“The Times They Are A-Changin’”: Flexible Meter and Text Expression in 1960s and 70s Singer-Songwriter Music

by

Nancy Elizabeth Murphy

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Abstract

The 1960s and 70s saw the flowering of the singer-songwriter style, which featured acoustic performances by artists who were the composers and lyricists of their own music. Reflecting their culture, their songs carried messages of personal and political significance. But their music is of technical as well as of social interest. Like classical art song, it often highlights lyrical meaning with various sorts of metric irregularities. In this dissertation, I closely analyze twenty-seven songs by Bob Dylan, Paul Simon, Buffy Sainte-Marie, Joni Mitchell, and Cat Stevens, in order to characterize the metric style of their songwriting and demonstrate their use of meter as an expressive device.

To describe meter in this music requires theories more flexible than those usually applied to groove-based music. The analyses in this dissertation draw not only from theories of meter as a hierarchy of beat streams, but also upon theories of metrical process and prosody, in order to create transcriptions, to describe precisely listeners' sensations of meter, and to propose expressive rationales for metric settings.

As an introduction to the style and the theoretical issues, Chapter 1 considers the problems of conceiving of meter in the expressively timed context of Mitchell's "The Fiddle and the Drum." Chapter 2 examines the existing methods for analyzing meter in music and poetry, in order to find some productive ways to analyze this metrically fluctuant repertoire. Chapter 3 considers transcription as analysis, showing that one's conception of meter informs and constrains musical representation, and therefore interpretations of lyrical meaning.

In Chapter 4, I position 1960s and 70s songwriting in its cultural and political environment, reviewing some stylistic precedents to understand their influence, and determine its original metrical techniques. In the remaining analytical chapters, I examine meter-text expression in songs by Simon, Sainte-Marie, and Stevens (Chapter

5), the expression of character and lyrical personae in the narratives of three solo-piano-accompanied songs by Mitchell (Chapter 6), and how Dylan adapted text-expressive metric techniques of earlier genres in a variety of original ways (Chapter 7).

Preface

This dissertation is the original, unpublished, independent work of the author, Nancy Elizabeth Murphy.

The author has transcribed all musical examples in this study unless otherwise noted. They are to be considered an account of the sounding events of a song for academic study, distinct from the original sounding work. Where transcriptions have been reproduced from other sources, they are treated as academic quotes and cited in the footnotes and the discography.

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To Mom and Dad, who prayed for my success from the undergraduate acceptance letters to the final submission. I could not have done this without your love, patience, and support. Thank you for teaching me to love school enough to make it through so much of it!

Dedication

To my parents, who did everything possible to help me get to the finish line. Dad, thanks for letting me sit beside you, guitars in hand, to sing through your giant, typewriter-produced binder of 60s and 70s pop songs. That is where this research truly started.

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Meter and Popular Music

In rock and dance music, repeated pitches, harmonies, and rhythms encourage physical responses from listeners, such as tapping feet or clapping hands, which align with stress patterns created by the musical repetition. When the patterns are perceived as alternating strong and weak stresses, they can be interpreted as musical meter.[1] Rock and dance genres are so consistently repetitive that they afford such a perception nearly immediately. As a result, much of the discussion of meter in popular music assumes a repeated regular pattern of stresses, with minimal disruption, and concentrates instead on higher-level metric organization, phrase structure, and large-scale form.

This assumption may be appropriate for these particular kinds of popular music, but it leaves open many questions to be explored. How, exactly, is meter created and sustained, and how should we describe and appreciate any differences in the ways that is done? Just a few studies of musical "groove" have begun to address this topic.[2] What about the rhythms of the lyrics in popular music? Are they always organized to be completely subservient to the groove, or do they interact with the meter of the music in ways that (as in art song) express the sentiments and ideas of the text?[3] And what about

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[1] This preliminary definition of meter will be theorized in more detail in Chapter 2. It is important to note that demonstrating a physical response to stress patterns is not a requirement for hearing meter, but it is a likely response to the types of popular music that have been studied.

[2] The few exceptions are studies of *groove*, which address the pitch and rhythmic motives that create a repeating musical texture. See, for example, Robin Attas, "Meter as Process in Groove-Based Popular Music" (Ph.D. dissertation, The University of British Columbia, 2011); Timothy Hughes, "Trapped within the Wheels: Flow and Repetition, Modernism, and Tradition in Stevie Wonder's 'Living for the City,'" in *Expression in Pop-Rock Music*, ed. Walter Everett, vol. 2, Studies in Contemporary Music and Culture (New York: Garland, 2000), 239–65; Matthew Butterfield, "The Power of Anacrusis: Engendered Feeling in Groove-Based Musics," *Music Theory Online* 12, no. 4 (2006).

[3] Some examples of this can be found in Walter Everett, "Any Time At All: The Beatles' Free Phrase Rhythms," in *The Cambridge Companion to the Beatles*, ed. Kenneth Womack (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 183–99; Jocelyn Neal,

the many other, less regular genres of popular music that are not intended for dancing? Are the existing theories of popular-music meter adequate for them? These three questions – how meter develops, how the rhythms of lyrics interact with their accompaniment, and the nature of meter itself – are especially pertinent to an important subgenre of popular music, the singer-songwriter repertoire of the early 1960s to early 1970s. Although it is often considered a category of rock, this subgenre's style is shaped by a less rigid approach to meter, which is afforded in part by its solo performance tradition. The self-accompanied music of Bob Dylan, Cat Stevens, Paul Simon, Joni Mitchell, and Buffy Sainte-Marie demonstrates flexible timing that can disrupt metric regularity, sometimes to extremes. Especially in these flexibly timed performances, metric cues that are brought out by specific performances, even in contexts that seem devoid of regular meter, draw the listener's attention to important words in the lyrics, or create temporal qualities that express the lyrics' themes. Indeed, I will illustrate that such lyrically expressive metric disruption and flexible timing are a characteristic feature of the singer-songwriter repertoire.

It is difficult to apply the concepts of meter currently ascendant in popular music analysis to such flexibly timed songs. Let us consider, as a provocative example, Joni Mitchell's "The Fiddle and the Drum," from *Clouds* (1969). It is unaccompanied, and the timing of Mitchell's singing does not yield a regular series of strong and weak stresses. Thus it is not metric in the same way that rock and dance music are metric. However, we shall see that it suggests ways of measuring timespans, and presents a succession of textual and musical stresses of varying weights. That is, it exhibits some of the aspects of meter that, when regularized, create stress hierarchies in dance music. Rather than investigating whether the song has meter or not, we can instead examined how it

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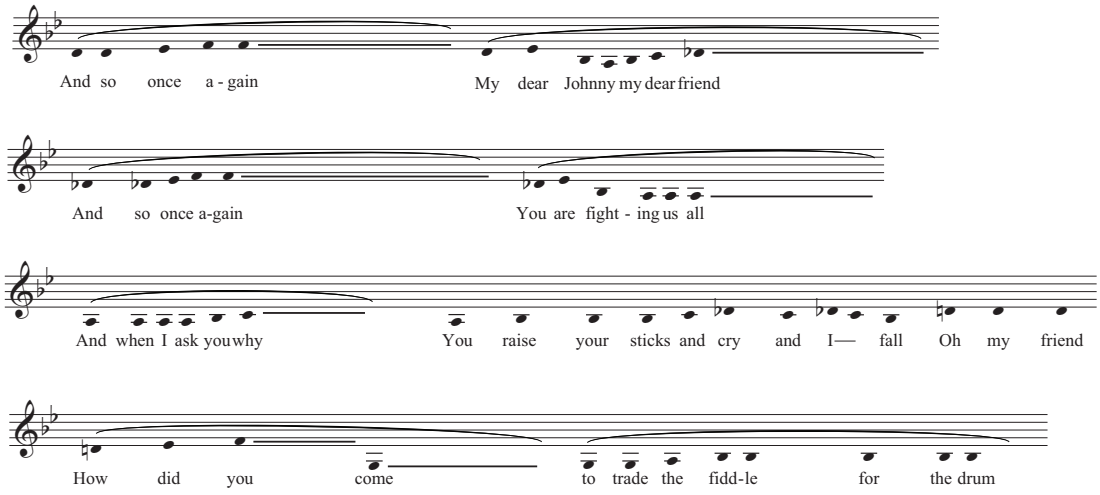
"Songwriter's Signature, Artist's Imprint: The Metric Structure of a Country Song," *Country Music Annual*, 2000, 112–40.

demonstrates a *potential* to create regular meter, and to what degree, if any, that potential is realized. We will need accordingly to expand and adjust our ideas of meter (and our expectations about how meter should be organized) to describe and appreciate the rhythms of this song and the rest of the singer-songwriter repertoire. Our theorizing will be refined considerably in the chapters to come, but the following discussion offers an introduction to the issues and potential benefits of such an investigation.

Investigating aspects of meter begins with an examination of stress. In order to measure the degree of regularity in "The Fiddle and the Drum," we need to determine the stresses created by its pitches, rhythms, and lyrics. A transcription of the song's first verse (0:23-0:42) is provided as Figure 1.1, which includes a plausible key signature, and pitches for the first verse. Mitchell's flexible timing obscures specific rhythms, so the melody notes are spaced proportionally to their sounding length and slurs indicate that each note is sustained until the next onset, and solid lines indicating the durations of sustained pitches.

Figure 1.1: Mitchell, "The Fiddle and the Drum," verse 1[4]

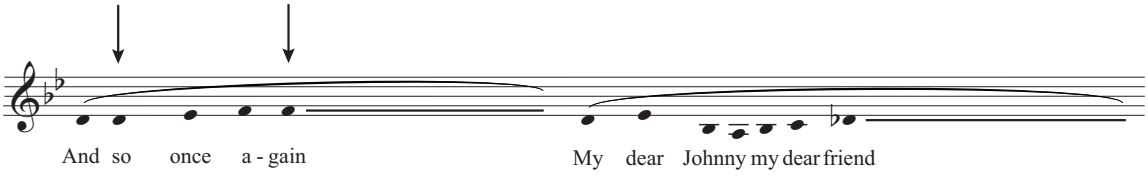


[4] Transcribed from Joni Mitchell, *Clouds* (Reprise, 1969). Unless otherwise noted, all transcriptions in this dissertation are my own.

The first system includes the first two vocal fragments, each ending with a sustained final pitch. In the first fragment, we hear a stress on the second D4 resulting from its relatively loud dynamic. The next stress occurs on the final F4, arising from the note's longer length and loudness.

The resulting two-stress structure is illustrated in Figure 1.2, with arrows indicating the stressed events. The dynamics and rhythms that mark their onsets for attention are reinforced by the poetic (or prosodic) structure of the lyrics.

Figure 1.2: Mitchell, "The Fiddle and the Drum," line 1, fragment 1

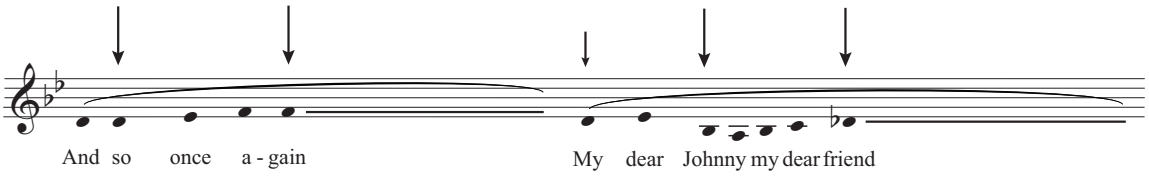


Following Mitchell's accents in performance, there are two prominent prosodic stresses in the first fragment of text in line 1, "And **so** once a-**gain**," with bolded syllables indicating the prosodic stresses.[5] The onsets of these text syllables align with the stresses we have located in the music, and may even be considered the motivation for them. In this texturally minimal song, stresses are therefore created not just by dynamics and rhythm, but also through prosodic stress in the lyrics.

The importance of text stress for meter is also evident in the second fragment, where the first strong prosodic stress occurs on the first syllable of "Johnny," preceded by a weaker stress on the preceding "My," as shown by the arrows in Figure 1.3.

[5] Another plausible reading of this fragment could be with three stresses ("And **so once** a-**gain**") or four stresses, with an unarticulated fourth stress. However, within either of those readings, stronger syllables would be found on "so" and "-gain," so that is the level of analysis examined in this study. A more detailed methodology for prosodic analysis can be found in Chapter 2. The preferred two-stress reading is reinforced by a later television performance of this song, which replicates the stresses of this reading; see "The Dick Cavett Show" (ABC, August 19, 1969).

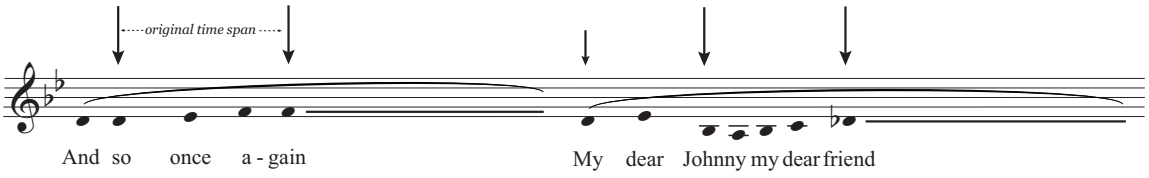
Figure 1.3: Mitchell, "The Fiddle and the Drum," line 1, fragments 1 and 2



We hear a final stress on the final D-flat4, which is marked for attention by duration, dynamics, and the prosodic stress on "friend." The result is a pattern of two main stresses ("My dear **John**-ny my dear **friend**") that parallels the structure of the first fragment.[6] If the long duration between stresses in the first two fragments were shortened, these four stresses could easily be imagined in a regular duple meter, in which they would occur as a regular pattern of alternating strong and weak stresses. Yet Mitchell does not set it that way, and as the song progresses, we begin to understand an expressive reason for this flexibly timed setting.

In each short melodic fragment, two stresses have emerged from rhythmic, dynamic, and prosodic stress; however, for musical meter, the pattern of stress alone is not enough to create meter. We need to also measure the relative equivalence of the time between stresses and their potential to create regularity. The first most salient time span in "The Fiddle and the Drum" occurs between the stresses on "so" and "-gain," labeled in Figure 1.4 as the *original time span*.

Figure 1.4: Mitchell, "The Fiddle and the Drum," line 1, time spans



[6] After the long duration on "-gain," the stress on "my" initially sounds like the strong first stress of the second fragment. But we are likely to retroactively recognize that the stress on "Johnny" is the more prominent stress of these two. A smaller arrow in Figure 1.3 indicates the weaker stress on "my" in relation to the other stresses in the fragment.

In a regular meter, we might interpret these as a pair of strong and weak stresses, and we would expect that after another timespan more or less equal to the original time span, we would hear another strong-weak pair. However, the beginning of the next fragment occurs too late. The parallel rhythm, prosodic stress, and the nearly-rhyming words "again" and "friend" ending each of the two fragments have the potential to form a steady continuity of repeated durations, but this potential is left unrealized by Mitchell's flexible timing.[7] A similar process occurs progressing from the second fragment to the third: the time span created by the stresses on "Johnny" and "friend" might be repeated, but a subsequent stress that would reproduce the duration does not occur.

It may be tempting at this point to question the merits of listening for repeated durations in such an irregular context. Yet listening this way draws attention to the sensations of wanting regularly spaced stresses and not experiencing them. I will show that attending to these sensations is crucial to an understanding of this song. Pairs of stresses create durations that *could* occur within a regular meter, but are instead found in an irregular context.

By violating expectations of regularity, Mitchell's melody highlights the contrast between metric behavior and lyrical meaning. This is immediately apparent in the lyrics "And so once again," which imply repetition. In her plea to the soldier, Johnny, she asks why he is "once again" entering into war, and sings these lyrics twice to emphasize the repeated violent behavior. Yet these mentions of repetition occur in a context that fails even to achieve repeated durations. Mitchell's performance engages aspects of listeners' experience of meter to draw out this contrast. And this technique is even more effective when considered in the context of the more metrically regular section that follows.

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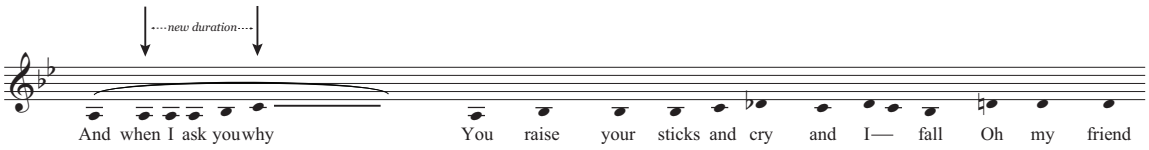
[7] It may be possible to imagine two silent stresses, equivalent in duration to the original time span, which could occur during the space between the first and second fragments. However, the pattern of these imagined stresses would not end up aligning with those that occur in the second fragment. We would still need to reset our attention to a new series of stressed events in the second fragment.

After the first four fragments, which all avoid regularity, the fifth begins as if it might parallel the structure of the preceding melodic units. Figure 1.5 reproduces the third system of Figure 1.1, which comprises the fifth and sixth vocal fragments.

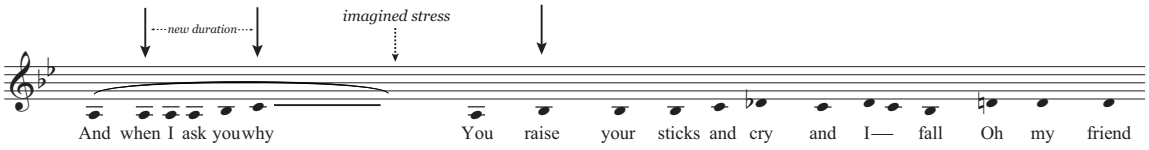
Figure 1.5: Mitchell, "The Fiddle and the Drum," stresses in fragment 5



The emphasis on "when" is created by the word's prosodic stress and a louder dynamic on the A4 pitch. This is followed by a series of briefer pitches leading to the longer duration and louder dynamic accent on C4, which aligns with the prosodic stress on the word "why." These two stresses create a new duration between the arrows in the figure. The next vocal stress occurs on "raise," but this is too long a duration from "why" to be considered the next stress in that pattern. However, unlike in the previous fragments, we can imagine a stress that bisects the duration between "why" and "raise" that would maintain the pattern of stresses begun in the fifth fragment. In other words, if we hear the duration from "when" to "why" duplicated from "why" to the imaginary stress, we can also hear the duration from the imagined stress to "raise" as equivalent to it. By "equivalent" I mean that we consider the durations to be equal, even if they are slightly different as measured by a clock. This perception is shown by the succession of nearly equally spaced arrows on Figure 1.6.[8]

[8] An imagined stress works here because it acts to continue a series of actual stresses that is subsequently continued by actual stresses. This contrasts with the situations with the earlier pairs of fragments where the actual stresses in the second fragment are not timed this way. A working rule may result that imagined stresses should only be used when they continue a stress pattern that is regained by articulated stresses, and not when it simply extends an eventually disrupted pattern.

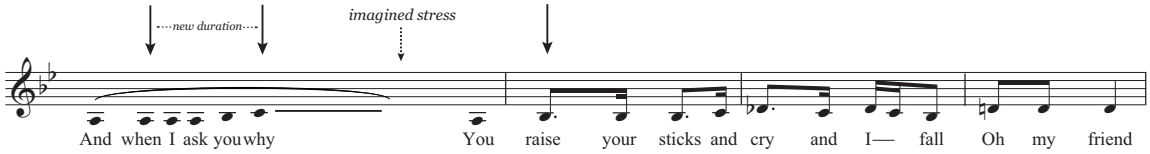
Figure 1.6: Mitchell, "The Fiddle and the Drum," fragments 5-6



Using this imagined stress to continue the pattern of stresses and durations, the stress on "raise" is the first alignment of expected stress and actual realization, which initiates the most regular passage so far in the song.

In the subsequent fragment, we can easily hear that Mitchell's melody creates regular stresses through prosodic and dynamic accents on "raise," "sticks," "cry," etc. These stresses create a series of equivalent durations that allow us to attribute precise proportional rhythmic values to these pitches. Figure 1.7 illustrates these rhythms as subdivisions of quarter notes, which have been interpreted as an alternating series of strong and weak beats in a 2/4 meter, with bar lines placed after every pair of notes.

Figure 1.7: Mitchell, "The Fiddle and the Drum," fragment 6 in 2/4 meter



From this metrically regular pattern we can hear an alternation of strong and weak involving just the first beats of each notated bar, and thus hear a higher level of meter. The regularity of stresses and durations in this passage, then, offers the full metrical experience in which we can not only expect stresses after specific spans of time but also finally hear the realization of those expectations.

To build this complete metric structure, we worked through three steps, the first of which is attending to stresses in the musical texture. In "The Fiddle and the Drum" these stresses are primarily articulated by prosodic text stress, aligned with and

supported by dynamic and durational emphasis. The second step recognized the spans of time created between stresses and looked for where their durations might be repeated to create a regular pattern. If the time spans did not repeat, the result was like the opening fragments, in which the pattern failed to become regular. Where the durations did repeat, the realized pattern of stresses and durations met our expectations and we experienced regular meter.

These three steps (stress, duration, and predictable regularity) are three of the aspects that must be engaged to build meter. In repetition-based music, it is not necessary to separate them out, since repeating motives easily reinforce them. However, it is essential to do so in examining songs like "The Fiddle and the Drum," since the degree to which metric salience is engaged varies between sections. This song eventually achieves a regular meter, but it is not the end goal of regularity that is of interest. The more compelling examination is of the degree to which the aspects of meter are engaged; in other words, how much of the metric potential has been realized, whether it becomes regular or not. Rather than hastily labeling a song as ametric, this approach examines the experience of meter (however regular) and makes it possible to consider how this experience contributes to the meaning of the lyrics.

Generally, in "The Fiddle and the Drum," the text addresses tendencies towards violence in America. Mitchell's personal pleas to Johnny in the first verse comment on his trading "the fiddle for the drum" and "the handshake for the fist." Just as the lyrical imagery builds on contrasts between peace and war, so Mitchell uses degrees of engagement with regular meter to highlight this contrast. In the first four fragments, the music begins but repeatedly fails to create regularity of stresses and durations. This section therefore engages only with the first two aspects of meter: attending to irregularly spaced stresses and experiencing the non-equivalent time spans between them. The sixth fragment, by contrast, engages all three aspects of meter by achieving a

regular series of strong and weak stresses at equivalent durations. During this passage, expectations for regularity align with the pattern of regular durations, and this moment of alignment occurs as Mitchell is singing about raising weapons and marching into war. As she sings, “You raise your sticks and cry,” the music fits a 2/4 meter with march-like dotted rhythms, as a rhythmic illustration of Johnny’s trading his fiddle for the military drum.

Examining meter in this way thus provides a rich way to read Mitchell’s song. By taking into account both actual and potential durational regularity, as well as sensations of durational reproduction and prosodic stress, it treats all those factors as active and relevant contributions to the musical expression of the text, giving a more intimate reading of the personal and political narratives. We can find similar process of flexible timing and other metric irregularities that seem to occur to highlight passages of text or the overall lyrical narrative in the music of Mitchell’s singer-songwriter contemporaries. In the chapters that follow, I develop a precise analytical methodology to describe the sensations of meter and their connection to a reading of meaning in the lyrics in the singer-songwriter repertoire of five artists between 1962 and 1972. My methods make it possible to describe specifically these artists' characteristic techniques of timing and metric disruption, including (as we have already seen in Mitchell's song) changes of tempo and beat-groupings. Indeed, my study treats the meter-text relationship as a critical component of the singer-songwriter style of this period, which engaged audiences with its heartfelt personal narratives and political statements.

Chapter 2: Metric Theories and the Aspects of Meter

2.1 Meter as Measuring

In the previous chapter, we examined productive ways I hear time to be regulated in "The Fiddle and the Drum." Some of its musical and textual stress patterns are periodic, demonstrating isochronous beats between event onsets, but others can only be understood through a more flexible comparison of their time spans. The issue is not that meter in "The Fiddle and the Drum" is too complex, but rather that it changes in both quantity and quality. Recognizing that different sorts of meter may coexist makes it necessary to take all grouping- and meter-inducing factors into consideration, not just those that create layers of unvarying periodicities. Referring to different metric systems will allow the analyst to organize these factors and their effects in a variety of viable ways.

A precedent for such an inclusive view of meter is Joti Rockwell's account of "crookedness" in the Carter Family's bluegrass tunes.[9] He seeks to "draw together various strands of rhythm and meter theory," which he identifies as *architectonicism*, *meter as process*, and *metric entrainment*, and which are manifest in two current analytical approaches to meter: (1) imagining meter in terms of time points on a multi-leveled grid, where beats in each layer occur within the perceptual limits for entrainment; and (2) understanding meter as a process of reproducing durations. Rockwell combines basic aspects of these theories to identify similarities and differences of metrical disruption techniques among 290 songs. Since he is interested mostly in developing a typology, he does not consider the expressive functions of the specific types of disruption in individual songs (beyond an expression of performers' subjectivity), nor

[9] Joti Rockwell, "Time on the Crooked Road: Isochrony, Meter, and Disruption in Old-Time Country and Bluegrass Music," *Ethnomusicology* 55, no. 1 (2011): 55–76.

does he consider how a combined approach could account for other sorts of rhythmic irregularity.

A similarly inclusive view of meter, adopting aspects of various theories, can be fruitful for analysis not only of "The Fiddle and the Drum" but of the metrically flexible singer-songwriter repertoire to which it belongs. Like the bluegrass genre, singer-songwriter music also has songs in which regular meter, described by entrainment and architectonic theory, is disrupted, and the theory of meter as process can provide ways of understanding these moments. To the approaches that Rockwell mentions, it is helpful to add concepts from poetic meter, which in texted music can provide another basis for hearing periodicities. If meter is (among other things) a matter of measuring, these are the most common types of measurement, and our understanding of music like Joni Mitchell's will benefit from a thorough review of the scholarly literature about them.

2.2 The "Architectonic View"

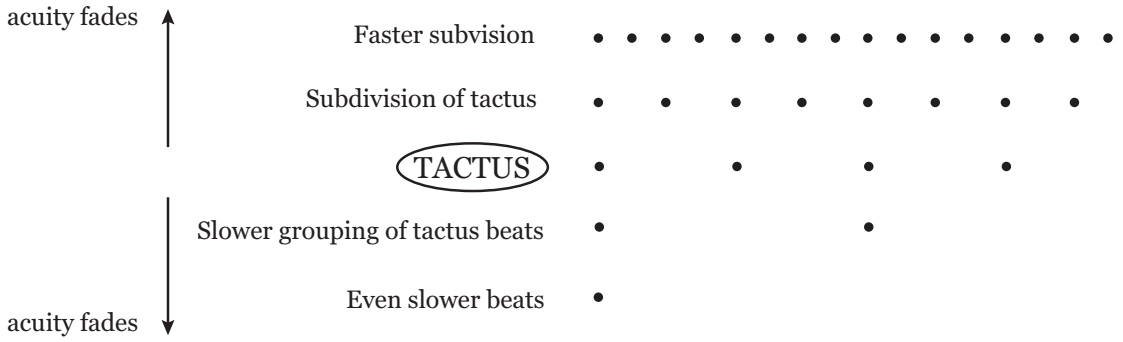
The architectonic view of meter as a grid is the prevailing conception of meter in the music-theoretical literature. In *A Generative Theory of Tonal Music* (hereafter *GTTM*), Lerdahl and Jackendoff propose well-formedness and preference rules (analogous to those in linguistic theory) to define meter and characterize how listeners determine it.[10] They describe *metric structure* as the strong-weak organization within a metric hierarchy of two or more levels of equally-spaced beats.[11] Their *dot notation* illustrates this organization as a metric grid, an imagined structure inferred from and

[10] One of the strongest criticisms of *GTTM* is its insufficient quantification of preference rules. See John Peel and Wayne Slawson, "Review: A Generative Theory of Tonal Music," *Journal of Music Theory* 28 (1984): 2.Lerdahl addresses some of these in Fred Lerdahl, "Genesis and Architecture of the GTTM Project," *Music Perception* 26, no. 3 (2009): 187–94.

[11] Fred Lerdahl and Ray Jackendoff, *A Generative Theory of Tonal Music* (Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 1983), 19.

sustained by patterns of accent and grouping.[12] The unit of measurement in this grid is assumed to be consistent throughout the longer time-span to which the grid applies. The dots in the grid represent *beats*, the time-point elements in a metrical pattern. The strong and weak relationship between beats in a pattern results from their hierarchical arrangement, in which the strong beats at one level are also beats at the next slower level.[13] Levels of beats are periodically reinforced: each beat at one level is two or three times the duration of the next fastest level. The most typical grid structures include five or six levels of beats in which one of the moderately-paced layers, the one most likely to correspond with foot tapping and conducting patterns, is felt as a *tactus*. Figure 2.1 illustrates a five-level metric hierarchy that could correspond to Lerdahl and Jackendoff's descriptions. The tactus is placed as the middle layer, the two layers below the tactus indicate its faster subdivisions, and the two layers above the tactus correspond to slower tactus groupings.

Figure 2.1: Lerdahl and Jackendoff's five-level metric grid



In certain cases, the slower beat indications are regarded as a higher-level metric grouping called *hypermeter*. In *Phrase Rhythm in Tonal Music*, which draws to some extent from *GTTM*, William Rothstein examines the key features of hypermeter, defining it as an extension of the strong and weak relationships of notated meter to higher metric

[12] Ibid., 8.
[13] Ibid., 19.

levels.[14] In Rothstein's terms, hypermeter involves the "combination of measures on a metrical basis," which includes "both the recurrence of equal-sized measure groups and a definite pattern of alternation between strong and weak measures."[15] Notated measures grouped together form *hypermeasures*, and the downbeats of these measures form patterns of strong and weak *hyperbeats*, with strong hyperbeats labeled *hyperdownbeats*.

In the several different studies that engage the kind of metric grid described in *GTTM*, opinions vary on the number of beat levels that well-formed meters include. Lerdahl and Jackendoff suggest the grid could "theoretically be built up to the level of the whole piece" but that it should only include perceptually relevant layers, though they do not quantify these perceptual limits.[16] As the listener "progresses away by level from the tactus in either direction, the acuity of his metrical perception gradually fades," as shown with the arrows in Figure 2.1.[17] As a result, the layers closest to the tactus layer feature the most stringent regularities of metric structure, while at larger levels, meter is more likely to be "heard in the context of grouping structure, which is rarely regular at such levels." They therefore consider meter to be a "relatively local phenomenon."[18]

The five layers described in *GTTM* have been reproduced in Figure 2.2 and annotated with different types of boxes to indicate the minimum number of layers that various accounts consider necessary for a well-formed metric hierarchy. The dotted-line rectangle encloses all five of the layers Lerdahl and Jackendoff initially use to illustrate a

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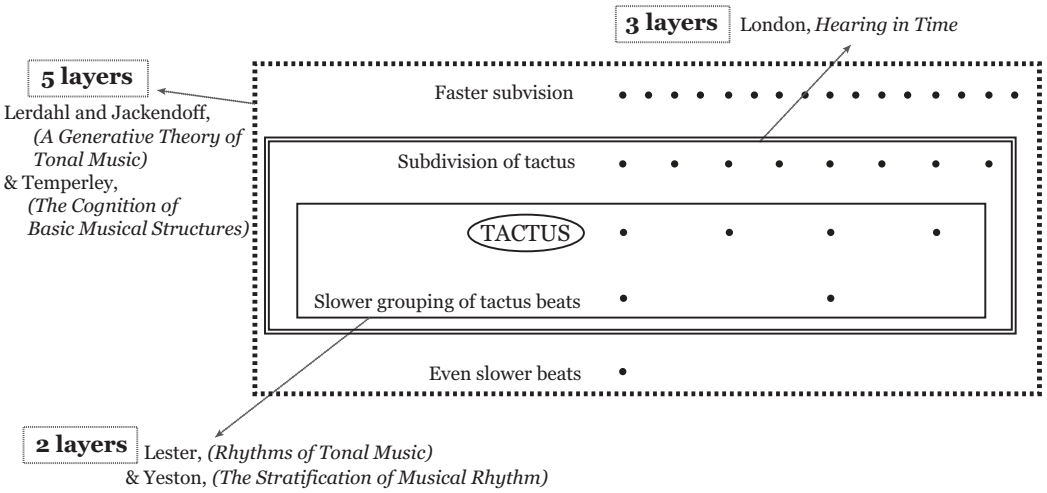
[14] This is similar to Harald Krebs' definition, which defines hypermeasures as larger than a notated bar, composed of patterns of strong and weak hyperbeats. See Harald Krebs, "Hypermeter and Hypermetric Irregularity in the Songs of Josephine Lang," in *Engaging Music*, ed. Deborah Stein (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 18.
[15] William Rothstein, *Phrase Rhythm in Tonal Music* (New York: Schirmer Books, 1989), 12.
[16] Lerdahl and Jackendoff, *A Generative Theory of Tonal Music*, 21.
[17] Ibid.
[18] Ibid.

metric grid.[19] This also indicates David Temperley's preference for a grid that includes a tactus, two layers above the tactus, and two layers below.[20] The double-line box encompasses three layers: the tactus, its closest subdivision, and a slower grouping (normally the closest one) of the tactus beats; these three layers comprise the minimum requirement for well-formed meter in Justin London's *Hearing in Time*.[21]

Figure 2.2: The number of layers in a metric hierarchy



The solid-line box includes only two layers of beats – the tactus and a slower grouping – illustrating the fewest number of required levels in both Joel Lester's and Maury Yeston's conceptions of metric hierarchy.[22]

2.2.1 Metric Accent

This "perceptual grid" of two or more layers, depending on the theoretical approach, constitutes an essential system of measurement that anchors the timing of

[19] Elsewhere, they assert two or more layers as the minimum requirement for a well-formed meter. See Ibid., 20.
[20] David Temperley, *The Cognition of Basic Musical Structures* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2001), 39.
[21] Justin London, *Hearing in Time* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 16.
[22] Joel Lester, *The Rhythms of Tonal Music* (Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press, 1986), 47; Maury Yeston, *The Stratification of Musical Rhythm* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1976), 66.

musical events and makes possible the powerful sensations of alignment or syncopation that can be heard once a listener cognizes metric hierarchy.[23] To do so, according to the preference rules in *GTTM*, the listener fits cues from the raw signal of *phenomenal* and *structural accents* to allowable structures of *metric accent*.[24] Phenomenal accents are articulated by stresses given to moments in the musical flow, and structural accents result from arrivals on melodic and harmonic points of closure. When these occur at regular spans of time, the imagined pattern of metrical accent is clear and multileveled; if there is little regularity or conflict to the accentual input, the sense of metric accent becomes ambiguous.[25] Metric accents are therefore imagined structures "inferred from but not identical to the patterns of accentuation at the musical surface,"[26] able to occur on rests or without any musical events to mark them off. Metric accents arise as a result of an imagined, metaphoric yardstick that listeners can use to help locate musical events in a grid of time points.[27] Locating this grid is often referred to as *meter finding*, *meter creating*, or *meter building* based on the accentual input of the music.[28]

2.2.2 Grouping and its Role in Meter Analysis

Since the present study is most interested in passages from the singer-songwriter repertoire that interrupt a regular metric grid, it is important to consider the flexibility of grid-based conceptions of meter. Different architectonic theories are more or less flexible about the regularity of beats on the various levels of the grid. Lerdahl and Jackendoff are stringent in requiring isochrony in layers closest to and including the tactus. In their

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[23] Joel Lester, "Notated and Heard Meter," *Perspectives of New Music* 24, no. 2 (April 1, 1986): 120–123.
[24] Lerdahl and Jackendoff, *A Generative Theory of Tonal Music*, 17–18.
[25] Ibid., 18.
[26] Ibid.
[27] Joel Lester, "Notated and Heard Meter," *Perspectives of New Music* 24, no. 2 (1986): 118.
[28] Gretchen Horlacher, "Multiple Meters and Metrical Processes in the Music of Steve Reich," *Intégral* 14/15 (2000): 296; Temperley, *The Cognition of Basic Musical Structures*, 35; Lester, "Notated and Heard Meter," 120.

view, well-formed meters demonstrate consistent grouping of beats on a given level into either twos or threes by the next slower level. Any disruption of these regular beats is understood as the result of conflict among the rules that take into account the other dimensions of musical rhythmic organization: grouping.

Grouping structures are the "hierarchical segmentation" of a piece "into motives, phrases and sections."[29] The *grouping preference rules* or (GPRs) presented in *GTTM* establish which of the possible grouping structures for a piece correspond with a listener's intuitions about that piece.[30]Lerdahl and Jackendoff's sixth grouping preference rule encourages the grouping of parallel units according to similarities of rhythm, internal grouping and pitch contour.[31] This principle of *parallelism* extends to meter as well; their first metrical preference rule supports reading parallel groups with parallel metrical structures.[32] This rule has become an important part of subsequent studies of parallelism in metric analysis.[33]

Grouping parallelism sometimes encourages a hearing of irregularities in the construction of a metric grid. Examples of this occur in Gretchen Horlacher's study of meter in Stravinsky's *Les Noces*, which relies on grouping parallelism to characterize the meter of Stravinsky's melodies.[34] Her examination of Stravinsky's creation of metric orientations in the absence of isochronous periodicities provides an important precedent for analyzing songs like Mitchell's "Fiddle and the Drum," which lack periodic beats. The prioritization of grouping parallelism necessitates analytical concepts (particularly the

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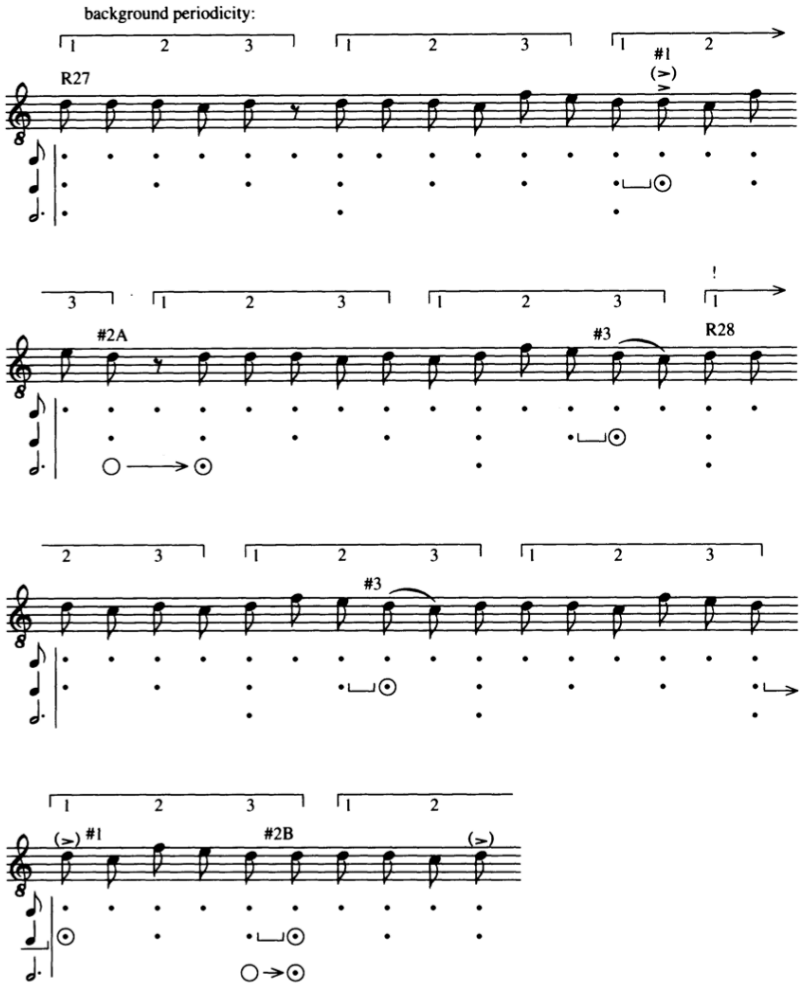
[29] Lerdahl and Jackendoff, *A Generative Theory of Tonal Music*, 8.
[30] Ibid., 37.
[31] The authors acknowledge their failure to provide an exhaustive set of preference rules for parallelism, suggesting instead for listeners to rely on their musical intuition. Ibid., 51–53.
[32] Ibid., 75.
[33] David Temperley and Christopher Bartelle, "Parallelism as a Factor in Metrical Analysis," *Music Perception* 20, no. 2 (December 1, 2002): 119.
[34] Gretchen Horlacher, "Metric Irregularity in 'Les Noces': The Problem of Periodicity," *Journal of Music Theory* 39, no. 2 (1995): 288–289.

term and symbols for *metric shift)* that account for irregularities in the metric grid at the beat level.

The method for analyzing metric shifts is illustrated in several examples from her analysis of *Les Noces*. In one passage, Stravinsky's melody introduces a motive with a distinctive metric identity that (following the grouping preference rules in *GTTM*) the listener seeks to hear in its subsequent repetitions. However, when repetitions delete or add events to the motive, the listener hears metric shifts. In Figure 2.3, which reproduces Horlacher's Example 5, two types of metric shifts are illustrated. At #1, the square bracket in the grid at the quarter-note level indicates that the unexpectedly early repetition of material from quarter-note beat 2 of the previous measure induces the listener to understand that the quarter-note beat comes an eighth note earlier than it should in a well-formed grid. Horlacher's circled dot indicates that the corresponding beat, which was expected to be only on a weak eighth, is now understood as being on the stronger quarter-note level. This reinterpretation occurs because of parallelism: each of the preceding instances of D4-C4 in the melody occurred with D aligning with a stronger beat in the grid. Furthermore, the F4 that occurred in the second motivic unit on a strong beat encourages hearing the next F4 on a strong beat. At #2A, motivic parallelism causes a different metric reinterpretation. The first statement of the motive encourages hearing its initial D4 as metrically accented, that is, as a beat at the dotted half-note level; parallelism encourages hearing a metric accent at any repetition of this motive. But the music has also established the D at the end of the F-E-D descent as metrically strong. That descent occurs again in #2A, suggesting that that moment is a strong beat. However, a quarter note later, the motive begins again with its initial D that we also want to hear as metrically strong. To hear it that way, we must imagine a delay, adding a quarter-note beat to the already displaced half-note level. Horlacher indicates this effect

by the open circle with an arrow pointing forward in time to a circled dot at the dotted half-note level.

Figure 2.3: Horlacher (1995): Example 5: Metric shifts in Stravinsky's *Les Noces*[35]



Example 5. A metrical interpretation of R27–R28

These two metric shifts, then, involve adding or subtracting beats in the hierarchy. Most crucially, the shifts are allowed to occur at levels different from those contemplated by previous studies of meter. Horlacher explains,

[35] Ibid., 99.

> [while] most theories admit breaks in periodicity at hypermetric levels, they require periodicity at the level of the beat (the tactus), corresponding with a steady pulse, and at the level of the measure, corresponding with a single time-signature designation.[36]

Other studies are similarly concerned with hypermetric irregularities, in which a metric unit is considered to *elide* (borrowing grouping terminology), or *overlap* with another metric unit, creating an irregularity in the grid. Lerdahl and Jackendoff describe this phenomenon as a *metric deletion*, in which part of a metric hierarchy has been omitted, which gives the "intuitive effect of a retrospective awareness that a metrical shift has taken place."[37] Rothstein prefers the Schenkerian term *metrical reinterpretation* to describe this phenomenon with respect to the hypermeter of a piece.[38] Horlacher's study relates to these concepts, but extends the previous theories to faster metric levels, closer to and including the tactus level. Metric irregularities in the grid of the singer-songwriter analyses in this study are either described as metric or hypermetric reinterpretations or metric shifts, but exclusively use Horlacher's analytical symbols in the grid notation.[39]

2.2.3 Entrainment and the Metric Grid

Theorists focused on meter as hierarchy are sensitive to the effects of tempo on the perception of beat levels. The theory of meter as entrainment engages the scientific research that empirically determines the perceptual limits of meter. The word *entrainment* refers to the process by which mental and physical regularities align with musical periodicities, helping to direct attention and predict the timing of subsequent event onsets. In *Hearing in Time*, Justin London summarizes the findings from a wide-ranging survey of empirical literature to define perceptual limits that we can use as

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[36] Ibid., 290.
[37] Lerdahl and Jackendoff, *A Generative Theory of Tonal Music*, 101.
[38] Rothstein, *Phrase Rhythm in Tonal Music*, 52.
[39] In this way, the term *metric shift* encompasses both metric and hypermetric reinterpretations.

guidelines for how many levels should be included in the metric hierarchy. His study proposes the range of 100 ms to 6 seconds for inter-onset intervals (IOIs) between beats as a *temporal envelope* for entrainment, peaking in perceptibility at IOIs around 500-600 ms.[40] When beats are too fast, we cannot entrain to them; too slow, and we have difficulty anticipating when the next beat will occur.[41] When listeners cannot entrain or form timing expectations, they do not perceive meter in this sense. Since meter involves multiple levels of entrainment, certain patterns of entrainment (meters) are salient only within a particular range of tempos, and depending on the tempo, different levels of the hierarchy may be perceived as tactus.

Entrainment theory is also useful not only for determining what meters are perceptually possible, but also focusing on the processes of perceiving meter, potentially showing how composers and performers often "play with our metric abilities," specifically where they "invite but then thwart" the ability to perceive a specific number of metric levels.[42] For example, London's analysis of Beethoven's Fifth Symphony demonstrates that,

> [m]eters may shift from relatively rich patterns of expectation with several additional layers of structure above and below the beat and measure to patterns of expectation that are relatively sparse, a bare-bones series of beats.[43]

In the symphony's first movement, the tactus and its subdivisions are nearly always elicited by the sounding events, but higher-level tactus groupings are discontinuous. Beethoven "never allows the listener to settle into a particular

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[40] London, *Hearing in Time*, 27.
[41] Other commentaries offer a different range for the temporal envelope. Malin, for example suggests the range of 200-2000 ms, with 370-740 ms as the preferred tactus range. He further suggests that metric experience can extend, with proper training, beyond London's six-second limit. See Yonatan Malin, *Songs in Motion*, Oxford Studies in Music Theory (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 45.
[42] London, *Hearing in Time*, 190.
[43] Ibid., 110.

meter; he constantly adds and subtracts metric levels."[44] London finds that meter "is thickest and most secure" at areas of high-level formal closure; the near absence of meter and tactus correlates with the peak of tonal and dramatic tension.[45] Metric stability and fluctuation, therefore, play an "equal role with harmony and melody in creating large-scale processes of tension and release" in shaping the larger form of the movement.[46]

These sorts of observations are relevant to singer-songwriter music, which (as we shall see) often coordinates metric irregularity with moments of narrative tension in the lyrics. In particular, this study serves as an important precedent to the analysis of metric depth in Joni Mitchell's song "The Last Time I Saw Richard," in Chapter 6. For this analysis, the depth of meter – the level of coordination between meters of the voice and accompaniment – corresponds with the song's narrative, and which character's voice is active at a given moment.

2.2.4 Timing Fluctuations

Entrainment theory also helps focus on other techniques that musicians use to affect listeners' perception of the number and continuity of metric levels: change of tempo, expressive timing, and *fermata*. These timing phenomena may be explicitly indicated by a composer or result from interpretive decisions made by the performer; of course in singer-songwriter music, these are the same individual. Lerdahl and Jackendoff state that a "certain amount of metrical inexactness is tolerated" in the presence of tempo fluctuations.[47] In other words, when performers add small temporal inflections, listeners can understand these as "local deviations" that do not break down

[44] Ibid., 111.
[45] Ibid., 119–120.
[46] Ibid., 120.
[47] Lerdahl and Jackendoff, *A Generative Theory of Tonal Music*, 70.

the grid.[48] Indeed, as Rothstein suggests, it is the *idea* of equally-spaced beats, a "hypothetical continuation of a steady tempo" against which listeners measure musical events.[49] These two attitudes are shared by other studies; for example, William Benjamin and Jonathan Kramer both separately argue that meter is tolerant to tempo variations.[50] Similarly, in passages with a *fermata*, Benjamin states that listeners experience a "kind of standing still of counting, in which the counter stops, but keeps track" of where we are in the count.[51] Despite this accommodation, Benjamin does not indicate a limit for how long the listener can stop the counter before losing metric positioning. In these cases, London's lower perceptual limit of 6 seconds might indicate where a listener is likely to lose track of the count in a moment of *fermata*. These limits create boundaries, which will prove useful in the more flexibly timed singer-songwriter repertoire.

