horses, fool around.</i>  <i>Vivian: No women?</i>  <i>Marlowe: I'm generally working on something most of the time.</i>  <i>Vivian: Could that be stretched to include me?</i>  <i>Marlowe: I like you. I've told you that before.</i>  <i>Vivian: I liked hearing you say it. But you didn't do much about it.</i>  <i>Marlowe: Well, neither did you.</i>  <i>Vivian: Well, speaking of horses, I like to play them myself. But I like to see them work out a little first, see if they're front-runners or come from behind. Find out what their whole card is. What makes them run.</i>  <i>Marlowe: Find out mine?</i>  <i>Vivian: I think so.</i>  <i>Marlowe: Go ahead.</i>  <i>Vivian: I'd say you don't like to be rated. You like to get out in front, open up a lead, take a little breather in the back stretch, and then come home free.</i>  <i>Marlowe: You don't like to be rated yourself.</i>  <i>Vivian: I haven't met anyone yet who could do it. Any suggestions?</i>  <i>Marlowe: Well, I can't tell till I've seen you over a distance of ground. You've got a touch of class, but I don't know how far you can go.</i>  <i>Vivian: A lot depends on who's in the saddle. Go ahead, Marlowe, I like the way you work. In case you don't know it, you're doing all right.</i>  <i>Marlowe: There's one thing I can't figure out.</i>  <i>Vivian: What makes me run?</i>  <i>Marlowe: Uh-huh.</i>  <i>Vivian: I'll give you a little hint. Sugar won't work. It's been tried." (TBS)</i></p>
7	<p><i>"Vivian: Where did you find her?</i>  <i>Marlowe: I didn't find her.</i>  <i>Vivian: Well, then how...</i>  <i>Marlowe: I haven't been here. You haven't seen me and she hasn't been out of this house all evening. [...]</i></p>

	<p><i>Vivian: What did she tell you?</i></p> <p><i>Marlowe: Not half as much as you just did. I don't slap so good around this time of the evening.</i></p> <p><i>Vivian: You go too far, Marlowe.</i></p> <p><i>Marlowe: Ooh. Those are harsh words to throw at a man. Especially when he's walking out of your bedroom." (TBS)</i></p>
8	<p><i>"Vivian: You've forgotten one thing, me.</i></p> <p><i>Marlowe: What's wrong with you?</i></p> <p><i>Vivian: Nothing you can't fix." (TBS)</i></p>

Article was received by the editorial board 15.01.2021;

Reviewed 02.02.2021 and 28.02.2021.

Similarity Index 8.2%