2.2.5 Architectonicism in Rock Meter Analysis

The terminology and approaches from these important studies of meter provide a clear language with which to describe regular meter, and any irregularities, in Western art music. Indeed, Lerdahl and Jackendoff and Rothstein's approaches have been incorporated into several studies of meter in rock, particularly those concerned with phrase length irregularities. Though the metric irregularities in the singer-songwriter repertoire primarily concern metric or hypermetric shifts rather than phrase grouping, it is helpful to examine these studies of rock meter as precedents for the development of theories of meter for popular music. As we shall see, the theories applied to rock music assume a metric regularity that is often not present in the singer-songwriter repertoire,

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[48] Ibid.
[49] Rothstein, *Phrase Rhythm in Tonal Music*, 41–42.
[50] William E. Benjamin, "A Theory of Musical Meter," *Music Perception* 1, no. 4 (1984): 398; Jonathan Kramer, *The Time of Music* (New York: Schirmer Books, 1988), 99.
[51] Benjamin, "A Theory of Musical Meter," 397.

and therefore, theories associated with rock are not universally applicable in popular music analysis.

Consistent with its origins in twentieth-century dance music, rock often presents a regular 4/4 meter, "overtly iterated in the accompaniment pattern."[52] Drums usually set up regular rhythms, which in many songs uniformly mark each beat of the meter with occasional syncopation.[53] The regularity of percussion rhythms is often supported by the rhythm section (bass, guitar, keyboard, etc.), which together create a normally consistent pulse layer at the tactus level, with the regular alternation of strong and weak beats creating a multileveled structure. Repeating patterns, often called the "groove," collectively establish and sustain slower levels of pulse, giving rise to meter and hypermeter. Rock's instrumentation separates into a melody and accompaniment texture, in which the rhythm section articulates "the music's foundation, providing the metric framework against which all pitched instruments and vocals find their place" and may have more varied rhythms.[54] Indeed, several theories of rock meter treat melodic phrase and accompaniment hypermeter as separate components.

Analysis of rock rhythm plays a central role in Ken Stephenson's important survey of *What to Listen for in Rock*. He focuses especially on length of melodic phrases in relation to instrumental hypermeter. Aligning his definition of hypermeter with Rothstein's, he asserts that groups spanning four strong beats are the norm in rock and the "rigid adherence to this standard encourages the perception of hypermeter" and contributes "to the widely acknowledged perception of a natural, steady – even driving –

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[52] Nicole Biamonte, "Formal Functions of Metric Dissonance in Rock Music," *Music Theory Online* 20, no. 2 (2014): [1.4].
[53] Walter Everett, *The Foundations of Rock: From Blue Suede Shoes to Suite: Judy Blue Eyes* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 8.
[54] Ibid., 28.

beat."[55] The continuity provided by repeated four-bar hypermeasures means that vocal phrases are "free to line up with these units in a variety of ways."[56]

Stephenson's approach is well suited to his chosen repertoire, which rarely deviates from a regular groove. However, its application to genres outside of rock, particularly those with timing fluctuations, falls short of precisely describing the sensations of meter in more flexible contexts. We find a similar limitation in Walter Everett's study of phrase rhythm in the Beatles, which relies on normative four-bar units and theories of grouping structure to illustrate metric irregularities.[57]

Both Stephenson and Everett account for metric irregularities by engaging in theories of phrase structure and hypermeter and describing irregularities as overlapping phrase units or metric units. [58] Yet these studies find a similar limitation as those Horlacher cites: they operate almost exclusively on hypermetric levels (or at the level of phrase grouping) and provide no tools or language with which to analyze irregularities in the metric grid closer to the tactus. As a result, this study will draw instead on Horlacher's theory of metric shift and parallelism to illustrate the kinds of metrical reinterpretations that occur in examples from the singer-songwriter repertoire that can be analyzed with a metric grid.

One such example is Joni Mitchell's "A Case of You," which features a metrical reinterpretation similar to those Horlacher examined in *Les Noces*. Figure 2.4 illustrates this passage (0:40-1:04) and the following analysis will serve to clarify the terminology

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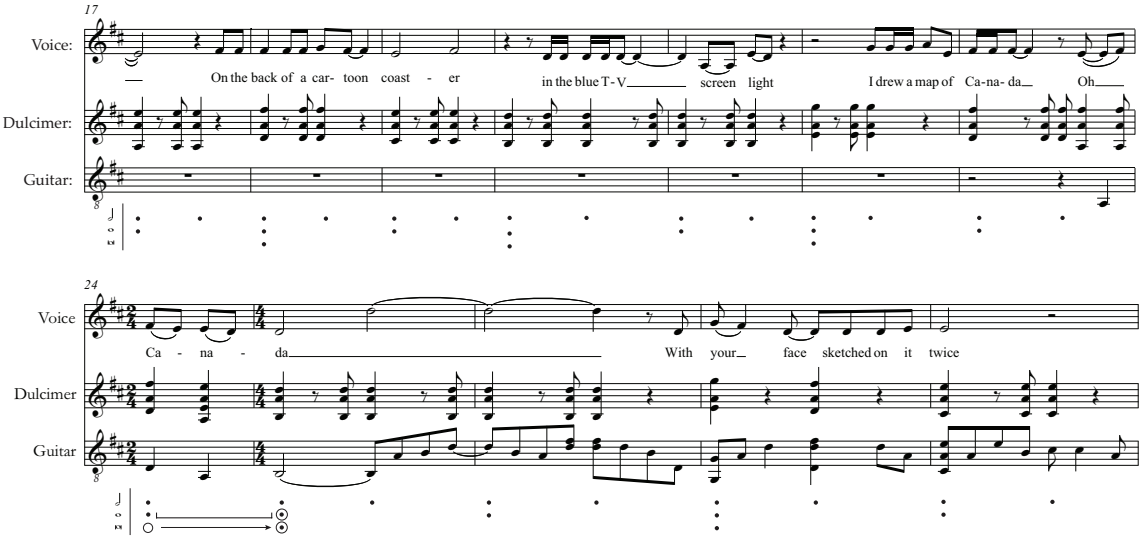
[55] Ken Stephenson, *What to Listen for in Rock* (Yale University Press, 2002), 5.
[56] Ibid.
[57] Everett, "Any Time At All: The Beatles' Free Phrase Rhythms."
[58] Looking closely at Stephenson and Everett's analyses, it would likely confuse a student of meter that both authors use phrase structural terminology (like *elision*) to describe metric irregularities rather than overlaps at grouping boundaries. Adding to this confusion, Everett proposes the term *enjambment* as the simultaneous ending of a phrase with the beginning of the next, which seems somewhat equivalent to Stephenson's definition of elision as what a meter theorist would label metrical reinterpretation. See Ibid., 193; Stephenson, *What to Listen for in Rock*, 17.

used in the present study for dealing with added and removed beats (metric shifts) to the metric hierarchy. The grid below the staff includes three metric levels, the slowest of which initially spans two of the notated measures. These two-bar hypermeasures arise from patterns of rhythm and chord change in Mitchell's dulcimer accompaniment. This metric layer is maintained through mm. 18-23, so that the listener would expect a breve-level hyperdownbeat in m. 24, coinciding with a vocal stress on the first syllable of "Canada." However, no chord change occurs there, unlike at all preceding hyperdownbeats. Rather, a half note later, on the final syllable of "Canada" in m. 25, a confluence of factors cause a metrical reinterpretation of this moment as a strong hyperbeat.

Figure 2.4: Mitchell, "A Case of You," metrical reinterpretation[59]



Harmonic change now appears, supporting the arrival of a durationally- and dynamically-accented tonic scale degree after a descent from scale-degrees 3 and 2 in the melody. Moreover, an added guitar part enters in m. 23, with a bass line that sounds like an anacrusis to the downbeat of m. 25. Any breve-level hyperdownbeat the listener might imagine at m. 24 is overridden by the subsequent, more accented hyperdownbeat in m.

[59] Joni Mitchell, *Blue* (Reprise, 1971).

25. Following Horlacher's analytical notation, the empty circle in m. 24 indicates the expected hyperdownbeat based on the metric structure leading to this measure. An arrow points to the encircled dot at the same level in m. 25 to indicate the reinterpreted hyperdownbeat a half note later, as if a half-note duration was added to this level of the metric structure. As a result of this hypermetric reinterpretation, the next lowest level of structure (the whole-note level) must also be reinterpreted to satisfy Lerdahl and Jackendoff's second well-formedness rule.[60]

2.2.6 Metric Analysis and Song Lyrics

This analysis follows Horlacher's model in describing these metric shifts as metrical reinterpretations but clarifies further, as she also does, whether the irregular structure results from added or deleted beats at a particular level. In the analytical chapters that follow, I will show how these irregularities support the prosodic structure and narrative content of the lyrics. Similar interpretive claims are made in the analysis of rock music; Nicole Biamonte, for example, finds a link between meter change and programmatic function of the text in some examples from rock.[61] However, there is also a strong case to be made for connecting meter and lyrics in the singer-songwriter repertoire where composition and lyric writing are focused on personal expression. This is also true for the related genre of country music, in which narrative paradigms and self-expression motivate metric irregularities.[62] Jocelyn Neal examines these features in the music of several country songwriters, arguing that manipulations of song structure contribute to the overall sound of an individual performer. Different artists' use of metric

[60] Lerdahl and Jackendoff, *A Generative Theory of Tonal Music*, 69.
[61] Biamonte, "Formal Functions of Metric Dissonance in Rock Music," [7.8].
[62] This is true also for the art songs studied by Krebs, in which hypermetric structures are interpreted to serve the expression of the poetry. See, for example, Krebs, "Hypermeter and Hypermetric Irregularity in the Songs of Josephine Lang"; Harald Krebs, "Text-Expressive Functions of Metrical Dissonance in the Songs of Hugo Wolf," *Musicologica Austraica* 26 (2007): 125–36; Harald Krebs, "The Expressive Role of Rhythm and Meter in Schumann's Late Lieder," *Gamut* 2, no. 1 (2009): 267–98.

irregularities reflects "the singer's sense of humor, approach to storytelling, and role in relation to the combined musical ensemble."[63]

Neal's study provides an important model for analysis of singer-songwriter music in that she uncovers the expressive impact of these kinds of metric manipulations with reference to the lyrics. To her model, the present study add consideration beyond the textual narrative to the prosodic structure of the text (the patterns of strong and weak syllables, discussed further in Section 2.4) as contributing to an understanding of meter, and at times providing motivation for irregularities. In "A Case of You," for example, the metrical reinterpretation occurring in the passage in Figure 2.4 seems to be motivated by a supplemental but emotionally central line in the stanza. Figure 2.5 illustrates the final five lines of the stanza, in which the much shorter fourth line is syntactically redundant, seeming to function as an emotional interpolation for a lyrical exclamation of patriotism.

Figure 2.5: Mitchell, "A Case of You," lyrics: end of stanza 1

On the back of a cartoon coaster
In the blue TV screen light
I drew a map of Canada
Oh Canada
With your face sketched on it twice

In these lines, Mitchell connects a sentiment for Canada with the twice-sketched face of "you," the addressee (and presumed object of our narrator's love), and the lines narrate a moment of heightened awareness emerging from the poignant superimposition of two powerfully nostalgic images. The metrical setting demonstrates how the expressive priorities of the vocal line (highlighting the structure and meaning of the text) can provide impetus for disrupting a prevailing hypermeter. The analytical chapters of this dissertation explore these features of the singer-songwriter, examining the alteration of otherwise regular metric grids as an expressive device in this music.

[63] Neal, "Songwriter's Signature, Artist's Imprint," 113.

2.3 Meter as Process

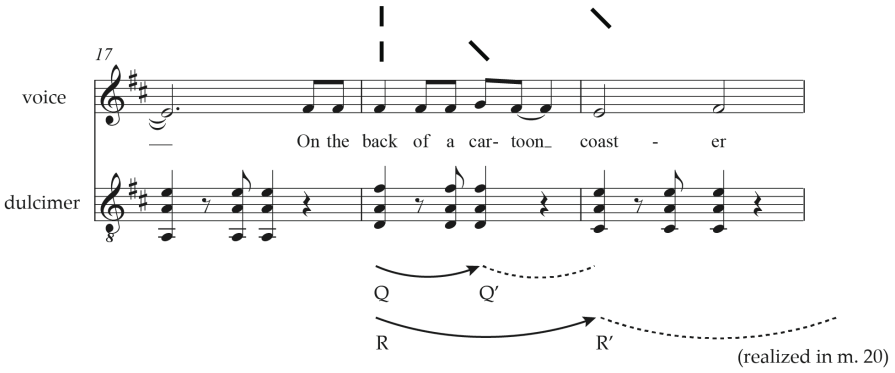
One of the distinctive features of the singer-songwriter repertoire, the self-expression of the performer/composer, is often manifested through rhythms so flexible that they cannot be reconciled with a conception of meter based on regularity and hierarchy. Viewing meter as process provides a way of describing and finding purpose for these more flexible passages. Such a view is expounded in Christopher Hasty's *Meter as Rhythm*, which developed from his dissatisfaction with theories of meter that mark time as durationless and "inherently discontinuous" dots or beats on a grid.[64] He defines meter instead as a creative process of continually unfolding durations and durational projections. Thus his theory stands as an alternative to concepts of metrical grids while still accommodating the listener expectations that are a concern of entrainment theory.

Projection is the fundamental process of meter as Hasty theorizes it. In projection, the listener attends to the *potential* of a duration to be reproduced by the next emerging duration. The onset of the referential duration functions as a *beginning*, symbolized in a score analysis by a |. At a certain point, often at the next onset, the listener decides that the presently unfolding duration is complete, and the duration becomes *projective*. A projective duration is indicated by a solid curved arrow pointing from the outset (the beginning) to its completion. The potential reproduction of this duration, a *projected duration*, is shown as a dotted curved line extending from (and conceived as coming into cognition at) the moment of completion, when the initial duration becomes past. In Figure 2.6, which comprises mm. 17 to 19 of Joni Mitchell's "A Case of You," a series of projections begins at the downbeat of m. 18. The solid arrow marked Q below the staff indicates a projective half-note duration from the beginning (|) at the word "back," completed at the onset of the first syllable of "cartoon." The projected reproduction of this Q duration is shown as the dotted-line Q'. The projective potential of

[64] Christopher Hasty, *Meter as Rhythm* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 57.

a duration is considered to be *realized* when a new beginning occurs "whose durational potential is determined by the now past first event."[65] And we can see that Figure 2.6 shows the Q' duration realized (where the dotted line ends) by the onset of "coast-."

Figure 2.6: Mitchell, "A Case of You," process-based analysis



When the second duration (Q') is realized and it seems to function to continue a still-active first duration, the onset of Q' is considered a *continuation*, symbolized as \. This continuation represents a decision "not to end or a decision against making a new beginning that would make the first beginning past or inactive."[66] If this is the case, as it is in Figure 2.6, the first beginning at Q is considered the *dominant beginning* of the two and the continuation at Q' functions to keep this dominant beginning active as the initiation of a longer duration, R, that continues to accumulate beyond the Q duration, with its own projected duration, R'.

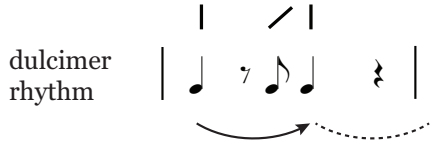
In the event that a third beginning occurs that also does not function as a dominant beginning, but rather as a further continuation of the dominant beginning already active, a special type of continuation, a *deferral* occurs. The symbol for deferral (- \) is added to the beginning and continuation symbols as part of the same projection, creating the symbols | \ - \ above the staff. For Hasty, this process is characteristic of

[65] Ibid., 84.
[66] Ibid., 104.

triple meters, where the first beat acts as a beginning, the second as a continuation, and the third as a deferral of the projective potential to the next downbeat.[67]

Hasty distinguishes another type of continuation, the *anacrusis*, using the symbol /, which leads to a dominant beginning. Continuations occur in relation to a prior beginning; anacruses point forward to a subsequent beginning. For example, the eighth note from the dulcimer rhythm in Figure 2.6 functions as an anacrusis (/) to the next half note beginning (|). This relationship is illustrated with the symbols above the rhythms in Figure 2.7.

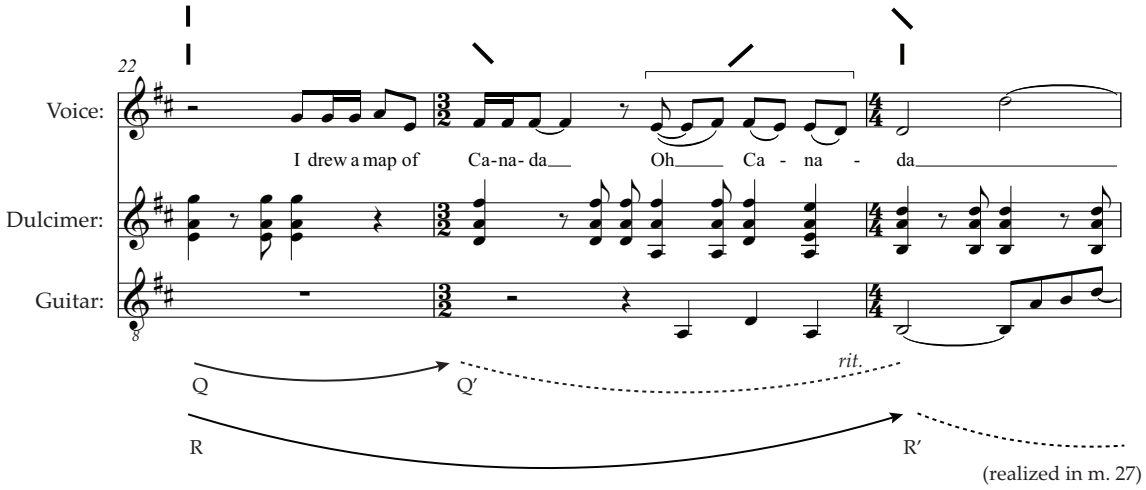
Figure 2.7: Mitchell, "A Case of You," dulcimer rhythm analysis



In some cases, multiple durations together function as anacruses, in what Hasty calls an "anacrustic group."[68] In a later passage from "A Case of You," shown as Figure 2.8, the bracketed events in m. 23 comprise an anacrustic group leading to the dominant beginning in m. 24. In this particular analysis, the extended anacrusis lengthens the duration between the continuation in m. 23 and the next dominant beginning in m. 24. The 2/4 measure from Figure 2.4 that was part of a metrical reinterpretation, has been interpreted here as part of a 3/2 measure. This metrically irregular passage is reimagined through Hasty's theory as a process in which the listener accepts a duration longer than Q as the realization of its projected potential. In other words, the "extra" beats function to delay the eventual arrival of the final syllable of "Canada" in m. 24 of Figure 2.8. The *rit*. symbol above the Q' arrow indicates the listener's ability to understand Q' as an extended Q duration, as if the time within the Q' duration has slowed down.

[67] Ibid., 133.
[68] Ibid., 127.

Figure 2.8: Mitchell, "A Case of You," metrical reinterpretation reimagined as a metric process



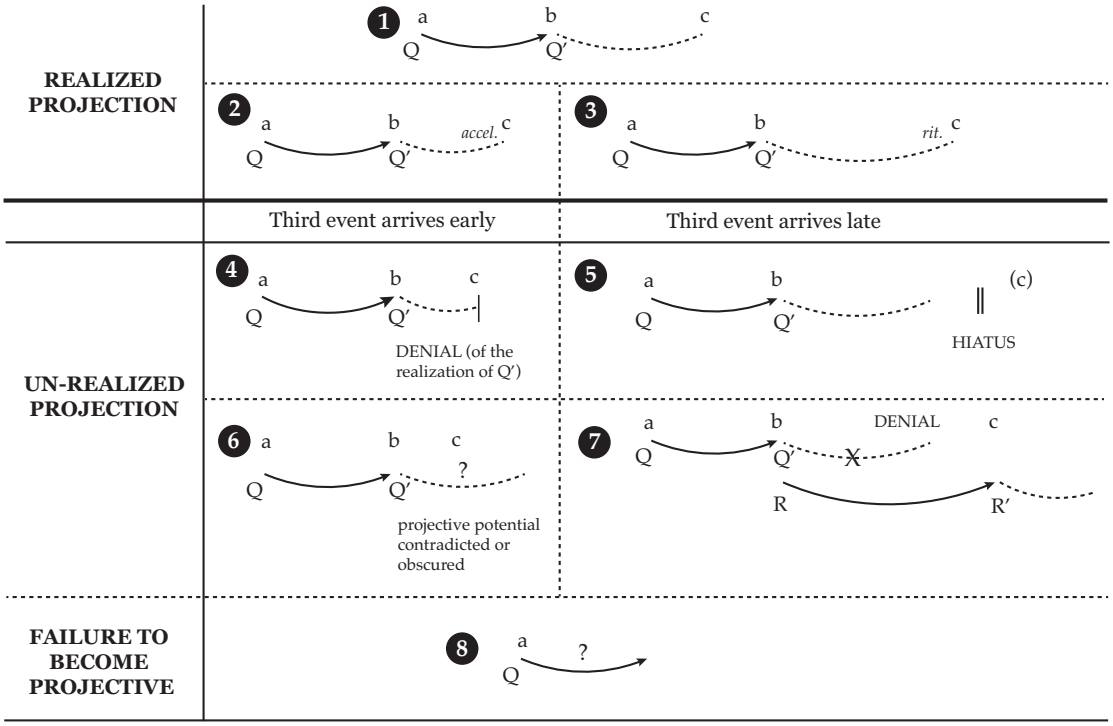
Using these three types of functions – beginning, continuation, and anacrusis – Hasty's theory allows for comparisons of durations in time that need not be equal. The tradition of associating meter with clock time gives the impression that it might run "unperturbed, continually and uniformly measuring" and implying scientific ideas of periodic time "that are incompatible with our intuitions of rhythm."[69] Although we have examined the various ways the architectonic theory accounts for timing fluctuations, the theory of projection allows for comparisons of time spans in which the durations may be felt as reproductions without being precisely equal according to the clock. This is especially important for the singer-songwriter repertoire, which frequently demonstrates these kinds of flexible, and sometimes perceptually equivalent durations.

A benefit of Hasty's theory is its ability to precisely describe the sensations of extremes in flexible timing and other metric irregularities. Drawing on Hasty's figures 7.1

[69] Ibid., 5–6.

to 7.4, Figure 2.9 summarizes the symbols and terminology for flexible timing and unrealized metric projections that are used in Chapters 4-7 in this dissertation.[70]

Figure 2.9: Summary of Hasty symbols used in this study



The top two rows of Figure 2.9 (comprising examples 1-3) illustrate metric projections that we can hear as realized, with the uppermost row illustrating three events (a, b, and c) that create two isochronous durations. When tempos accelerate across two durations, we can feel the decreasing time span between beginnings. If this time span is within the perceptual limits for entrainment, we are likely to hear the projection at (2), in which Q' is realized through an *accelerando*, as indicated above the dotted arrow. If the tempo slows, an increased time span can be heard to be a realized projected duration through a

[70] Adapted from John Roeder, "Durational Projection in World Music: Some Analytical Applications," paper presented at the Society for Music Analysis Conference, Keele, UK, July 2015.

ritardando.[71] For situations (1), (2), and (3), we can describe Q' as reproducing the Q duration.

In extreme, unexpected cases, it is possible to hear a beginning (represented here as the third event c) arriving "too soon" or "too late." In the case that the event arrives too soon, there are two possible outcomes, shown as (4) and (6) in Figure 2.9. In case (4), the new beginning, c, is heard to interrupt the previous projection, rather than accelerate a previous projection.[72] In scenario (6), c arrives so early that the projected Q' is contradicted or obscured, as indicated by the question mark above the dotted line.

As event onsets increase in time span, extreme cases result in a hiatus, shown as case (5), in which the anticipated event arrives too late and the listener hears a break "between the realization of projected potential and a new beginning."[73] A hiatus is symbolized as ||, and in many cases is followed by the expected third event, shown as (c) in the figure. Another possible outcome of event c arriving late is the denial of Q' being realized, indicated with an "X" over the Q' arrow in case (7). In many such cases, the duration between b and c is heard as a new projected duration, shown in the figure as R.

The final row illustrates the symbols used when a duration fails to become projective. This occurs as a result of the event a not being followed by event b, thereby being unrealized as a projective duration. I show this using a question mark above the solid arrow.

2.3.1 Anacrusis and Syncopation: Meter as Process in Popular Music

To the symbols discussed above, we will also add several aspect of Hasty's theory that have proven important for the analysis of meter in popular music. Foremost on this

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[71] Hasty uses the term *rallentando* for decreasing tempos, however my preference, *ritardando,* will be used throughout this dissertation. For example, see Hasty, *Meter as Rhythm*, 89.
[72] We can understand (4) as a more extreme case of (2), indicated by its placement in the same column in the figure.
[73] Hasty, *Meter as Rhythm*, 88.

list is Hasty's concept of "projective reinterpretation" that becomes an essential component of Matthew Butterfield's study of anacrusis in groove-based popular music. For Hasty, an initial beginning, continuation or anacrusis function can be reinterpreted, so that, for example, an event that seems to function as a continuation can be reinterpreted as a beginning, symbolized as \ → |.[74] Butterfield modifies this symbology to illustrate the ability for an anacrusis to "function projectively for the ensuing downbeat," whether that downbeat occurs as an actual or "virtual" articulation.[75] Doing this allows Butterfield to accommodate syncopations, analogously to Temperley's "syncopation shift," filling in for a dominant beginning not actually articulated.[76] Robin Attas cites Butterfield's "virtual articulation" of dominant beginnings in her related study of metric process in groove-based music, stating that, "[o]f course, in many popular music textures, the beginning will in fact be articulated by a new attack in some other instrument."[77] However, for the self-accompanied singer-songwriter repertoire in this dissertation, that is unlikely to be true. Indeed, in songs like Buffy Sainte-Marie's "Winter Boy," which will be considered in Chapter 4, there are multiple instances of virtual articulations. Butterfield's symbol, modified in that analysis as / → (|), with parentheses indicating a dominant beginning not sounding, accounts for syncopations even in non-groove-based music.

Like Butterfield's, the present study examines the timing of metric projections in milliseconds. This helps to define a therefore a threshold for accommodating flexible time spans – giving specific values to the conceptions of "too soon" or "too late" – before

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[74] Ibid., 120.
[75] Butterfield, "The Power of Anacrusis: Engendered Feeling in Groove-Based Musics," [25].
[76] Ibid.; David Temperley, "Syncopation in Rock: A Perceptual Perspective," *Popular Music* 18, no. 1 (1999): 19–40.
[77] Attas, "Meter as Process in Groove-Based Popular Music," 66.

a projection is disrupted. Again, we rely on the values provided in London's 'temporal envelope' to denote the limits of this threshold.

2.4 Poetic Meter: Prosody and Textual Stress

We have seen that in some moments of Joni Mitchell's "The Fiddle and the Drum" durations are so variable that it is difficult to measure them with respect to a metric grid and even to hear the realization of durational projections. These seemingly meterless time spans are a distinctive feature of the singer-songwriter repertoire that is the focus of this dissertation. In these passages, attending to the syllabic and accentual structure of the lyrics may guide the listener towards hearing grid or processive meter.

In order to understand prosodic stress in the lyrics, it will benefit us to investigate theories of prosody and poetic meter and studies that apply these theories to song. *Poetic meter* can be conceived as an organization of the "phonological and prosodic structures" of text analogous to how musical sounds are organized in time.[78] Indeed, Derek Attridge suggests that analyzing poetic structure is an account of the "movement of meaningful sounds through time."[79] His definition of meter and beat in poetry are similar to some of the musical explanations examined earlier. He states,

> Meter – whether in music or poetry – is a way of *organizing* rhythm that gives it special *regularity* and *strength*…Every rhythm involves a sequence of energy pulses, of peaks and falls, but as we have seen, when a certain level of regularity and patterning of movement is achieved, the strong pulses become *beats*. Beats in turn reinforce the rhythm, marshaling the elements into clearly defined and measureable sequences.[80]

Attridge's definition aligns with that of musical meter, in which the regularity of a pattern of beats defines measurable rhythmic and metric patterns. Poetic and

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[78] Fred Lerdahl, "The Sounds of Poetry Viewed as Music," *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences* 930, no. 1 (2001): 337.
[79] Derek Attridge, *Poetic Rhythm: An Introduction* (Cambridge University Press, 1995), 11.
[80] Ibid.

musical meter function to set up expectations for the reader and listener, acting as "comparable arrangements of contrasting elements."[81]

In a grid-based conception of musical meter, the elements being organized are patterns of strong and weak beats. The poetic analogs are stresses, the fundamental elements of poetic organization. English is a Germanic language in which "stresses provide the main markers of regular rhythm."[82] In theories of *prosody* (the pattern of rhythm and sound in poetry), *stress* is often synonymous with *accent*, and stressed syllables are sometimes referred to as *accented syllables*.[83] To identify the meter of a poem is to *scan* it, and the act of scanning (*scansion*) involves uncovering the basic rhythmic structure of a poetic line or group of lines. In strict poetic meter, each *foot* (the basic metrical unit) typically contains two or three syllables, at least one of which will be stressed. Stressed syllables have *metrical accent* when they receive more emphasis that surrounding stressed syllables.[84]

There are several studies that apply these principles of poetic meter to the analysis of nineteenth-century German Lied, examining the relationship between the meter of German lyric poetry and the meter of its musical setting. Yonatan Malin's book, *Songs in Motion*, provides a taxonomy of likely musical settings of different poetic meters (trimeter, tetrameter, etc.), comparing different *declamatory schemas* (or settings) between compositions in this genre.[85] In a related approach, Harald Krebs *basic rhythm of declamation* (BRD), which proposes a series of musical rhythms – with their accentual and durational components – to represent the rhythms we would aurally

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[81] Chantal Lemire, "At the 'Crossroads': The Interaction Between Speech Rhythm and Musical Rhythm in Tom Waits's Spoken-Word Song" (M.A. Thesis, University of British Columbia, 2013), 54; Malin, *Songs in Motion*, 9.
[82] Attridge, *Poetic Rhythm: An Introduction*, 37.
[83] Ibid., 26.
[84] Timothy Steele, *All the Fun's In How You Say a Thing: An Explanation of Meter and Versification* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 1999), 32.
[85] Malin, *Songs in Motion*, 13–31.

perceive as a poem is recited.[86] It is against this BRD that Krebs examines any distortions in a given musical setting.[87] Both approaches rely to some extent on the regularity of poetic meter, or an imagined prototype of regularity, against which they can measure metric distortions and their expressive effect.[88]

The singer-songwriter repertoire, however, would be particularly limited by such an approach, since many lyrics, especially those by Mitchell, do not exhibit such regularity. Furthermore, the lyrics exist primarily as part of the musical setting – though some published lyric volumes are available – and readings of poetic meter would, for those familiar with the recordings, be influenced by dynamic accents in voice and accompaniment. Throughout this study, we will consider stress patterns of song lyrics independent of the performance only as a step in the comparison of these stresses with those in the musical setting.[89] In other words, singer-songwriter lyrics are treated as one aspect that can contribute to a reading of musical meter, rather than as texts independent of their musical setting.

To scan lyrical stress patterns, we may draw from additional studies of poetic meter to build a scansion procedure for the singer-songwriter repertoire. One option

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[86] Harald Krebs, "Fancy Footwork: Distortions of Poetic Rhythm in Robert Schumann's Late Lieder," *Indiana Theory Review* 28 (2010): 69.
[87] Ibid.; Harald Krebs, "Treading Robert Schumann's New Path: Understanding Declamation in the Late Lieder through Analysis and Recomposition," *Music Theory Online* 20, no. 4 (2014).
[88] Similar findings can be found in other studies of vocal music; see William Rothstein, "Metrical Theory in Verdi's Midcentury Operas," *Dutch Journal of Music Theory* 16, no. 2 (2011); William Rothstein, "National Metric Types in Music of 19th and Early," in *Communication in Eighteenth-Century Music*, ed. Danuta Mirka and Kofi Agawu (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008); Deborah Stein, *Engaging Music* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005); Deborah Stein and Robert Spillman, *Poetry Into Song* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996); Yonatan Malin, "Metric Analysis and the Metaphor of Energy: A Way into Selected Songs by Wolf and Schoenberg," *Music Theory Spectrum* 30, no. 1 (2008): 61–87; Yonatan Malin, "Metric Displacement Dissonance and Romantic Longing in the German Lied," *Music Analysis* 25, no. 3 (2006): 251–88; Susan Youens, "Poetic Rhythm and Musical Metre in Schubert's 'Winterreise,'" *Music and Letters* 65, no. 1 (1984): 28–40.
[89] This is, indeed, the case for many of the Mitchell song analyses in Chapter 6.

follows studies like that of John Halle and Fred Lerdahl, to create a prosodic *stress grid*, similar to those in the architectonic view of musical meter, to illustrate the hierarchy of stress in text.[90] The lowest level of such a grid consists of a stream of syllables that at the next higher level would be organized into a pattern of strong and weak syllables. The grid provided in Figure 2.10 scans the syllables and levels of stress in the first line of lyrics for The Clancy Brothers and Tommy Makem song "The Parting Glass," the Irish folk song on which Dylan's song "Restless Farewell," from *The Times They Are A-Changin'* (1964) is based.

Figure 2.10: The Clancy Brothers and Tommy Makem, "The Parting Glass," lyrical prosodic stress grid, line 1

						X			line (2)
	X		X			X		X	line (1)
X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	line (0)
Oh	all	the	mon-	ey	that	e'er	I	spent	

The lowest line of "X" symbols places a mark above each syllable in the line. This corresponds to the level Halle and Lerdahl call "line (0)."[91] this level is rarely discussed in the analytical chapters of this study, but constitutes an important step in determining relative syllable stress.

The next level of the grid, line (1), aligns an "X" with the stronger syllables of the line. In polysyllabic words, the mark is placed on the strongest syllable(s), referred to as the *main stress* and, if present, *secondary stress*.[92] The Xs on line (1) in the interpretation of Fig. 2.10 on the monosyllabic words "all," "e'er" (the contraction of "ever"), and "spent" denote that their stresses are stronger than the

[90] See John Halle and Fred Lerdahl, "A Generative Textsetting Model," *Current Musicology* 55 (1993): 5–9. See also Lerdahl, "The Sounds of Poetry Viewed as Music."
[91] Halle and Lerdahl, "A Generative Textsetting Model," 5.
[92] Attridge, *Poetic Rhythm: An Introduction*, 28–29.

other monosyllables.[93] The other line (1) stress, on the first syllable of "money," naturally arises from its pronunciation in speech. This scansion thus identifies an iambic (weak-strong) stress relationship (*foot*) between "Oh" and "all," followed by an amphibrach (weak-strong-weak), then by two iambs "that e'er" and "I spent." The uppermost level, line (2), interprets "all" and "e'er" as stronger stresses relative to the other stressed syllables. Other readings of the prosodic structure outside of the performance are possible, but this interpretation most closely matches the performed dynamic stresses of the vocal line in the Clancy Brothers recording.[94]

We can apply the same analytical method to one of Dylan's versions of the song.[95] The lyrics for the studio recording of "Restless Farewell," are scanned in Figure 2.11.

Figure 2.11: Dylan, "Restless Farewell," lyrical prosodic stress grid, line 1

	X							X						line (3)
	X		X					X				X		line (2)
	X		X			X		X		X		X		line (1)
X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		line (0)

Oh all the mon-ey that in my whole life I did spend

Lines (0) and (1) show the basic prosodic stress pattern, informed by Dylan's performance. The Xs on the next line, (2), though, are placed to be consistent with Dylan's recording, which places dynamic stresses on the words "all," mon-" "whole" and "spend," with particular emphasis on "all" and "whole," but not on "in" or "I." The

[93] Placing the stress on "spent" rather than "I" prioritizes having a weak syllable between each stressed syllable at line (1). A stress on "I" would yield two Xs in a row at this level.
[94] See "The Parting Glass" on The Clancy Brothers and Tommy Makem, *Come Fill Your Glass With Us* (Tradition, 1959).
[95] There are other recordings of "Restless Farewell" that feature different meter(s) from the studio recording. Two such examples include a performance on QuestTV from 1964, which never settles into a regular meter, and a 1998 performance at Frank Sinatra's 80th birthday tribute in straight 4/4. (Unauthorized recordings and videos of both performances can be found online.) A comparison of such recordings will not be conducted in this study; we will focus instead on the recording on *The Times They Are A-Changin'*, since it is likely the most widely disseminated of Dylan's versions of the song.

resulting grid does not make such a clear delineation of feet as "The Parting Glass" lyrics do.

We find this sort of irregularity occurring in the scansion of other singer-songwriter lyrics. The solution offered throughout this dissertation is to scan for an alternation of lexical (corresponding most often to a line (1) scan) and phonological phrase (most often aligning with line (2) stresses) stresses without requiring a perfectly regular hierarchy, but informed by phenomenal accents in performance, and an awareness of speech pronunciation. Any irregularities in prosodic structure or musical meter would be an important discussion point in analysis. Figure 2.12 demonstrates this approach in an analysis of stress in the first four lines of Dylan's lyrics to "Restless Farewell."

Figure 2.12: Dylan, "Restless Farewell," lyric stress diagram, lines 1-4

Oh **all** the mon-ey that in my **whole** life I did spend
Be it mine right or **wrong**-ful-ly
I **let** it slip glad-ly **to** my friends
To **tie** up the time most **force**-ful-ly[96]

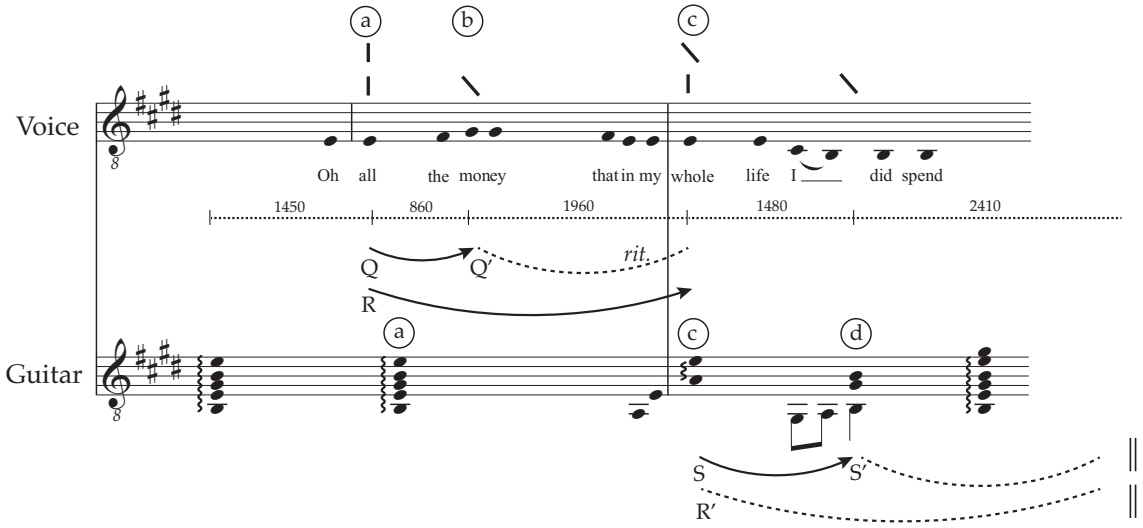
Underlined syllables indicate stresses that correspond to the lexically stressed layer of the stress grid; bold face syllables illustrate stronger phonological phrase stresses relative to the lexical stresses. This analysis represents Dylan's performance stress while also maintaining as regular a stress pattern as possible to match the regularity of the lyrical source material. Since Dylan does not place dynamic stress on the word "in" in his performance, no indications are made on the diagram to place a stress on that word. The word "mine" receives an unexpected dynamic accent in Dylan's vocal line, which disrupts

[96] The lyrics have been transcribed from the studio recording, differing slightly from those published in lyric volumes and on Dylan's official website. Bob Dylan, *The Times They Are a-Changin'* (Columbia, 1964); Bob Dylan, *Lyrics: 1962-2001* (Simon & Schuster, 2004); Bob Dylan, "Restless Farewell by Bob Dylan," www.bobdylan.com/us/songs/restless-farewell, accessed November 26, 2014.

the regular stress pattern of the lyrics, marking this possessive word for narrative attention.

Such coordination or conflict of prosodic and phenomenal stress patterns provides important cues for hearing musical meter in Dylan's performance of "Restless Farewell" that it overrides extreme variations in timing.[97] To illustrate, Figure 2.13 analyzes the projective meter of the first line of the song (0:00-8:09).[98] (It will be considered again in Chapter 7.)

Figure 2.13: Dylan, "Restless Farewell," line 1[99]



It shows how prosodic stresses initially guide the listener's sense of durational reproduction despite an extreme timing differentiation between the 860 ms Q duration

[97] The term *prosodic stress* is used here, and throughout this study, as refer to the latent stresses of the lyrics as coordinated with phenomenal accents in the vocal line. When vocal stresses occur on un-stressed lyrical syllables it is often used to emphasize particular words in the lyrical narrative.
[98] To determine the interonset interval values, here and in subsequent examples, I used the transcription software *Transcribe!*, which is similar to Audacity in that it includes a waveform illustration and includes timings to the nearest millisecond. For ease of comparison, I rounded each IOI value to the nearest 10 ms. For reference on how to measure IOIs, see Nicholas Cook and Daniel Leech-Wilkinson, "A Musicologist's Guide to Sonic Visualiser," London: Centre for the History and Analysis of Recorded Music, accessed September 23, 2015, http://www.charm.rhul.ac.uk/analysing/p9_1.html.
[99] Bob Dylan, *The Times They Are a-Changin'* (Columbia, 1964).

and the 1960 ms IOI for Q'.[100] The strong vocal stresses in this passage initiate projective durations Q, R, and S, until the final stress, which is provided not by the voice, but by the guitar chord at (d). This kind of hearing asks the listener to attend to different streams to maximize durational reproduction. Beginning and continuation symbols indicate the projective function and hierarchy of these stresses.[101] The dominant beginnings at "all" and "whole" make a metric connection between these semantically related adverbs, emphasized further by the *ritardando* leading to the onset of "whole," the arrival of which is strengthened by a simultaneous attack in the guitar. The listener is guided through this passage without knowing what "in [his] whole life" the narrator did with "all the money" until the final verb arrives, delayed from the guitar's metrically functional final stress in a somewhat regretful confession. The hiatus that ends this segment dramatically interrupts the meter before Dylan continues his confession, admitting in the next line that the money may have been his "right or wrongfully."

Artists like Bob Dylan and Joni Mitchell, and their contemporaries, demonstrate more extreme cases of this kind of expressive timing that challenges regular meter, and do so setting lyrics that manifest the irregular stress patterns of speech rather than strict poetic rhythm. In looser poetic forms, or speech-like lyrics, scansion involves locating the stressed syllables and relatively more stressed syllables of each line of text, rather than analyzing poetic feet. As we have seen in the analysis of "Restless Farewell" an awareness of these stresses, coordinated (or not) with the vocal and instrumental lines can provide important cues for hearing metrical processes in these flexibly timed musical contexts.

[100] Further rationale for this analytical decision is provided in Chapter 7, in the discussion of Figure 7.3.
[101] A more detailed analysis can be found in section 7.1 Folk Sources and Dylan's "Restless Farewell".

2.5 Aspects of Meter and their Application in Analysis

We have thus far examined three different ways of understanding meter in music with text. Architectonic theories explain how listeners orient to a fully realized structure of multiple levels of periodically reinforced beats, in addition to explaining the hierarchal nature of that structure, the accuracy with which listeners measure timings, and how listeners are affected by the perceptual constraints on their ability to entrain to those levels. But according to theories of meter as process, measurement can and does happen over shorter timespans without such a hierarchical grid; to hear meter is to evaluate how to set up, support, or modify the immediate reproduction of duration. Theories of textual prosody, while not typically concerned with measuring and comparing durations, also treat successions of sounds as stress patterns. Prosody provides an additional input for meter analysis that helps to account for different types of measuring in a single repertoire.[102] Together, these theories account for any amount of metric engagement that a listener might have with a song.

In order to sense meter of whatever kind and strength, listeners attend to four aspects of the song. In one mode of attending they notice stress, the markings of particular moments for attention by any kind of phenomenal accents: musically through durational, dynamic or contour accents, motivic repetition, harmonic change, melodic contour, etc.; and textually through lexical and phonological syllable stresses. In sparse musical textures, changes of harmony are particularly salient markers of stress, often coordinating with prosodic stresses to indicate hyperbeats or hyperdownbeats. Parallel grouping structures reinforce stress patterns between repeated groups, and non-parallel grouping structures create ambiguous or noteworthy unexpected stresses or interactions.

Secondly, on the basis of this primary mode of stress attention, listeners may attend to patterns of stress, or to durations between stresses, to the limits of perception.

[102] Rockwell, "Time on the Crooked Road," 58.

Perceiving the duration between two stresses (according to Hasty's theory), we may project its reproduction even without a referential pulse to measure it. This type of measuring is active whether or not the potential is realized and involves a distinction between the functions of beginnings, some dominant and some continuative.

The third aspect of meter is operative to the extent that durational projections are realized. If two or more consecutive durations are heard as equal, the listener can typically entrain to a beat layer containing three or more beats. The fourth mode of attending is that in which the listener groups isochronous pulses into strong and weak beats that are transformed into a hierarchy when the strong beats in the groups themselves emerge as a hierarchically higher isochronous layer. As the number of perceptible beat layers increases, the hierarchy is more fully formed and reinforced above and below a perceptible tactus. This hierarchy requires only two beat layers; however, more salient grids will contain as many layers as possible within London's defined metric envelope. The table in Figure 2.14 summarizes these four modes of metrical attention, arranging them with the most basic mode, the perception of stress, at the bottom to the most structured, a metric hierarchy of beats, at the top.

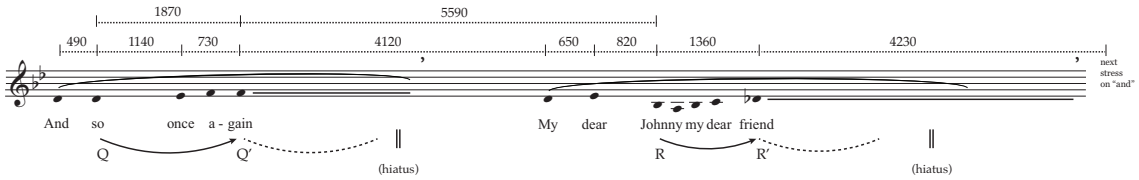
Figure 2.14: Aspects of Meter[103]

ASPECT OF METER	FEATURES
Metric Hierarchy of Beats	▪ Periodically-reinforced layers of strong and weak beats ▪ Perceptually isochronous ▪ Containing two or more levels of structure
Pulse	▪ Pattern of equally-spaced stresses ▪ Single layer of structure
Durational Reproduction	▪ Perceptible durations between stresses ▪ Durations have the potential for reproduction
Stress	▪ Intensified events (musical and/or textual) within a musical texture

[103] It may also be possible to understand another aspect of meter between "pulse" and "metric hierarchy" that can create hierarchy when stress patterns are regular and hierarchical, but that, when they are not, creates non-hierarchic patterns of accentuation on the pulse stream.

Having now explained the four aspects of meter, I return to the analysis of "The Fiddle and the Drum" to demonstrate how Mitchell deploys all of them strategically in the first verse. The two prosodic stresses ("so" and "-gain"), articulated by text stress and dynamic accent in the voice, mark off a specific time span (in the introduction, I call this the *original time span*), the chronometric duration of which is indicated above the staff in Figure 2.15 as 1870 ms.

Figure 2.15: Mitchell, "The Fiddle and the Drum," verse 1, vocal segments 1 and 2

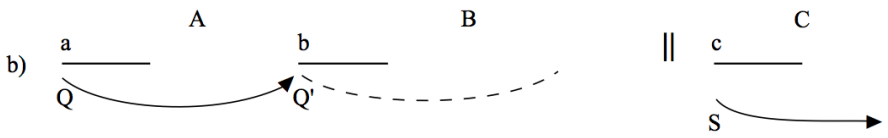


In the next most basic level of listening, this time span could be heard as a duration Q, with the projective potential to be reproduced as the duration Q'. However, the sense of measurement does not continue after Q'. There is a sensation that Q' has been realized 1870 ms after its onset, since it has not been interrupted by another beginning; but since no event occurs at that moment, Q' itself is not realized and does not itself become projective. For it to continue, an event would have to mark the end of Q' and another event would need to appear approximately 1870 ms later, creating a pulse. In reality, the listener experiences a hiatus of Q-Q': a "break between the realization of projected potential and a new beginning."[104] Indeed, this moment from "The Fiddle and the Drum" conforms to Hasty's Example 7.4b (reproduced in Figure 2.16, and discussed briefly in

[104] Hasty, *Meter as Rhythm*, 88. Hasty's approach is phenomenological and thus relies on introspection rather than empirical evidence, but it is worth noting that the span between "-gain" and the next dominant beginning, at 5590 ms, comes close to the upper threshold for precise human entrainment, which has been estimated at 6000 ms. London, *Hearing in Time*, 27.

Figure 2.9) in which the "late" arrival of a third even (c) results in a hiatus of Q-Q' and the onset of a "new and relatively unconditioned projective potential S."[105]

Figure 2.16: Hasty (1995): Example 7.4b, "Late Entries of a Third Event"



In the second fragment of "The Fiddle and the Drum," the first syllable of the noun "Johnny" is dynamically accented enough that the listener may intuit the projection R-R', aligning with the lexical stresses on "John-" and "friend."[106] But this projection suffers the same fate as Q-Q': a hiatus caused by the lack of projection after we hear it realized. Hasty's concepts capture our sense of the emerging durations (Q and R) and our anticipation of their reproduction. Since, as explained above, there is no pulse, this passage only engages with the first two aspects of meter: stress and durational reproduction.

By contrast, a pulse does arise during segments 5 and 6, the passage of which is included in Figure 2.17. The vocal stresses on "when" and "why" create the duration U, which has an 890 ms IOI. Although there is again a long duration after the second stress, in this case it can be heard as the realization of a projection: if we hear the projective potential of U to be realized about 1080 ms after "why," and that duration itself, V, to be projective, then "raise" arrives at the right moment to complete the projection V-V'.[107] This series of three approximately equal durations creates a pulse.

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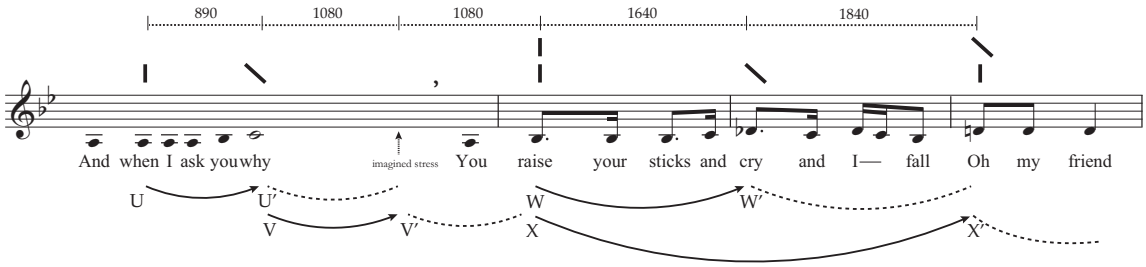
[105] Hasty, *Meter as Rhythm*, 88.
[106] We are likely to do this despite the 1470 ms duration between "My" and "John-," which has the potential to be a duration reproduced by the 1360 ms duration that follows. The dynamic accent on "John-" is much stronger than that on "My," ensuring its status as the dominant beginning.
[107] Hasty describes these kinds of "virtual articulations" as those that "need not be notated or produced by the performer" and are "no less real (though less vivid) than a sonic articulation. See Hasty, *Meter as Rhythm*, 130.

Figure 2.17: Mitchell, "The Fiddle and the Drum," verse 1, segments 5 and 6



The vocal stress on "raise" and "cry" initiates a new projection W-W' with interonset intervals I have notated as half notes. The listener would entrain to the isochronous quarter- and half-note durations beginning at "raise" and group them as strong and weak beats within a 2/4 meter, as indicated by the notated rhythms and bar lines. The faster layer in this meter aligns with the articulated eighth notes in the measures and the slowest layer spans whole-note durations. Sixteenth-note IOIs are too fast, and breve durations are too slow to entrain, so this metric hierarchy contains four layers, i.e. eighth-, quarter-, half- and whole-note durations. Though projection symbols have been used throughout Figure 2.17, we could thus also interpret the meter of this sixth fragment using a metric grid.

To this reading of regular musical meter, we might also more closely examine the prosody of the lyrics of this line as conflicting with the musical meter. The lyrical line "You raise your sticks and cry and I fall, oh my friend," begins with duple iambic feet, but switches to a pair of anapest (weak-weak-strong) feet. If a listener were aware of this poetic meter independent of the musical performance, it would push against the emerging 2/4 musical meter and strengthen the impact of the narrative's emotional conflict.

Overall, this more technical approach to "The Fiddle and the Drum" allows us to account more precisely for our intuitions, expressed in Chapter 1, about how Mitchell's use of different aspects of meter supports the narrative of her lyrics. The opening

segments have suspense precisely because of their hiatus. The durations have potential to initiate a pulse, but the pulse and meter only become manifest when the song's subject describes Johnny's actions of raising his weapons and marching into war. Retrospectively, these actions are latent from the beginning, always having the potential to be musically illustrated as a fully formed metric structure. But if Mitchell timed her opening segments metrically, we would not get the evocative sense of marching into action that emerges in segment 6, and the rhetorical emphasis of the more metrically stable segments would be weakened.

Such use of meter to express narrative content is a distinctive feature of the singer-songwriter compositions examined in this study. As exemplified by the brief analyses in this chapter, the analyst needs to be sensitive to all aspects of stress and timing, and understand the (possibly layered) meaning(s) of the text. In order to properly illustrate these stresses in transcription, it is important to acknowledge the role of analysis in the act of transcribing, since it is possible to create multiple transcriptions of a song all based on different theories of meter. As we shall see in the subsequent chapter, transcriptions informed by various theories of meter can bring out different readings of musical meaning in analysis.

Chapter 3: Popular Song Transcription as Analysis

3.1 Transcription and the Analysis of Meter

So far, this study has identified some aspects of urban-folk-inspired songwriting that could be considered metric, and has proposed metric theories that can be used to analyze the aspects that are brought out in a particular performance. In order to apply those theories in published analyses, it is necessary to represent each performance by musical transcriptions. However, transcription, as Jocelyn Neal suggests, is not "theoretically neutral," but rather it is an interpretation in which the chosen notational system manifests the transcriber's particular theoretical conceptions.[108] As we shall see, available transcriptions for singer-songwriter music are often inadequate for the study of meter. For any one transcription, the transcriber must make analytical decisions, informed by a particular metric theory, about which components are essential. But these decisions require the analyst to disregard other possible expressive aspects of meter that could be brought out by transcriptions informed by other theories of meter. This chapter will discuss and demonstrate the different strategies employed in this dissertation to represent prosodic, hierarchical, and projective meter in multiple transcriptions of Bob Dylan's "With God on Our Side" from *The Times They are a-Changin'* (1964).

This studio recording demonstrates several metric features of the urban-folk repertoire that challenge representation in a single transcription. Fluctuations in timing make it difficult to choose a tactus. Whatever tactus is chosen, it must be heard to be grouped inconsistently, for example, with stretches of clear compound-quadruple meter gradually changing to compound triple. Dylan's strumming pattern in this recording demonstrates passages of increased rhythmic density that cause metric shifts, in the

[108] Jocelyn Neal, "Song Structure Determinants: Poetic Narrative, Phrase Structure, and Hypermeter in the Music of Jimmie Rodgers" (Ph.D. dissertation, Eastman School of Music, 2002), 47.

apparent addition or deletion of beats, that make a transcription in a steady meter incomplete or even misrepresentative. Other recordings of the song from live performances between 1963 and 1965 are entirely in compound-triple meter, or switch freely between compound-triple and compound-quadruple. Yet many of the aforementioned nuances, especially with regard to timing and accompaniment rhythms, apply only to the studio recording. A transcription focused on this particular recording would suggest engagement with different aspects of meter than on other tracks. By employing various transcription strategies, using various theories of meter, the different aspects of meter can be brought out, and their contribution to the meaning of the lyrics can be appreciated.

For the singer-songwriter repertoire, sheet music and guitar tabs are popular types of notated transcriptions. However, both types are often inadequate for performance-specific metric analysis, acting as *prescriptive transcriptions*, which Charles Seeger defines as a "blue-print of how a specific piece of music shall be made to sound," distinguishing these from *descriptive transcriptions* of how a specific performance "actually did sound."[109] Commercial sheet music is a type of prescriptive transcription, made available as authorized publications or fan-created scores for online databases, specifies enough of a song's harmonic, lyrical, and melodic content to inform cover versions of a song. However, songs with a variety of different manifestations in performance – which is the case with many examples from Dylan's repertoire– these transcribers often normalize meter to the closest idealized version.[110] Indeed, Joti Rockwell finds this to be the case for sheet music of Carter Family songs, in which tactus-level metric irregularities are removed, and performers are expected to modify the

[109] Charles Seeger, "Prescriptive and Descriptive Music-Writing," *Musical Quarterly* 44, no. 2 (1958): 184.
[110] As one example, Steven Rings traces the performance history of a single song throughout Dylan's career; see Steven Rings, "A Foreign Sound to Your Ear: Bob Dylan Performs 'It's Alright, Ma (I'm Only Bleeding)'," *Music Theory Online* 19, no. 4 (2013).

rhythms by referring to original recordings.[111] The prescriptive transcriptions are intended to act as guides for a realization of a song in its most well known form, not as indications for how to reproduce a specific performance. They are therefore unsuitable for the kind of metric analysis found in this study.

Another type of inadequacy stems from the nature of available transcription formats. Transcribing keyboard accompaniment requires staff-based illustrations, which offer the opportunity for more accurate accounts of rhythm and meter than other options we will explore below. However, common-practice notation, despite some flexibility in the form of tempo markings and fermata symbols, assumes a regular and hierarchical meter, which cannot indicate realized projections very well. As we shall see, rhythmic accuracy varies in these kinds of transcriptions.[112]

The introduction to the studio recording of Joni Mitchell's "Woodstock" provides a striking example of this problem of transcription accuracy. Most of the song is in a clear 4/4, but the introduction features fluctuations in timing, with moments of metric salience giving way to slower passages that do not fit clearly into a meter. Available scores either simplify the material, or accurately account for pitch content but not for actual sounding durations. Additionally, some of them neglect to take grouping parallelism into account in their representation of meter.

Two available transcriptions demonstrate these problems. The score of "Woodstock" available on Sheet Music Plus, which is identical to the illustration in Figure 3.1, entirely avoids any engagement with the timing and pitch contents of the studio recording by completely rewriting Mitchell's introduction.

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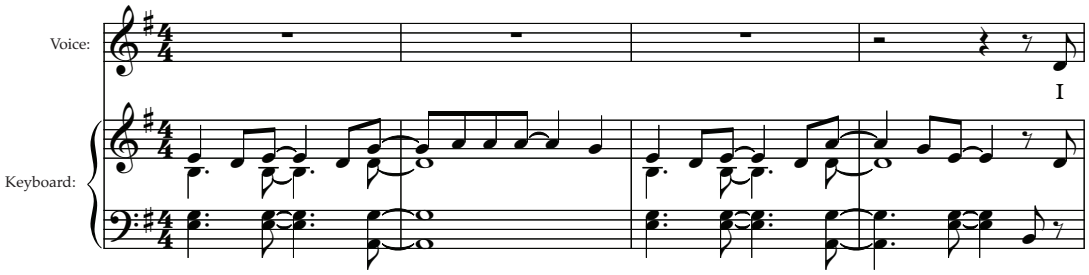
[111] Rockwell, "Time on the Crooked Road," 69.
[112] There are several keyboard transcriptions of Mitchell's songs that accurately represent the rhythms of her studio recording. Three of these are explored in Chapter 6.

Figure 3.1: Joni Mitchell, "Woodstock," introduction from Sheet Music Plus



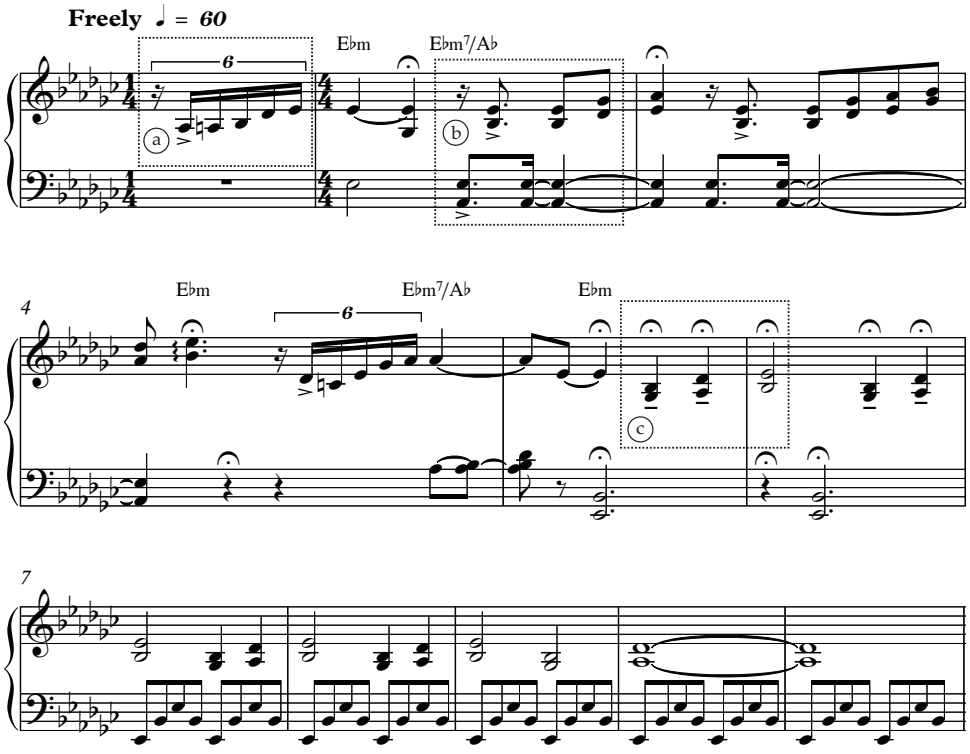
This transcription reduces the 47-second introductory passage from *Ladies of the Canyon* to four measures of new, metrically regular material. By contrast, the transcription available on Mitchell's fan-maintained official website (www.jonimitchell.com), which has been annotated in Figure 3.2, accurately represents the pitches of the studio recording (0:00-0:44), but is inconsistent with several principles of metric theory discussed in Chapter 2.[113]

The primary issue is one of parallelism; the transcription from Mitchell's website does not assign similar metric identities to parallel harmonic and melodic structures. As discussed in Chapter 2, this is an important consideration in cognizing meter. Accordingly, the three repeated pitch motives in the "Woodstock" introduction would seem to demand similar metric identities; they are labeled (a), (b), and (c) in Figure 3.2. Motive (a) comprises a sextuplet figure. The transcriber initially represents it as an anacrusis gesture to a strong beat, but when it returns in m. 4, it is notated as leading to a weak beat – the last beat of the 4/4 measure – rather than to a strong beat, as its first appearance was notated. Similarly, the first instance of the (b) motive is notated at first on the strong third beat of the first complete measure, and so attributes a metric accent to the dynamically accented A-flat2 to E-flat3 dyad. However, when this motive is

[113] Figure 3.2 is an exact reproduction (with my annotations) of the online transcription, found at Dave Blackburn, "Transcriptions: Lesson in Survival," 2014, http://jonimitchell.com/music/transcription.cfm?id=488.

immediately repeated, the transcription denies metric accent to that event, notating it as beginning on the second beat of m. 2.

Figure 3.2: Mitchell, "Woodstock," introduction transcribed on jonimitchell.com

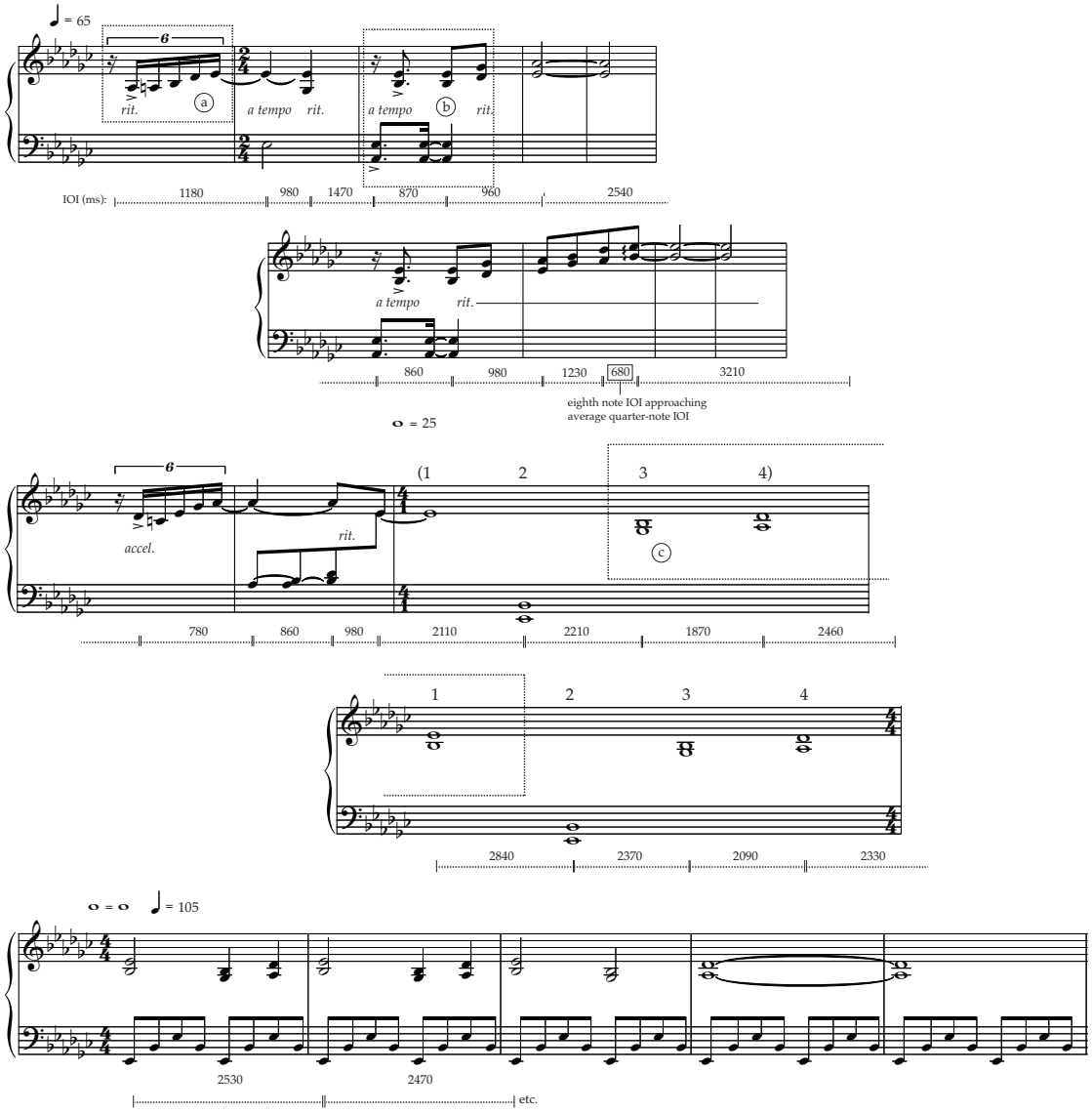


To highlight and correct these inconsistencies, I provide a revised transcription in Figure 3.3 that assigns similar metric identities to parallel motivic occurrences. It places the second sextuplet motive (a) as an anacrusis leading to the downbeat at the beginning of the second system. The (b) motive is also given parallel treatment, with the beginning of each statement shown occurring on a downbeat. The purpose of this transcription, then, is to show how the repeated pitch content suggests an emerging but flexibly timed hierarchical meter.

Bar lines are shown only where the motivic content or pitch centricity (around E-flat) suggests a metric accent. Instead of stems and specific durations for pitches that are

sustained; open tie symbols are used. From the aforementioned parameters, a two-beat structure emerges (notated as a 2/4 meter), giving motives (a) and (b) more specific metric identities. Motive (a) always occurs after a sixteenth rest, to complete an entire 2/4 measure, and (b) always begins on a downbeat.

Figure 3.3: Mitchell, "Woodstock," alternate transcription[114]



The final two measures of Figure 3.2 and third and fourth systems of Figure 3.3 have much in common. Both indicate parallelism with the contents of the metrically

[114] Joni Mitchell, *Ladies of the Canyon* (Reprise, 1970).

regular material that follows, and assign a similar metric identity to the dyads in the (c) motive (G3 to B-flat3 and A-flat3 to D-flat4) as leading to the next downbeat with an E-flat in the melody. The major difference between the transcriptions is that Figure 3.3 sets the melodic E-flat4 as syncopated with a downbeat, while Figure 3.2 places this pitch on beat 1.5 of m. 5, and incorrectly misplaces the fermata, seeming to show that only an eighth note elapses between it and the low dyad. Figure 3.3 uses proportional spacing and IOI values (in milliseconds) to indicate how the timing of the middle system relates to the subsequently metrically regular material. This alternate transcription includes numbers above the staff in the third and fourth systems to indicate a repeated group of four events, suggesting a slow quadruple (4/1) meter. This group prepares the material that follows, which seems to compress these four whole-note beats into a single bar of four quarter notes.

Transcriptions that do not use common-practice notation similarly involve certain assumptions about rhythm and meter that affect how accurately timing can be represented. For instance, various types of guitar sheet music, as popularly practiced, only represent meter as regular. One option lists chord changes (with chord names or fingering charts) above the lyrics, and aligning the symbols with the syllables on which they occur, as exemplified in Eyolf Østrem's transcription of Bob Dylan's "With God on Our Side" (Figure 3.4). This shows, at the very least, a loose relationship between harmonic change and poetic meter, in that a reader with musical knowledge might infer that a chord change and prosodic stress on "name" indicates that the words should be accented. But realistically, the reader must be familiar with one of Dylan's performances to know, for example, that the three chord changes on "age it means" last the same amount of time as the F on the first syllable of "nothing." This notation functions merely as a guideline to indicate which lyrical syllable should align with harmony changes.

Figure 3.4: Bob Dylan, "With God on Our Side," transcription of lyrics and chords

```
|F    |Em   |G  G6 G7   |C

        C              F Em
Oh my name it ain't nothin'
   G    G6  G7   C
My age it means less[115]
```

Guitar tablatures (or "tabs") are another option for transcription. They account for the pitch content of chords using numeric patterns on rows of dashed lines that correspond to guitar strings. A tab transcription can provide slightly more information with regard to musical meter than the lyrics-and-chords representation. In Figure 3.5, I have created a tablature based on Østrem's chord and meter indications from Figure 3.4.[116] The lyric fragments below the staff aligning with their respective anacruses and downbeats. The dots above the tab illustrate a simple triple meter, with the pattern : . . indicating the strong (:) and weak (.) components of each group of three beats.[117] The dashed lines provide additional information for this metric pattern, with each dash corresponding to a quadruple subdivision of the beat.[118] This transcription encourages a performance of "With God on Our Side" in a simple-triple meter with continuously regular guitar rhythms. However, it can be rather difficult to discern the tactus, slower

[115] This transcription is identical to that found in Østrem's catalogue of Bob Dylan song transcriptions. In this transcription, Østrem uses the symbol * to indicate use of the progression G-G6-G7, "that Dylan is so fond of," for which separate tabs are provided in the written introduction to the song. Eyolf Østrem, "With God On Our Side Tabs," *My Back Pages: Bob Dylan Chords and Lyrics*, accessed November 18, 2014, http://dylanchords.info/03_times/withgod.htm.

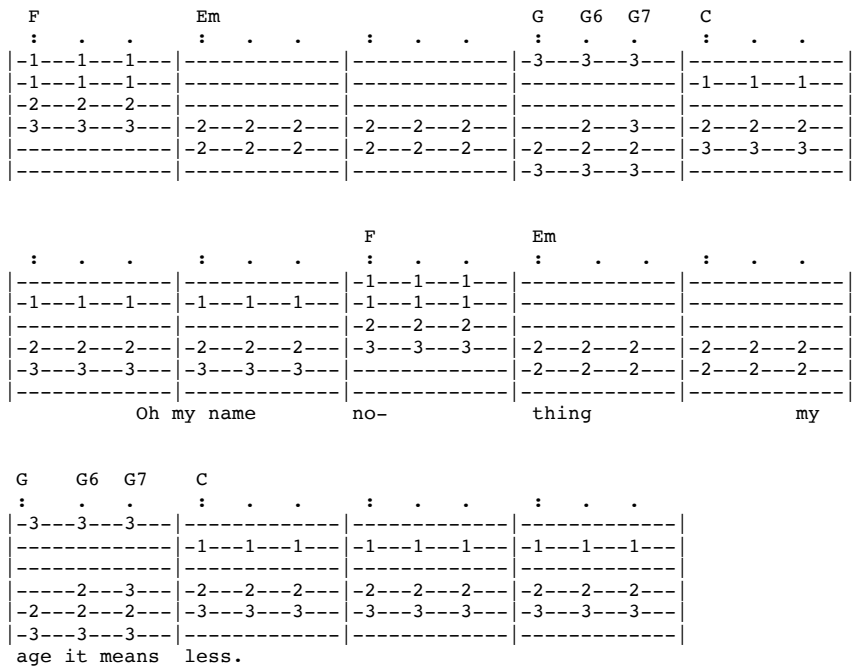
[116] The bottom line indicates the lowest string (E2), and the top, the highest string (E4). Numbers appearing in the place of a dash correspond to a fret on the fret board that should be depressed while strumming.

[117] This illustration of meter follows the practice outlined in Eyolf Østrem, "Reading Tabs," *My Back Pages: Bob Dylan Chords and Lyrics*, accessed November 18, 2014, http://www.dylanchords.info/roadmaps.htm#Tabgraphics.

[118] The first dash of each bar is not included in the meter. Rather, it is used to separate the first beat of the bar from the preceding vertical bar line; this is typical practice for guitar tablature.

beats, and syncopated rhythms from this tablature format; indeed, players tend to grasp them only approximately from the proportional spacing of the tabs, then firm them up by mimicking the recorded performance that the tab represents.

Figure 3.5: Dylan, "With God on Our Side," guitar tablature



Additionally, any metric irregularities, like those in Dylan's studio recording, are typically omitted from these kinds of transcriptions, making them inadequate for the study of meter in specific performances.

From the foregoing examples, it is evident that both guitar tabs and common-practice-notation transcriptions make certain assumptions about meter that at least do not account for actual performance timings and at worst attribute meter in a way that is inconsistent with well-accepted cognitive principles. Furthermore, no single transcription, even one that represents timings accurately, can capture all of the aspects of meter engaged in a particular performance, since those aspects often require different transcription strategies involving different theories or ways of hearing. Multiple readings, each representing different hearings based on different theories of meter is one

solution to this problem. In Chapter 2, we discussed three theories of meter (poetic meter, grid meter, and projective meter) that can be used in transcription and analysis. In the remainder of the chapter, I will develop and compare transcriptions of Dylan's "With God on Our Side" that are consistent with these theories. These are offered as an alternative to the transcriptions of Østrem and other online transcription contributors, which, I contend, convey oversimplified analyses of the song's meter. The transcriptions used here will also serve to demonstrate the principles upon which the transcriptions in the remainder of the dissertation are based.

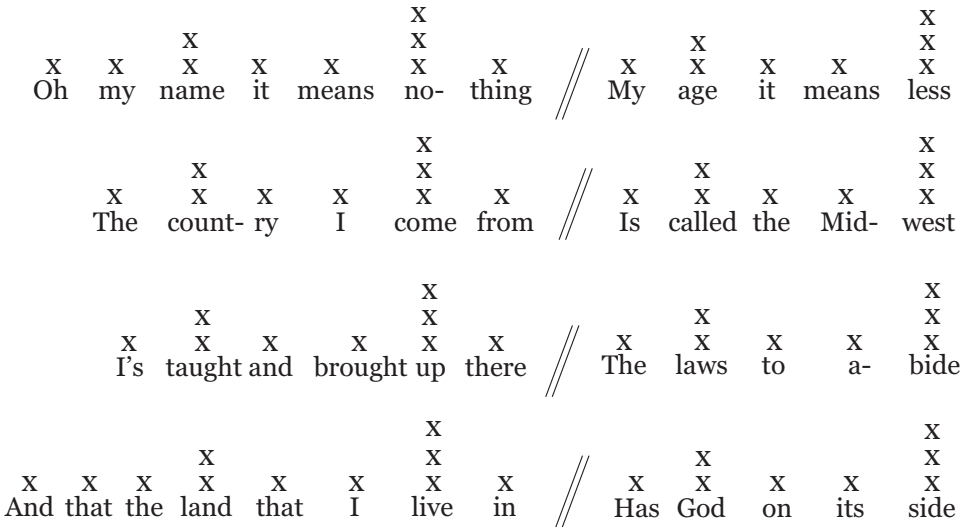
3.2 Poetic Meter; Grid-based Musical Meter

Chapter 2 argued that the prosodic structure of the lyrics, though not a musical meter strictly speaking, does influence the perception of beat hierarchy and durational reproduction. So the first step in any transcription is to consider this poetic meter. Following the formats on Dylan's official website and published lyric volumes, the grid in Figure 3.6 shows how the first eight-line stanza of Dylan's song is organized into four couplets (two-line pairs), each line featuring two stressed syllables.[119] To show the couplet organization, the figure places paired lines side-by-side, with the symbol // separating them. In the first half of each pair, one to three weak syllables lead to the first strong syllable, which is indicated by an "x" one level up from the level in which every syllable receives a stress. After two more weak syllables occurs the phonological phrase stress of each first line, and it is followed by a weak syllable. The second halves of all the couplets are identical in construction, featuring the pattern of stressed (S) and unstressed (U) syllables U-S-U-U-S. This can be interpreted in poetic feet as an iamb (U-S) followed by an anapest (U-U-S). Either reading results in the same higher-level

[119] Bob Dylan, "With God On Our Side by Bob Dylan," n.d., www.bobdylan.com/us/songs/god-our-side; Dylan, *Lyrics: 1962-2001*, 85–86.

structure of two prominent stressed syllables, with the second as the phonological phrase stress.

Figure 3.6: Dylan, "With God on Our Side," lyrical stress grid



To give an idea of how this poetic meter is carried through the rest of the song, Figure 3.7 annotates each line of verses four through seven by underlining the two lexical stresses, and bolding the phrase stress. Although the number of syllables in each line varies considerably, every line has two prosodic stresses, the second of which is the phonological-phrase stress. Most of these stresses are on the most significant words in the lyrics. This passage additionally shows the historical thematic scope of Dylan's lyrics, which recount historical events from the First World War to political conflict with Russia and the threats of the Cold War. The lyrics emphasize the hypocrisy of religion's role in justifying war ("For you don't count the dead/When God's on your side"), the ease with which alliances are broken for political convenience ("We forgave the Germans/And then we were friends"), and the ignorance of assuming divine support for only one side of a conflict ("And you never ask questions/When God's on your side."). Prosodic stresses typically land on words that are central to this narrative.

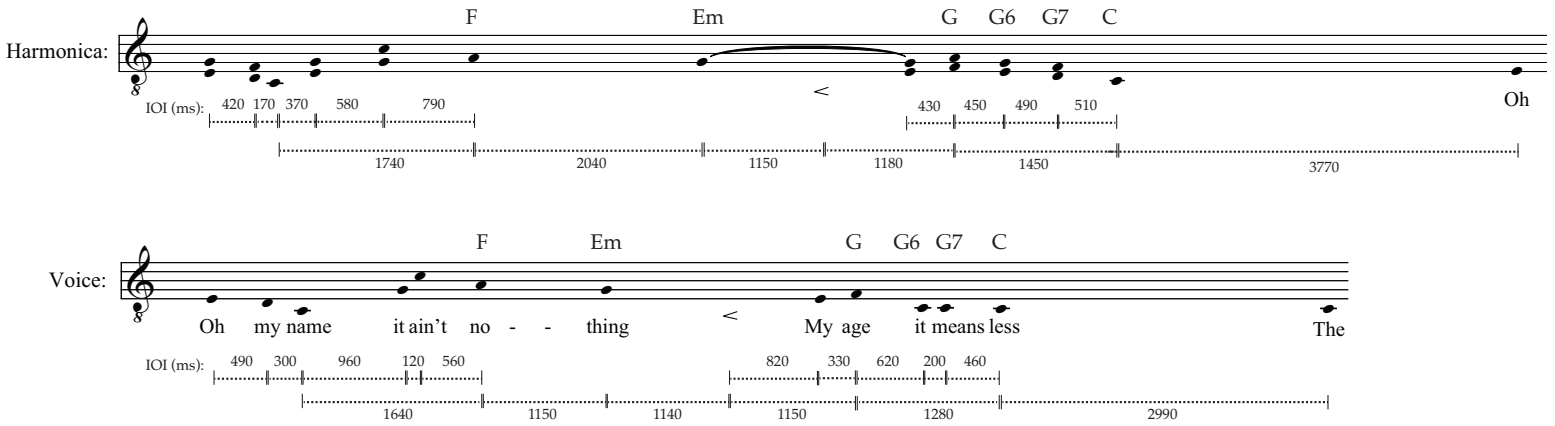
Figure 3.7: Dylan, "With God on Our Side," lyrics, verses 4-7; underlined lexical stresses and bold face phonological phrase stresses

VERSE 4	VERSE 6
Oh the first World **War**, boys It closed out its **fate** The reason for **fight**ing I never got **straight** But I learned to ac**cept** it Accept it with **pride** For you don't count the **dead** When God's on your **side**	I've learned to hate the **Rus**sians All through my whole **life** If another war **comes** It's them we must **fight** To hate them and **fear** them To run and to **hide** And accept it all **brave**ly With God on my **side**
VERSE 5	**VERSE 7**
When the second World **War** Came to an **end** We forgave the **Ger**mans And we were **friends** Though they murdered six **mil**lion In the ovens they **fried** The Germans now **too** Have God on their **side**	But now we've got **weap**ons Of chemical **dust** If fire them we're **forced** to Then fire them we **must** One push of a **but**ton And a shot the world **wide** And you never ask **ques**tions When God's on your **side**

The recurring stress pattern of these lyrics constitutes a type of meter not specifically tied to duration. One way to represent it musically is to conceive of the meter of the performance as a grid with prominent text stresses as metric or hypermetric downbeats. This conception would need to satisfy the systematic requirements for metric hierarchy reviewed in Chapter 2: the transcription should manifest an isochronous tactus, with at least one level grouping tactus beats; bar lines in the transcription should indicate which beats within the grouping are heard to receive metric accent; and parallel motivic structures should be assigned to similar metric identities.

To satisfy these requirements, the transcriber must make some crucial decisions. One, which we have already encountered in our critique of the Mitchell transcription, has to do with how to interpret grouping parallelism. The first clear parallelism is evident between the harmonica introduction and the first vocal phrase.

Figure 3.8: Dylan, "With God on Our Side," parallel phrases with IOI values[120]



[120] Dylan, *The Times They Are a-Changin'*.

Figure 3.8 shows this parallelism by superimposing the two phrases (0:00-0:22) vertically, but represents them in a relatively un-interpreted way, providing only interonset interval (IOI) values below the staff to quantify the timing of melodic pitches, harmonic rhythm, and text stress.[121]

In a grid-based transcription, theory would assign similar metric properties to several parallel features of these phrases. Consider, for instance, the melodic A4s in both systems. Both have durational accent, and we may take this to indicate that both have metric accent, that is, placement on a strong beat. In the harmonica phrase, this sense of downbeat is reinforced by the onset of the guitar accompaniment at that moment. In the vocal line, the harmony changes from C major to F major at the A4, an accent that coincides with the phonological-phrase stress on the first syllable of "nothing."

Another clear parallelism between these two groups is the accelerating harmonic rhythm (G-G6-G7) that precedes each C major guitar chord. The C takes durational accent, and so sounds like a strong beat in both cases. The conception of phonetic stress and durational accent as strong beats is a powerful one that should be represented even though, as shown by the IOIs, the absolute timings and durations of events differ considerably.

While parallelism thus helps establish some metric landmarks for any transcription, there is another essential component of grid transcription that needs to be decided: what is the tactus? Here the choice is between hearing tactus beats at the changes of harmony and melody notes, or at faster articulations like the G-G6-G7 chord changes and the rhythmic patterns of the guitar accompaniment. The choice of tactus affects how the transcriber will metrically interpret the timing differences of the C4s and

[121] The guitar begins at the F major harmony indicated above the first A4 in the harmonica introduction and chord changes have been included above both systems. The actual strumming patterns have not been thoroughly represented in this illustration, with exception for the dynamic accents in guitar strumming between the Em and G harmonies, which have been indicated by accent symbols below both staves.

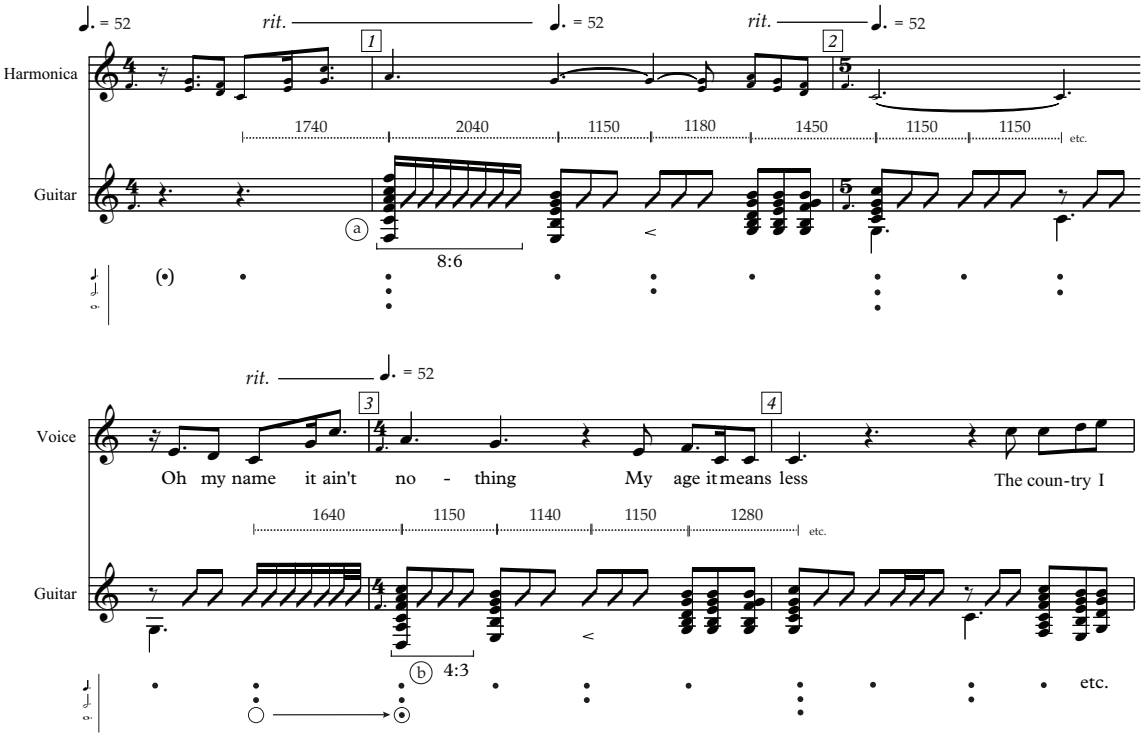
A4s, and therefore the material that precedes the A4 in each phrase. Several different interpretations of proportional durations, tempo fluctuations, and parallel grouping structures are possible. In the subsequent section, I will discuss two. Both assume a grid hierarchy, with the well-formedness rules invoked above. They are also constrained by the requirements that the tactus IOIs lie within the typical 200-1800 ms tactus range.

One transcription option is to feel as tactus the IOI values around 1150 ms that emerge midway through the harmonica system in Figure 3.8. These durations span the onsets of larger-scale events like changes of harmony, melodic contour peaks, and declamation of phonological phrase stresses. Although the consistent repetition of this duration is not evident at the very beginning of the song, nor in some other passages, the grid theory suggests treating longer IOIs as tactus beats if they span similar types of events, like chord changes. Figure 3.9 does so, using *ritardando* symbols to explain any durational variation. Such an interpretation seems plausible, since each passage of *ritardando* is followed by a return to the 52-bpm tempo.

Assigning the 1150 ms IOI values as tactus durations, we can attribute specific metrical properties to the rhythms and their grouping. Shorter IOI values around 400-500 ms are represented in Figure 3.9 as eighth-note subdivisions of the dotted-quarter-note tactus. Triple subdivisions, illustrated, for example, on beats 2, 3, and 4 of m. 1, are most common. However, in some passages, the guitar-strumming pattern creates greater attack density; these passages have been indicated by tuplet brackets below the staff in the transcription. At (a), for example, the ratio 8:6 indicates that eight sixteenth notes are occurring in the span of six. The ratio 4:3 at (b) labels a quadruple subdivision of the tactus. By making the same subdivision here as he did at (a), Dylan helps us hear the parallelism between these two moments. Theoretical justification for these irregular groupings in the metric hierarchy can be found in Lerdahl and Jackendoff's MWFR 4,

which allows for freedom in the number of beats that subdivide the tactus as long as the beats are evenly spaced.[122]

Figure 3.9: Dylan, "With God on Our Side," metric grid with dotted-quarter-note tactus



The dots below the staff indicate the grid conception of meter: that the tactus and the slower beats that group it are isochronous; and that changes in IOIs are the result of *ritardandi* or *accelerandi*.

At the larger-scale, an instance of non-isochrony is better explained by the theory as the product of grouping parallelism. In the harmonica introduction, since we hear the main accents on the onsets A4 and C4, and because we hear chord changes articulating the tactus, we understand the meter as quadruple, that is, the timespan from the A to C is four beats. In the vocal phrase, the 1640 ms IOI value between "name" and "nothing" parallels the longer 1740 ms tactus beat duration from the harmonica phrase. So the A4

[122] Lerdahl and Jackendoff, *A Generative Theory of Tonal Music*, 72.

melodic pitch on the first syllable of "nothing" should appear on a downbeat, just as the harmonica's did in the introduction. Similarly, the prosodic stress on "less" should sound parallel to the tonic harmony on the downbeat of bar 2, so it should also appear on a downbeat. Therefore there are again four beats measuring the timespan. However, there are no other parallel structures to indicate a metric accent between the downbeat of bar 2 and that of bar 3, so that timespan constitutes a single measure. But that measure contains five tactus beats, rather than four – that is, the strong beats are not isochronous. Horlacher's analytical symbols help to conceptualize this; the symbols on the grid illustrate a metric shift at the dotted-whole-note level. The open circle indicates where the strong beat should have occurred in the grid (at "name") and the circled dot identifies its new location. The 5 in the time signature at m. 2 indicates the extra beat that results from these metric decisions.

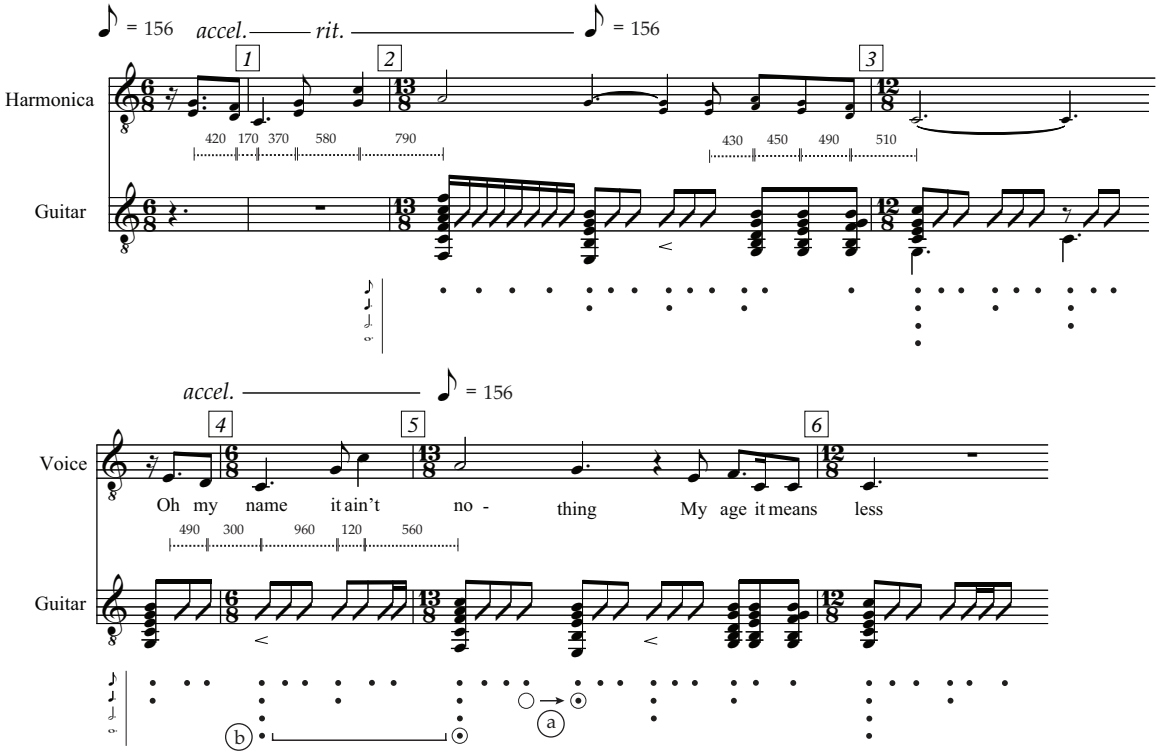
These choices about meter have interesting implications for the analysis of lyrics in this passage. The transcription in Figure 3.9 draws attention, first of all, to the stress and significance of phonological-phrase stresses, which, as discussed earlier, Dylan arranges as essential words in his narrative. Metric accents in the first stanza bring out the lyrical themes whose many manifestations are described in the subsequent stanzas: divine power supporting one group's persecution of another. Other readings of the poetry are possible too, however, and we shall see that other aspects of meter, which other transcriptions bring out, emphasize those nuances.

The second transcription option that uses a metric grid is built around a faster tactus than Figure 3.9. It instead follows the durations created by the shorter IOIs between, for example, the G-G6-G7 chord changes and rhythms of the guitar accompaniment. The transcription in Figure 3.10considers each articulation of guitar strumming around a 450 ms IOI to be eighth-note-tactus beats at a tempo of 156 bpm. These faster tactus beats, which correspond to the fast tactus subdivisions from Figure

3.10 are salient because the guitar strums are regular and the tempo is not too fast to entrain. A dotted-quarter-note grouping of tactus beats into threes becomes apparent around G4 in m. 2. And beats at this level align, as they did in Figure 3.9, with changes of harmony, melodic motion, and dynamic accent.

In passages of increased rhythmic density in the guitar strumming, this eighth-note-tactus transcription must accommodate "extra" tactus beats through metrical reinterpretation in the grid and reconceptualization of the melody-note durations. At (a), for example, an extra guitar strum creates a half-note duration for the A4 melodic pitch. In Figure 3.9 this duration was a dotted-quarter note, lengthened by a *ritardando* to accommodate the faster rhythmic density of the guitar subdivisions. The half-note duration in Figure 3.10 is a conceptually different duration, spanning four eighth-note-tactus beats in the accompaniment.

Figure 3.10: Dylan, "With God on Our Side," metric grid with eighth-note tactus



The dynamic accent on beat 3 of the fifth measure of Figure 3.10 can be heard as expressively forcing our hearing back to triple time, when we otherwise may have heard quadruple continuing. This is illustrated below the staff as a metric shift at the dotted-quarter-note layer. An empty circle indicates where the beat should have occurred, and an arrow points to the encircled dot at its new location, after a half-note duration. The difference in tactus, therefore, changes how time is measured for the A4 duration and the accompaniment rhythms: triple in Figure 3.9 and quadruple in Figure 3.10.

A similar re-conceptualization of duration is necessary at (b), just before (a) in the second system of Figure 3.10. Here the guitar strums accelerate from 156 bpm to 187 bpm. In Figure 3.9, this rhythm was interpreted as sixteenth notes with a *ritardando*, which results from conceiving of the chord change from C to F as a single tactus beat, subdivided irregularly. With attention in Figure 3.10 drawn to each strum as a tactus beat, the guitar attacks in m. 4 are more easily interpreted as an accelerated eighth-note pulse stream (around 187 in the place of 156 bpm) rather than a slowed sixteenth-note (312 bpm) stream. The *ritardando* sixteenth-note rhythm from Figure 3.9 is therefore re-conceptualized as accelerating eighth notes in Figure 3.10. Prioritizing parallelism between the two phrases, the melody in m. 1 of Figure 3.10 has been transcribed with identical rhythm and meter to the second system. Tempo markings above the staff in m. 1 account for the timing discrepancies between IOI ratios and the ratios of the notated rhythms.

Several features of the eight-note tactus transcription that bring out nuances of lyrical meaning obscured in other readings. The notation of “name” as a metric downbeat, with the eighth-note interpretation of accompanimental rhythm, results in a metrical reinterpretation at the dotted-whole-note pulse layer between mm. 4 and 5; this is symbolized by the bracket and circled dot in that layer of the grid analysis. The placement of C4 on its own downbeat in the vocal phrase assigns a metric accent on

"name" that marks this word for attention in a meaningful way. The effect of this reading is particularly striking for the listener, whose attention is initially drawn to the accent on "name" as a marker of the narrator's identity, only to reinterpret this accent, assigning a similarly strong musical stress to the first syllable of "nothing." If the listener hears a strong-beat emphasis on "name" as affirming a strong identity for the narrator, this reinterpretation to another beat at the same grid level portrays a re-assignment of agency to membership in a collective group, which is one of the main themes of the lyrics. This meaning was latent in the dotted-quarter-note transcription, but brought out by this reading.

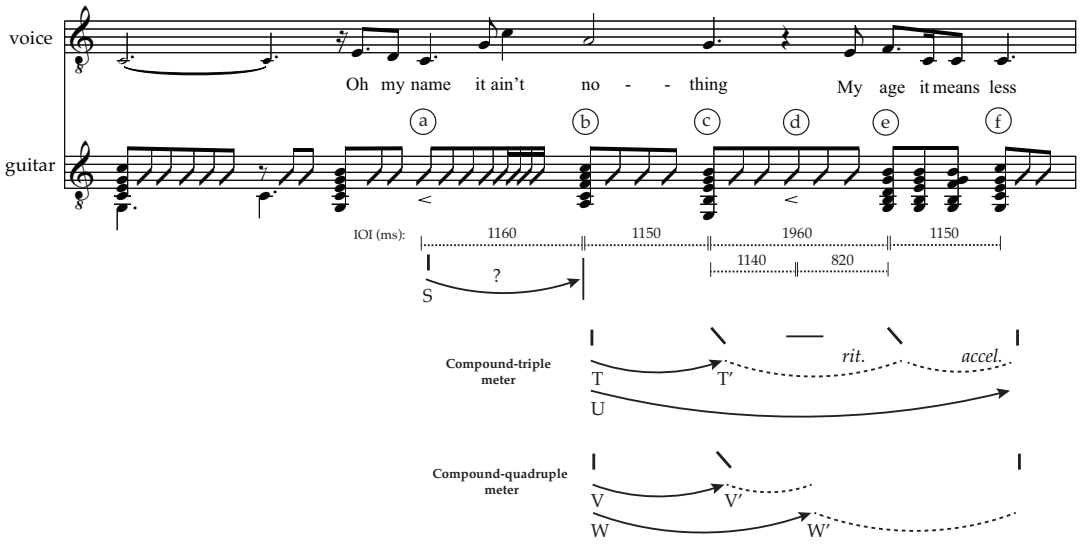
3.3 Projective Meter and Multiple Performances

The previous section examined the transcriptions that result from a conception of meter as a grid in "With God on Our Side," using two possible tactus durations. Following the metric theories outlined in Chapter 2, a third type of transcription using a projective meter is possible. Both grid-based transcriptions follow many of the rules defined by a metric hierarchy, serving as "bottom-up" analyses of metric grouping for Dylan's song. In a projective meter transcription, the transcriber is deciding to hear certain moments as "dominant beginnings," that is, as initiations of durations that will eventually become definite, and give rise to projections that may be realized. This kind of transcription provides another way of conceptualizing Dylan's timing and strumming irregularities.

This theory provides a further interpretation of the duration between "name" and "nothing," which is illustrated in the projective transcription in Figure 3.11, using the same rhythms as Figure 3.10. The listener might choose to hear a dominant beginning at (a) of duration S, which becomes definite at (b) at the next lexically stressed syllable. However, in this reading, the beginning at (b) interrupts the potential for the S duration

to be projective. A vertical line follows the S arrow and a question mark has been placed above the arrow to indicate the interruption. The events at (b), which received metric accent in the grid-meter transcriptions, create a dominant beginning in a projective meter that renders the beginning at (a) inactive.

Figure 3.11: Dylan, "With God on Our Side," projective-meter transcription



At the largest scale, (b) begins a duration U that is realized at the next important change (f). U can be heard to begin with a shorter duration completed at the next chord change, (c). As shown by the dotted slurs, this duration can be heard as projective, that is, we try to interpret the following events as reproducing it. But the timings of these events give us two ways to hear this projection realized. Those ways are shown as two separate sets of arrows under the figure, proceeding respectively from the (b)-to-(c) duration, which is labeled as both T and V.

In one hearing, the listener chooses to hear T', the duration from (c) until the next chord change, at (e) to reproduce the duration of T. Since T' is actually longer than T, the realization entails a sensation of *ritardando*. The next dominant beginning (f) comes too soon afterwards that the duration (e) to (f) merely seems to defer it; since that duration is shorter than T' there is a sensation of acceleration. Thus the long U duration

is produced by T, T', and the deferral, which are indicated by the beginning (|), continuation (\), and deferral (-/) symbols above the projection arrows. In another hearing, the listener accepts this dynamic accent at (d) as completing the duration begun at (c), and to hear that duration as realizing V', the projection of V. The realization completes a longer duration W (from (b) to (d)), that itself becomes projective. The W' projection form (d) is then realized by the tonic harmony at (f).

As with Figure 3.10, the lyrical meaning is highlighted by this interpretation. Yet here we have of identity in the word "name," which initially appears strong and has potential as a dominant beginning, truly being replaced and overshadowed by a dominant beginning on the first syllable of "nothing," offering further levels of nuance to the meaning of these two lexical stresses.

However we relate these projective readings to the lyrics, Figure 3.11 makes clear that the passage has potential to be heard either in compound-triple or compound-quadruple meter. In fact, in Dylan's various performances, he opts unambiguously for one or the other. The T-T' and U projections could be mapped onto Dylan's realizations of compound-triple meter. When this is realized in performances, Dylan typically omits the equivalent material between (d) and (e) – removing the third beat of the potentially four-beat structure. The V-V' and W-W' projections correspond to the compound-quadruple meter manifested by the first half of the studio recording. For a listener familiar with the compound-triple and compound-duple realizations, the projective meter brings out the tension between these performance options by illustrating both as spur-of-the-moment metric decisions. These decisions reflect the larger theme of time, latent in the lyrical meaning, but brought out by a comparison of different meters. This comparison is a feature of projective meter transcription that is not possible to represent in a single illustration based on metric hierarchy.

Some evidence that Dylan would decide in the moment between two meters can be found in his 1964 performance with Joan Baez, in which Dylan switches unpredictably between compound-triple and compound-quadruple meter.[123] It seems clear that the switches are not preplanned because Baez is often late, or remains silent rather than singing the anacrustic material that precedes the A4 of each phrase. In omitting the third beat of a potentially four-beat structure, Dylan rushes into the next phrase, and Baez rejoins him at the next phonological phrase stress.

We can find a similar rushing in his narrative delivery later in the studio recording, around the fifth verse, when Dylan realizes the compound-triple meter with more regularity than the compound-quadruple. This parallels a shift in the lyrics to topics concerning politics in the 1960s, like the threat of chemical weaponry and the increasing American involvement in the Vietnam War. Compound-triple meter allows Dylan to declaim the lyrics faster, expressing the temporal relevancy of the subject matter for the narrator – an educated, politically-active young man in the mid-1960s – which would resonate with the urban folk audiences at the time of the album's release. Shifting between meters is one way for Dylan to express the lyrical meaning in performance.

This chapter highlights some of the ways in which existing transcriptions oversimplify meter in songs by Joni Mitchell and Bob Dylan, and proposed several alternative transcription strategies, informed by recent research in metric theory, that offers more nuanced accounts of the metric phenomena experienced when listening to these songs. Each alternative brought out different features of the music-text relationship through analytical exploration of different aspects of grouping and metric realization in transcription of a single recording. The resulting illustrations act as descriptive transcriptions in their account of sounding events, with subjective analytical

[123] Bob Dylan, *The Bootleg Series, Vol. 6: Bob Dylan Live 1964* (Columbia, 2004).

interpretations – represented by bar lines and notated rhythms – about how stressed events engage with metric structure.[124]

The two primary approaches to meter as either a grid or series of projected durations are often explained as contradictory. The transcriptions used throughout this dissertation position these theories as mutually supplemental, together accommodating different conceptions of the aspects of meter engaged in a particular performance. Of course, several interpretations are possible, and any one transcription represents decisions about what to represent and which theory of meter to use. Analytical examples in subsequent chapters focus on the theoretical approach to transcription that best illuminates how poetic and musical meter express the meaning of the lyrics in that particular analysis.

In order to interpret meaning, any analysis will benefit from examining the public and private persona of the songwriter in addition to the historical and cultural environment in which the music and lyrics were written. Preliminary to analyzing some passages, then, the following chapter examines the style and influences of the singer-songwriter repertoire, with specific focus on the central figures of the present study: Bob Dylan, Joni Mitchell, Paul Simon, Buffy Sainte-Marie and Cat Stevens.

[124] To the rhythmic conventions of Western music notation, Peter Winkler points out that other aspects of performance, like vocal inflection, are difficult to transcribe with precision and subjectivity. See Peter Winkler, "Writing Ghost Notes: The Poetics and Politics of Transcription," in *Keeping the Score: Music, Disciplinarity, Culture*, ed. David Schwarz, Anahid Kassabian, and Lawrence Siegel (Charlottesville, Virginia: University Press of Virginia, 1997), 189–191.

Chapter 4: Metric Style in the Music of Five Singer-Songwriters

4.1 The "Singer-Songwriter" Style, 1962-1972

The term *singer-songwriter* has been used since the 1960s to categorize musicians, typically self-accompanied solo singers, who write and perform their own music. Scholars suggest that Bob Dylan, Paul Simon, and Joni Mitchell were among the first to whom the label was applied in an attempt to capture the distinct aesthetic space inhabited by these artists, defined neither entirely as commercial pop stars, nor as high culture composers.[125] These songwriters plot a continuum "between dual poles of accessibility and artistry" derived in part from their presence on stage as solo acts, with minimal, unamplified instrumentation, and song lyrics containing messages of personal and political significance.[126] In the 1960s and early 1970s, folk-inspired songwriting was intended for public or private listening rather than dancing, and it valorized "literate verbal texts and individual expressive styles," designed within a musical setting that encouraged listeners' attention to the subtleties of its construction.[127] We need the theories of meter outlined in the preceding chapters to characterize the metric subtleties that comprise singer-songwriter style.

Several early examples from this repertoire demonstrate metric disruptions, for example, through the addition or removal of beats, or through phrase length irregularities, that can be traced to stylistic precedents in folk and blues music. Typically, these kinds of irregularities appear during vocal phrases, so that specific words or lines are either strategically aligned (or misaligned) with regular meter, coordinated with a moment of metric disruption, or provide prosodic cues that act as a defining aspect of

[125] James Bennighof, *The Words and Music of Paul Simon*, The Praeger Singer-Songwriter Collection (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2007), xi.
[126] Lloyd Whitesell, *The Music of Joni Mitchell* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 7.
[127] Ibid.

meter. Chapter 2 provided the methodology for the analysis of meter in any texted repertoire, and in the previous chapter, some of those theories of meter were applied in transcription to develop the principles on which all subsequent transcriptions in this study are based. In this chapter we will examine the biography, political climate, and stylistic influences of the five artists examined in this dissertation, in order to define the singer-songwriter style, to bring out the personal and political nature of its lyrics, and to inform an interpretation of the lyrics as expressively connected to irregular metric structure.

The beginning of this singer-songwriter period aligned with the shift, particularly in Bob Dylan's early career, from performing pre-existing folk songs to experimenting with original songwriting. In Dylan's case, this songwriting style infused the folk song with blues influences, politically inclined subject matter, and conversational, though often enigmatic lyrics. He and other songwriters benefitted from the restructuring of the music industry at this time, when the popularity of the long-playing record and FM radio allowed for "more breathing space to foster an original musical sensibility" that combined fine art and popular expression.[128] This restructuring led to the emergence of musical styles distinct from the popular songs of the commercially successful Tin Pan Alley and Rock and Roll traditions.[129]

In the early 1960s, singer-songwriters were heavily influenced by the so-called "folk music revival," a resurgence of the rural American folk and blues songs of the early twentieth-century, like those written and performed by Woody Guthrie.[130] Bob Dylan

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[128] Ibid.
[129] Anna Stephan-Robinson, "Form in Paul Simon's Music" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Rochester, Eastman School of Music, 2009), 22.
[130] The popularity of this mid-twentieth century folk music revival follows a similar history as the career of Pete Seeger's, which began to rise in popularity in the 1940s as he performed folk and folk-dance music. Blacklisted in the 1950s, Seeger re-emerged in the 60s as folk music, especially folk-influenced protest songs, peaked in popularity. See

scholar Todd Harvey describes this revival as a period in which aspects of "traditional rural American music style and aesthetics were transmitted to young urban musicians."[131] The folk revival of the late 1950s and early 1960s was led by small acoustic ensembles and solo performers. Some artists, like Joan Baez and Judy Collins, primarily interpreted traditional folk music and songs of their contemporary songwriters, while others, most significantly Pete Seeger, and later Bob Dylan, were also renowned for writing their own music.

Many 1960s folk musicians that adapted the pre-existing catalogue of folk songs often modified the lyrics in response to the provocative social issues of their time, specifically the Vietnam War and the growing civil rights movement. For example, the song "We Shall Overcome" was a modified version of the song "We Will Overcome," sung by Pete Seeger, then Joan Baez, and it had existed in various forms before being repurposed in the 1960s as a civil rights protest song.[132] The term "singer-songwriter" helped to distinguish folk singers that were also songwriters, whose lyrics were written in part as a response to the confusing political climate of the early 1960s, in some way reflecting the emotional needs of the public consciousness.[133]

Singer-songwriter Buffy Sainte-Marie describes the artistic scene of the early 1960s as a free-speech movement in which many artists were writing poetry about interpersonal relationships and opposition to war. She recalls it as a time when artists

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Allan M. Winkler, *"To Every Thing There Is a Season": Pete Seeger and the Power of Song* (Oxford University Press, 2009).

[131] Todd Harvey, *The Formative Dylan: Transmission and Stylistic Influences* (Lanham, Maryland: The Scarecrow Press, Inc., 2001), xix.

[132] David King Dunaway and Molly Beer, *Singing Out: An Oral History of America's Folk Music Revivalists* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 141–142.

[133] Many artists of this period, like Seeger, fall under both categories, existing as folk singers and singer-songwriters. Murray Lerner, *Festival!* (Patchke Productions, 1967); Simon Frith, "Why Do Songs Have Words," in *Music for Pleasure* (Routledge, 1988), 118.

had a "very broad acceptance and tolerance for one another."[134] Songs written in the 1960s were opportunities for storytelling, sometimes from a first-person perspective, delivering messages of personal and political significance to their listeners, as exemplified by the opening line of Dylan's song "The Times They Are A-Changin'" ("Come gather 'round people, wherever you roam").[135]

In many cases, these stories feature an alignment between lyrical topics and the biography of the songwriter, manifested in personal, political, or religious topics. Even if lyrics were not explicitly autobiographical, listeners came to expect "truth-to-personal experience" realism.[136] Alan Lomax links this expectation to an *authenticity* that came to be associated with folk-influenced songwriting. He suggested that folk singers wishing to project authenticity must experience the meaning behind their art, performing their songs as if they were true-to-life, even if the characters and stories themselves are fictional.[137] Walter Everett describes these singer-songwriters as projecting an "aura of authenticity" because their songs derived "from a gut-produced extension of true values without either the commercial potential that comes with writing credit or the chintz of artificial overproduction."[138] But it is not necessary for the values a song expresses to be authentic in order to interpret its meaning, as listeners may infer meaning that was unintended by the songwriter. The crucial point is that the heightened attention that personally or politically significant lyrics commanded in this style make a listener likely

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[134] Blair Stonechild, *Buffy Sainte-Marie: It's My Way* (Markham, Ontario: Fifth House Ltd., 2012), 65–66.
[135] This lyrical significance may be deliberate, as is the case with Mitchell's anti-war song "The Fiddle and the Drum," or enigmatic, interpreted slightly differently by each listener. Many examples from Dylan's early compositions demonstrate this veiled meaning, like his 1963 song "Blowin' in the Wind." Dylan often makes reference to his songs as storytelling; at the 1963 Newport Folk Festival, he even introduces his "With God on Our Side" by saying "This song tells a story…if you like stories." See Lerner, *Festival!*
[136] We can even extend this notion to twenty-first century songwriting, for singers like Adele and Taylor Swift, who often write songs based on personal experience.
[137] Frith, "Why Do Songs Have Words," 118.
[138] Everett, *The Foundations of Rock*, 381.

to focus on them, and therefore be more susceptible to the effect of metric irregularities and flexible timing that they demonstrate.

The ten-year span (1962-1972) examined in this dissertation encompasses the "singer-songwriter periods" of five particular artists: Bob Dylan, Buffy Sainte-Marie, Paul Simon, Joni Mitchell, and Cat Stevens. Four of them began their recording careers in a folk-influenced style, with Cat Stevens as the only exception, beginning his career as a teenage pop star.[139] Simon arose performing as part of a duo with Art Garfunkel, but also recorded his first solo album as an acoustic, self-accompanied solo act.[140] We can then notice a shift in songwriting in the mid-1960s. By the time of Dylan's scandalous performance with electric instruments at the Newport Folk Festival in 1965, traditional folk music seemed to be "losing its novelty, as well as the intimacy that made it unique."[141] Artists who were initially influenced by the folk revival moved towards introspective songwriting, which was less political and universal, focusing instead on personal issues like romance and religion. The table in Figure 4.1 plots the album release dates for each artist between 1962 and 1972, with grey shading indicating the albums containing songs that are referenced in this dissertation. These selected examples are not the only songs that use meter for text expression; they are, however, some of the most compelling ones.

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[139] Stevens released two pop albums in 1967; by his next release in 1970, his style had shifted to folk-influenced introspective songwriting. Alan Yentob, *Yusuf: The Artist Formerly Known as Cat Stevens*, Imagine (BBC1, 2006).

[140] Simon's performing career began as part of the band Tom & Jerry with Art Garfunkel in the late 1950s, writing rock and roll songs in a style similar to the Everley Brothers. The two singers later recorded their debut folk-rock album as Simon & Garfunkel, *Wednesday Morning, 3 A.M.*, in 1964, and Simon recorded his solo album in 1965, many songs of which appear on subsequent Simon & Garfunkel albums. Bennighof, *The Words and Music of Paul Simon*, xxi.

[141] Stonechild, *Buffy Sainte-Marie: It's My Way*, 72.

Figure 4.1: Singer-songwriter period albums from five artists, 1962-1972[142]

	1962	1963	1964	1965	1966	1967	1968	1969	1970	1971	1972
Bob Dylan	*Bob Dylan*	*The Freewheelin' Bob Dylan*	*The Times They Are A-Changin'*	*Another Side of Bob Dylan*	*Bringing It All Back Home*	*John Wesley Harding*		*Nashville Skyline*	*Self Portrait* *New Morning*		
Paul Simon			**Wednesday Morning, 3 A.M.*	*The Paul Simon Songbook*	**Sounds of Silence* **Parsley, Sage, Rosemary and Thyme*		**Bookends*		**Bridge Over Troubled Water*		*Paul Simon*
Buffy Sainte-Marie			*It's My Way*	*Many a Mile*	*Little Wheel Spin and Spin*	*Fire & Fleet & Candlelight*	*I'm Gonna Be a Country Girl Again*	*Illuminations*		*She Used to Wanna Be a Ballerina*	*Moonshot*
Joni Mitchell							*Song to a Seagull*	*Clouds*	*Ladies of the Canyon*	*Blue*	*For the Roses*
Cat Stevens						*Matthew & Son* *New Masters*			*Mona Bone Jakon* *Tea for the Tillerman*	*Teaser and the Firecat*	*Catch Bull at Four*

[142] For Paul Simon, album titles with a * denote recordings as part of Simon & Garfunkel.

Two distinct stylistic trends emerge from this ten-year period. The first, from the early to mid-1960s, corresponds to the folk- and blues-influenced songwriting style in which politically engaged lyrics often challenged popular cultural conceptions. The second trend comprises the late 1960s to early 1970s, in which personal, introspective song lyrics were more common. The present study examines songs from both halves of the decade, and how their lyrical themes are brought out by extreme timing fluctuations and metric irregularities in the musical setting.

4.2 Bob Dylan: Origins and Influences

Of the five artists examined in this study, Bob Dylan is not only chronologically, but also stylistically prior to the others. His influence in the folk music scene, particularly the coffeehouse performances in Greenwich Village, New York City in the early 1960s, was widespread; Buffy Sainte-Marie, Paul Simon, Cat Stevens, and Joni Mitchell all acknowledge or demonstrate Dylan's influence on their songwriting.[143] His performances in New York followed the model of the folk revivalists, adapting pre-existing music for his own performances, often mimicking the earlier styles. He drew freely in this regard from other artists in country music, in early twentieth-century folk songs, as well as in music from his contemporaries in the folk revival, especially Joan Baez (who included Dylan as a frequent collaborator in many stage performances), Pete Seeger, Jimmie Rodgers, and Dave van Ronk.[144] Dylan was particularly influence by Woody Guthrie's

[143] Susan Lacy, *Joni Mitchell: Woman of Heart and Mind: A Life Story* (Eagle Rock Entertainment, 2003); Joan Prowse, *Buffy Sainte-Marie: A Multimedia Life* (True North, 2014); Bennighof, *The Words and Music of Paul Simon*, 30; Yentob, *Yusuf: The Artist Formerly Known as Cat Stevens*.

[144] There are countless accusations of Dylan's copying other artists; he reportedly stole the harmonic progression and vocal style of Dave Van Ronk's version of "House of the Rising Sun" to record on his debut album *Bob Dylan*, without permission. As a result, Van Ronk had to stop performing the song publically because his audiences were accusing him of stealing it from Dylan. See Martin Scorsese, *No Direction Home* (Paramount Pictures, 2005).For other influences, see Craig Russell, "The Idiom of Simon and the Image of Dylan: When Do Stars Cast Shadows?," in *Music in Performance and*

music, borrowing records from friends to study his style, and eventually performing and imitating Guthrie in coffeehouse performances.[145]

The initial period of Dylan's career was heavily influenced by folk and blues traditions, both of which feature non-isochronous rhythms and irregular phrase lengths. In imitating the style of earlier artists, Dylan incorporated their guitar strumming style and its characteristic metric irregularities. Two metric devices he adapted are of particular interest to this study. In the first, beats are routinely added or removed from phrases, sometimes to accommodate the structure of the text, but also as an occasional demonstration of a playful performance style.[146] Steven Rings suggests that the incorporation of such "crookedness" into Dylan's music demonstrates the influence of bluegrass, country, and rural blues on the artist's style, and suggests that the singer would likely have been aware of the tradition of non-isochrony in these repertoires.[147] The second technique that Dylan adopted was the practice of elongating melody notes over a continuation of the beat in the accompaniment, a technique often cited as a direct link to Woody Guthrie's rhythmic practices.[148] Many such instances of non-isochrony can be traced to Dylan's folk and blues sources, with the clearest direct influences found in the music of Woody Guthrie and Robert Johnson. The following section draws on one example from each to compare those artists' characteristic metric irregularities to similar ones occurring in Dylan's own songs.

Society, ed. Malcolm Cole and John Koegel (Warren, MI: Harmonie Park Press, 1997), 589.

[145] Scorsese, *No Direction Home*.

[146] Jocelyn Neal finds a similar kind of playful engagement between the singer and audience in twentieth century country music songwriting. See Neal, "Songwriter's Signature, Artist's Imprint."

[147] Rings, "A Foreign Sound to Your Ear: Bob Dylan Performs 'It's Alright, Ma (I'm Only Bleeding)'," [22].

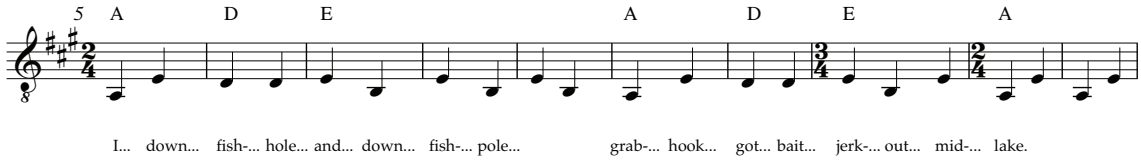
[148] Ibid., [24].

4.2.1 Bob Dylan and Woody Guthrie

The parallels between Dylan's early style and Guthrie's music are best demonstrated on the first few studio albums, on which he uses a guitar pick to articulate a bass note before strumming the remainder of the chord.[149] The "talking blues" songs in Dylan's repertoire directly reference Guthrie's own songs in this style, particularly in the metric practice of adding or removing beats from measures of one harmony in a repeated progression.[150] One example in which Guthrie demonstrates this technique is "Talking Fishing Blues" (sometimes titled "Talking Fish Blues"), the first phrase of which (0:04-0:14) is given in Figure 4.2. The guitar's bass line has been transcribed on the staff, with the strummed chords indicated above by their root. The lyrics for the first four lines, which are spoken rather than sung, have been provided above the transcription and the syllables sung on quarter-note beats are placed below the staff.

Figure 4.2: Guthrie, "Talking Fishing Blues," first two vocal phrases[151]

I went down to the fishing hole,
And I sat down with my fishing pole;
Somethin' grabb'd my hook and it got my bait
And it jerked me out in the middle of the lake.



[149] Dylan refers to his strumming style as "casual Carter-Family flat-picking style;" however, as Rings points out, Maybelle Carter did not flat-pick. See Bob Dylan, *Chronicles: Volume One* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2004), 157; Rings, "A Foreign Sound to Your Ear: Bob Dylan Performs 'It's Alright, Ma (I'm Only Bleeding)'," 18.
[150] Pete Seeger noted that talking blues songs follow a predictable pattern of "two lines that rhyme, two more that rhyme, then two or three irregular, free form lines following as a comment, before the next stanza." See Saul Schniderman, ed., *Talkin' Union: Music, Lore, History* 6 (1983), 4.
[151] Bass line and lyrics transcribed from Woody Guthrie, *The Asch Recordings, Vol. 1*, The Asch Recordings, Vol. 1-4 (Smithsonian Folkways Recordings, 1999), 1.; modified to match Woody Guthrie, "Talking Fishing Blues," *www.woodyguthrie.org*, accessed August 3, 2015, https://www.woodyguthrie.org/Lyrics/Talking_Fishing_Blues.htm.

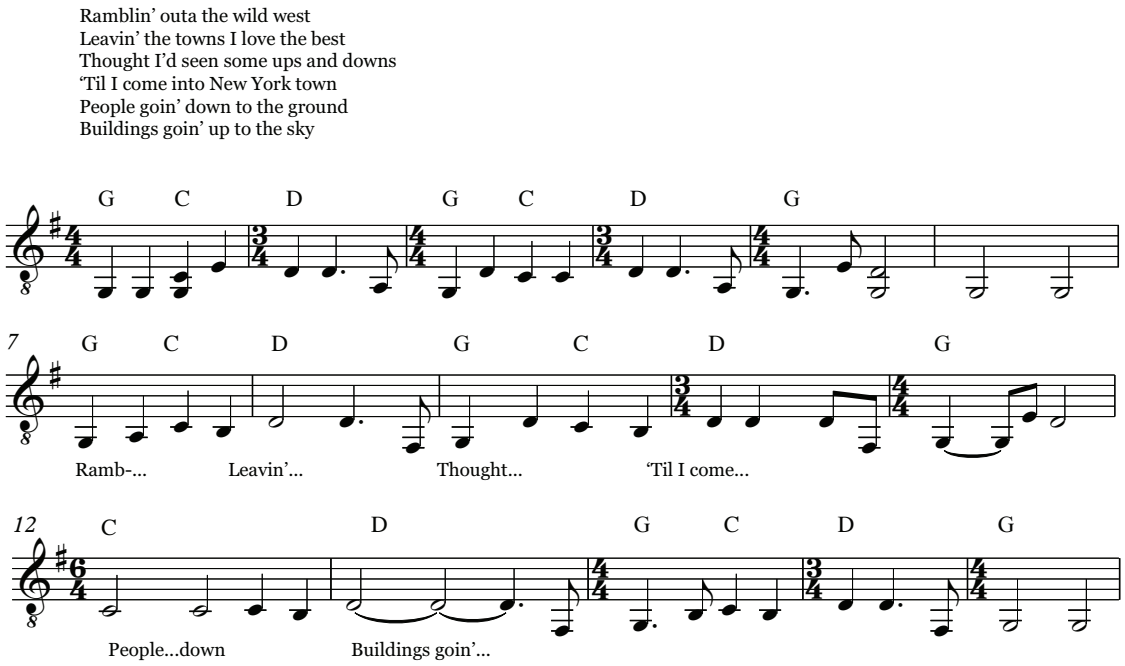
The tetrameter of the lyrics suggests that another four-bar unit could conceivably begin after the initial four measures. However, Guthrie adds an extra measure of dominant harmony in m. 9 that extends the first unit by two quarter-note beats. In the second unit, the 3/4 measure accommodates Guthrie's omission of a quarter-note beat on B3 (compared to the first unit), which results in the arrival of tonic harmony in m. 13, a beat earlier than expected from a four-bar pattern in 2/4. These extra and omitted beats seem to result from the casual, conversational style of Guthrie's vocal delivery, in which he freely changes the accompaniment patterns. Indeed, the metric irregularities occurring in this style result from the deployment of formulaic patterns of voice and accompaniment stress.[152]

We can find a similar processes occurring in Dylan's talking blues songs. In one example "Talkin' New York" (Figure 4.3) he adopts a style similar to Guthrie's in vocal timbre, spoken singing technique, and guitar strumming, adding even more instances of non-isochrony. The introduction sets up metric deletions as normal occurrences, with an omitted beat at the end of every second measure creating seven-beat motivic units. In the first four measures, the beat is omitted from each bar of dominant harmony so that the following tonic arrives a quarter-note beat early. Measures 5-9 remain in 4/4, but by m. 10 another metric deletion occurs in the bar of dominant harmony. By this point, Dylan has established that a beat is likely to be omitted from measures of V that precede the tonic. In the final system, the subdominant harmony and the following dominant each last for six beats, a half note longer than expected, temporarily upsetting the alignment

[152] Indeed, Jocelyn Neal cites Chas Williams in her descriptions of "extra measures" (fifth bars added to a four-bar prototype), which commonly occur in the country music repertoire. Both Figure 4.2 and 4.4 includes these kind of extra measures, which Neal describes as having the dual function of providing a respite for the voice and an upbeat sensation to the next hyperdownbeat. See Neal, "Songwriter's Signature, Artist's Imprint," 122; Chas Williams, *The Nashville Number System*, 1988, 26.

of measure beginnings with changes of harmony. We can read the progression from mm. 11-14 as an augmentation of the progression in mm. 7-8.

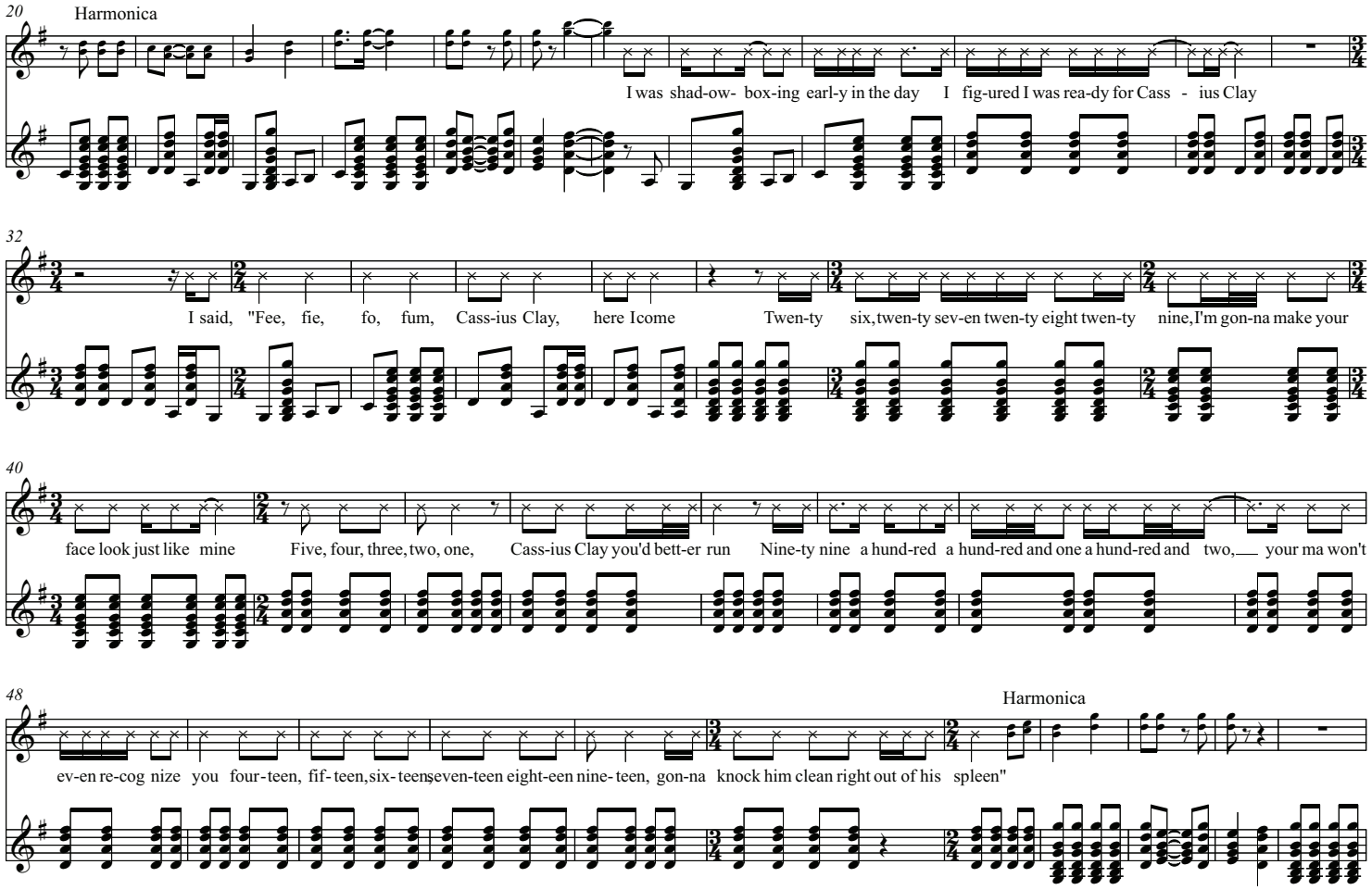
Figure 4.3: Dylan, "Talkin' New York," verse 1[153]



Dylan's metric deletions propel the opening section, illustrating the speed of New York City life, and seemingly autobiographical lyrics about finding industry success as a folk revivalist in the early 1960s. His lyrics mimic reactions of record executives ("You sound like a hillbilly," "We want folksingers here"), which align with responses Dylan received when trying to get a record contract in New York."[154] Two of Dylan's other talking blues songs, "Talkin' World War III Blues" and "I Shall Be Free No. 10," both feature similar first-person narratives and metric irregularities.

[153] Bob Dylan, *Bob Dylan* (Columbia, 1962).
[154] Scorsese, *No Direction Home*.

Figure 4.4: Dylan, "I Shall Be Free, No. 10," verse 1[155]



[155] Bob Dylan, *Another Side of Bob Dylan* (Columbia, 1964).

In "I Shall Be Free, No. 10" we find another example of Dylan's borrowing Guthrie-style irregularities in addition to extending vocal phrases beyond their expected length. These prolongations occur on dominant harmony, sometimes to make a pause in the lyrics, but also to accommodate passages in which Dylan adds text. Figure 4.4 provides a transcription of the song's second verse (0:23-1:10), with the rhythms of Dylan's lyrics included in the upper staff. He rotates through the harmonic progression I-IV-V several times, with different numbers of measures of each harmony in each iteration.[156] For the first line of the stanza, beginning at the upbeat to m. 27, nine beats of dominant harmony follow two beats of tonic and two beats of subdominant. In the second rotation, there are only two measures of dominant (mm. 35-36), which provides a contrast with the third rotation's total of fourteen measures of dominant.

The added measures accommodate what seems like improvised lyrics, as Dylan counts in a variety of ways, interjecting comments about Cassius Clay and boxing. The humorous imagery of the slender Dylan taking on a heavyweight boxing legend is enhanced by the musical setting, in which the listener would be anticipating the arrival on tonic, but sense the long delay as Dylan explains how he's "gonna knock [Clay] clean right out of his spleen." Dylan emphasizes this humor by elongating his phrases, subverting listener expectations of normative phrase lengths.

4.2.2 Bob Dylan and Robert Johnson

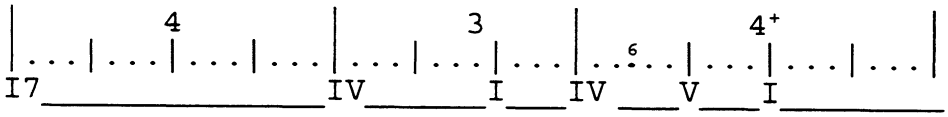
In addition to Guthrie's influence, a link can be drawn between Dylan's songs and the metric irregularities of Robert Johnson's music. Blues-influenced R'n'B and rock-

[156] Rings' schema-based analysis provides a precedent for accommodating the stretching or contracting of music units in Dylan's music, connected to the singer's "famously shambolic performance style." Rings describes Dylan's hypermetric flexibility as a dynamic series of actions, following a loose syntax but "chaining together" some "idiomatic gestures realized spontaneously in the moment of performance." See Rings, "A Foreign Sound to Your Ear: Bob Dylan Performs 'It's Alright, Ma (I'm Only Bleeding)'."

and-roll found their way to Dylan's northern Minnesota hometown in the 1950s "by way of the radio and recordings."[157] Dylan would also likely have heard rural blues, which "had a resurgent national and international presence as an ancillary to the folk revival," with Johnson representing a "mythic emblem for a central strain" of Dylan's musical style.[158] Johnson's songs are often organized into three-line stanzas, as would become formulaic in the prototypical twelve-bar-blues forms after his era, yet the number of beats in each bar is not always four, so much so that non-isochronous grouping of beats is a flexible norm in his repertoire. Charles Ford's study of Johnson's musical rhythms illustrates a variety of types of irregularities, including Johnson's tendency to string together various guitar accompaniment patterns without regard for maintaining a consistent meter. For instance, in his analysis of "Kindhearted Woman Blues" (0:44-1:17), Ford bases his metric reading on Johnson's declamation of the text, hearing bar lines articulated by strong syllabic emphasis. Figure 4.5 reproduces Ford's Example 4, which provides a metric transcription of the song's second verse.[159] Longer vertical lines in this diagram correspond to what we would call hypermetric downbeats, shorter lines indicate bars within those hypermeasures, and dots denote the quarter-note beats in each bar.

Figure 4.5: Ford (1998): Example 5: "Kindhearted Woman Blues #1" metric transcription, verse 2[160]

Example 5. 'Kindhearted Woman Blues' #1, verse 2.



[157] Albin Zak, "Bob Dylan and Jimi Hendrix: Juxtaposition and Transformation 'All Along the Watchtower,'" *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 57, no. 3 (2004): 625.
[158] Ibid.
[159] Johnson recorded two versions of this song; Ford's transcription is based on the first, which can be found on Robert Johnson, *King of the Delta Blues Singers* (Columbia, 1961).
[160] Charles Ford, "Robert Johnson's Rhythms," *Popular Music* 17, no. 1 (1998): 76.

The numbers at the top indicate how many bars are in each hypermetric unit. As we can see, the second unit is only three measures long, because Johnson omits a second bar of tonic harmony that normally occurs in a 12-bar blues progression. Additionally, in the next hypermeasure, Johnson adds two quarter-note beats to the first measure, which expands the hypermetric unit. Ford illustrates this lengthened hypermeasure by including a plus sign beside the "4," suggesting that, though four bars comprise this unit, one has been lengthened.

In the subsequent unit, Ford reads the alignment of the first syllable of the word "baby" with a clear hypermetric downbeat as Johnson's marking the word for attention in comparison to other vocal phrases, which begin after a downbeat.[161] Elsewhere in the song, strong dynamic accents on particular stressed syllables inform Ford's choice of downbeats in transcription. This gives an indication that we may use Johnson's placement of lyrics as cues to understand his often-irregular metric and hypermetric structure.

4.2.3 Phrase Extension via Melodic Elongation

In addition to the borrowed technique of added and removed beats, we may find phrases elongated through other techniques Dylan adopted from other musicians. One elongation technique is Dylan's lengthening of melody notes over a continuation of guitar strumming, which adds beats to measures in his strophic songs.[162] This technique is particularly challenging to transcribe; elongated melody notes without accompaniment could be accounted for with a fermata, but these elongations instead require extra beats, sometimes extra measures, in transcription to accommodate the lengthened melody note

[161] Ibid.
[162] Dylan reportedly learned this from a Woody Guthrie songbook, in which he highlighted a passage that describes this practice. Rings, "A Foreign Sound to Your Ear: Bob Dylan Performs 'It's Alright, Ma (I'm Only Bleeding)'," [24–25].

and the accompaniment strumming articulations.[163] Examples of this technique occur in Dylan's songs "With God on Our Side," "Bob Dylan's Dream," and his version of the folk song "Man of Constant Sorrow," examined below. Dylan was likely familiar with recordings of this song by the Stanley Brothers and Mike Seeger, and performances by Joan Baez, all of which feature a regular 4/4 meter throughout.[164] Dylan's version, however, varies the melody of the original and includes several melodic elongations that disrupt regular meter. Dylan copies the ten-bar structure of the Stanley Brothers' recording, but arranges his melody and chord changes differently with respect to the measure numbers. The transcription in Figure 4.6 illustrates the first vocal phrase (0:07-0:19) of the Stanley Brothers recording. The ten measures of the phrase divide into five two-bar hypermeasures, each of which begins with metric and durational accents on five of the line's key words: "I," "man," "sorrow," "trouble," and "days." In Dylan's arrangement (0:00-0:13, shown in Figure 4.7), his guitar bass line begins by articulating scale-degrees 4, 3, and 2, suggesting a subsequent arrival on scale-degree 1. Before this tonic occurs, his vocal line prolongs the D4 pitch on the word "I" to span more than two measures over a dominant harmony, delaying the arrival of tonic further than expected. When the tonic does arrive, it is only a half-note long, compared to the whole-note tonic length in the Stanley Brothers' recording. This technique occurs throughout his version of "Man of Constant Sorrow," always extending dominant harmony to delay the arrival of a shortened tonic harmony. The local meter is not disrupted, since Dylan's guitar provides fast articulations that continue tactus beats.

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[163] As discussed in Chapter 3, the focus of this study is on transcriptions that account for all the sounding evens of a particular recording, rather than producing a single score for a song.

[164] The Stanley Brothers' recording can be found on *Clinch Mountain Bluegrass* (Vanguard, 1994). The song was also more recently re-recorded and popularized in the soundtrack to the movie *O Brother, Where Art Thou?* (Lost Highway/Mercury, 2000). For a more detailed history of the song, see Todd Harvey, "Never Quite Sung in This Fashion Before: Bob Dylan's 'Man of Constant Sorrow,'" *Oral Tradition* 22, no. 1 (2007): 99–111.

Figure 4.6: The Stanley Brothers, "Man of Constant Sorrow," first vocal phrase

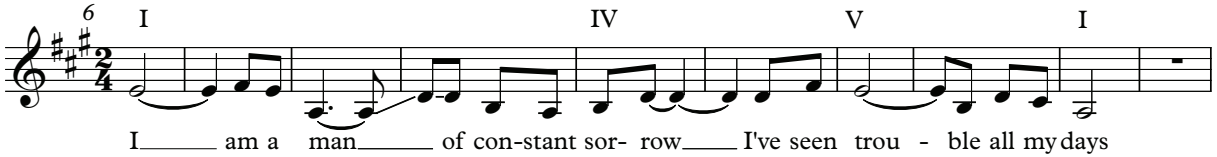
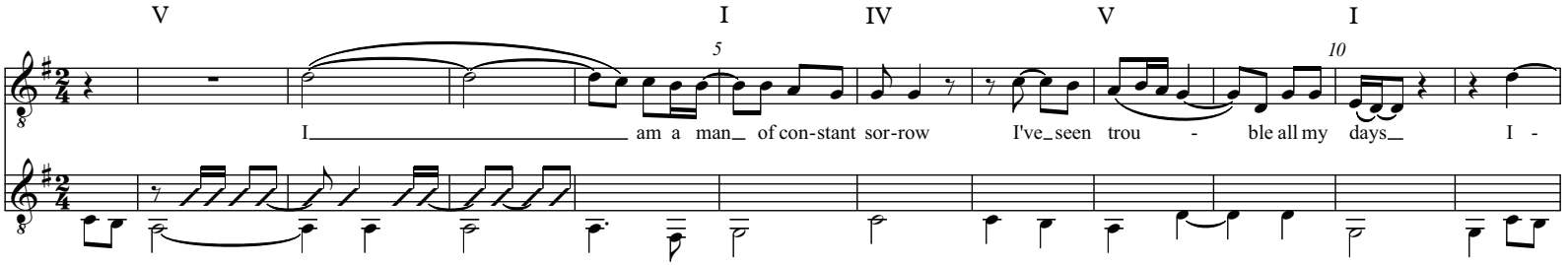


Figure 4.7: Dylan, "Man of Constant Sorrow," first vocal phrase[165]



[165] Dylan, *Bob Dylan*.

However, the hypermeter is made irregular through Dylan's extension of the number of measures of dominant harmony in this progression.[166] We will later examine a similar technique occurring, amid other metric irregularities, in Dylan's song "Only a Pawn in their Game."

4.2.4 The Political Significance of Dylan's Lyrics

The aforementioned metric techniques Dylan adopted from folk and blues influences appear in various ways in the music of his contemporary singer-songwriters. Before examining some instances, it is important to also acknowledge the influence of his political songwriting on his peers.[167] Drawing on influences from traditional folk songs, Dylan wrote many of what were referred to as "topical protest songs," which continued the folk tradition of political engagement, referencing specific events but also making wide-sweeping political statements, as in "The Times They Are A-Changin'," that conveyed a feeling "that was in the general essence of the spirit of the times."[168] His "A Hard Rain's Gonna Fall" suggests various kinds of suffering and injustices, both personal and environmental, that became associated with the feelings of the time around the Cuban Missile Crisis in 1962, even though the song was written before the events of the crisis occurred.[169]

Dylan's early songs either referred to specific political events or made vague commentary on political and civil rights issues. Pete Seeger describes one performance

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[166] Rings describes similar kinds of hypermetric flexibility in Dylan's music as a dynamic series of actions, following a loose syntax but "chaining together" some "idiomatic gestures realized spontaneously in the moment of performance." See Rings, "A Foreign Sound to Your Ear: Bob Dylan Performs 'It's Alright, Ma (I'm Only Bleeding)'," [22].
[167] Dylan openly disliked the term "protest songs" and only acknowledged his status as a "protest singer" in an effort to refute it. He instead referred to himself as a writer of "contemporary songs." Scorsese, *No Direction Home*.
[168] Ibid.
[169] Many scholars frequently credit the song with depicting an "atomic rain," though Dylan states that he simply wrote about a "hard rain" with no intentional reference to the Cold War. Ibid.

in his tour of the southern United States, when the civil rights movement was in full swing, and Dylan performed "Only a Pawn in their Game" for several hundred people, singing about the man who killed American civil rights activist, Medgar Evers. The song's lyrics draw attention to the ideology of the "poor white man," who is taught to protect his social standing, however meager, at all costs. Seeger describes Dylan's lyrics as encouraging his audience not just to "think of this one man who did this murder, but [to] think of this whole situation."[170] The song is examined in detail in Chapter 7, but its message brings up an important consideration about Dylan's music: that his song topics were encouraging listeners' attention to the lyrics. When his music includes metric irregularities, their expressive rationale in association with the lyrics is much more likely to be understood by listeners already focused on lyrical meaning. This lyrical significance is also a factor in the music of Dylan's contemporaries, whose own styles are outlined in the subsequent sections.

4.3 Buffy Sainte-Marie: Art and Activism

During Dylan's tenure in the Greenwich Village performance scene, he reportedly heard and enjoyed the songs of Buffy Sainte-Marie.[171] In 1965, both artists were performers at the Newport Folk Festival; however, by that time, Dylan had departed from acoustic performances, having infamously added an electrified band to his performing ensemble.[172] Sainte-Marie, however, was performing her own acoustic songs, influenced by her personal experiences and cultural heritage. Born on the Piapot Cree First Nations reserve in the Canadian prairies, she was musically inclined as a child and, influenced by her college peers to take up songwriting, found models in the "true folk

[170] Ibid.
[171] Prowse, *Buffy Sainte-Marie: A Multimedia Life*.
[172] Lerner, *Festival!*

songs that have lasted hundreds of years."[173] She provided her own accompaniment on guitar, and incorporated a traditional mouth bow into some of her songs on her first three studio albums. In addition to her folk influences, Sainte-Marie recalls particular singers as influences on her style. For instance, she credits Edith Piaf for inspiring a singing practice that focuses on the projection of emotion more through effects like vibrato than through perfect singing technique.[174]

Sainte-Marie's music is most well regarded for the impact of its lyrics, which are the most researched aspect of her compositions. She consciously desires to create music about the human condition "that would be meaningful in all kinds of different countries and in all kinds of different generations."[175] The song "Universal Soldier" is a powerful anthem about the anti-war sentiments of the 1960s; Sainte-Marie wrote it as the Vietnam War was escalating, claiming her inspiration from seeing wounded soldiers at an airport and wanting to write a song about individual responsibility for war, and how "old feudal thinking kills us all."[176]

In these respects, Sainte-Marie's songs followed a contemporary trend in poetry, described by Mary Oliver, in which passages of free verse acted as "candid and revelatory documents," becoming vehicles for poets to speak out passionately about their lives from personal and community-based perspectives.[177] Oliver explains,

> I am speaking of women writers, the Afro-American writers, and Native American writers, for example, whose poems are often eloquent and powerful disclosures of gender or ethnic truths.[178]

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[173] Stonechild, *Buffy Sainte-Marie: It's My Way*, 10–44.
[174] Ibid., 123.
[175] Ibid., 43–44.
[176] Ibid., 142; Philip Coulter, *Still This Love Goes On: The Songs of Buffy Sainte-Marie* (CBC Music, 2012).
[177] Mary Oliver, *A Poetry Handbook* (Harcourt Brace & Co, 1994), 79–80.
[178] Ibid.

These statements are a good description of Sainte-Marie's protest songs, particularly those regarding the mistreatment and historical representation of Native Americans. Social workers and religious figures in the 1940s did not see a future for them, believing "their own salvation lay in assimilating into white society."[179] Sainte-Marie's first widely-popular Native American protest song was "Now That the Buffalo's Gone," the lyrics of which "object to the hypocrisy of Americans who lamented the nation's past injustices while allowing current ones," mentioning specific events in the 1960s, like building the Kinzua Dam in upstate New York, which displaced many Natives.[180] Her song "My Country 'Tis of Thy People You're Dying" borrows text and melody from the American patriotic song, "My Country 'Tis of Thee," thus specifically targeting the teaching that U.S. history began with the arrival of European colonists.

When singing passionately about her subject matter, Sainte-Marie often uses expressive timing to highlight the meaning of her lyrics. Her song "Suffer the Little Children," from *Illuminations* (1969), addresses the impact of residential schools on children and their parents, who were encouraged to abandon their culture and language to succeed in colonized society. Her lyrics depict the children taking a daily "little drink from the liar's cup," while their mothers avoid acknowledging colonizers as the real enemy. Instead, they sell "a son or two into some slavery," forsaking their heritage for potential lucrative gains. Sainte-Marie's performance on the studio recording features a *ritardando* at lyrically significant moments in her verses, particularly in the declamation of lyrics regarding the mothers of children in residential schools. She repeated the different wordings of the line "Mama don't really care" with a slower tempo, as if to scold the participants, but later she empathizes ("Poor Mama needs a source of pride") with a

[179] Stonechild, *Buffy Sainte-Marie: It's My Way*, 11.
[180] Ibid., 97.

generally troublesome situation. These particular fluctuations never disrupt the tactus, but they serves to express Sainte-Marie's perspective on the subject matter.

Sainte-Marie was not the first twentieth-century songwriter to write protest songs about the treatment of Native Americans. Fellow Greenwich Village singer Peter La Farge wrote an entire album about Native rights in 1963, some songs of which were covered by Bob Dylan and Johnny Cash. However, Sainte-Marie's status as a cultural insider to multiple groups—as a woman, a Canadian, an American, and as a Native—gave her work special authenticity. Her intention was never to scold her audiences, but to use her songwriting as a way to bring her listeners "on board" to a shift in perspective about universal issues.[181] Several songs we will explore in this study, both original compositions and folk adaptations, feature meter-disrupting timings that serve to express the personal and political meaning of her lyrics.

4.4 Paul Simon and Political Songwriting Trends

In the aesthetic environment of the singer-songwriter style, Paul Simon found fertile ground for nurturing his songwriting talent. His compositions took advantage of the influences of American 1960s popular songwriting, including the so-called "urban folk" sound, but also took advantage of the musical and lyrical trends that complemented his ideas.[182] Simon's English literature studies were reportedly a large influence on his songwriting, and he became increasingly interested in the "literary potential" of his lyrical craft.[183] His solo album, *The Paul Simon Songbook* (1965) included twelve tracks Simon had written, two of which had previously been recorded on Simon & Garfunkel's debut album, and nine of which would appear on their subsequent duo albums. The two

[181] John Walker, *Buffy* (National Film Board of Canada, 2010), www.nfb.ca/film/buffy.
[182] Bennighof, *The Words and Music of Paul Simon*, xxi.
[183] Ibid.

remaining tracks, "A Church is Burning" and "The Side of a Hill" are two of Simon's few topical and anti-war protest songs.

Simon's self-accompanied singer-songwriter period was relatively brief. His later work with Art Garfunkel is normally classified as "folk rock," a genre that contains fewer cases of metric irregularities, due in part to its inclusion of a rhythm ensemble. The small section of Simon's urban-folk songs are those included on *The Paul Simon Songbook* as solo tracks, and their analogs on Simon & Garfunkel albums. The most well known of these songs, "The Sound of Silence," examined more fully in Chapter 5, is a quintessential example of the expressive relationship between prosody and meter found in the urban-folk repertoire.

Simon's first song regarding more serious topics was "He Was My Brother," which he initially recorded with Garfunkel on *Wednesday Morning, 3 A.M.,* and later on his solo album. Simon later claimed that the song was about the murder of his friend, social activist Andrew Goodman, who was volunteering in Mississippi during the "Freedom Summer" of 1964.[184] However, he had actually written the song prior to Goodman's death, only later dedicating the song to his friend. Scholars credit the intentional misrepresentation to Simon's eagerness to be part of the personal and political songwriting movement of the 1960s.[185] It additionally demonstrates that audiences may assign authenticity to song lyrics that are biographically or historically inaccurate, attributing a different meaning to them than the songwriter may have intended.

Several scholars credit the influence of folk revivalists, particularly Bob Dylan's "poetic invention and social commentary," with the shift in Simon's songwriting from

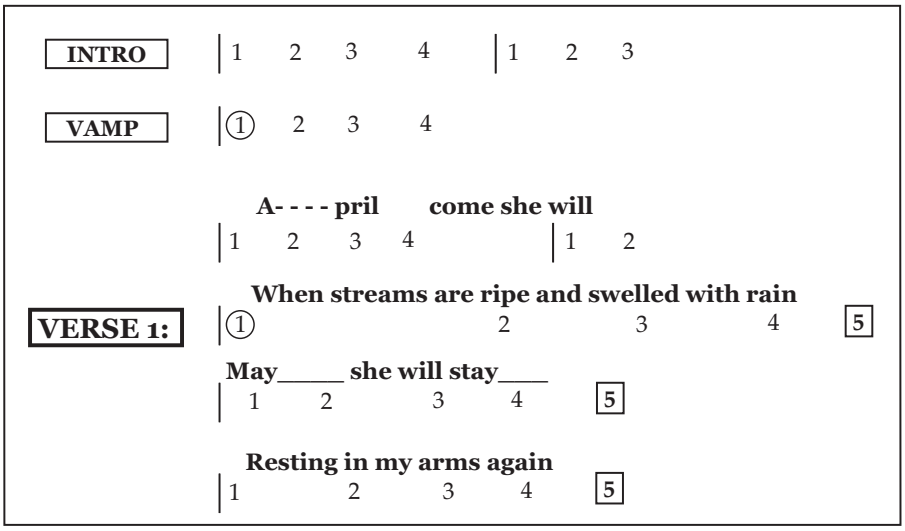
[184] Ibid., 3.
[185] Stephan-Robinson, "Form in Paul Simon's Music," 82.

"bouncy pop music to the troubling events of the civil rights movement."[186] The popularity of political lyrics motivated the shift in Simon's songwriting in general, but Dylan's music seems to have had a particular influence. One explicit reference is Simon's parody song "A Simple Desultory Philippic (or How I Was Lyndon Johnson'd into Submission"), which was first recorded on Simon's solo album, and later re-recorded on *Parsley, Sage, Rosemary and Thyme*, with the parenthetical changed to "or How I was Robert McNamara'd into Submission," along with several other changes to the lyrics. The song imitates Dylan's early style, cited in some sources as a direct parody of Dylan's "Subterranean Homesick Blues," which also features a "rapid-fire succession of ultra-short rhyming phrases."[187] The talking blues style Simon imitates contrasts his usual folk singing timbre, and his listeners would have recognized this change as a reference to Dylan. The song serves to demonstrate Simon's knowledge of Dylan's aesthetic, with the altered title and lyrics accommodating shifts in Simon's own political opinions between recordings.

Like Dylan, Simon routinely adds or omits beats at the ends of his phrases to disrupt the hypermetric units. One example of this occurs in "April Come She Will" on *The Paul Simon Songbook*, for which a hypermetric diagram of the first verse (0:00-0:38) has been included as Figure 4.8, with numbers corresponding to half-note beats in a 4/2 hypermeter.

[186] Russell, "The Idiom of Simon and the Image of Dylan: When Do Stars Cast Shadows?," 595.
[187] David Brackett, *Interpreting Popular Music* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 166.

Figure 4.8: Simon, "April Come She Will," hypermetric structure, introduction, vamp, and verse 1[188]

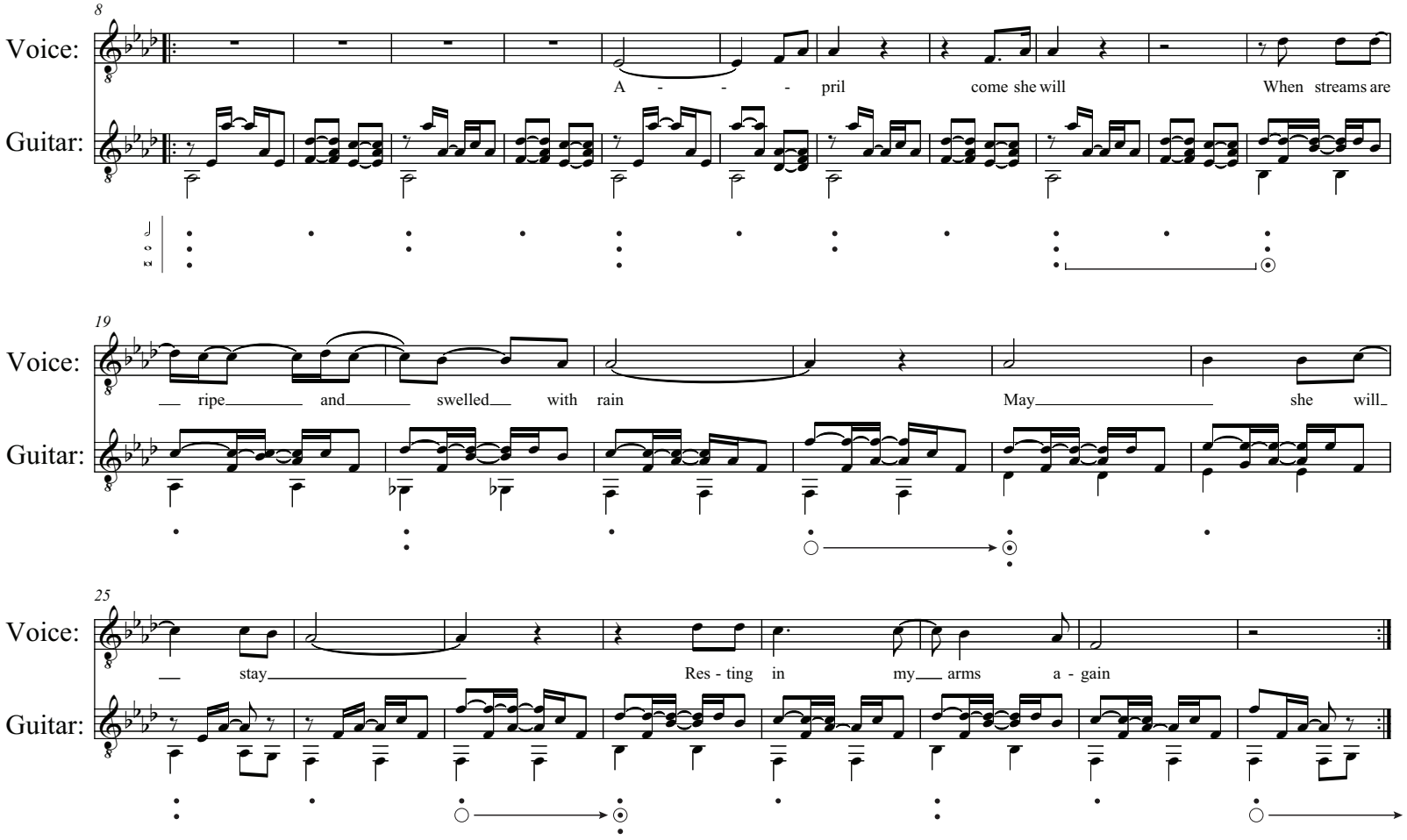


The song's introduction sets up the meter and hypermeter, but a half-note beat removed from its second hypermeasure causes the onset of the subsequent vamp to arrive earlier than it could have. A similar shift can be found at the onset of Simon's second vocal fragment (line 2 in the figure), which occurs a whole note earlier than expected, since beats were removed from the previous hypermetric unit. The circled "1" in the vamp and in the second vocal fragment indicate the unexpectedly early arrivals of the hyperdownbeats with respect to the previous structure. In addition to these metric shifts, Simon later adds a fifth half note to the end of each of the last three lines, as shown with the beats enclosed in boxes in the figure. These extra beats prolong the F minor harmony and delay the expected arrival of the next hypermetric unit.

Horlacher's analytical notation helps us to notate these metric shifts in the vocal line, with the shift in the second vocal fragment as a metric deletion of a whole-note beat, and the other three reinterpretations as added beats to the half-note level, as shown in Figure 4.9.

[188] Paul Simon, *The Paul Simon Songbook* (CBS, 1965).

Figure 4.9: Simon, "April Come She Will," verse 1



We might expect the vamp in mm. 17-18 to repeat, as it did prior to the vocal entry; however, the chord change and start of another vocal line in m. 19 create a strong grouping beginning that necessitates a metrical reinterpretation. This is shown as a metric deletion, through omission of a whole-note beat at the breve level. The added hyperbeats in mm. 22, 27, and 32 both delay the arrival of a beat at the whole note level. We can read these added beats as evoking the text at their inclusion. Where Simon sings "When streams are ripe and swelled with rain" the extra beat can be read to highlight the words "swelled with rain" to allow them extra time to resonate with the listener, illustrating a surplus of water. Simon employs this technique again at the end of the third vocal fragment, "May she will stay," to extend the hypermetric unit and emphasize the word "stay," and in the fourth line, evoking "rest" in the phrase "resting in my arms again."

At the corresponding points in the subsequent verses, identical metric shifts are also significant to the narrative. The lyrics span six months, paired into seasons; the first verse comprises the springtime romance developing over April and May. In verse 2, the summer time months (June and July) find the woman wanting to "change her tune" about the relationship. Added beats occur to give more time to the ends of the lyrical phrases, and their corresponding minor harmonies, "In restless walks she'll prowl the night," July she will fly," and "And give no warning to her flight." The third verse mourns the lost love with the arrival of August and September, and added beats align with descriptions of falling temperatures (i.e. "The autumn winds blow chilly and cold"). By contrast, in the final stanza, as Simon sings "And love once new has now grown old," he moves to an A-flat major harmony (instead of the F minor of the previous verses) and does not add a beat to this hypermeasure. Instead his final vocal hypermeasure manifests a more normative four half-note beats, then proceeds directly into the cheery vamp of the opening, with his final word, "old" aligning with the vamp's hyperdownbeat.

We can read this altered final stanza as a fond remembering of the springtime love lost over the six-month period. These rather simple examples of metric shift aligned with lyrical meaning illustrate one of the ways that Simon uses meter for text expression.

4.5 Joni Mitchell and the Rise of "Confessional Songwriting"

We can find many examples of musical meter serving to express the often-personal meaning of the lyrics in the songs of Joni Mitchell, who is renowned for her lyrical craft. The singer-songwriter movement was already well established in Greenwich Village when Mitchell joined the performance scene in 1967, booking herself gigs at coffeehouses.[189] She had taught herself to play guitar using a Pete Seeger songbook, but had to devise alternate tunings to accommodate the lasting effects of childhood polio on her left hand.[190] Influenced by Judy Collins, Joan Baez, and Leonard Cohen's poetry, Mitchell also credits Dylan, stating that she never thought to set her poetry to music until she heard Dylan's "Positively Fourth Street" and realized she could make literature-based songs.[191] This discovery was the "galvanizing spark" that opened up the literary potential of her songwriting.[192] Her early albums are catalogues of the folk-inspired music Mitchell performed at her early coffeehouse gigs. At these performances, Mitchell met Buffy Sainte-Marie, who subsequently covered two of Mitchell's songs, "The Circle

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[189] Lacy, *Joni Mitchell: Woman of Heart and Mind: A Life Story*.
[190] "Joni Mitchell Biography," *Rolling Stone*, accessed July 15, 2014, http://www.rollingstone.com/music/artists/joni-mitchell/biography.
[191] Dai Griffiths, "From Lyric to Anti-Lyric: Analyzing the Words in Pop Song," in *Analyzing Popular Music*, ed. Allan Moore (Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 41. In subsequent interviews, Mitchell admonishes Dylan as a fraud, through she denied this in a recent interview; see minutes 81:58-84:38 on "Joni Mitchell: Portrait of an Artist," *Q with Jian Ghomeshi* (CBC Radio One, June 11, 2013). The interview is available online at http://music.cbc.ca/concerts/CBC-Music-Exclusives-The-Joni-Mitchell-Interview-2013-06-04/videos/The-Joni-Mitchell-Interview-A-CBC-Music-Exclusive
[192] Whitesell, *The Music of Joni Mitchell*, 77; Lacy, *Joni Mitchell: Woman of Heart and Mind: A Life Story*.

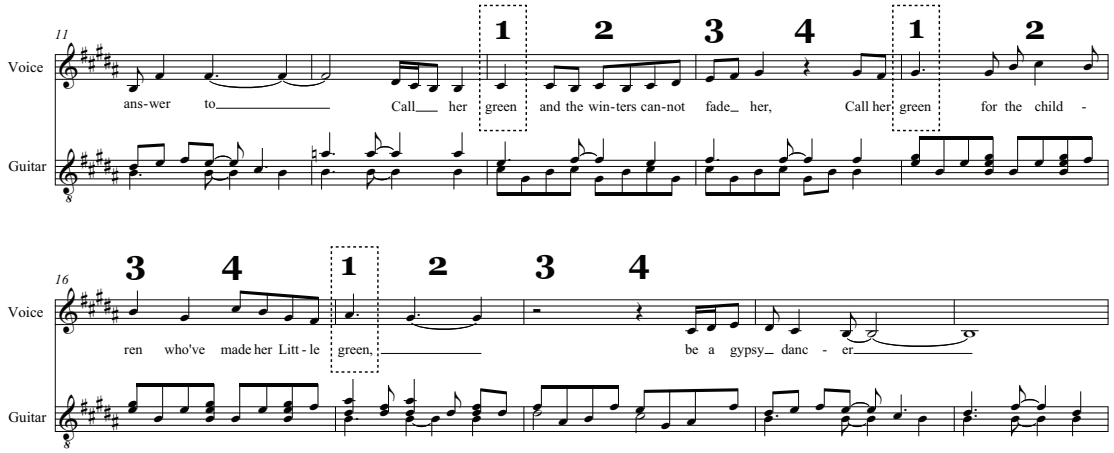
Game" and "Song to a Seagull," on the album *Fire & Fleet & Candlelight*, and promoted Mitchell's music until she found management.[193]

Mitchell's first stylistic period encompasses her first five albums from 1968 to 1972, in which she "takes an acoustic folk aesthetic as the point of departure for various explorations into intricate poetic structure, rhapsodic expression, and idiosyncratic instrumentation."[194] Her lyrical and musical output has been credited as a representative voice of a "self-explanatory intellectual bohemianism" that was shaped by the ideals of the 1960s folk revival.[195] By the 1970s, Mitchell's songwriting became more introspective. Her 1971 album *Blue* is lauded as the "zenith of confessional songwriting," in which many lyrical topics can be traced to autobiographical details about Mitchell's own life and romantic relationships.[196] In some cases, the romantic partners have been identified: "Willy" and "My Old Man" addresses her relationship with CSNY's Graham Nash; "Rainy Night House" and "A Case of You" were reportedly inspired by Canadian poet and songwriter, Leonard Cohen. Some subjects were more ambiguous; for example, there is much speculation about the romantic interest of her song "Blue," and the initial release of "Little Green" had listeners puzzled over its theme. It was later revealed that the song was written after Mitchell gave up her daughter, Kelly, for adoption in 1965 which Mitchell had kept a secret until the 1990s. Though her listeners did not initially understand the song's subject matter, Mitchell gave hypermetric accents to the word "green" throughout the song to highlight its covert meaning in association of the shade Kelly green with the name she gave her daughter. Figure 4.10 illustrates a passage (0:22-0:43) in which each onset of the word "green" is highlighted by its placement on a breve

[193] Prowse, *Buffy Sainte-Marie: A Multimedia Life*.
[194] Whitesell, *The Music of Joni Mitchell*.
[195] Ibid., 12.
[196] "Joni Mitchell Biography."

beat that is established by the harmonic changes and motivic patterns of the guitar accompaniment.

Figure 4.10: Mitchell, "Little Green," hypermetric emphasis on "green"[197]

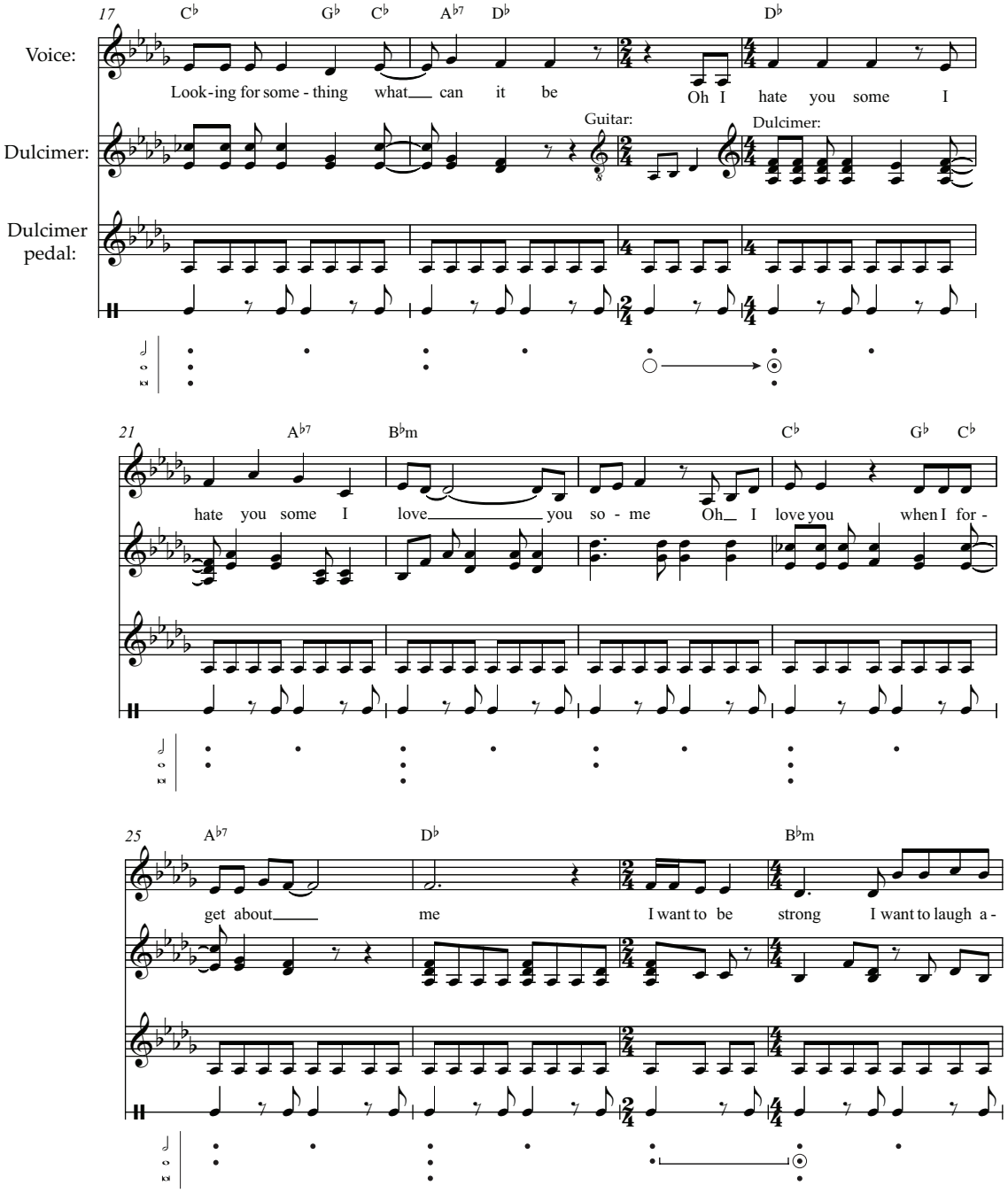


Dotted line boxes indicate the instances of alignment of the word with three consecutive hyperdownbeats in a 4/2 hypermeasure. In this instance, it is the alignment of important words with hypermetric units that gives them emphasis; elsewhere, we shall see that Mitchell uses timing, metric irregularities, and expressive misalignment with musical meter to bring out the nuances of her lyrical themes.

As with Dylan and Simon, we find instances of Mitchell adding or removing beats to give the effect of either a delayed or rushed delivery of the lyrics. A clear example is her song "All I Want" (a passage of which, 0:17-0:46, is shown in Figure 4.11). Lloyd Whitesell describes it as polymodal, featuring a dialogue between D-flat major and F-flat Mixolydian to represent the "personal quest" of the poet who is "looking for the key to set her free."[198]

[197] Mitchell, *Blue*.
[198] Whitesell, *The Music of Joni Mitchell*, 180.

Figure 4.11: Mitchell, "All I Want," mm. 17-28[199]



In addition to this conflict, Mitchell emphasizes the eagerness of this quest by using metric shifts at higher metric levels to propel the music forward or dwell on a particular

[199] Mitchell, *Blue*.

sentiment.[200] An A-flat 3 in the dulcimer articulates a beat every eighth note, while the repeating drum rhythm, shown in the bottom staff, reinforces beats at the half-note level. At the end of her vocal phrase in m. 19, Mitchell adds a half-note beat so that the next phrase occurs a little later than it could have. This extra beat adds a little suspense for the listener after her line "what can it be?" Later, in m. 27, shown in the third system of Figure 4.11, another half-note duration is omitted, which causes the vocal anacrusis ("I want to be") to lead to a hyperdownbeat on "strong." The word's early arrival is emphasized with this particular metric placement, reflecting earnestness for the song's subject in uncovering her personal truth. This is one example of the variety of metric devices Mitchell employs – more of which are examined in Chapter 6 – to express the text of her more introspective songwriting.

4.6 Cat Stevens, Introspection, and Religious Themes

Around the same time that Mitchell's songwriting shifted from its folk origins to more personal songwriting topics, Cat Stevens was exploring a similar stylistic shift of his own. He credits Bob Dylan and the Rolling Stones as his early influences, yet Stevens had his own start in the music industry as a teenage pop star in the 1960s, touring with Jimi Hendrix and Englebert Humperdink.[201] Stevens spent time away from the music industry after contracting tuberculosis, but returned with three albums released in fifteen months between 1970 and 1971 – *Mona Bone Jakon* (1970), *Tea for the Tillerman* (1970), and *Teaser and the Firecat* (1971) – with songs that "perfectly caught the mood" of the beginning of the 1970s.[202] Stevens' "Peace Train," from *Teaser and the Firecat* became an anthem for his audiences in live performances. By the early 1970s, the protest movement that had started with Dylan was still very strong, especially given the

[200] Neal, "Songwriter's Signature, Artist's Imprint," 119.
[201] Yentob, *Yusuf: The Artist Formerly Known as Cat Stevens*.
[202] Ibid.

worsening situation in Vietnam. Stevens experienced positive responses to the message of "Peace Train" and recalls the song's success as a "really fantastic moment" when what audiences wanted from him fused with what he wanted to tell them.[203] Alongside his political songs, Stevens wrote many lyrics of personal reflection, and describes his early 1970s songwriting as a narrative to his life; he claims that listeners can hear in these songs "all the explanations" of his mindset and his life's direction. [204]

In some examples, however, Stevens' lyrics are less obvious with their messages, but feature passages of irregular meter that draw attention to particular words in the narrative. In "Portobello Road," Stevens stresses four syllables in each line of text, underlined in Figure 4.12.

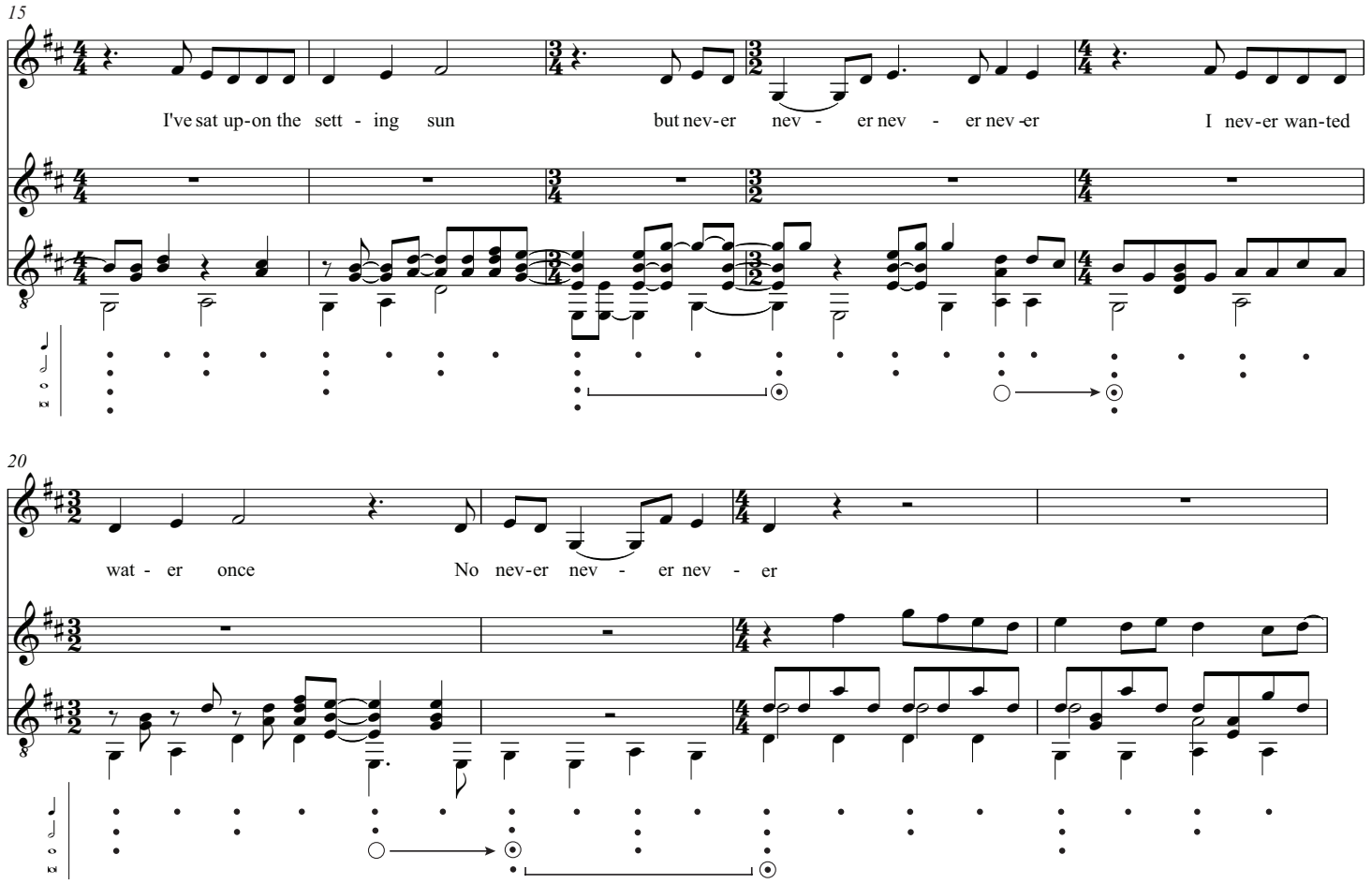
Figure 4.12: Stevens, "Portobello Road," lyrics stanza 1

Get-ting hung up all day on smiles
Walk-ing down Port-o-bel-lo road for miles
Greet-ing stran-gers in In-di-an boots
Yel-low ties and old brown suits
Grow-ing old is my on-ly dan-ger[205]

The rhyme scheme pairs the lines into couplets ("smiles" and "miles," "boots" and "suits"). A normal four-line stanza would end at the fourth line in the figure; however Stevens includes a single fifth line that causes an irregularity in the stanza structure. The fifth line depicts "growing old," which contrasts the carefree "smiles" and greeting of strangers from the preceding lines. This stand-alone fifth line draws attention to its more serious meaning (the narrator's fear of aging) in an otherwise lighthearted verse.

[203] Ibid.
[204] Ibid.
[205] Lyrics transcribed from the recording on Johnson, *King of the Delta Blues Singers*.

Figure 4.13: Stevens, "The Wind," mm. 13-23[206]



[206] Cat Stevens, *Teaser and the Firecat* (Island/A&M, 1971).

The personal narrative Stevens describes in his music is also demonstrated in songs like "The Wind," which reflects on his past errors ("I swam upon the devil's lake"), but vowing never again to repeat the same mistakes. This mirrors a similar statement he made about experimenting with drugs in his youth, and how his health problems prompted introspection and the study of religion.[207] In both verses of "The Wind," the first of which (0:29-0:49) is included as Figure 4.13, Stevens uses meter to highlight repetitions of the word "never" through metrical reinterpretations.[208] The first occurs when the vocal stress on the second statement of "never" necessitates a reinterpretation of the previous measure as a 3/4 bar. I hear a beat at the whole note level and breve levels at m. 19 likely because of its parallel grouping structure with m. 15. As a result, m. 18 has been interpreted as a 6/4 bar. In the second system, Stevens' dynamic vocal stress shifts to the first statement of "never," which has been transcribed as the downbeat of m. 21, resulting in another 6/4 bar for m. 20. A final metrical reinterpretation occurs at the final statement of "never," in which the second syllable aligns with the return of the guitar introduction, and therefore a parallel hyperdownbeat with the beginning of the song. These emphases on "never" reiterate how vehemently the song's narrator refuses to repeat past mistakes.

In his time away from the music industry during his illness, Stevens studied religion and used the imagery from the natural surroundings of his hospital as the initial inspiration for his folk-influenced songwriting.[209] For some songs, like "Into White" (Figure 4.14), Stevens highlights the meditative images of his lyrics with particular metric irregularities.

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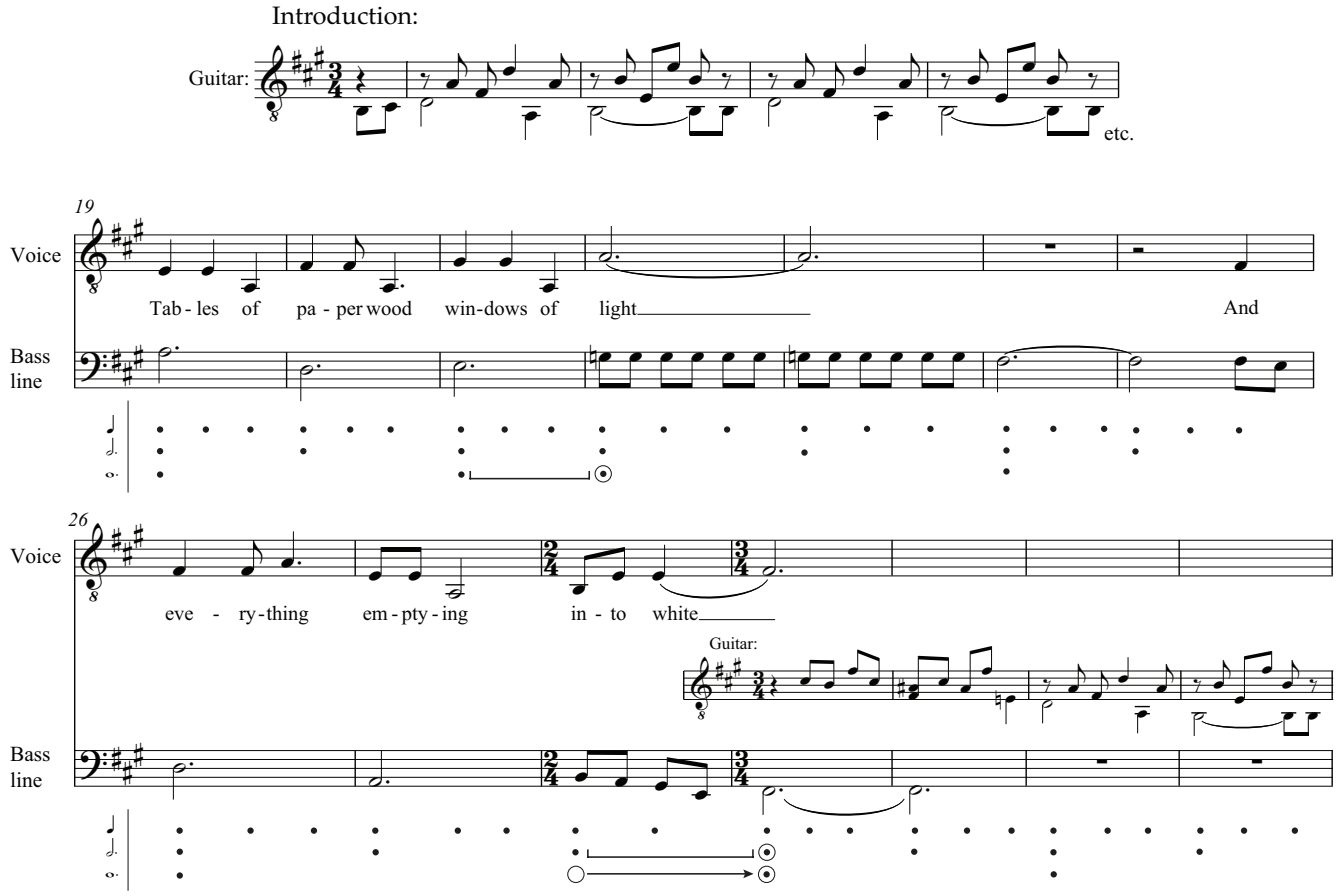
[207] Yentob, *Yusuf: The Artist Formerly Known as Cat Stevens*.
[208] Throughout this passage, there is conflict between the stresses of the vocal line and the bass line; this reading has prioritized the vocal stresses.
[209] Yentob, *Yusuf: The Artist Formerly Known as Cat Stevens*.

Figure 4.14: Stevens, "Into White," introduction and end of verse 1[210]



[210] Cat Stevens, *Tea for the Tillerman* (Island/A&M, 1970).

The guitar introduction, shown at the top of the figure (0:00-0:07), maintains a steady stream of eighth notes with a bass line and changes that establish and maintain a 3/4 meter. Each of Stevens' vocal fragments in the first vocal phrases spans two measures, with minimal syncopation, and prosodic stresses align with metric downbeats. Measure 19 (starting at 0:30) begins a four-bar hypermetric unit. But that is cut short, when word "light," accented by dynamics, contour, duration and harmonic change, creates a strong grouping beginning, necessitating a metric shift, and a deletion of the fourth hyperbeat of the initial unit. Later, in the third hypermeasure of this passage, two metric irregularities combine to highlight the lyrics of the titular refrain. In m. 28 the word "white" occurs a quarter-note beat early. This metric irregularity yields a metric deletion at the dotted-half note level of the grid.

At this same moment, we can interpret another metric shift occurring at the dotted whole note level. The dynamically and durationally accented bass note F-sharp in m. 29, and introduction of a new two-bar guitar motive, create a strong grouping beginning that encourages hearing this moment as a hyperdownbeat. To hear this, however, requires a reinterpretation of the hyperdownbeat that should have occurred in m. 28. As a result, at the same moment that we hear an omitted quarter-note beat, we are also hearing an added hyperbeat that gives the sense of metric dissolution at levels above the tactus. This combination of metric shifts can be read as an "emptying into white," a dissolving of the imagery described in the previous lines of lyrics into a peaceful, personal dwelling space.

The preceding examples from Dylan, Sainte-Marie, Simon, Mitchell, and Stevens, between 1962 and 1972 demonstrate some similarities in their use of meter for text expression. Many of the songs include extra beats at the ends of lines, roughly correlating metric irregularity with syntax in the manner of the folk-song and blues traditions that influenced Dylan's songwriting. However, they often feature metric

irregularities during the lines, a kind of irregularity that, considering the special attention that the lyrics command, seem calculated to bring out the meaning of specific words.

The kinds of lyrics being expressed by metric irregularities fall into two categories: political activism or personal storytelling. Both Dylan and Sainte-Marie's songwriting fall squarely into the political category, with Dylan commenting on civil rights issues of the 1960s and Sainte-Marie bringing attention to social justice for marginalized groups. Simon's songwriting also took advantage of these trends, adding personal (though not always autobiographical) elements to his lyrics. Both Mitchell and Stevens performed music in which meter highlights a close coordination between narrative and biography. Though differing in accompaniment style – Dylan being the least predictable, loosely following borrowed guitar strumming patterns – compositions by these five artists drew listeners' attention to messages of political or personal significance, which are often aligned with the ideology or biography of the songwriter.

The following chapters examine some more complex metric irregularities and extreme examples of expressive timing, proposing expressive rationales for their placement in connection with this lyrical meaning. As we shall see, the subsequent examples engage to varying degrees with the aspects of meter outlined in Chapter 2, and the language we developed in that chapter will precisely explain the metric structure or process and the sensations of hearing metric irregularities. Each analysis draws on the biographical and stylistic information explored in this chapter to interpret lyrical meaning in the repertoire of these five artists.

Chapter 5: Irregular Meter in the Singer Songwriter Repertoire

The previous chapters examined several Bob Dylan songs, his influences, and the nuances of meaning that are brought out using different theories of meter in transcription. In this chapter, we will examine meter in the related repertoire of some of Dylan's singer-songwriter contemporaries between 1963 and 1970: Paul Simon, Cat Stevens, and Buffy Sainte-Marie. Whereas metric irregularities in related folk, bluegrass, and rock genres often occur as added beats between vocal phrases, examples by these singer songwriters include metric disruptions during the vocal phrase, often at specific words with lyrical or narrative significance. Each of the following analyses focuses on a single transcription, using the theory of meter that best illustrates how irregularities in metric structure serve to express lyrical structure and narrative, taking into account the considerations of Chapter 4.

5.1 Metric Irregularities Across Multiple Recordings of "The Sound of Silence"

Paul Simon's "The Sound of Silence" is a well-known song from the singer-songwriter repertoire that exemplifies the use of meter for text expression. It was written by Simon in 1963, and he performed it as a duo with Art Garfunkel as well as solo. The metric disruptions in this song are not improvised: all four recordings made from 1963 to 1966 contain them, and they highlight important moments in the lyrics and narrative.[211] The song's meaning is enigmatic. The lyrics describe the dream images of

[211] The duo's initial acoustic track from *Wednesday Morning, 3 A.M.,* in 1964 was re-released as a single in 1965, overdubbed with drums and electric bass and guitar to imitate the folk-rock sound that was rising in popularity in the mid-1960s. Simon also recorded a solo acoustic version of "The Sounds of Silence" on *The Paul Simon Songbook* in 1965. The duo reunited after the overdubbed single achieved commercial success to re-record the song with a folk-rock ensemble on their 1966 album *The Sounds of Silence*. A detailed history of the song is outlined in Stephan-Robinson, "Form in Paul Simon's Music," 4; Bennighof, *The Words and Music of Paul Simon*, 2–11.

silent crowds of people to whom the narrator tries to communicate, but who ignore him and instead silently pray to a "neon god they made."[212]

To understand the expressive impact of the metric irregularities contained in this track it is helpful to first examine the structure of the lyrics. The first stanza, which has been reproduced and annotated in Figure 5.1, displays a regular prosodic structure in the first four lines, with four lexical stresses (underlined) and two phonological phrase stresses (in bold face).

Figure 5.1: Simon, "The Sound of Silence," stanza 1 lyrics

Hel-lo **dark**-ness my old **friend**
I've come to **talk** with you a-**gain**
Be-cause a **vis**-ion soft-ly **creep**-ing
Left its **seeds** while I was **sleep**-ing
And the **vis**-ion that was **plant**-ed in my **brain**, still re-**mains**
With-in the **sound** of si-lence

The word "vision" gets special emphasis in this poetic meter, appearing twice and receiving phonological phrase stress on its first syllable in both occurrences. The titular word "sound" is also emphasized by the prosody in its status as the final (and only) phonological phrase stress of the last line of the stanza.

Despite the regularity of the printed lyrics, Simon's musical setting does not always align prosodic stresses with metric accents. For the third line, Simon sets the words "softly" and "creeping" so that breve beats coincide with their second syllables rather than with the lexically stressed first syllables. The parallel moments in the next vocal line give similar metric treatment to "was" and "sleeping," creating and accenting a

[212] James Bennighof reads these lyrics as preaching to "thousands of people who are not able to communicate in a genuine way. In their lives, significant communication is defeated by 'the sound of silence.' It is not heard, or it is not understood, or it inspires no interest, or at best it is merely whispered. Oddly, a neon light that they worshiped instead of communicating with each other tells them about the messages that they are missing. And even when the singer himself tries to warn them about the silence, they do no hear him." See Bennighof, *The Words and Music of Paul Simon*, 9.

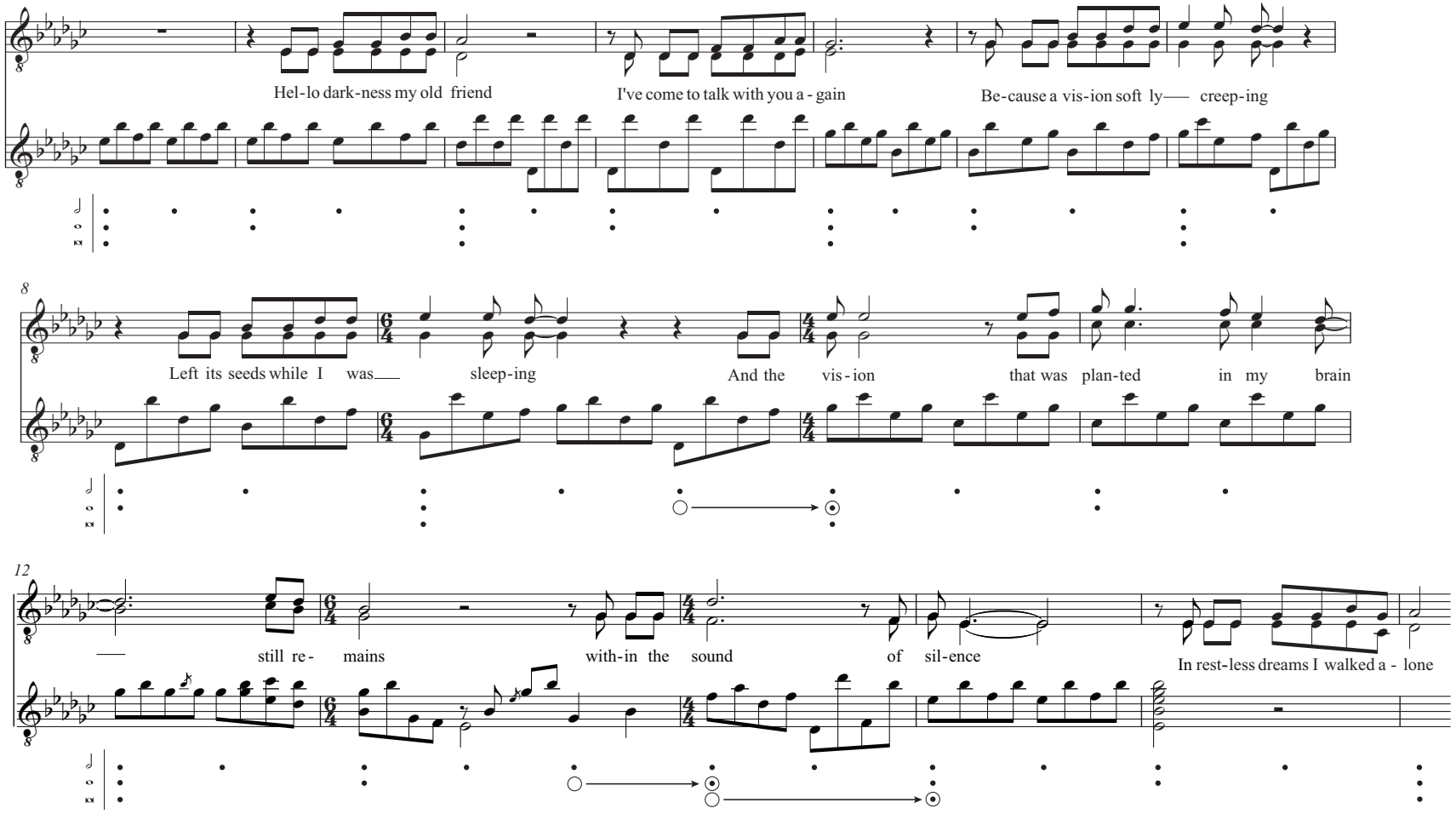
diphthong on “was” and accenting the second syllable of “sleeping,” neither of which would be emphasized in speech.

Simon and Garfunkel’s performance gives further emphasis to two words – “vision” and “sound” – that are central to the narrative. Both are highlighted through metrical reinterpretations in the grid. Simon establishes a 4/2 hypermeter beginning in m. 1 as illustrated with the metric grid in Figure 5.2, which spans 0:00-0:39. This hypermeter is created and sustained by changes of harmony and alignment of prosodically-stressed words, like “friend” in m.3, that align with hyperdownbeats. The second statement of the word “vision” (shown as m. 10) occurs at an unexpected moment in the grid structure. The word’s placement on a hyperdownbeat in the transcription, with a dot at the breve-level of the grid, is encouraged by the change of harmony that occurs in this measure, in addition to the durational accent on the word’s second syllable, the longest duration so far in a mid-phrase melody pitch.[213] To hear m. 10 as a hyperdownbeat, however, requires hearing the previous measure (m. 9) as containing an extra half-note beat, which yields a 6/4 measure. Measure 9 initially proceeds as parallel to m. 7, with a dot at the whole-note level of the grid expected on D-flat 3, as there was on the downbeat of m. 8. However, the hyperdownbeat in m. 10 results in a shift of beat from the D-flat 3 to the G-flat 4 a half note later. The open circle indicates where the beat was expected, with the arrow point to its new location at the circled dot.

From m. 10 onward, the 4/2 hypermeter resumes. The metric shift at “vision” can be interpreted marking the word “vision” for attention as central to the song’s narrative. The late arrival of this hyperbeat mimics the unpredictable, “softly creeping” appearance of the vision upon the narrator. Indeed, the rest of the song’s lyrics more precisely illustrate the contents of this vision.

[213] The long durations on “friend” and the second syllable of “gain” are more typical of melodic cadences, aligning a longer duration with the end of a melodic phrase.

Figure 5.2: Simon, "The Sound of Silence"[214]



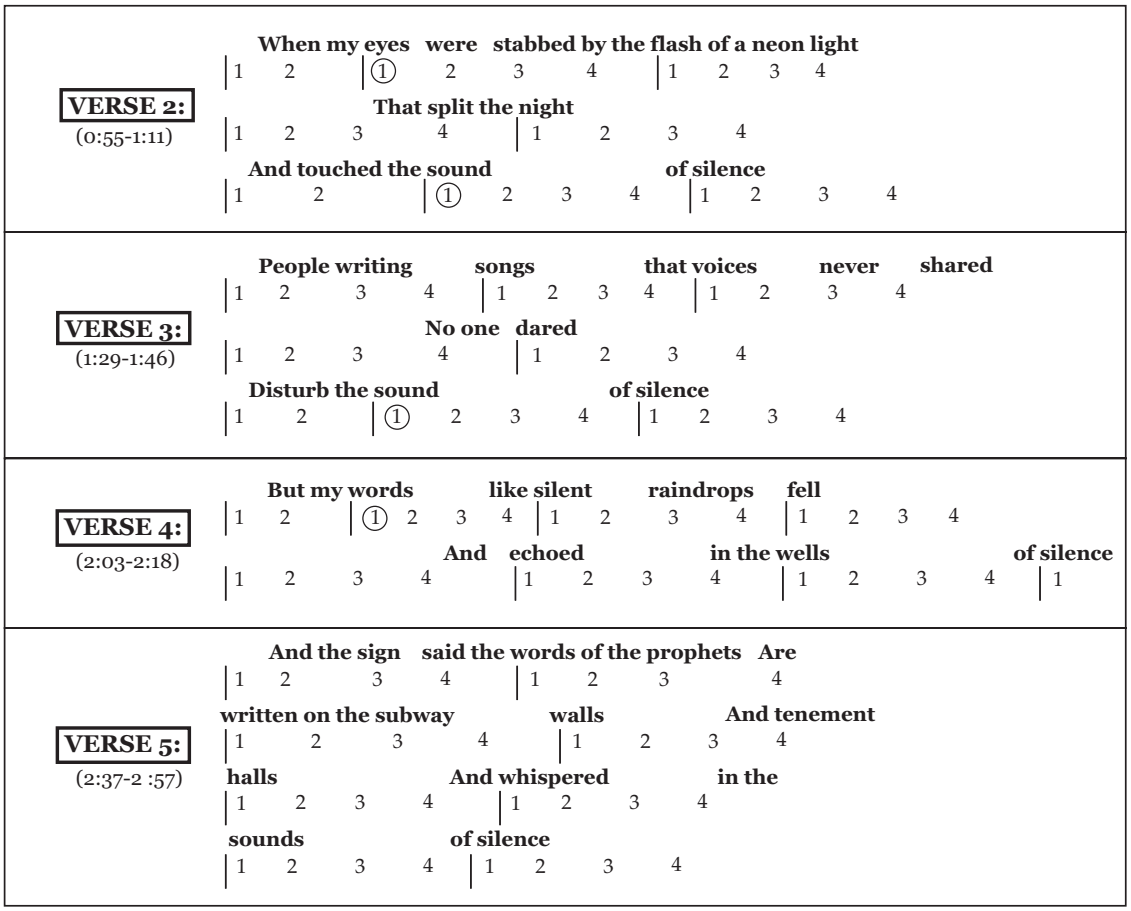
[214] Simon & Garfunkel, *Wednesday Morning, 3 A.M.* (Columbia, 1964).

A similar metric adjustment occurs at the end of the verse to highlight the word "sound." The word's onset in m. 14 is emphasized by a dynamic accent in the voice, aligns with a change of bass note and harmony. These factors encourage hearing a hyperbeat at this moment, yielding a metric shift, parallel to that of mm. 9-10, leading to the downbeat of m. 14. We are unlikely, though, to hear m. 14 as a hyperdownbeat considering what follows. In m. 15, the accompaniment returns to the harmony and motive from m. 1, and Simon and Garfunkel's melody for "In restless dreams I walked alone" parallels the melody for "Hello darkness, my old friend." This return of motivic material suggests the hearing of grouping parallelism between mm. 15-16 with mm. 1-2, so that both units begin with a hyperdownbeat. To hear this requires an interpretation of the m. 14 arrival of "sound" as aligning with a beat at the whole-note level followed by a breve-level hyperdownbeat in m. 15. This yields another metric shift, this time at the breve level, between an expected hyperdownbeat in m. 14 (shown with the empty circle), and its actual arrival in m. 15, at the circled dot after the arrow.

This hypermetric structure can be read as expressing the lyrics at this moment. The parallelism with m. 1 ensures the word "silence" falls on a hyperdownbeat (of the 4/2 hypermeter). This setting suggests that "silence" is more important than "sound," as an oxymoronic modifier of the kind of sound being heard. Both "vision" and "sound" – words pertaining to two different senses – arrive later than expected, increasing suspense in the narrative and marking certain words as essential to the storytelling.

The metrical emphasis on sensory-oriented lyrics demonstrated in verse 1 is continued into the remaining verses. However, Simon varies the setting slightly so that important words, at different moments in each verse, receive emphasis through metric shift of hyperbeats. Figure 5.3 summarizes the hypermeter of the second halves of verses 2 through 5 with numbers indicating quarter-note beats, vertical lines as bar lines, and lyrics aligned with their placement in the meter.

Figure 5.3: Simon, "The Sound of Silence," verses 2-5



Circled numbers signify metric downbeats that occur earlier than expected as the result of metric shifts. The second verse follows the same metric structure as the first, in which two metric shifts occur: one at "eyes" (where verse 1 had emphasized "vision") and a second in a parallel emphasis of "sound." The third verse features a single metric shift, also emphasizing the word "sound." In the fourth verse, the word "sound" is absent from the stanza's final line. Instead, Simon uses a metric shift to emphasize "words" in the phrase "But my words like silent raindrops fell," imagery that visually depicts the "sound of silence." Subsequently, a solo guitar lick recalls the melody that previously accompanied the lyrics "still remains" from verse 1 (and parallel moments from subsequent verses). While the voice is silent at this moment, the meter retains 4/4 throughout this phrase, where previous statements had featured expressive metric shifts.

In final verse, this 4/4 meter can be maintained throughout, which can be read as expressing the silence that remains when the narrator's message is not heard by the audience in his dream.

These moments of metric irregularity emphasizing particular words in the lyrics occur in every recording, affirming a consistent conception of the role of meter in text expression in this song. Existing transcriptions and guitar tabs that overlook these irregularities omit an essential expressive component of Simon's composition. [215] Not all metric irregularities appear consistently across multiple recordings, especially in Dylan's repertoire; however, "The Sound of Silence" provides a clear example of the use of meter for text expression in 1960s singer-songwriter music.[216] The remainder of this chapter explores similar irregularities in the music of two of Paul Simon's contemporaries – Cat Stevens and Buffy Sainte-Marie – who use irregular meter to highlight temporal, religious, and romantic themes in several of their songs.

5.2 Metrical Illustrations of Time in Cat Stevens' Songs

As explored in Chapter 3, Cat Stevens' songwriting around 1970 contained lyrical themes of self-discovery, touching upon personal and sometimes religious subject matter.[217] In two songs, "Katmandu" and "Time," from the album *Mona Bone Jakon* (1970), direct references to temporal experience in the lyrics can be read as part of the introspective trend in Stevens' 1970s songwriting. In the studio recordings for both songs, temporal lyric themes are highlighted by metric irregularities in the music.

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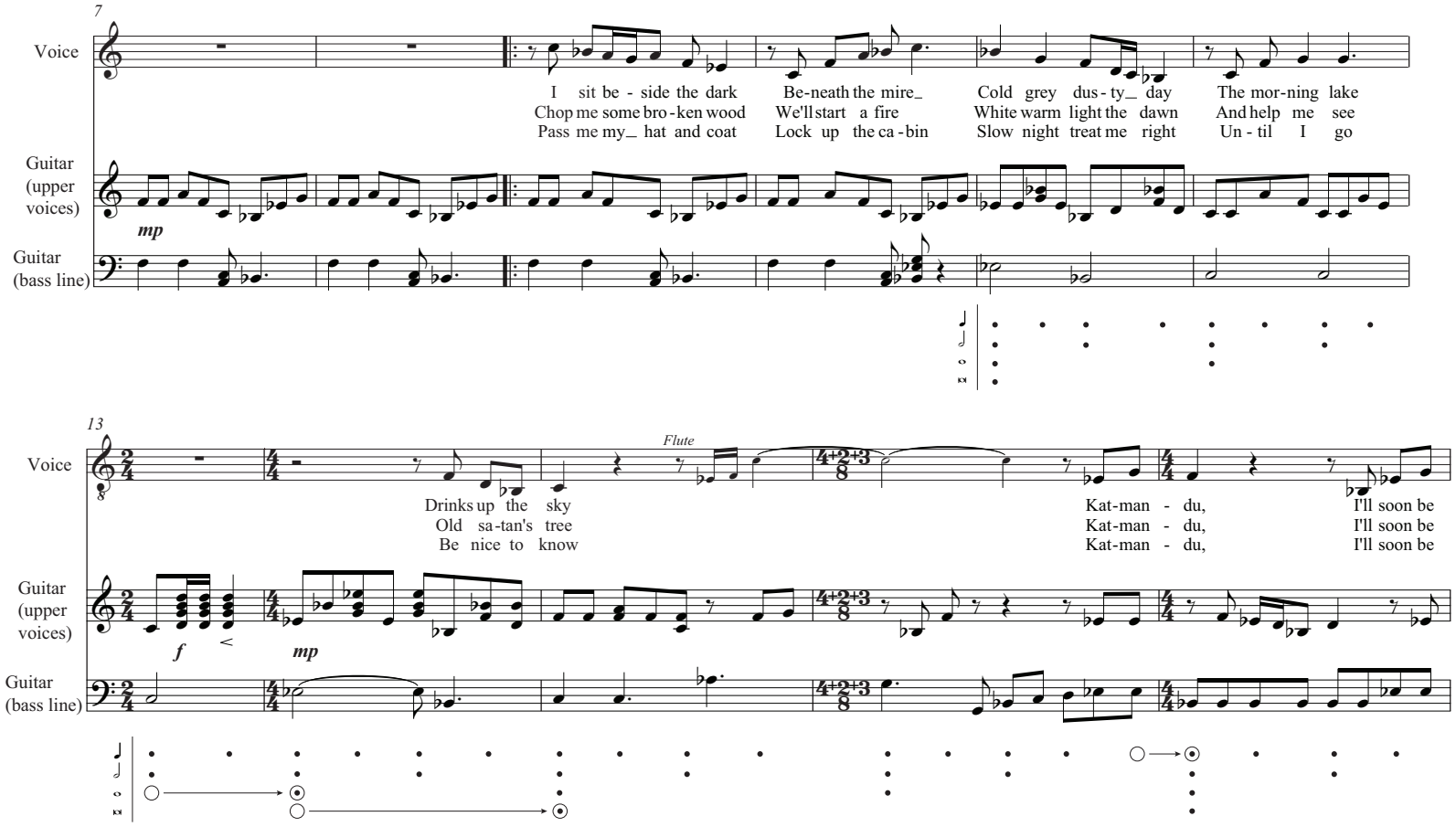
[215] Several guitar tabs available online simply add extra beats to guitar transitions to normalize the 2/4 bars. For one example, see Brad Priddy, "The Sounds of Silence Tab," *Brad's Paul Simon Guitar Tablature Page*, accessed November 23, 2014, bradpriddy.com/paul_simon/thesou.htm.

[216] For a detailed study of the transformation of Dylan's song "It's Alright, Ma (I'm Only Bleeding)," see Rings, "A Foreign Sound to Your Ear: Bob Dylan Performs 'It's Alright, Ma (I'm Only Bleeding)'."

[217] Many commentators attribute this introspection as a by-product of Stevens' year of bed rest, prescribed during his recovery from tuberculosis. See Yentob, *Yusuf: The Artist Formerly Known as Cat Stevens*.

Figure 5.4: Stevens, "Katmandu," verse to chorus[218]



[218] Cat Stevens, *Mona Bone Jakon* (Island/A&M, 1970).

The narrator of “Katmandu” describes his cultural experience in that Nepalese city as a “strange, bewildering time,” and that phrase is an apt characterization of its musical setting. The guitar introduction presents motives that, when grouped according to dynamic accent and contour, could only be represented in transcription by mixed, irregular meters (like 11/8 and 7/8). Just before the entry of the singer, the music settles into a consistent vamp that can be transcribed in 4/4, as shown in the first two measures of Figure 5.4 (beginning at 0:16), but with eighth notes grouped non-isochronously as 2+3+3 motivically, or 5+3 harmonically. The vamp repetition in mm. 9-10 offers the listener the possibility of a 4/2 hypermeter, that is, a breve (hyper)beat, and this is confirmed by the paired mm. 11-12, in which the grouping of eighth notes further solidifies the 4/4 as a more normative 2+2+2+2 grouping. The subsequent measure initially seems as if this pattern will continue, but the guitar instead presents a disorienting strum, extending the dominant harmony from the end of m. 12. Just a half note later, it returns to the original 5+3 vamp rhythm, which encourages hearing the attack of the long bass E-flat as a beat at the whole-note level. To hear this, though, we must retroactively reinterpret the preceding strum figure as adding a half-note beat to the 4/4 grid. The open circle under m. 13 indicates the beat expected then at the whole-note level, and an arrow points to the moment, a half note later, that we interpret as that beat.

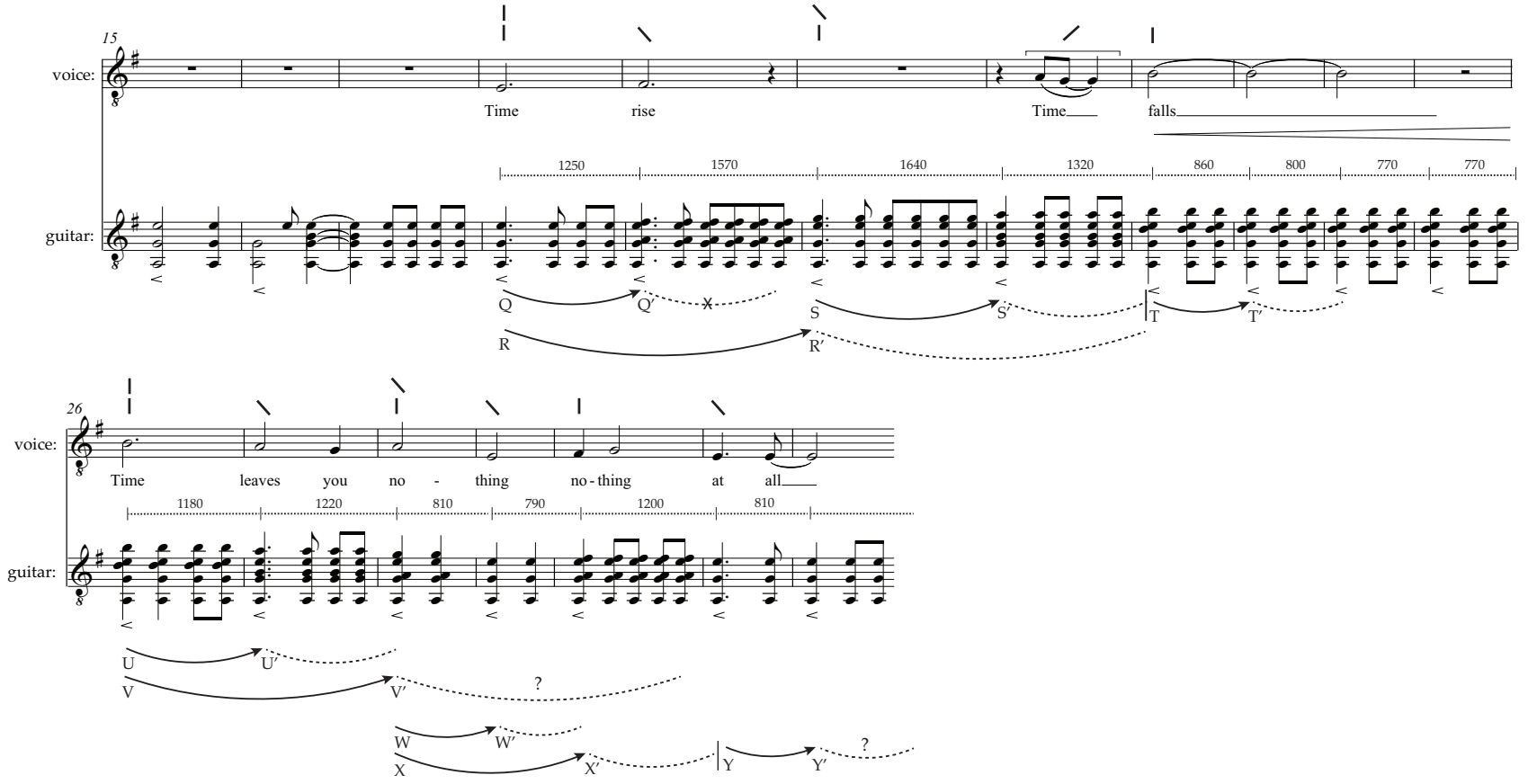
We might expect the return to the 4/4 vamp at m. 14 to restart the two-measure groupings of mm. 9-10 and mm. 10-11. However, only a whole note later, the bass returns to a C2 tonic pitch, with a C4 melody note in the voice, which places a dynamic stress on the word “sky,” both of which encourage a hearing of this moment as a beat at the breve level. To hear a hyperdownbeat at this moment necessitates another metric shift in the grid in which the breve beat that could have occurred in m. 14 is reinterpreted to be delayed until the downbeat of m. 15, as shown in Figure 5.4.

Stevens includes one further metric shift just before the refrain to highlight the song's title. The 5+3 vamp grouping appears in the bass line of m. 14, followed by a 2+3+3 grouping in m. 15. Measure 16, however, introduces new accompanimental motives that defy any grouping patterns we have heard so far. At the moment notated as the downbeat of m. 17, a new bass instrument doubles the notated bass line, articulating a steady pulse of eighth notes. Dynamic accents in this instrument and the voice, on the final syllable of "Katmandu" encourage hearing this moment as a beat at the breve level. To do so requires interpreting m. 16 as having an extra eighth note, so that the bass line groups into 4+2+3 (or 4+5). The extra eighth note is illustrated on the quarter-note level of the grid as a metric shift that draws attention to the final syllable of the word "Katmandu."

Like the emphasis on the song's title, we can read other metric irregularities as drawing attention to the moments in the narrative in which they occur. The chains of delays in mm. 13-14 are triggered by the guitar strum, representing a revelatory shift in the narrator's perspective. Up to m. 13, he has described a "dark," "cold," and "gray" landscape by a lake, as the music settles from the restless vamp of the introduction to an even 4/4. At the strumming in m. 13, and unexpected harmony, he senses the lake "drinking up the sky," and an out-of-time flute call evokes a new perspective. The metric irregularities in this song are musical examples of the "strange, bewildering time" Stevens experiences in Katmandu, which he sings about in the chorus. In the final line of the first two chorus statements, he comments that the "time" will "hold [him] down." Yet, by the final chorus, this is replaced with the statement that time "will keep [him] home," suggesting that the narrator has grown to value the surprising, sometimes disorienting sensations of time.

On another track from *Mona Bone Jakon*, Stevens' song "Time" similarly explores its theme through changes of meter, which occur in coordination with the lyrics.

Figure 5.5: Stevens, "Time," verse 1[219]



[219] Ibid.

As in “Katmandu,” these changes are signaled by patterns of grouping and accent in the guitar strumming and dynamic accents in the voice. However, following these cues in “Time” yields non-isochronous measures in transcription, with the number of beats per measure never persisting for more than a few bars at a time. The transcription in Figure 5.5 (encompassing 0:15-0:34) accounts for each of the quarter-note beats in the notated rhythms, but does not include time signatures to indicate the changing meter. Instead, bar lines precede each dynamic accent in the guitar strumming, and Hasty’s projection symbols illustrate the sensations of following the constantly changing durations between dynamic stresses.

We can observe this non-isochrony of measure durations in the first verse, beginning with the final three measures of the guitar introduction that precede the first vocal entry. Dynamic accents every dotted half-note beat in the guitar strumming have been transcribed as downbeats in a 3/4 meter for mm. 15-17, with syncopation to the downbeat of m. 17. In m. 18, a dynamic accent in the guitar coincides with the first prosodic stress on “Time” to create a dominant beginning that initiates the Q duration. This duration is realized a dotted half note later by the next dynamic accent in the guitar, and another vocal stress, continuing the 3/4 meter. Its projection, Q’, however, cannot be heard to be realized, since neither a guitar nor voice accent occurs a dotted half note later. Instead, I hear a longer duration (R) beginning from the stress on “Time” being realized by the guitar’s dynamic accent seven quarter notes later (transcribed as the downbeat of m. 20).

A similar metric process occurs in the next two notated measures. The S duration can be initiated by the dynamic accent in bar 20 and realized by the next dynamic accent in m. 21. The realization of this projection S’, however, is interrupted by the too-early arrival of the next dynamic accent and the prosodic stress on “falls.” Nevertheless, the longer seven-quarter-note projection R’, initiated at m. 20, can be heard to be realized by

the stress on “falls” in m. 22. The word “Time” in m. 21 can be heard to function as an anacrusis to this dominant beginning. Following this moment, half-note durations are articulated for the remainder of this line as a crescendo intensifies the music towards the next vocal entrance.

Stevens’ setting for the first lines expressively illustrates the meaning of the lyrics. As he sings the word “rise,” extra beats are added to m. 19, increasing the duration between the guitar accents that articulate metric downbeats. Here, longer notated measures illustrate increased timespans. Contrastingly, at the end of the system, at the word “falls,” durations between accents are shortened. A series of 2/4 bars give the sense of time passing too quickly, slipping away from the narrator’s control.

In the next vocal phrase, Stevens continues disrupting meter to express his lyrics. In m. 26, the prosodically stressed “Time” aligns, as it did in the previous system, with a dynamic accent in the guitar. This creates a dominant beginning that initiates the U-U’ dotted-half note durations and the longer V duration. Both V and the projected U’ are realized by the dynamic accent in m. 28, which aligns with the prosodic stress on the first syllable of “nothing.” We can hear a projected duration V’ initiated by this downbeat, but left unrealized, since there is no salient dynamic accent to confirm it towards the end of m. 30.

The same event that initiates V’ also begins a series of shorter durations. The W duration spans the guitar accent in m. 28 to the next dynamic accent in m. 29, a whole note later. Its projection, W’, is realized by the next dynamic accent in m. 30. The longer duration X can be heard to span the whole-note duration of W-W’. However, its projection X’ is interrupted by the too-early arrival of the dynamic accent in m. 31 on the word “at.”

Together, these moments of metric disruption serve to illustrate the passages of text that describe the effects of time. Stevens’ disruption of meter in the second system

can be read as expressing the "nothing" that "time leaves" him. In eschewing metric regularity, Stevens prevents the listener from orienting to musical time, creating a temporal disorientation that reflects the lyrical theme. These metric irregularities cannot be heard as disruption as additions or subtractions to a grid since every alternative offered by Stevens' dynamic stresses to group the quarter-note beats fail to create isochronous measures. Hasty's theory allows us to precisely describe the sensations of these non-isochronous durations and their connection to the meaning of Stevens' lyrics.

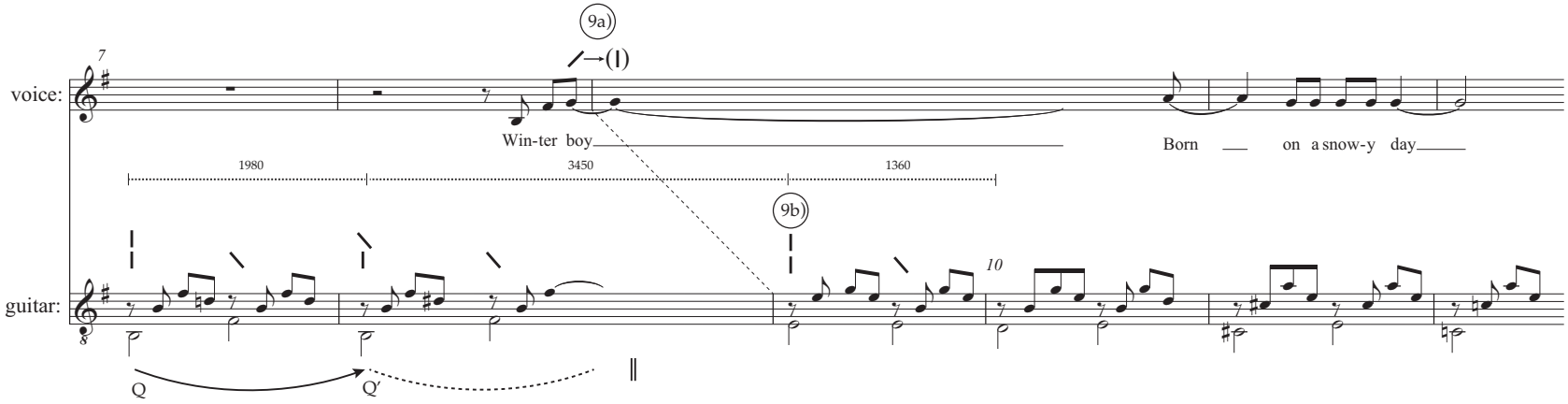
5.3 Expressive Interaction Between Voice and Accompaniment in Buffy-Sainte Marie Songs

Buffy Sainte-Marie's songwriting, like Stevens', expresses personal and religious themes that she often highlights with irregular metric structures. Three songs from her repertoire – "Winter Boy," "Ananias," and "Sir Patrick Spens" – demonstrate some of the various ways metric process in the voice and accompaniment can interact. In these songs, various alignments and staggered arrivals of dominant beginnings in the voice and guitar create dramatic settings for important moments in her lyrics.

5.3.1 "Winter Boy" and Staggered Downbeats

In several of Sainte-Marie's songs with personal or romantic themes, meter is used to express that narrative. In "Winter Boy," from *Little Wheel Spin and Spin* (1966), the narrator laments a failed romance and describes the lost love as regained through the birth of a son, in whom she finds renewed joy and security. Sainte-Marie makes this story expressive by her timing of particular words, often arriving on stressed syllables before metric downbeats in her accompaniment. We hear an example of this process immediately at the first vocal entry (beginning at 0:11), the passage of which is transcribed in Figure 5.6. The guitar has a steady vamp pattern with regular bass attacks shown as half notes in the transcription.

Figure 5.6: Sainte-Marie, "Winter Boy," mm. 7-11[220]



[220] Buffy Sainte-Marie, *Little Wheel Spin and Spin* (Vanguard, 1966).

Although its tempo slows in mm. 7-8, we could still anticipate the whole-note projection Q' being realized through a *ritardando*. However, the guitar pauses, so there are no bass notes to realize this duration, and a hiatus occurs. She places the word "boy" on the final eighth note of m. 8 and sustains it into what should be the next measure, yet she does not articulate the expected downbeat either. Perhaps the G4 on "boy" can be heard as an anacrustic syncopation that anticipates and substitutes for the missing downbeat (marked as 9a on the figure.)[221]

The next guitar entry can be read as filling the role of the "missing" downbeat for m. 9. The onset of the E3 bass note at 9b) in the figure initiates the return of the metrically regular accompaniment pattern of the introduction. We can interpret the material beginning at 9b) as resuming the meter of mm. 1-7. The transcription in Figure 5.6 shows an anacrusis on "boy" leading to an inferred dominant beginning, shown with the symbol |, on the downbeat of m. 9, labeled 9a), with the guitar's dominant beginning interpreted as part of the same beginning (the same emerging duration), labeled 9b). Reading the dominant beginnings in this way allows us to interpret this moment as a single beginning articulated by two staggered manifestations, extending and thereby emphasizing the moment at which Sainte-Marie sings the titular word "boy." This initial statement marks for attention one of the narratively central words in the lyrics.

Sainte-Marie employs this kind of staggered unfolding of dominant beginnings throughout the rest of the song to highlight important words in the narrative. One example occurs in the second verse to highlight a temporal narrative shift. In the second stanza, the narrator sings, "And there'd been summer love," which contrasts the "snowy day" and "rainy afternoon" contexts from stanza 1. The use of past tense ("there'd been") suggests to the listener that this season precedes the birth of the "winter boy," giving

[221] For a theoretical discussion of similar such anacrustic syncopations, see Butterfield, "The Power of Anacrusis: Engendered Feeling in Groove-Based Musics," [26].

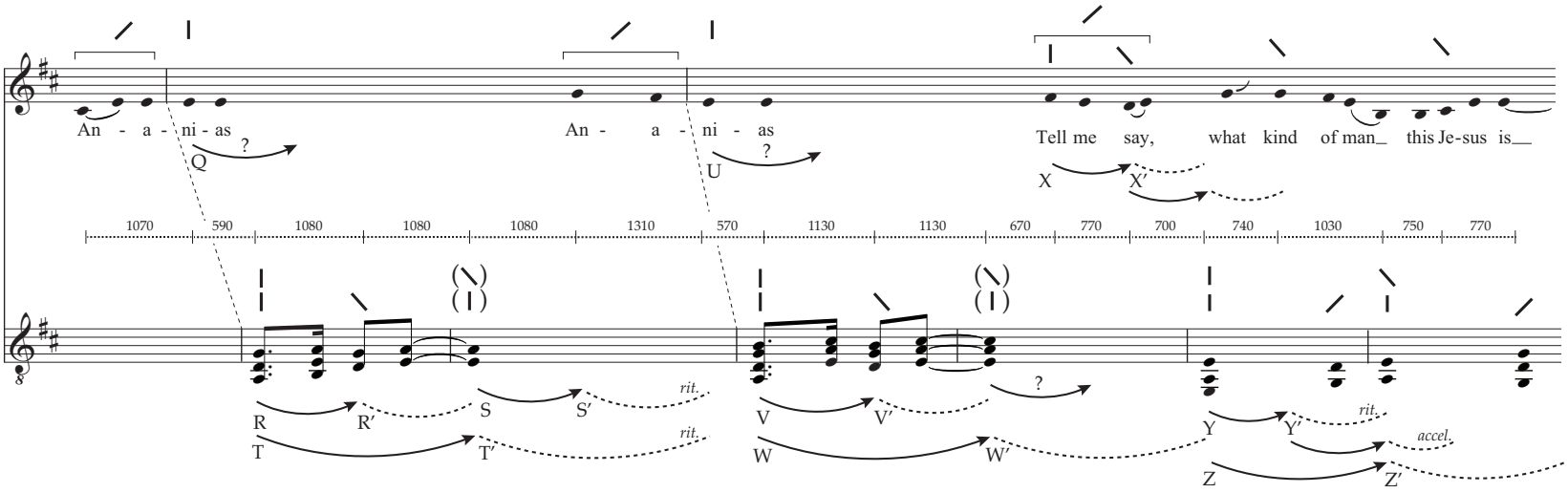
information about the narrator's past relationship. Sainte-Marie highlights this expressive shift in the narrative by staggering the vocal and accompanimental downbeats at the arrival of the word "love." The misaligned downbeats here, and in other similar passages, express reminiscence in the lyrics through expressive timing between the meter of the voice and guitar.

5.3.2 Progressive Alignment of Voice and Accompaniment in Sainte-Marie's "Ananias"

The same kind of downbeat misalignments that appear in "Winter Boy" also occur in the song "Ananias" from Sainte-Marie's debut album *It's My Way* (1964). For this song, however, they occur only as part of an expressively timed introduction that eventually yields to coordination between the voice and guitar as the tempo increases towards the end of the song. The opening passage (0:00-0:15) has been transcribed as Figure 5.7. The prosody of the word "Ananias," Sainte-Marie's first utterance, suggests a motion from anacrusis to dominant beginning on the third syllable, which her musical setting reflects. However, the guitar does not place its first onset until 590 ms after the third syllable of "Ananias." When it enters, it initiates a series of projections: R, a duration that can be heard to be realized by the D-G dyad 1080 ms later, gives rise to a projection R' that we can hear to be realized by inferring a beat. Though there is no actual chord onset there, we can hear the E-A dyad as a syncopated substitute for a downbeat. A projection, S, from this downbeat could be heard as realized, using the same 1080 ms duration, by the next vocal onset at the first syllable of the repetition of the word "Ananias." Since the initial statement of the word placed its first two syllables as anacrustic to the third, a parallel hearing would do the same for its second statement. The projective symbols above the staff illustrate this reading.

We can interpret the music from Q until the end of T' as a four beat unit, the first beat of which occurs on the "-ni-" of the first statement of "Ananias."

Figure 5.7: Sainte-Marie, "Ananias," opening[222]



[222] Buffy Sainte-Marie, *It's My Way* (Vanguard, 1964).

Since the 590 ms duration between "-ni-" and the first guitar beginning is nearly half the length of the surrounding durations, I do not hear this as an added beat to the first fragment. Instead, we may hear the guitar's dominant beginning arriving as a misaligned downbeat from the voice, a delayed version of the same attack. The second beat of the unit occurs in the guitar at the D-G dyad, and the third is the inferred beat that realizes R'. The fourth and final beat comprises the first two syllables of "Ananias" that can act as an anacrusis to the next dominant beginning in the voice.

We can hear an identical metric structure in the next four beats in the voice and guitar; but by the end of the system, we can hear the voice and guitar coordinated more closely as a 4/4 meter begins to tighten up. The third four-beat unit, like the two preceding units, begins with an anacrusis. The lyric fragment "Tell me, say" can be heard initially as set with a dynamic accent creating a dominant beginning on "Tell" leading to a continuation on "say." However, the dynamic stress on the subsequent guitar chord suggests a retroactive interpretation of the initial lyrics as anacrustic to the guitar's dominant beginning. A dynamic accent on the lexically stressed "kind" can be heard as the next stress, followed by another dynamically accented guitar chord on the A-E dyad, and then a dynamic accent on the first syllable of "Jesus" in the voice. Together these stressed events comprise a four-beat unit that begins to resemble a 4/4 meter. Indeed, a listener familiar with the remainder of the song may begin to recognize the clear 4/4 achieved later emerging by the end of the first phrase. In this third unit, we can see the coordination emerging between the two instruments, with the voice and guitar trading accents to articulate the four beats.

In connection with the lyrics, we can interpret the gradual metric coordination as representing a gradual gathering of the narrator's faith. The text directly address a disciple of Jesus to inquire about "what kind of man this Jesus is," and go on to recount miraculous events – like healing the sick and rising from the dead – as examples of

Jesus' actions. The metric misalignments and expressive timing in the opening passage reflect the petitioner's initial uncertainty. The musical setting gradually increases in tempo and metric regularity, with coordination in process between the voice and guitar, to reflect a process in which the narrator gradually gains conviction. Indeed, by the final stanza, rather than referring to second-hand stories, the narrator states that "He come to my heart and my heart opened up," to confirm the unmediated source of her belief.

5.3.3 Vocal Stress as Meter in Sainte-Marie's "Sir Patrick Spens"

A final example from Buffy Sainte-Marie's repertoire demonstrates the crucial role of prosodic stress in articulating meter. The introduction to the song "Sir Patrick Spens," from *Little Wheel Spin and Spin* (1966), lacks a clear meter. As shown in the transcription in Figure 5.8 (0:00-0:17), the double bass begins with two articulations of an A1 pitch at (a) leading to an open fifth D2-A2 at (b). They act as an anacrusis to the beginning of (b) of a long perfect-fifth dyad, as shown with the anacrusis (/) and beginning (|) symbols above the double-bass staff. This dominant beginning initiates the long S duration. Sainte-Marie's twanging of the mouth bow is too fast to act as a tactus, so we have no basis for measuring S.[223] The open tie symbols and solid note heads on the D2 and A2 pitches indicate its initial, indeterminate duration. We can hear S to be realized by the stress from a bowing change that rearticulates only the A2 pitch at (d). From this moment the projection S' begins; however, it cannot be heard to be realized, since no bass onset occurs until 4600 ms after this pitch, which is too long to be heard as reproducing the 2950 ms S duration. As a result, a hiatus occurs at (e).

The next double-bass dyad, at (f), seems to try to revive the meter of the opening few stresses. The fifth at (f) creates a dominant beginning that initiates the T duration.

[223] Sainte-Marie's strumming pattern presents a duple structure, indicated by the upward and downward strumming symbols above the staff at (c), but these beats do not group into larger durations, so they are not salient cues for m function as a drone, not actively participating in the metric process.

Figure 5.8: Sainte-Marie, "Sir Patrick Spens," instrumental introduction[224]

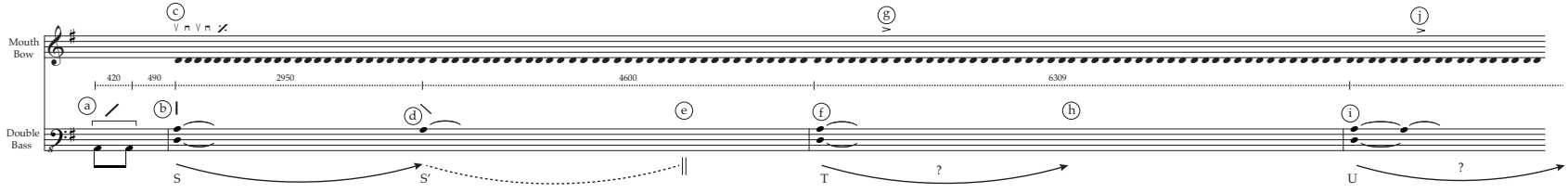
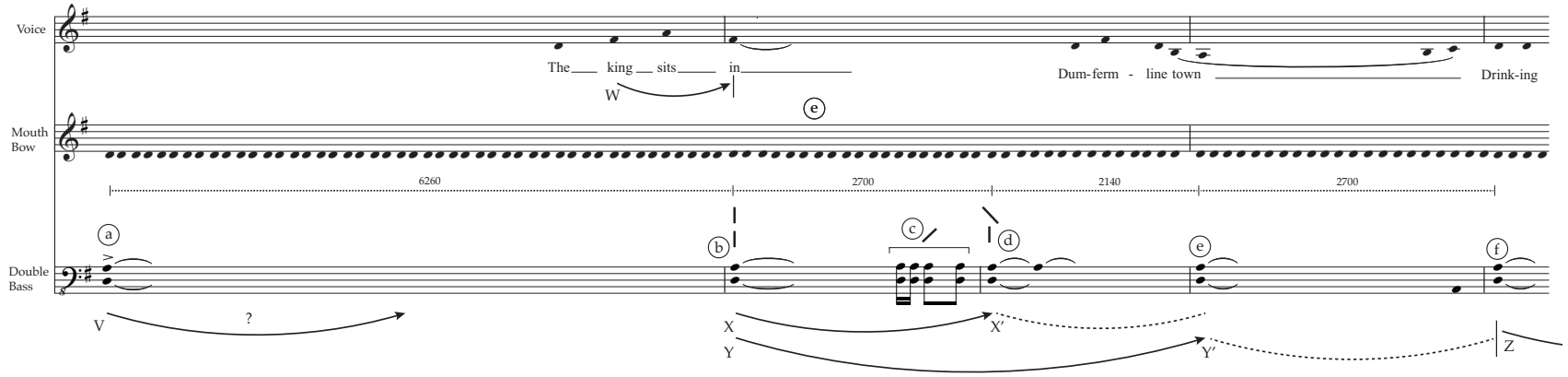


Figure 5.9: Sainte-Marie, "Sir Patrick Spens," first vocal line



[224] Sainte-Marie, *Little Wheel Spin and Spin*.

However, the span between this dominant beginning and a stress that might realize its duration is too long. The too-long duration T (with a 6309 ms IOI) fails to become projective, as indicated by a question mark above the T arrow. The projection U is similarly disrupted: the dominant beginning at the fifth dyad is not realized by any subsequent onsets in the double bass. Stresses from pitch change in the mouth bow create accents at (g) and (j), but neither are salient enough to participate in the metric projections begun at the double bass, which are themselves too far apart to be heard as realized durational projections.

It is only when the voice enters that the listener can hear projections realized. The transcription in Figure 5.9 illustrates the meter of the first vocal phrase (0:20-0:35). It begins with another failed metric projection in the double bass, with the too-long 6260 ms IOI preventing the V projection from being heard as realized. The first lexical stress on "king" occurs in the middle of a long duration between double-bass stresses, and can be heard as a dominant beginning of a duration, W, that can be realized by the next prosodic stress on "in." However, the alignment of "in" with a double-bass dyad onset makes this a stronger dominant beginning that renders W inactive. The stress on "kind" is therefore reinterpreted as an anacrusis to the events at (b).

The synchronization at (b) of lexical stresses and double bass onsets finally initiates a passage in which metric projections are actually realized. The dominant beginning at (b) marks the onset of the X duration, which can be heard as realized by the next double bass fifths at (d). The repeated fifths at (c) could initially be heard to realize the X duration, but can be retroactively reinterpreted as part of an anacrusis to the next beginning at (d). The dyad at (d) initiates the projection X', which we can hear to be realized by the next dyad at (e). In the first lyric fragment ("The **king** sits **in**,") the second of the two stressed words aligned with a dynamic accent in the double bass. Parallel to this structure, the setting of the lyrics "Dum-**ferm**-line **town**," aligns the

second stress (on "town") with a dyad at (e) to confirm the X' duration. It may also be possible to hear a longer duration Y, comprising X and X', from the prosodic stress on (b) to the onsets at (e). Y's projection Y', however, would be heard as interrupted by the too-early arrival of the next prosodic stress on "Drink-," the arrival of which is emphasized through alignment with a double-bass dyad at (f). The interruption is shown with a vertical line below the staff and the new projective duration, Z, beginning at (f).

Continuing a similar metric process for the remaining vocal phrases allows Sainte-Marie to highlight words that are central to the fateful narrative of the original folk song source, which has the Scottish king sending Sir Patrick Spens to his eventual death at sea.[225] In the lyrics, "But **where** will **I** get a **good** Scot **sail**-or/To **sail** this **ship** of **mine**," the stresses on "I," "good," "sail," and "mine" are emphasized through alignment with dynamic stresses in the double bass. Prosodic stresses on the possessive pronoun "I," the first syllable of "sailor" (presumably Sir Patrick Spens, himself), the verb "sail" and the final possessive word "mine" create vocal stresses in the musical setting that are the primary cues for meter. Throughout the remainder of the song, the meter is only clearly articulated when coordinated with Sainte-Marie's declamation of the essential prosodic stresses in the narrative.

The preceding examples demonstrate some of the various ways that irregular meter during vocal phrases can emphasize meaningful words or phrases in singer-songwriter lyrics. Metric shifts and expressive relaxation of metric process coordination between instruments give special emphasis to prosodic stresses in the lyrics and themes in a song's narrative. In many cases, this kind of metric highlighting occurs as a momentary disruption in an otherwise regular meter. In "The Sound of Silence" these metric shifts occur in all of the song's performances, serving to highlight words that

[225] We might read Sainte-Marie's adoption of this narrative as reflecting a warning message against blindly following authority, as an engagement with the fraught cultural politics of the 1960s.

express the narrator's efforts to deliver his message to the crowd in his dream. Similarly, metric irregularities in "Katmandu" bring attention to the "strange, bewildering time" expressed in the lyrics. The other Stevens song, "Time," features patterns of accent that group beats into non-isochronous measures, expressing the theme of rising and falling of time in the lyrics. Eschewing a regular grid construction, the meter of this song is best expressed as a series of projected durations, some realized and some interrupted.

Buffy Sainte-Marie's songs demonstrate three methods of engaging with meter for text expression not found in the other examples. In "Winter Boy," staggered downbeats between the voice and guitar accompaniment create moments of tension in her performance that highlight words in the narrative of newfound love with a child. The gradual regularization of meter in "Ananias" serves to express the unfolding affirmation of the narrator's religious beliefs. Finally, in "Sir Patrick Spens," Sainte-Marie's performance fails to realize durational reproductions until the voice enters, emphasizing important prosodic stresses in the narrative of the fatal sea voyage.

These analyses have shown some of the ways that meter and timing can be manipulated in a performance to serve the expression of lyrical narrative. The remaining analytical chapters will explore expressive metric irregularities in several songs by Joni Mitchell (Chapter 6), which demonstrates various degrees of alignment between metric process in voice and accompaniment, and Bob Dylan (Chapter 7), in which prosodic stresses have a prominent role in articulating meter.

Chapter 6: Expressive Meter in Selected Songs by Joni Mitchell

The previous chapter examined several uses of meter for text expression in the music of Joni Mitchell's singer-songwriter contemporaries. This chapter examines the meter-text relationship in three of Mitchell's own songs, "Lesson in Survival," "Blue," and "The Last Time I Saw Richard," all of which feature a voice-and-piano texture. Mitchell's style at the keyboard, as described in studies by Lloyd Whitesell and Daniel Sonenberg, features a steady stream of eighth notes in the left hand, arpeggiating tones of a given harmony; chords in the right hand most often align with half-note beats, with occasional syncopation.[226] These two parts create repeated rhythmic and metric patterns in Mitchell's accompaniment that can be presented in a simplified (regularized) form. Against this metric regularity, prosodic stress patterns frequently evade strict poetic meter, yet occasionally feature passages of regular stress patterns. Patterns of stress in the vocal line move in and out of alignment with the accompaniment to emphasize or obscure particular words or phrases. In certain passages, Mitchell's musical setting includes metric irregularities that mark words or themes for attention in her lyrical narrative. The transcriptions published on Mitchell's official website provide temporary changes of meter signature to notate these irregularities; however, these do not adequately express the various sensations of metric disruption, particularly with respect to the lyrics.[227] The analyses in this chapter reproduce the notated meter suggested by the online transcriptions, but more fully characterize the nature and the effect of these

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[226] Lloyd Whitesell, "Harmonic Palette in Early Joni Mitchell," *Popular Music* 21, no. 2 (2002): 173–93; Whitesell, *The Music of Joni Mitchell*; Daniel Sonenberg, "'Who in the World She Might Be': A Contextual and Stylistic Approach to the Early Music of Joni Mitchell" (Ph.D. dissertation, City University of New York, 2003).

[227] The three such transcriptions include two transcriptions of "Blue" and one of "Lesson in Survival." See Dave Blackburn, "Transcriptions: Blue," 2014, http://jonimitchell.com/music/transcription.cfm?id=387; Howard Wright, "Transcriptions: Blue," 2014, http://jonimitchell.com/music/transcription.cfm?id=302; Blackburn, "Transcriptions: Lesson in Survival."

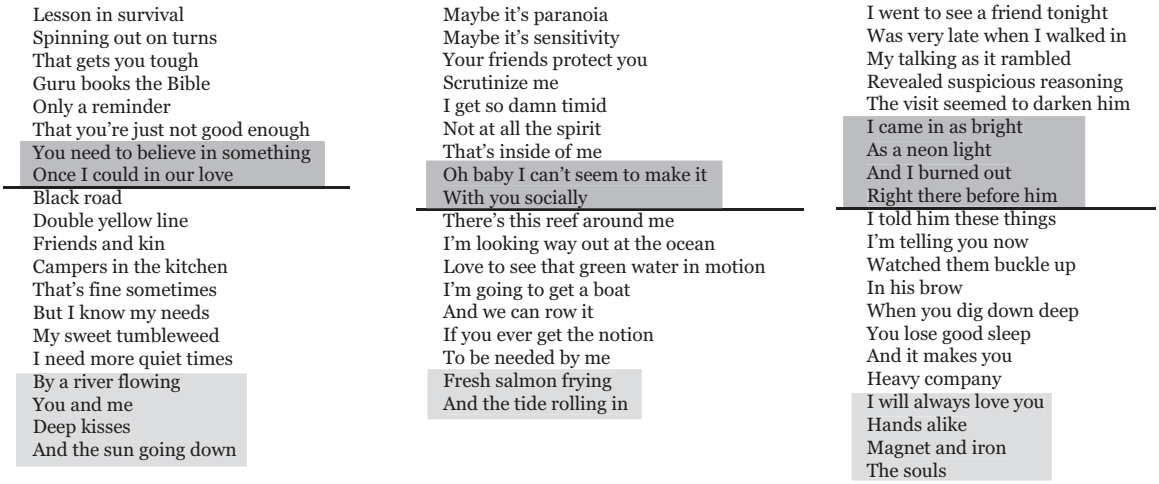
meter changes by using the concepts of projective theory, clarified in some cases with alternative, proportional transcriptions. Through these analyses, this chapter examines the poetic narrative in these three keyboard-based songs, and analyzes how Mitchell's treatment of meter in voice and piano clarifies and enhances the meaning of the lyrics.

6.1 "Lesson in Survival" and the Technique of Metric Text Painting

To appreciate this expressive effect of meter, it is important to have a thorough understanding of the text. Whitesell describes the lyrics of "Lesson in Survival" as a "furrowed brow monologue," in which Mitchell's lyrics resemble speech.[228] Her text is initially enigmatic; the reader may not immediately understand what the "lesson" concerns. Rather, the song's meaning is gradually unveiled, with crucial information emerging later in a few passages that occupy parallel positions in their respective stanzas. Each stanza focuses on different imagery, as shown in Figure 6.1, which lays out the lyrics of all three stanzas in parallel columns. Horizontal lines bisecting each long stanza indicate narrative changes, and the lyrics that precede them are highlighted in dark grey to indicate textual parallelism. As the song proceeds, these parallel lyrics gradually reveal critical information about the narrator's previous relationship and why it failed. Other important parallelisms, discussed below, appear at the end of the stanzas, and are highlighted in light grey. At the outset of the first stanza, Mitchell's mention of "Guru books" and the Bible reference traditional paths to faith that have been a poor fit for the narrator, reminding her only that she is "just not good enough." She concedes that "You need to believe in something," and reveals that she once believed in the love of a past relationship, the details of which she will clarify in the remaining lyrics. The text "once I could in our love" reveals that the song's message is intended for a former lover, the first-person pronoun suggesting that the commitment she made to their relationship was not reciprocated.

[228] Whitesell, *The Music of Joni Mitchell*, 41.

Figure 6.1: Mitchell, "Lesson in Survival," lyrics



In the second half of the first stanza, her metaphors suggests that it was the social aspect of the relationship that isolated her, comparing her confinement to the "Double yellow line" that separates opposing lanes of traffic. While the bustling visits of friends and "Campers in the kitchen" are "fine sometimes," she explains that she "needs more quiet times," the pace of a flowing river, rather than cars on a road. The second stanza reveals more specifically that she feels ostracized by his friends. The lyrics "Oh baby I can't seem to make it with you socially" pinpoint why their relationship failed. This moment of clarity parallels the lines occupying a similar position in stanza 1, where the narrator first hinted that she was surviving a past relationship.

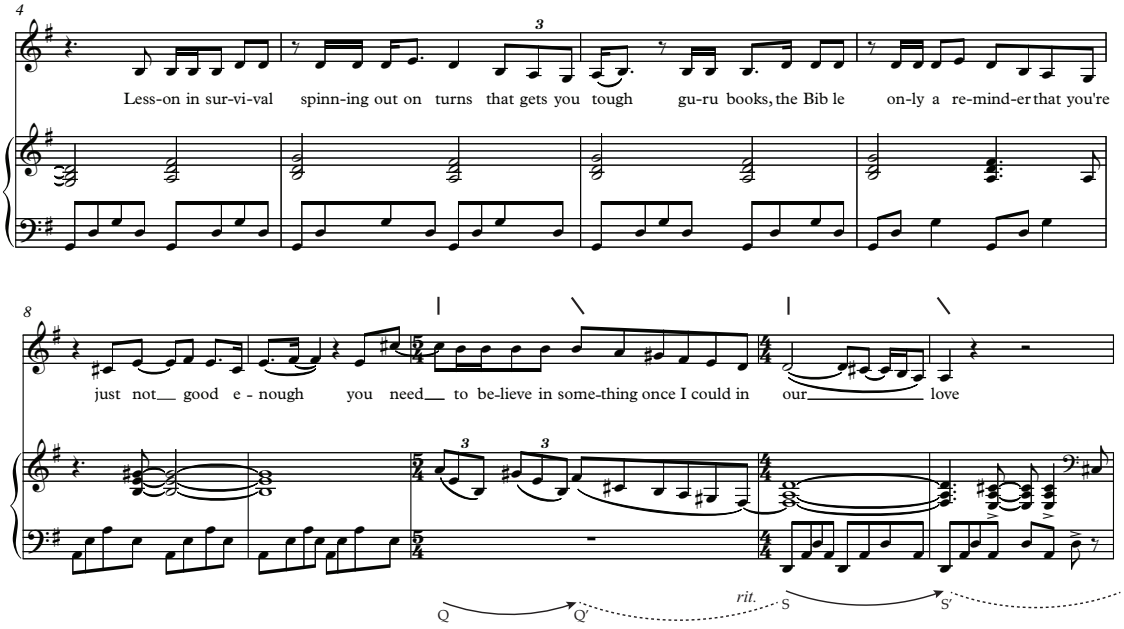
The conclusion of each stanza expresses the narrator's dreams about how the relationship would have been satisfying to her. In stanza 1 she imagines sitting alone with him by a flowing river, watching the sun go down, exemplifying the "quiet times" for which she yearned earlier. The final lines of the second stanza describe a similar fantasy, in which she is rowing a boat together with him and then watching "fresh salmon frying/And the tide rolling in." Both scenarios express a desire to be nearer to him and to open water, in contrast with social "reef" that she feels confining her. The description of

"the sun going down" at the end of stanza 1 seems to act as portent of the ending of the relationship.

Structurally important moments in the third stanza highlight the narrator's realization that the relationship is failing and that she must end it. Confiding in a friend, the narrator arrives initially as "bright as a neon light," concealing the darkness of her situation, but burns out "right there before him" as she reveals the truth (previously admitted to us in stanza 2) that the timidity she feels with her love represses "the spirit/That's inside" of her. Noticing that this visit seemed "seemed to darken" her friend and furrow his brow in concern for her provides the impetus for the narrator to end her romantic relationship. The final, syntactically broken lines of the song are devoted to this task. Her description of their souls as "magnet and iron" is a wishful way to describe the failed potential of their relationship, paralleling the imagery from the end of the previous stanzas; the statement of "I will always love you" is her declaration of farewell.

The revelatory lyrics are given special emphasis both melodically and metrically which helps to highlight their narrative connection. The metric effects are carefully prepared. At the beginning the first stanza (0:06-0:29), shown in Figure 6.2, consistent articulation of eighth notes in the piano's left hand and chordal articulations every half note in the right hand maintain the 4/4 meter set up in the song's introduction. In m. 10, the melody leaps up very high, and this first moment of emotional intensity brings metric change and uncertainty. Although the setting of "You **need** to be-**lieve** in **some**-thing/**Once** I **could** in **our love**" aligns each vocal stress with the established quarter note beat (although "need" is syncopated), the eighth note pulse stream weakens as the left-hand drops out and the right hand begins to arpeggiate triplets.

Figure 6.2: Mitchell, "Lesson in Survival," mm. 4-12[229]



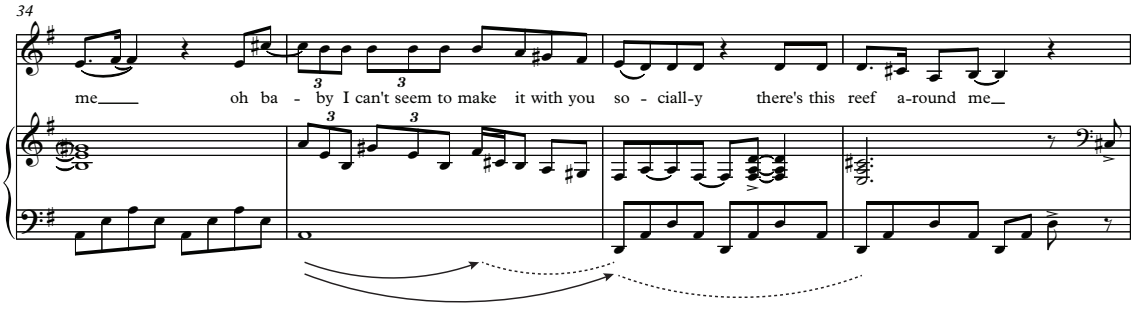
Then the ensuing events gradually disrupt the half- and whole-note pulse levels of 4/4 in a way that can be precisely characterized in terms of durational projective theory. At first, the half-note beat seems secure: a syncopated vocal stress on "need" and the onset of the first triplet figure initiate the Q duration, which is realized by the dynamic accent in the voice on the first syllable of "something." Q' is projected from the stress on "something" but not realized until the dominant beginning at "our," on the downbeat of m. 11, created by a dynamic accent in the voice, a chord articulation in the right hand, and a re-initiation of the left hand eighth notes. This projected Q' duration must be heard to be realized through a *ritardando* to span the duration between the continuation on "some-" and the dominant beginning at "our." To the extent that the listener is counting quarter notes, she may sense a 5-quarter-note span in m. 10, as illustrated in the transcription representing this process as a 5/4 bar, but the actual effect is not of a regular 5-quarter-note-beat but of two groups of triplet eighth notes giving way to a

[229] Mitchell, *Clouds*.

composed-out deceleration with six consecutive eighth notes in the voice and piano, and a subsequent return to 4/4. This occurs as the lyrics describe the need to break out of the trap of self-loathing, and then of metric certainty regained as the narrator identifies her source of hope ("our love"). This possessive pronoun is important because "our love" is the first indication of the song's theme and what the narrator is surviving.

In the second stanza, the revelatory line (1:18-1:27) begins similarly. Vocal stresses of the lyrics "Oh **ba**-by I **can't** seem to **make** it **with** you **so**-cial-ly" are aligned, as they were in verse 1, with each stress except the first aligning with a quarter-note beat.

Figure 6.3: Mitchell, "Lesson in Survival," mm. 34-37

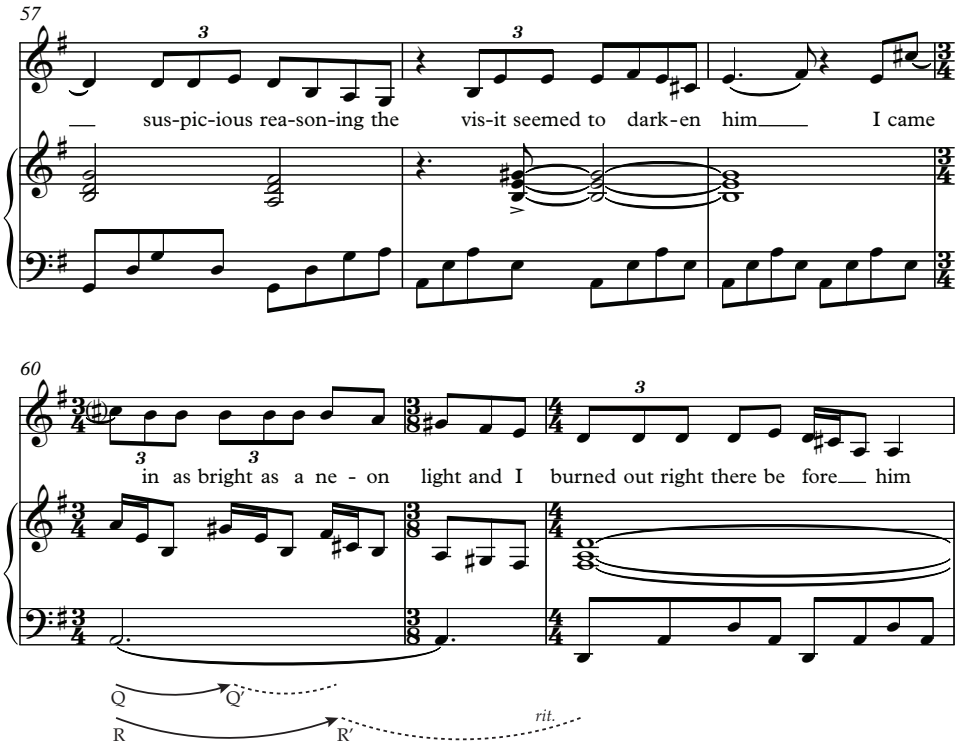


Unlike in verse 1, though, both the half-note and whole-note durations in this passage are realized, as illustrated by the projection arrows below the staff in Figure 6.3. Despite the absence of eighth notes in the left hand, m. 35 maintains the 4/4 meter of the preceding measures. The half-note duration begun on the downbeat of m. 35 is realized by the vocal stress on "make," while the whole-note duration is realized by the stress on "socially." By maintaining the 4/4 meter here, instead of breaking out of it as she did in the parallel moment in stanza 1, she gives us a sense that her metric freedom is being constrained, as water would be by the boundaries of a "reef."

The third verse parallels the first by its setting the revelatory line (2:14-2:26) with an irregular metric process. This passage sets the text "I **came** in as **bright** as a **ne**-on

light and I **burned** out **right** there be-**fore** him," with the first stress syncopated to a downbeat, and the remaining stresses aligning with quarter-note beats initially, then a dotted quarter-note beat in m. 61. Once again the melodic leap portrays a moment of emotional intensity, "bright as a neon light."

Figure 6.4: Mitchell, "Lesson in Survival," mm. 57-62



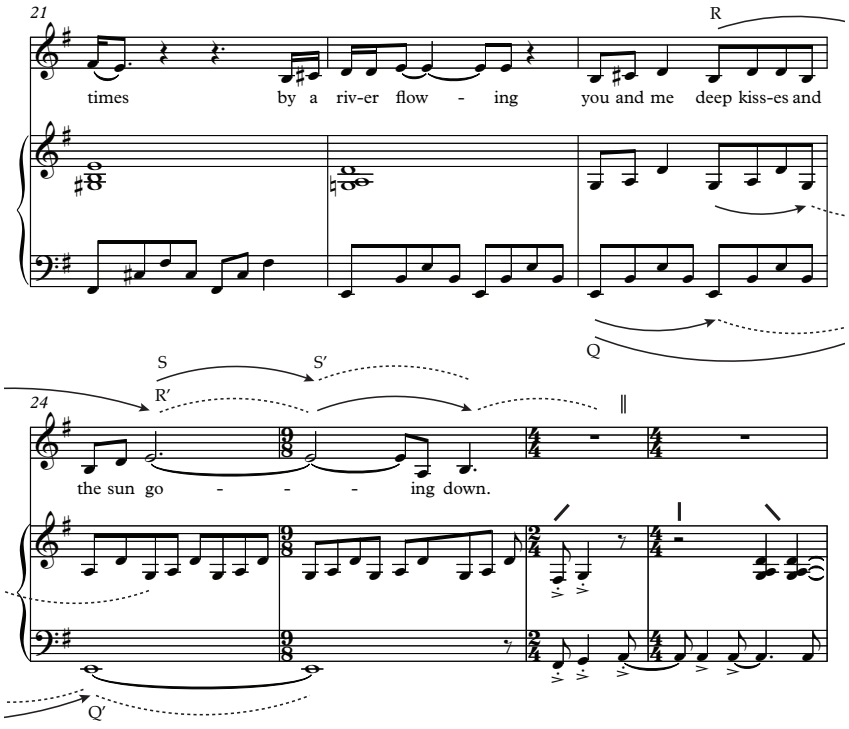
This transcription, following the one on Mitchell's official website, renders mm. 60-61 as a bar 3/4 bar followed by a 3/8.[230]. But such a representation does not adequately describe the metrical process here. Consider instead the projective arrows below the staff. The Q-Q' projection indicates the quarter notes spanning successive vocal stresses that give rise to a half note duration R from the downbeat of m. 60 to the stress on the first syllable of "neon" R is projected as R'. Will this projection be disrupted, as in stanza 1, or realized exactly as in stanza 2? Neither, as it turns out. Since the next vocal stress does not occur until the word "burned," R' is heard as realized, but through a

[230] Blackburn, "Transcriptions: Lesson in Survival."

ritardando, a duration that is notated in Figure 6.4 as spanning five eighth-note beats. This slight delay enacts, perhaps, the waning of intensity described in the lyrics, but in any case places special emphasis on "burned" to bring out its contrast with the narrator's initial brightness in this scene. In these three moments of emotional intensity, then, processes of projective meter not only help reinforce the musical parallelisms but also support the specific images and meanings of the lyrics.

Similarly, at the end of each stanza, in order to bring out the images of contemplative fantasy and to associate them, Mitchell uses motivic connections and irregular meter. In the first verse (shown in Figure 6.5), under the lyrics "You and me deep kisses and the sun going down" (0:48-1:02), she introduces a repeating G3-A3-D4 motive that by m. 23 takes on the rhythm of three eighth notes grouped together.

Figure 6.5: Mitchell, "Lesson in Survival," mm. 21-27



The repetition of its dotted-eighth duration conflicts with the half-note pulse. The metric whole-note duration Q expected at m. 24 is indeed marked by the attack of a sustained

bass pitch, and acts to initiate the projective duration Q'. But against these whole-note durations, the voice places the attack of its longest note (on the syllable "go-") a quarter note later, with the onset of the right hand motive, which confirms the dotted half-note duration R that began on the word "deep" in the previous measure. We can also hear dotted-quarter-note durations created by eighth note G3-A3-D4 groups, as shown with projective symbols below the treble staff in mm. 23 and 24. The projected R', which begins in m. 24, on "go-," is realized by the onset of the right-hand motive on the downbeat of m. 25, then R' begins a projection S-S' that is realized with the vocal arrival on "down".

The combination of these events cause the original 4/4 meter to evaporate, giving a floating, alternative sense of time to the dreamy scene she describes. Even the dotted-half pulse disappears when no event sustains it in m. 26.[231] Amidst this metrical hiatus (||), the syncopated material of piano introduction abruptly intrudes. The website's transcription implies that the half note pulse resumes at the attack of the piano's F#s. However, the piano lick acts more as an anacrusis (/) to a dominant beginning (|) implied by the syncopated arrival of tonic A. After the metric complications across mm. 23-27, the sudden return of introductory material and its meter feel like a jolt, a mimesis of the narrator jerking herself out of her reverie and back to reality, as signaled further by the drastic change of lyrics in the subsequent stanza and eventual return of un-syncopated 4/4 meter.

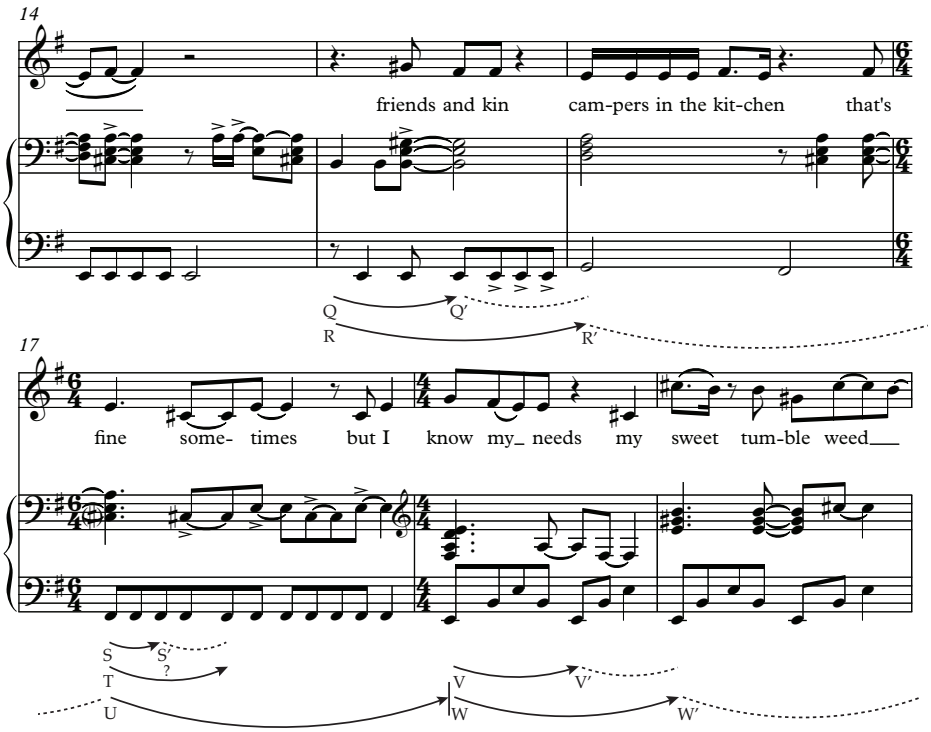
In the second and third stanzas, Mitchell reprises this three-note motive and metrical hiatus to accompany the similarly wishful passages. This associates the fantasy

[231] The jonimitchell.com transcription includes a typical grouping of right-hand eighth notes into threes for the notated 9/8. I have modified the rhythms of these pitches to more reflect the sensation that an eighth note has been added (an 8+1 grouping of the nine eighth notes) rather than the meter signature changed.

scenarios from the first two stanzas with the final image of the song, and the imagining of their romantic connection as “magnet and iron.”

Mitchell creates a third structural parallelism between the stanzas with metric irregularity, creating a narrative connection not immediately apparent in the lyrics. The first instance occurs in verse 1, shown in Figure 6.6, during the phrase “That’s fine sometimes/But I know my needs” (0:31-0:46), that is stated before the narrator realizes she needs “more quiet times

Figure 6.6: Mitchell, “Lesson in Survival,” mm. 14-19

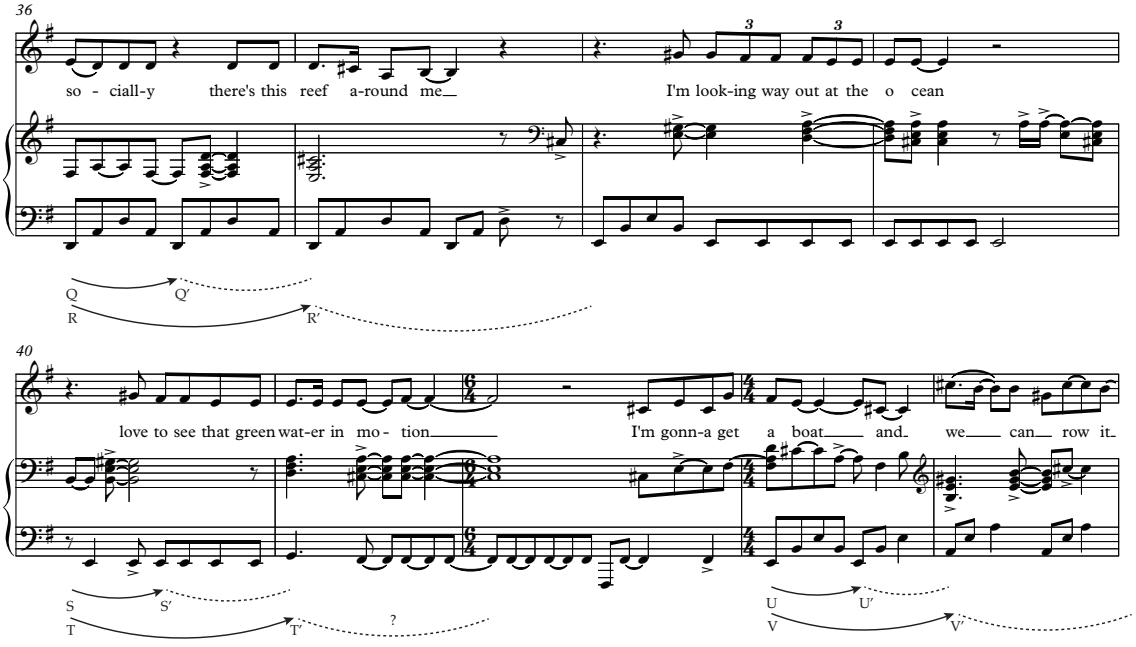


Based on the prevailing grouping, which pairs together mm. 15-16, the dominant beginning in m. 17, articulated by “fine” in the voice, should initiate another whole-note duration like those established by R and R’, which are subdivided into half notes in the manner of Q-Q', However, the repeated F#2 eighth notes and syncopated rhythms in the right hand and vocal line do not clearly realize the half note T duration. Though the S-S’ quarter-note durations are salient, creating the syncopations in the treble staves, the

only discernable longer duration occurs between “fine” and “know” in the vocal line, aligning with the downbeats of mm. 17-18 in the figure and creating a duration U much longer than R and R’. U, however, is unable to become projective because the vocal stress on “know,” harmony change, and right-hand chord articulation on the downbeat of m. 18 create a new dominant beginning of the V and W durations. This interrupts the potential for U to become projective and re-initiates the 4/4 meter (V’ and W’). Lyrically, this metric disruption matches the syntax, in which she interrupts her apparent acceptance of crowded family gatherings with the declaration that she needs more quiet times.

At the parallel moment in verse 2, Mitchell uses meter to evoke her narrator’s contemplative nature. Figure 6.7 analyzes the passage (1:23-1:43).

Figure 6.7: Mitchell, “Lesson in Survival,” mm. 39-44

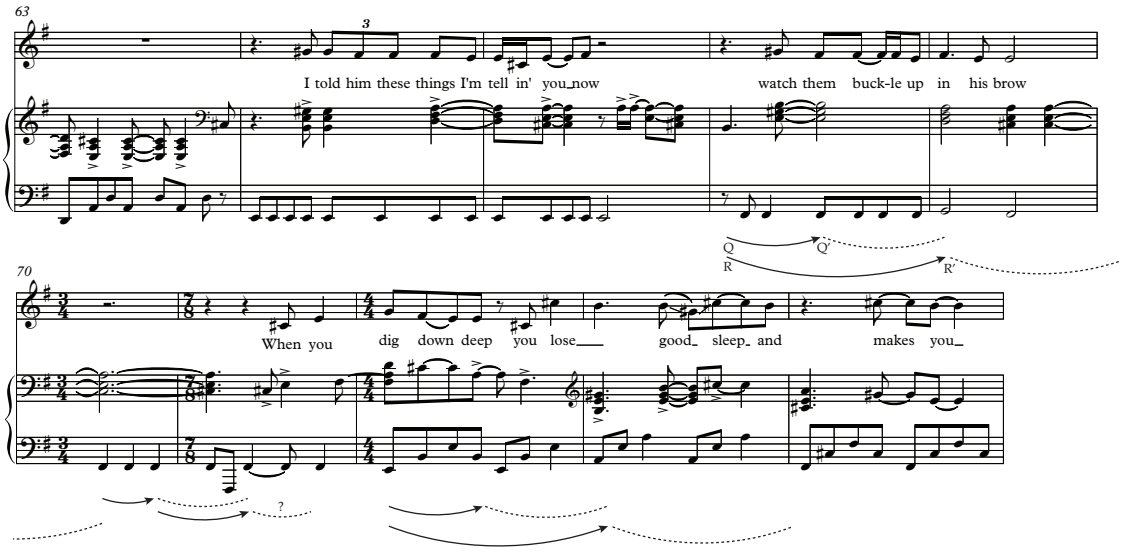


At the words “water in motion,” Mitchell disrupts the continuation of the established repeated half-note and whole-note durations, shown below mm. 36-37 and mm. 40-41. The projected T’ in m. 41 illustrates a hypothetical reproduction of the whole-note T duration, but that fails to be realized by any articulations in the piano and voice. Instead

the repeated F#2 disrupts the prevailing meter in m. 43 until the regular accompaniment pattern returns in m. 44. The repetition of this pitch parallels a similar moment of metric irregularity from verse 1, taking on a prominent role in this process of text painting in all three verses. The temporary suspension of measured time in this verse, illustrates the meditative act of watching the ocean.

A similar metric text painting occurs beginning in m. 64 (Figure 6.8) at the parallel moment in verse 3 (2:26-2:54), when the narrator confides in a friend and watches the information "buckle up in his brow."

Figure 6.8: Mitchell, "Lesson in Survival," mm. 63-72



Between her declamation of "brow" and the beginning of the next vocal phrase, meter is temporarily disrupted. During the repetition of F#2 in mm. 70-71, the half-note durations, illustrated in m. 68 as Q-Q', are unable to continue to m. 71 because no vocal or piano events confirm the Q' duration. It is not until the onset of the word "dig," a change of harmony, and a right hand chord articulation all coinciding in m. 72 that the 4/4 meter resumes. The temporary loss of meter between "brow" and "dig" illustrates the confounding effect of her confession on her friend.

6.2 "Blue" Imagery and Flexible Timing

"Lesson in Survival" showcased metric irregularities at parallel structural moments in the strophic form. "Blue," in contrast, has a more flexible form, and changes of meter bring out narrative themes and imagery that are not always parallel in the syntactic form of the lyrics. In the song's lyrics (the full text of which is provided in Figure 6.9) the narrator describes the tragic story of caring for a friend who is addicted to drugs. The opening declaration, "Blue songs are like tattoos," offers several images for interpretation. A literal reading, that songs on tragic subjects are as permanent as skin tattoos, announces that this is a story of heartbreak, from which our narrator has not entirely recovered.[232] The subsequent phrases, "You know I've been to sea before/Crown and anchor me/Or let me sail away," suggests that the narrator has learned from past relationships that she needs either commitment with him or complete freedom from him.

The second stanza reiterates and enriches the imagery from the first. The initial line "Hey Blue, here is a song for you" repurposes the word "Blue" as a nickname for the former lover. The narrator then describes the process of tattooing, in which needles pierce the skin to fill empty spaces with ink. Beyond this literal description, the lyrics prefigure the mention of "Needles, guns, and grass" later in the stanza, which allude to injecting drugs. Accordingly, "An empty space to fill in" can be taken to refer to an emotional emptiness, a void temporarily filled by the distractions of these activities.

The second half of stanza 2 changes from descriptive to imperative. She urges Blue "You've got to keep thinking/You can make it through these waves," which, she adds, include "**A**-cid **booze** and **ass**/**Need**-les **guns** and **grass**." The prosodic stress pattern of these lyrics, highlighted in bold, creates a rare moment of metric regularity in

[232] Accordingly, Whitesell interprets "Blue" as a "devastating love song," in which the characters, as seafarers, navigate "the treacherous waters of drugs and depression. See Whitesell, "Harmonic Palette in Early Joni Mitchell," 181.

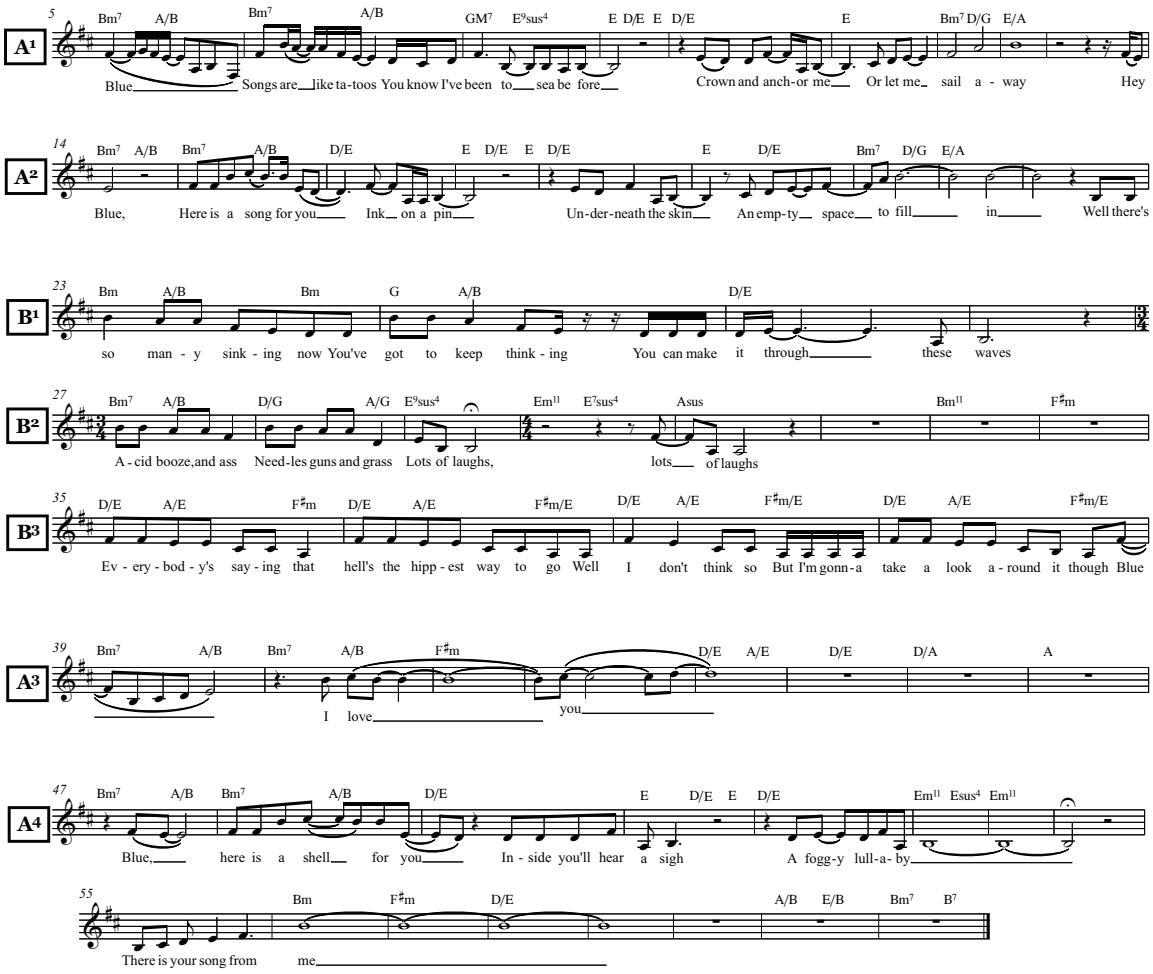
the lyrics that emphasizes the sources of Blue's struggles. Regular stress returns later, in the phrases that state: "**Ev**-ery-**bod**-y's **say**-ing that **hell's** the **hip**-pest **way** to **go**/Well **I** don't **think** so/But I'm **gon**-na **take** a **look** a-**round** it **though**," emphasizing the narrator's assessment of "Blue's" lifestyle.

The final stanza offers parallel imagery to the first. The narrator returns to the imagery of "blue songs" in her offering of a shell to him in which he can hear not the ocean but a "foggy lullaby" that contrasts with the precise definitions of tattoo from the first stanza. The shell she offers him is an empty vessel, recalling the empty space imagery from stanza 2 to suggest an emotional emptiness in her. The final lyrics "There is your song from me" act to terminate her relationship with him. The word "song" is singular here, in contrast to the pluralized "songs are like tattoos" from stanza 1. This is a singular offering to him that will not permanently mark her any further than it already has.

In the musical setting, meter is used to highlight passages of text that concern the central relationship of the poem that Whitesell reads as an unresolved conflict between "anchored commitment" and "undone moorings."[233] Most of the phrases of "Blue" follow one of two types, categorized according to similarities of pitch and lyrical content. The transcription provided Figure 6.9 analyzes the grouping structure of the studio recording and labels the type of each phrase as A or B.[234]

[233] Ibid., 182; Whitesell, *The Music of Joni Mitchell*, 137.
[234] The harmonic progression for the transcriptions of "Blue" follows those available on jonimitchell.com as well as studies by Whitesell. (See Whitesell, "Harmonic Palette in Early Joni Mitchell," 181; Whitesell, *The Music of Joni Mitchell*, 135.) The vocal transcriptions (including those combined with available piano transcriptions) are entirely my own.

Figure 6.9: Mitchell, "Blue," phrase type organization[235]



Though parallel in melodic contour and harmonic progression, the A¹ and A² phrases declaim the word "Blue" differently. The A1 phrase begins in the context of an introduction that clearly projects 4/4 meter, so it seems plausible to try to hear its beginning in the same meter as shown in Figure 6.9. However, the striking timings of Mitchell's performance (0:12-0:32), represented proportionally in Figure 6.10 make such a hearing difficult. Indeed, transcriptions from Mitchell's website, which maintain 4/4 meter, only show piano accompaniment for this passage, without any vocal pitches, and

[235] Mitchell, *Blue*.

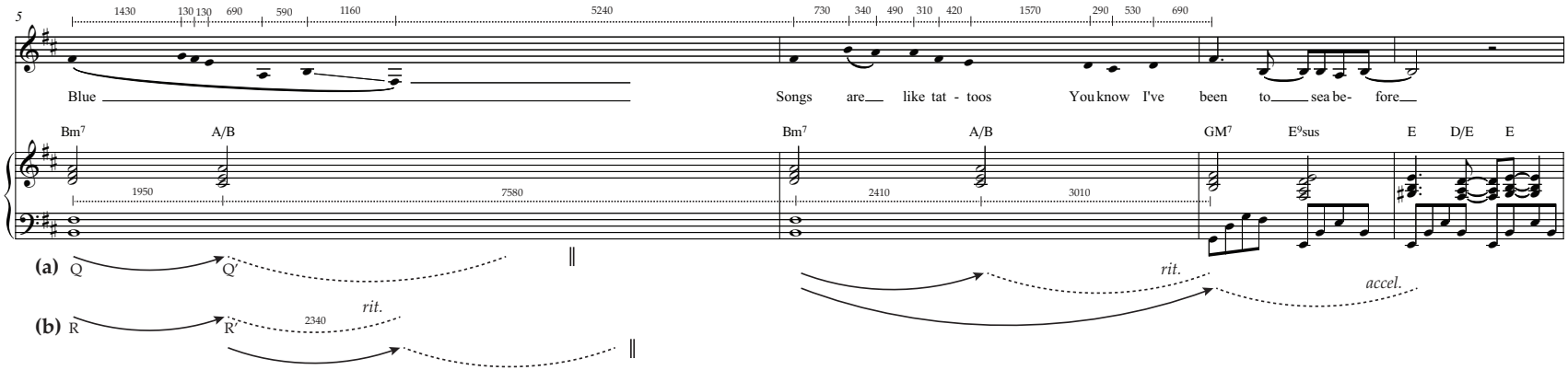
provide only fermata symbols and tempo indications to account for timing.[236] My proportional transcription retains the bar lines of a 4/4 meter setting, and includes those rhythmic durations for the piano accompaniment to show the connection with that meter. Rhythmic values in the voice part have been removed for mm. 5-6, but return in m. 7 once the 4/4 meter is regained. Projection arrows are included below the staff to illustrate possible metric readings of the more flexible timing.

A projective reading of mm. 5-6 shows how the timing disrupts the previously established meter of the introduction. The Q duration, at (a), that spans the right hand chords in m. 5 is projected as Q' which fails to be realized by another piano chord, even through a *ritardando*. The hiatus symbol (||) denotes an interruption of these projections at this moment. The R-R' arrows at (b) illustrate an alternate reading, in which R is the same duration as Q, but the vocal articulation on F#3 can be heard to realize R'. Continuing these durations also fails, since the 5240 ms duration between this F#3 and the next onset is too long. In either reading, meter is promised but lost. Next we hear the same two piano chords and a very similar vocal phrase, realizing a projective duration S analogous to and nearly the same as the previous Q. However, this time Mitchell provides dynamic accent on the word "been" and a new chord soon enough that we can hear the projection S' of S as realized. The S-S' durations create the larger T projection, which is projected as T' and realized through an *accelerando*.

The timing Mitchell gives to her performance of the word "Blue" is no surprise, given its centrality in this song, but it also creates a second layer of meaning to the syntax. The hiatus created by the performance timings breaks the syntactical continuity between the words "Blue" and "songs" in the lyrics.

[236] Both website transcriptions follow this. See Blackburn, "Transcriptions: Blue"; Wright, "Transcriptions: Blue."

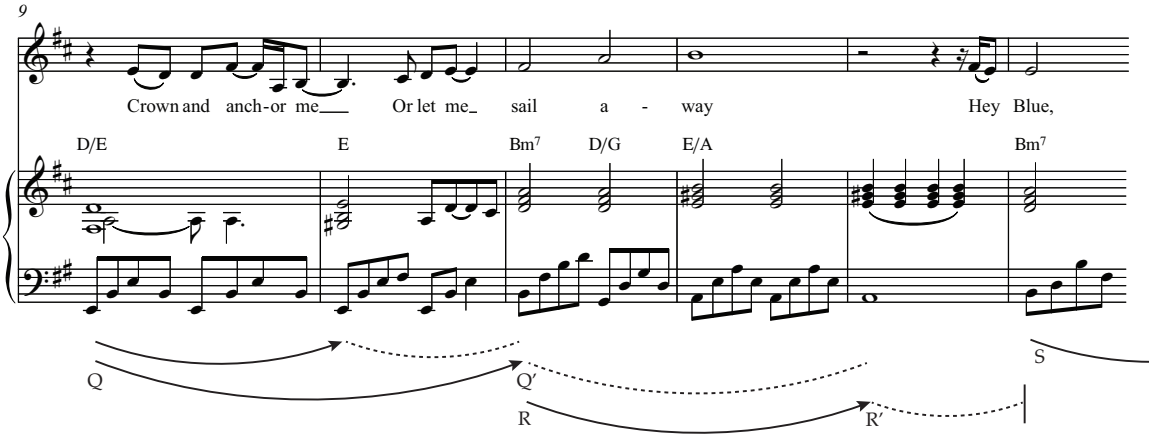
Figure 6.10: Mitchell, "Blue," mm. 5-8



Accordingly, “Blue” can be understood not only as a modifier of “tattoos,” but also a vocative – the nickname of the song’s dedicatee, as Mitchell clarifies in the next stanza. The hiatus further suggests that the narrator is lost in reminiscence about the relationship. The renewed then realized projections in m. 6 vividly portray the narrator pulling herself out of her reverie and back to the reality of watching “Blue” in despair.

Later in the same phrase (0:32-0:45), Mitchell uses irregular meter to highlight lyrical imagery. This occurs in the final lines of the stanza, in the musical setting of “Crown and anchor me/Or let me sail away,” the passage of which is illustrated in Figure 6.11.

Figure 6.11: Mitchell, “Blue,” mm. 9-13

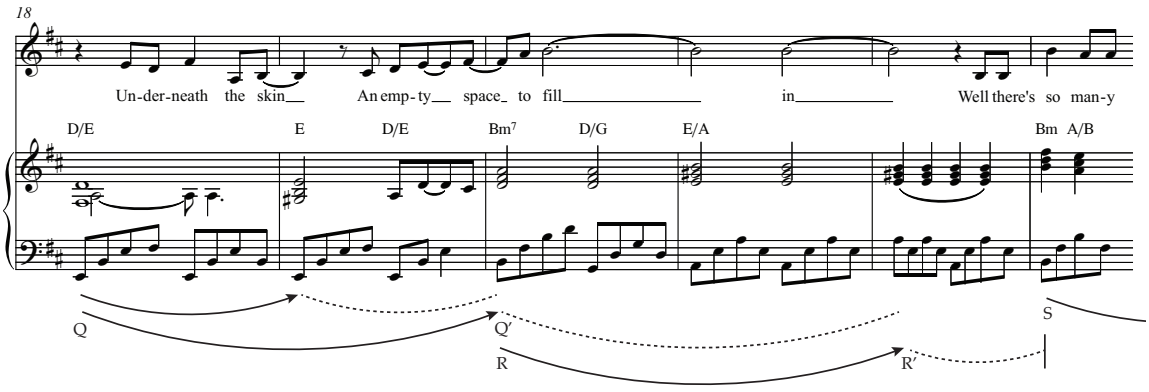


The Q-Q’ durations span two-measure units; Q begins on the D/E harmony in m. 9 and is confirmed by the Bm7 chord in m. 11. Its projection Q’ spans measure 11 to the onset of the long A2 on the downbeat of m. 13. I expect Q’, now as the determinate duration R, to itself be reproduced, but that is interrupted by the group beginning in m. 14, at the start of phrase A^2. As the ninth measure of the A^1 phrase, m. 13 feels extra, serving to prolong the E/A harmony. The change of accompaniment, to quarter note repetitions of the right-hand chord over a sustained bass, suggests the onset of a new breve duration R', but that is interrupted by the subsequent phrase beginning. Narratively, this unbinding

from the double-whole note regularity evokes the feeling of "sailing away," and the special freedom this would give the narrator.

The next mention of "empty space," at the end of the A^2 phrase (0:53-1:06), receives similar metrical treatment. As shown in Figure 6.12, the metric projections for this passage are identical to those in the previous phrase. R attempts to reproduce the two-bar unit durations from Q and Q' but is interrupted by the dominant beginning, and the onset of the next phrase in m. 23.

Figure 6.12: Mitchell, "Blue," mm. 18-22

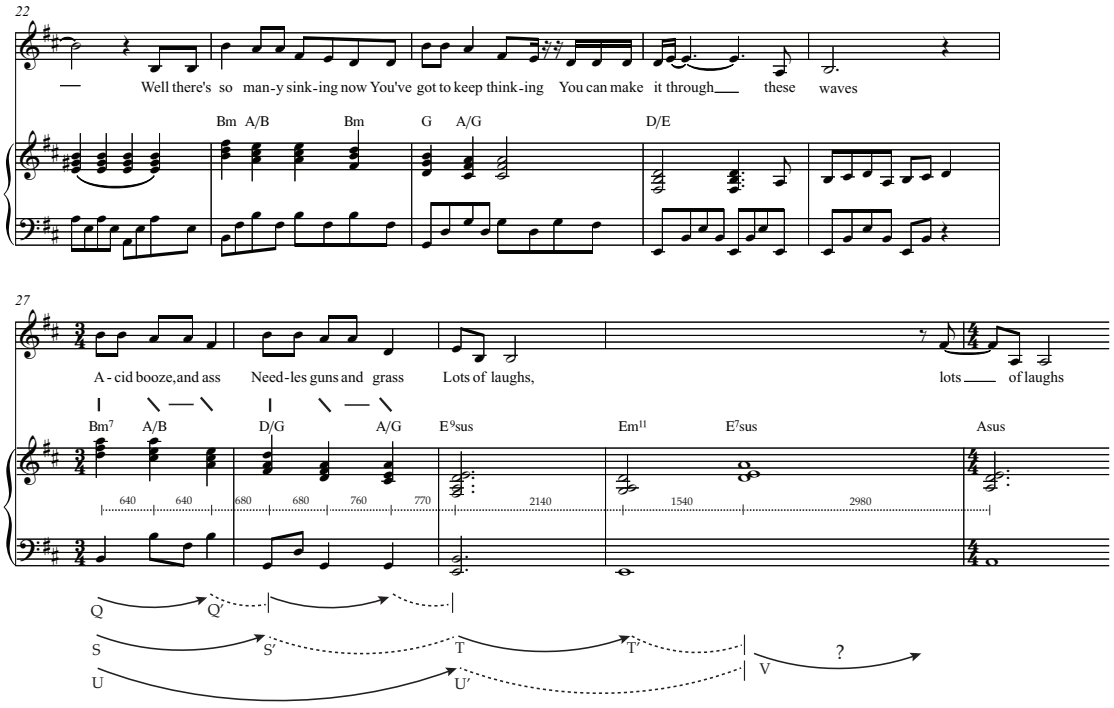


By breaking down the double-whole-note meter, m. 22 constitutes an "empty space" that Mitchell fills in with the longer durations of her melody. The rhythm here is almost a literal interpretation of the lyrics for this passage.

In the musical setting of the B phrases, Mitchell emphasizes the regular prosodic stresses by aligning each stressed syllable with a quarter-note beat. The first system of Figure 6.13 (1:05-1:27) illustrates the setting of lines "Well **there's** so **man**-y **sink**-ing **now**/You've **got** to **keep think**-ing," in which Mitchell emphasizes "so" instead of "there's," and emphasizes each vocal stress with a chord in the right hand. The following line, "**You** can **make** it **through** these **waves**," features four stressed syllables, but is set more loosely, with only "waves" aligning with a downbeat, and "make" and "through"

offset from the first beat of m. 25. The metric setting of syllables in this phrase emphasizes their meaning, as key elements of the narrator's advice to "Blue."

Figure 6.13: Mitchell, "Blue," mm. 20-30

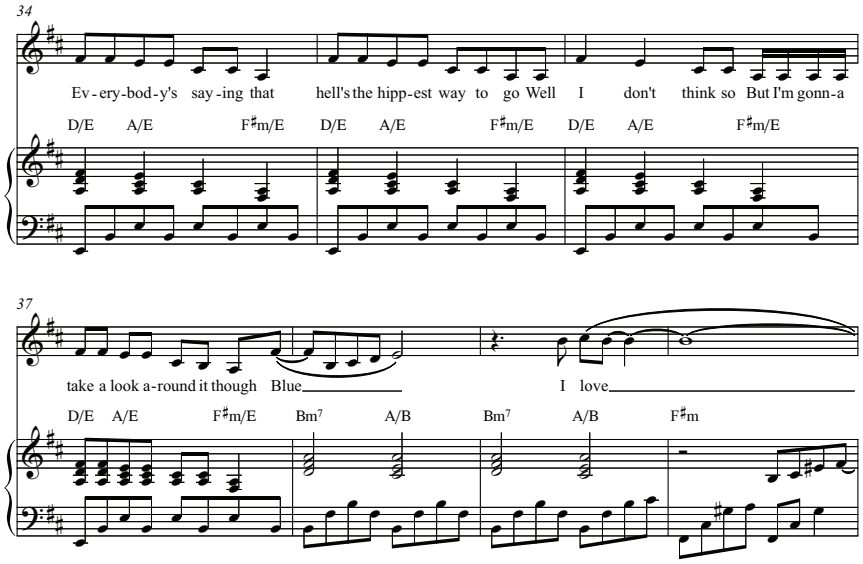


The musical setting of the text for the B^2 phrase brings out a significant difference between it and B^1: there are only three feet per line, instead of four. The melody in m. 27 begins like m. 23, suggesting that we will hear a series of half notes. As with the previous phrases, Mitchell aligns each syllable with a quarter-note beat. In projective terms, the Q duration, between the first syllable of "Acid" and the stress on "ass" becomes projective as Q'. However, Q' is interrupted by the stress on the first syllable of "Needles" and the grouping beginning suggested by melodic parallelism between mm. 27-28. Similarly, the duration beginning on the first syllable of "Needles" is realized with the stress on "grass," but its projective duration is interrupted by the next stress on "Lots." Thus, the whole note measures we expect are cut short, producing instead dotted half-note measures S-S' between the stresses on the first syllables of "Acid" and "Needle," which are notated in

the transcription as downbeats of two 3/4 measures. We hear the dotted half note reproduced again from the E^{9}sus on "Lots" to the next right hand chord, but its reproduction is also cut short by a third, too-early right hand chord. Had Mitchell continued the (640 ms) quarter note durations from mm. 27-28, the lyrics might have taken on a more lighthearted interpretation. By slowing the tempo and disrupting the prevailing metric processes, her performance indicates an ironic interpretation of "laughs," that alludes to the detrimental, not at all funny, long-term effects of the practices she just described.

The lyrics of the subsequent phrase, B^{3}, reflect on this lifestyle, with the shift of melody down a fourth from the previous phrases illustrating this change in perspective.

Figure 6.14: Mitchell, "Blue," mm. 34-40

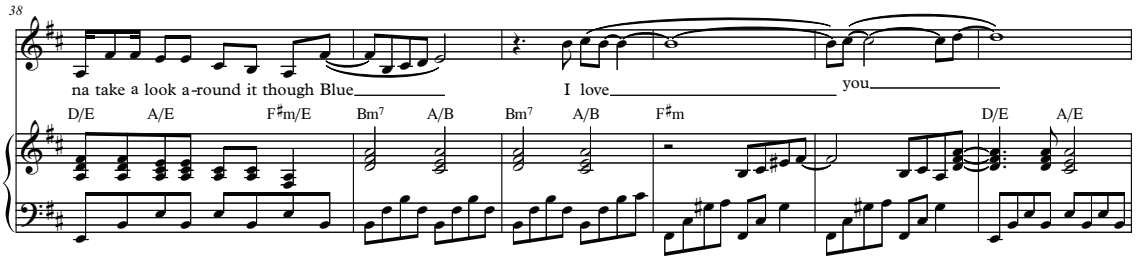


The narrator states, "**Ev**-ery-**bod**-y's **say**-ing **that**/**Hell's** the **hip**-pest **way** to **go**/Well **I don't think** so/**But** I'm gon-na **take** a **look** a-**round** it **though**," with a relatively regular pattern of stresses in the voice that Mitchell aligns with quarter note beats, as

shown in Figure 6.14 (1:37-1:54).[237] As with the previous B phrases, this declamatory setting emphasizes the lyrical meaning of statements like "I don't think so," that reflect the narrator's point of view. As will be explored later, the aliqgnment of vocal stresses with musical meter is one way Mitchell distinguishes the rhetoric of the characters in her narrative songs.

The A^3 phrase that follows directly from B^3 provides a new setting for an important moment in the narrative. In the piano, the beginning of A3 (1:47-1:52; mm. 39-40 of Figure 6.15) markedly recalls the first two measures of A^1 and A^2.

Figure 6.15: Mitchell, "Blue," mm. 38-43

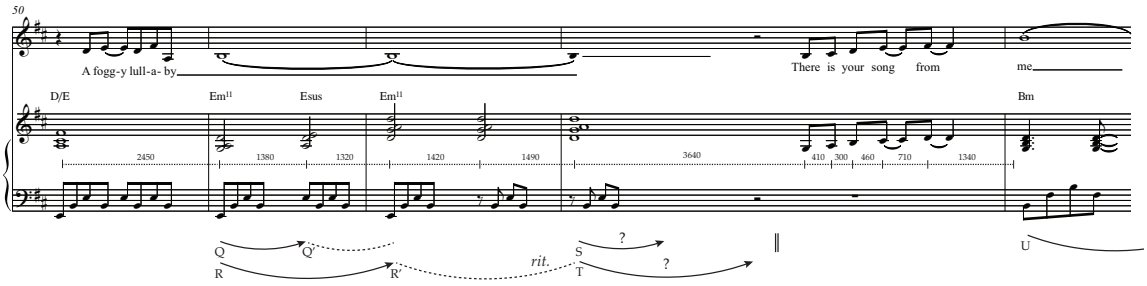


However, the melody departs from these models, ascending from the B4 in m. 40 to the melodic contour peak D5 in m. 43. This new material serves to highlight the lyrics at this moment, as the narrator professes her love for "Blue."

The final A phrase revives the melody of A^1 and A^2, but alters rhythms to highlight the text "A foggy lullaby." It avoids the melodic ascent to B4 that concluded A^1 and A^2, instead sustaining a B3 pitch from m. 50 onwards (2:16-2:32) , as shown in Figure 6.16. A specific metric effect accompanies this variation.

[237] In the printed lyrics, there is no line break between "that" and "hell's," yet the music makes a clear grouping beginning in m. 35 that encourages splitting up the line "Everybody's saying that hell's the hippest way to go" into two shorter fragments.

Figure 6.16: Mitchell, "Blue," mm. 50-54



The Q-Q' arrows below the staff indicate the half note durations created by right hand chord onsets in m. 51. These chords recall similar harmonies from the accompaniment to "sail away" and "empty space to fill in" from the earlier A phrases (Figure 6.11 and Figure 6.12) this time topped by the D5 pitch from the end of A[3]. The R whole note duration is projected as R' and containing a *ritardando* as the tempo slows in m. 52. In m. 53, the right hand chord creates a dominant beginning projected as S and T as half and whole note durations, respectively. However, neither of these projections is realized, since the 3640 ms IOI between the right hand chord and the next onset is too long, and a hiatus occurs. Superficially, Mitchell's use of a hiatus here helps to musically illustrate the fogginess of the drug-infused lullaby. But more deeply, it connects this passage to the earlier moments of hiatus that portrayed the narrator's yearning for "space" and freedom, as well as her ironic assessment of the supposedly free "laughs" in which Blue is trapped.

Mitchell's various metric parallelisms make additional narrative connections otherwise obscured in the lyrics. The alignment of vocal stress with regular meter in the B phrases gives an indication of what kind of lifestyle the narrator would have if anchored to the relationship with Blue. By contrast, the A phrases lack prosodic stress regularity, and are set to more melismatic lines that represent the narrator's desire for freedom, for herself and for "Blue" to be released from the turmoil of his addictions.

Local metric irregularities help to group parallel thematic phrases, which together represent the unresolved conflict in the song's lyrical narrative.

6.3 Rhetorical Emphasis in "The Last Time I Saw Richard"

As demonstrated in the analysis of "Blue," Mitchell's performance aligns regular patterns of prosodic stress with quarter-note beats to emphasize their meaning. In her song "The Last Time I Saw Richard," from the same album, various patterns of prosodic stress emerge as representative of central characters in the lyrical narrative: the female narrator, whose sentiments are expressed in a loose prosodic structure, and her former lover, Richard, whose rhetoric is pointed and regular. In the narrator's first-person account, the musical setting reflects a narrative control of how prosodic stresses interact with musical meter. Indeed, the degree to which she aligns stressed syllables with beats at different depths of the metrical beat hierarchy indicates how much the narrator believes, or is tormented by, the ideas that those syllables are expressing.

To evaluate their placement in a musical meter, we will first examine the lyrical meaning and determine the main prosodic stresses. The narrative begins with Mitchell's protagonist describing her final conversation with Richard, in which they evaluate each other's ideas about love. The three stanzas are given below in Figure 6.17, with grey boxes highlighting moments in the text we will examine later. The first stanza quotes Richard's evaluation of those who believe in romance; he states that "all romantics meet the same fate someday/Cynical and drunk and boring someone in some dark café." The narrator reacts with laughter, but he presses on, suggesting that she is not immune to these ideas, since she likes "roses and kisses and pretty men" to tell her "all those pretty lies."

Figure 6.17: Mitchell, "The Last Time I Saw Richard," lyrics

STANZA 1
The last time I saw Richard was Detroit in '68
And he told me all romantics meet the same fate someday
Cynical and drunk and boring someone in some dark cafe
"You laugh," he said, "you think you're immune
Go look at your eyes they're full of moon
You like roses and kisses and pretty men to tell you
All those pretty lies, pretty lies
When you gonna realize they're only pretty lies
Only pretty lies, just pretty lies"

STANZA 2
He put a quarter in the Wurlitzer and he pushed
Three buttons and the thing began to whirr
And a bar maid came by in fishnet stockings and a bow tie
And she said "Drink up now it's getting on time to close."
"Richard, you haven't really changed" I said
"It's just that now you're romanticizing some pain that's in your head
You got tombs in your eyes but the songs you punched are dreaming
Listen, they sing of love so sweet, love so sweet
When you gonna get yourself back on your feet?
Oh and love can be so sweet, love so sweet

STANZA 3
Richard got married to a figure skater
And he bought her a dishwasher and a coffee percolator
And he drinks at home now most nights with the TV on
And all the house lights left up bright
I'm gonna blow this damn candle out
I don't want nobody comin' over to my table
I got nothing to talk to anybody about
All good dreamers pass this way some day
Hidin' behind bottles in dark cafes, dark cafes
Only a dark cocoon before I get my gorgeous wings and fly away
Only a phase, these dark cafe days

The lyrics of his critique fall into an initially regular pattern of prosodic stress, with four poetic feet – three iambs (weak-strong pairs) followed by an anapest (weak-weak-strong) – in the line, "You **laugh**, he **said** you **think** you're im-**mune.**" This is followed by another four-stress line, "Go **look** at your **eyes** they're **full** of **moon**."[238]

These lines are the first of several instances of prosodic stress regularity associated with the rhetoric of Richard's character. Mitchell's construction of the lyrics, with a regular, clichéd stress pattern portray him as thick-headed and argumentatively emphatic, as though he were punching every one of his points. Continuing this rhetoric, the stanza completes with his declamation of "**When** you **gon**-na **re**-a-**lize** they're **on**-ly **pret**-ty **lies**," further criticizing her optimistic romanticism from his more negative worldview. In the lyrical construction, we can associate generally regular patterns of poetic meter with the rhetoric of Richard's character.

The narrative shifts to the narrator's perspective in the second stanza, in which she describes Richard's actions, retaining some metric similarities to his own speaking style from the previous stanza. As she states, "He **put** a **quar**-ter in the **Wur**-lit-**zer** and

[238] The foot "you're im-**mune**," briefly disrupts the iambs to create an anapest (weak-weak-strong).

he **pushed** three **but**-tons and the **thing** be-**gan** to **whirr**," the pattern of prosodic stress recalls the metric regularity of Richard's statements.[239] The metric emphasis on physical actions with objects further characterizes Richard as detached from the romantic feelings he criticized. The punctuated stress pattern in lyrics spoken by or concerning Richard solidify this rhetoric as a prosodic marker of his character in the lyrics.

In the second half of the stanza, the narrator finally expresses her own feelings, commenting that Richard has not changed from being a romantic himself. Her speech, in lines like, "Now you're romanticizing some pain that's in your head," is less regular in contrast with Richard's own declamation. Yet her comments about him engage with some of the metric regularity of his rhetoric. She states, "You've got **tombs** in your **eyes** but the **songs** you've **punched** are **dream**-ing," with the trisyllabic anapest (weak-weak-strong) patterns giving way to a shorter iamb (weak-strong) followed by an amphibrach (weak-strong-weak). The brief use of Richard's end-accented meter and words ("but the **songs** you've **punched**") are used to communicate with him on his level. In her own prosodic stress rhetoric, the narrator indicates that Richard himself is a romantic, choosing songs that reflect this outlook, despite the surface pessimism she describes as "tombs" in his eyes. Her last words of the stanza encourage him to get back on his feet, and remind him that, despite his negative outlook, "love can be so sweet."

The final stanza shifts forward in time to reveal Richard's fate using the regular pattern of stresses associated with his character, but reversing the strong-weak arrangement. Instead of end-accented poetic feet, the passage "**Rich**-ard got **mar**-ried to a **fig**-ure **skat**-er/And he **bought** her a **dish**-wash-er and a **cof**-fee **per**-co-la-tor,"

---

[239] Mitchell's line breaks in the published lyrics obscure the four-beat stress pattern in these phrases. The words "and he pushed" fit metrically and syntactically with the line beginning with "three buttons…" but are instead positioned set as the final words of the previous line.

features strong-weak (trochee) patterns in the multi-syllabic words. The couplet illustrates a happily domestic situation, but is followed immediately with a description of him drinking "at home now most nights with the TV on/And all the house lights left up bright." In addition to dissolving the prosodic stress regularity, this line indicates that, despite his change in marital status, Richard has not really changed; he is still argumentatively emphatic, albeit in a different meter. As the narrator notes, he has simply traded being drunk in cafés for drinking in his own brightly lit home.

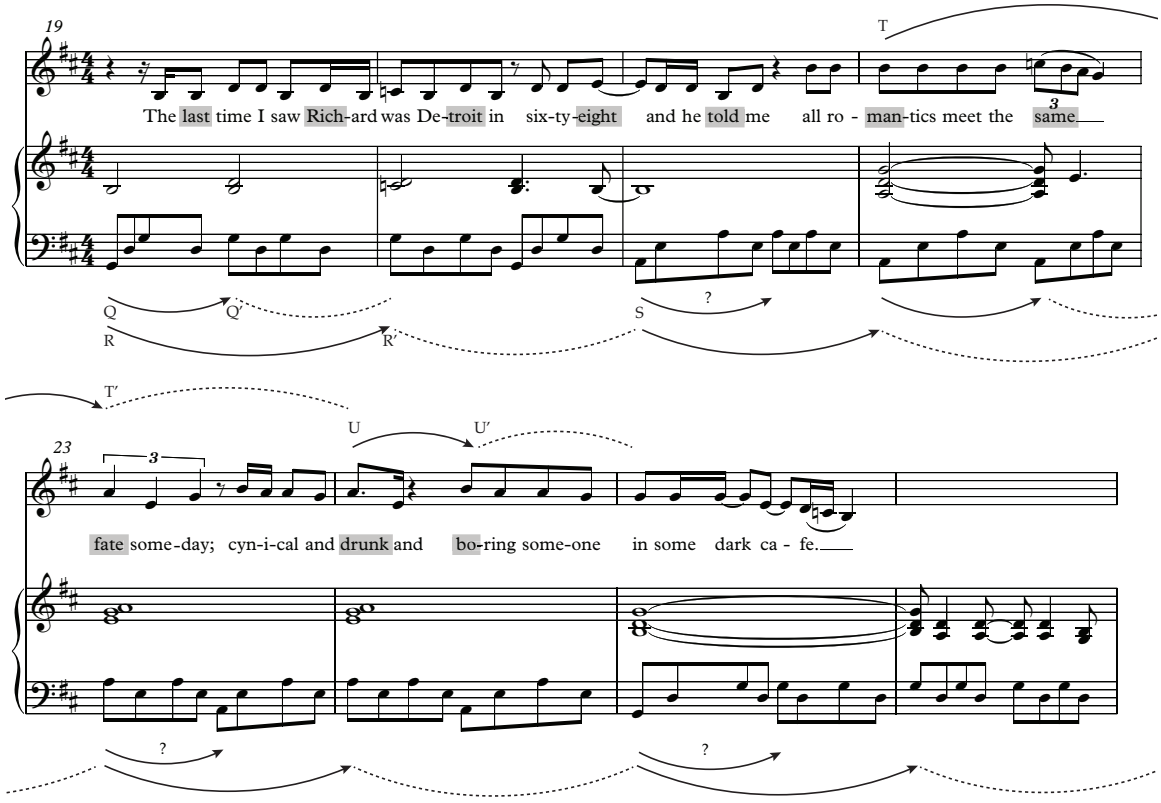
In contrast to Richard's stasis, the narrator is putting her café days behind her. The text "I'm gonna blow this damn candle out/I don't want nobody coming over to my table/I got nothing to talk to anybody about" liberates the narrator's speech from the prosodic stress regularity of lines spoken by or about Richard. Her statement that "All good dreamers pass this way someday/Hidin' behind bottles in dark cafés" asserts her eventual emergence from this emotional state. The final lines of lyrics recast the dark café as a "dark cocoon" through which she will get her "gorgeous wings and fly away." While Richard failed to evolve, the narrator desires to transform herself. The questions that concluded the previous stanzas ("When you gonna realize they're only pretty lies?" and "When you gonna get yourself back on your feet?"), highlighted in grey in Figure 6.17, are answered by this vivid imagery of her hopeful future.

In the musical setting, stressed syllables in the text are coordinated with right-hand chord articulations and changes of harmony.[240] In specific passages, Mitchell's shifts between minimal and maximal coordination between layers to express the meaning of words or passages of the lyrics. One instance of this occurs in the first vocal phrase (0:57-1:15), shown in Figure 6.18, in the setting of the opening lines of the lyrics.

[240] Mitchell's piano accompaniment articulates eighth notes in the left hand, but they are often difficult to hear in the recording, and therefore not always a factor in hearing coordinated durational projections other than maintaining the whole note beats. Changes in bass note that align with chord changes are much more salient.

Coordination is indicated in this transcription using metric projection arrows above and below the staff. In mm. 19-20, the Q and Q' arrows correspond to the half note durations of the right-hand chords; the R and R' projections each span whole note durations. Slight stresses in Mitchell's declamation of the vocal line (at "last" and the second syllable of "Detroit") create a four-beat pattern that is offset from the R and R' projections. In m. 21, neither a right-hand chord nor a vocal stress articulate the third beat, thereby leaving the S projection thrown into doubt. The question mark above the S arrow indicates the loss of half-note beats in this measure.[241]

Figure 6.18: Mitchell, "The Last Time I Saw Richard," mm. 19-26[242]



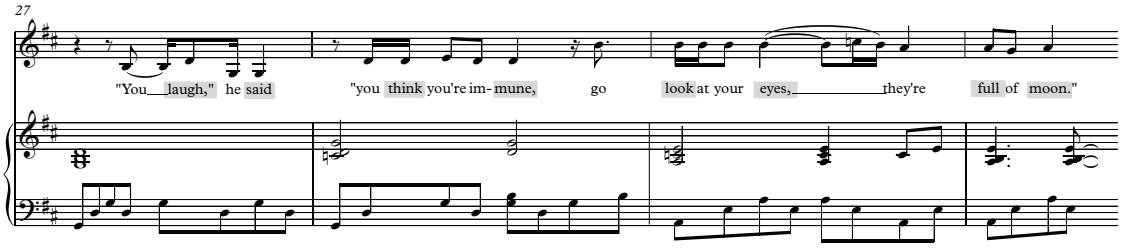
[241] There is some similarity between this approach and that of Justin London's analysis of Beethoven's fifth symphony, particularly in the interpretation of storytelling or drama in connection with meter; see London, *Hearing in Time*, 89–99. However, my analysis is concerned with the coordination of textural layers, whereas London's investigates how many beat layers can be perceived.
[242] Mitchell, *Blue*.

Identical symbols below mm. 23-25 indicate that the half note meter similarly does not revive in any of the textural layers. It is only restored in this passage by stresses in the vocal line. A right-hand chord and vocal dynamic accent mark a dominant beginning on the second syllable of "romantic" that is aligned with a beginning in the piano accompaniment. This projection, shown above the score as T, is realized by the stress on "fate" on the next notated downbeat. The shorter duration between "drunk" and the first syllable of "boring" creates the U projection, that becomes projective as U', which is realized by the piano right-hand chord and change of bass note in m. 25. U-U' temporarily revives the half-note meter before it becomes indistinct again in the subsequent measure.

Noticing the structure of the text, we can read these shifts of coordination as corresponding with the lyrical narrative. In mm. 19-20, stresses in the voice are misaligned from quarter-note beats in the meter. If we read the piano as representing the narrative present, the misalignment can be interpreted as representing emotional distance in the recall of her last, and presumably final, conversation with Richard. Subsequently, the disorienting effect of his character assessment, as she remembers and tells us what "he said," is reflected in the shallow meter beginning in m. 21, when the piano's right hand abandons the half-note beats. When the narrator quotes him, his emphatic prosodic stresses align with whole note beats, emphasizing the words "romantic" and "fate" that are central to his critique. Mitchell further accents the stresses on "drunk" and "boring," by placing them on half-note beats, highlighting Richard's opinion of the fate of romantics.

In the subsequent phrase (1:15-1:22), Mitchell misaligns the vocal stresses in her declamation of Richard's words, "'You **laugh**,' he **said**, 'you **think** you're im-**mune**," from quarter-note beats in the accompaniment.

Figure 6.19: Mitchell, "The Last Time I Saw Richard," mm. 27-30

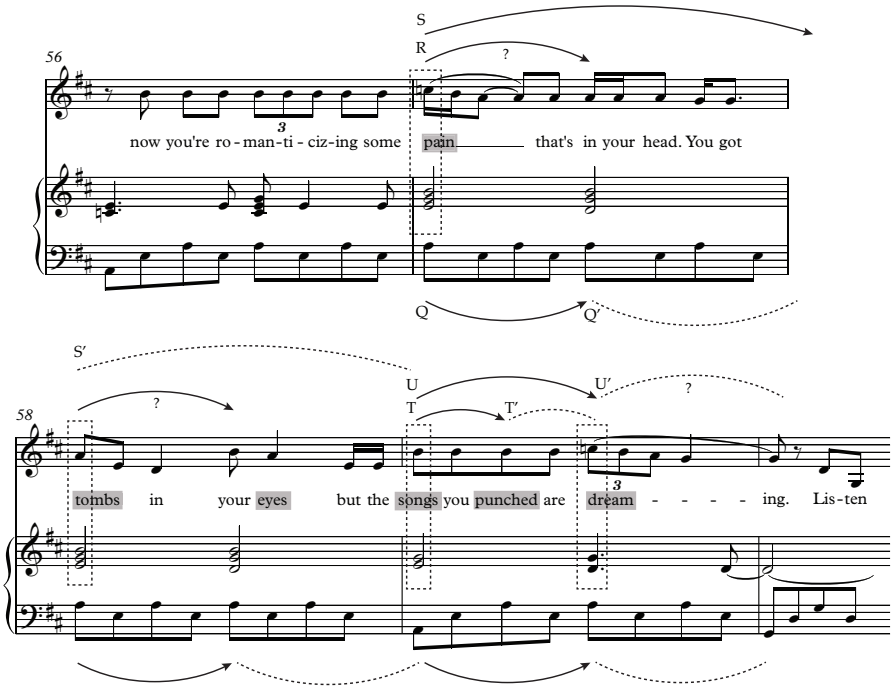


The Q and Q' projections in Figure 6.19 span whole note durations that are maintained throughout this passage. A half-note meter is missing from m. 27, but is regained from m. 28 onwards, as illustrated by the R-R' projections. The vocal stresses, highlighted in grey, are misaligned with it until the second syllable of "immune" realizes R. The projection R' is realized with at the word "look," which presents a moment of maximal coordination between the metric inputs of the textural layers: a vocal stress, right-hand chord, and change of harmony all occur on the same beat. These events complete the S duration, begun on the second syllable of "immune," however, the accents then create a dominant beginning that interrupts the potential for S to become projective. Instead, the duration T is projected from this dominant beginning, though unconfirmed by any subsequent vocal stress, since "eyes" does not align with a half-note beat. The right-hand chord on beat 3 of m. 29 serves to confirm the half-note duration in the piano, as indicated below the staff. The larger U duration, begun on the downbeat of m. 29, is realized and becomes projective as U' by the stress on "full" that is realized by the next notated downbeat. So the metric stress in this passage weakens Richard's authority by obscuring the poetic meter of his initial statement (that she thinks she is immune to the fate of romantics). This creates contrast for the metric alignment on the word "look," that describes the action of self-reflection he recommends.

By contrast, when the narrator is assessing Richard (2:16-2:25), many of her vocal stresses align with the more salient half-note beats in the accompaniment.

Mitchell's statement of the word "pain" aligns this vocal stress with the right-hand chord that initiates the Q duration, as shown in Figure 6.20. The R duration is unrealized, since no stress confirms it in the vocal line. Q, however, is confirmed by the next right-hand chord, and projected as Q'.[243] This half-note meter continues throughout the excerpt. The longer S duration, projected from "pain," is realized by the vocal stress on "tombs" that aligns with a right-hand chord. Though a half-note projection is not possible from "tombs," the projected S' is realized by the next vocal stress on "songs."

Figure 6.20: Mitchell, "The Last Time I Saw Richard," mm. 56-59



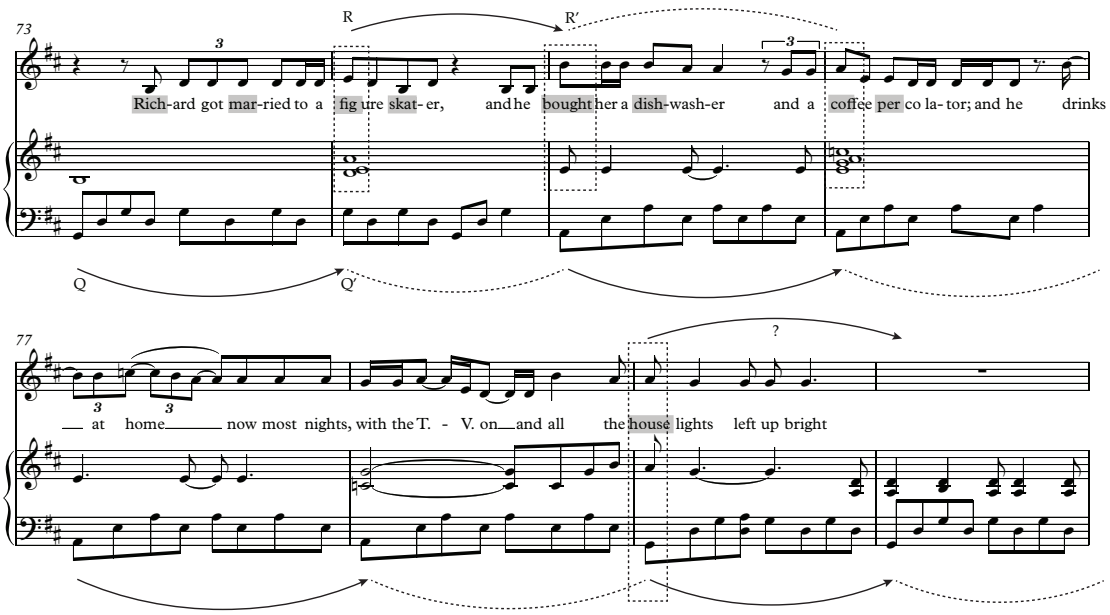
That dominant beginning initiates projections at the quarter-note level, realized by the vocal stresses on "punched" and the first syllable of "dreaming." Half-note durations in the piano and the voice are projected from beat 1 of m. 59 and realized by the vocal stress and right-hand chord on beat 3. At this moment of describing Richard's actions (punching songs in the Wurlitzer), Mitchell's setting emphasizes the syllables by aligning

[243] The Q-Q' durations also create whole-note projections, not notated in the transcription.

them with beats at the quarter note level. The alignment of "pain" and "tombs" with notated downbeats draws attention to the message of the narrator's assessment, that he, too, is a romantic. The emphasis Mitchell gives to the narrator's text stands in contrast with her previous obscuring of Richard's most regular iambic line. This contrast suggests the narrator's control over Richard's rhetoric in her re-telling of their last meeting. The presence or absence of metric emphasis illustrates her agency over the narrative authority, here removing some of Richard's voice, and giving it to herself instead.

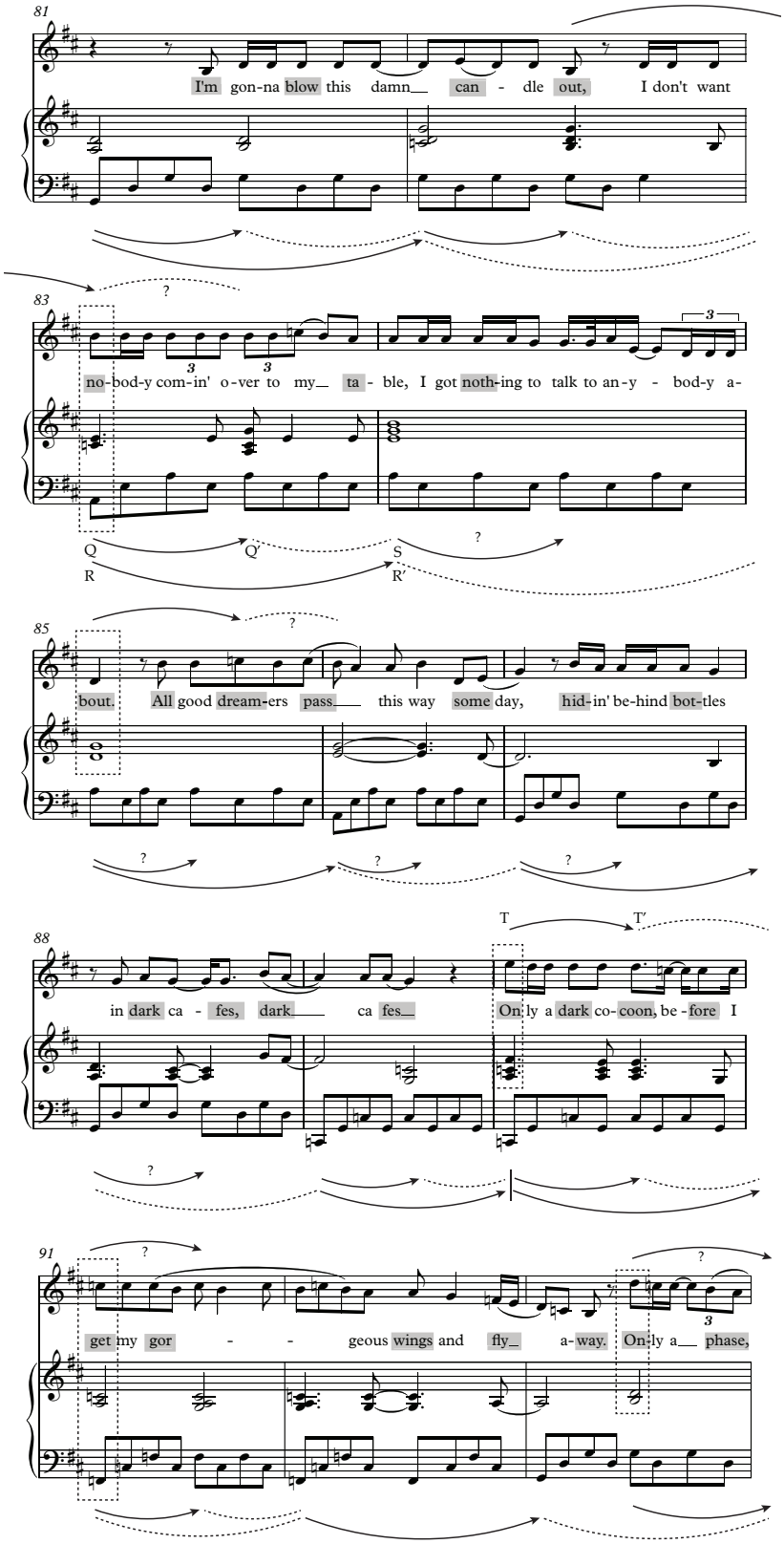
In the passage that describes Richard's fate (2:52-3:09), Mitchell recalls some of the regularity of his rhetoric, but contrasts this with a freer setting that comes to be associated with the narrator.

Figure 6.21: Mitchell, "The Last Time I Saw Richard," mm. 73-80



In the transcription shown as Figure 6.21, articulations in the right hand every whole note create and sustain the Q-Q' and following projected durations. In m. 74, the first syllable of "figure" aligns with the onset of Q', and creates the R projection that is realized by the stress on "bought." R' begins at "bought" and is realized by the vocal stress on the first syllable of "coffee."

Figure 6.22: Mitchell, "The Last Time I Saw Richard," mm. 81-93



These projections in the voice are aligning with whole-note durations in the accompaniment, emphasizing the words associated with Richard's domesticity. Updating us about Richard, the regularity of this passage recalls his earlier prosodic regularity and mimics the kind of regularity he would likely use to boast about these achievements himself. The vocal stress alignment dissolves in m. 76 and the meter becomes shallow, with only whole-note beats articulated only by the piano. This meter, uncoordinated with any other textural layers, supports a reading of the poetry that Richard's seemingly ideal personal life lacks depth. The statement of the word "house," that is given special emphasis through maximal coordination between textural layers highlights the irony of his drinking continuing in his own home.

The final verse (Figure 6.22) sets the text that describes the narrator's more hopeful outcome. The freer meter of this passage (3:09-3:35) contrasts moments that Mitchell highlights using various levels of coordination. Beginning in m. 81, half-note and whole-note beats are articulated by the piano accompaniment. The vocal meter, highlighted in grey, outlines four stresses in the phrase "I'm **gon**-na **blow** this damn **can**-dle **out**," but only the word "out" is aligned with a half-note beat. The projection begun at "out" is interrupted by the stronger dominant beginning in m. 83 as she states the first syllable of "nobody." This beat is a moment of maximal alignment in which the chord change, right-hand chord, and vocal stress align to highlight her declaration of independence. In the subsequent measure, the half-note projection S is unrealized, since the right hand does not articulate the third beat with a chord. The next vocal stress alignment on the second syllable of "about," aligns only with a beat at the whole-note layer.

The half-note beats are not articulated in the passage until m. 89, where their return highlights a lyrically significant moment. The whole-note duration begun in m. 89 is prevented from becoming projective because of the dominant beginning on the first

syllable of “only” on m. 90. At this syllable, the meter reaches maximal salience; vocal stresses between “On-” and “-coon” creating the T duration whose projection T' is realized by the vocal stress on “get” in m. 91. The coordination in this measure draws attention to the lyrics in which the narrator states that dark cafés are “Only a dark cocoon” from which she will emerge. This is the narrator’s statement of triumph over Richard’s initial claims of her tragic fate as a romantic. The subsequent vocal stress on “get” as the initiating action verb of the phrase “get my gorgeous wings and fly away” is set to a chord change and right-hand chord, to mark this word for attention. This is the identical metric treatment given to “look” from the first stanza, which describes Richard’s recommendation of self-reflection, and “house,” from the second stanza that highlights his ironic fate. This final use occurs on the verb “get” in the phrase in which the narrator describes her own transformation. This one final moment of alignment highlights Mitchell’s use of meter, particularly moments of contrast in coordination of metric projections between textural layers, to emphasize the meaning of her lyrical narrative.

Mitchell’s performance engages with Richard’s punctuated rhetoric in different ways in the course of the three-verse narrative. In verse 1, any regularity of prosodic stress patterns in the lyrics is initially obscured by Mitchell’s vocal line. Only at Richard’s judgments of the narrator do regular prosodic stresses align with metric accents, marking these moments for attention as having a lasting emotional impact on the narrator as she recounts the final conversation. Her own words to him are similarly punctuated in the second verse. By the final verse her emotional distance from Richard is highlighted by the dissolution of alignment between prosodic stresses in the lyrics and strong beats in the musical setting. Only several key words are highlighted by moments of metric alignment. The narrative concludes with a sense of victory for the narrator,

from the haunting, pressing messages of her final conversation with Richard to structurally freer, hopeful thoughts about her future.

The examples from "The Last Time I Saw Richard," "Blue," and "Lesson in Survival" demonstrate the various ways Mitchell uses meter to express lyrical meaning. In all three songs Mitchell's piano technique features a steady stream of eighth notes in her left hand, with chords occurring every half note in the right hand. Three main techniques of disruption to this accompaniment pattern occur in service of text expression. In the first, demonstrated throughout "Lesson in Survival," Mitchell inserts new accompaniment gestures, necessitating changes of meter in transcription. These insertions occur at parallel moments in each verse, often following the rhythms of the vocal line and highlighting moments of narrative significance. The second disruption technique is showcased in "Blue," in which Mitchell's performance timing slows to the point of hiatus in durational projections before resuming the prevailing 4/4 meter. Passages like the opening line (as shown in Figure 6.10) illustrate three perspectives on measured time: the experiential, as shown with the projection symbols, the empirical, as illustrated with the IOI timing annotations, and the conceptual, demonstrated through the use of standard rhythmic values and bar lines. The third type, featured in "The Last Time I Saw Richard, " engages with degrees of alignment between stressed lyrical syllables and specific beat layers in the metric hierarchy to demonstrate the authority of particular characters in the narrative. At its most sparse, only hyperbeats are reinforced, and Mitchell's syncopation of right hand chords (removal of the half-note beat layer) brings attention to moments of alignment of words in the narrative critical to the emotional success of the narrator. In some instances, techniques of metric emphasis reinforce themes already evident in a lyrical reading; in others, the metric treatment suggests new interpretations not immediately apparent in the text. Given Mitchell's limited performing technique and harmonic resources at the piano, the interactions of

poetic and musical meter serve as essential methods of text expression in her keyboard-based songs.

Chapter 7: Stylistic Influence and Metric Process in Selected Songs by Bob Dylan

As explored in Chapter 4, meter in Dylan's early songs for voice and guitar is created in part by rhythmic patterns in the guitar accompaniment. In his more metrically regular songs, Dylan's guitar strumming technique follows the style of early twentieth-century folk revivalists, in which strumming patterns produce a regular, usually fast tactus, grouped into duple meter and hypermeter. Occasionally, especially at the ends of lines, this accompaniment adds extra, unexpected beats, which disrupt the hypermeter but still maintain tactus regularity. In some songs, however, the time between beats is more flexible, and passages of extreme *rubato* or *accelerando* work against both metric and hypermetric isochrony. This process of moving in and out of metric determinacy can often be heard to be closely coordinated with the meaning and prosodic stresses of the text.

This chapter explores metric process in Dylan's songs that have obvious connections to earlier styles. On two early tracks, "Restless Farewell" and "Down the Highway," he draws on influences from the folk genres and blues style, respectively, to create flexibly timed metric contexts in his voice and accompaniment. A third track, the studio recording of "Only a Pawn in their Game," represents the emergence of Dylan's distinctive compositional style, which amalgamates folk and blues influences in an original and expressive way. These three analyses establish the prominent role of accompaniment gestures and vocal stresses in creating, disrupting, and re-establishing meter during passages of extreme flexibility in timing.

7.1 Folk Sources and Dylan's "Restless Farewell"

Many of Dylan's recordings in the mid-1960s drew from folk precedents, modifying but often retaining their elements. The melody and lyrics of "Restless

Farewell," recorded in 1964 on *The Times They Are a-Changin'*, derive from the Irish folk song "The Parting Glass," which was typically sung over the final round of drinks at a social gathering.[244] Dylan's version is based on the 1959 recording by the Clancy Brothers and Tommy Makem, *Come Fill Your Glass with Us*.[245]

His lyrics retain the stress pattern of the original. The first stanza of "The Parting Glass" has been annotated in Figure 7.1, with underlined syllables indicating the pattern of vocal stress in the Clancy Brothers recording.

Figure 7.1: The Clancy Brothers and Tommy Makem, "The Parting Glass," lyrics: verse 1

Oh all the mon-ey that e'er I spent	(4)
I've spent it in good comp-an-y	(4)
And all the harm that I ev-er did	(4)
A-las it was to none but me	(4)
And all I've done for want of wit	(4)
To mem-ory[246] now I can't re-call	(4)
So fill to me the part-ing glass	(4)
Good night and joy be with you all[247]	(4)

Their performance emphasizes a strict iambic tetrameter, with each line ending in a stressed syllable. Dylan's version does not duplicate that poetic meter precisely. His own lyrics do retain an almost identical number of stressed syllables in performance, but do not retain iambs throughout. The chart in Figure 7.2 aligns the four stresses of each line in a table, highlighting the stressed syllables in bold face and numbering them from one to four. Most lines begin with an iamb or anapest and end with an accented final word as the fourth stress. Lines two and four contain only three stresses, but many readers would imagine a rest, or beat, in place of the missing fourth stress.

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[244] Harvey, *The Formative Dylan: Transmission and Stylistic Influences*, 94.
[245] Harvey, "Never Quite Sung in This Fashion Before: Bob Dylan's 'Man of Constant Sorrow,'" 94–95.
[246] The pronunciation of "memory" in the Clancy Brothers' recording more closely resembles two syllables ("mem'ry") than three syllables ("mem-o-ry").
[247] Lyrics and stresses have been transcribed from The Clancy Brothers and Tommy Makem, *Come Fill Your Glass With Us*.

Figure 7.2: Bob Dylan, "Restless Farewell," lyric chart[248]

	1	2	3	4
Oh	**all** the	**mon-**ey that in my	**whole** life I did	**spend**
	Be it mine	**right** or	**wrong-**ful-ly	——
I	**let** it slip	**glad**-ly	**to** my	**friends**
To	**tie** up the	**time** most	**force-**ful-ly	——
But the	**bot-**tles are	**done** We've	**killed** each	**one**
And the	**tab-**le's	**full** and	**o-**ver-	**flowed**
And the	**cor-**ner	**sign** says it's	**clo-**sing	**time**
So I'll	**bid** fare-	**well** and be	**down** the	**road**

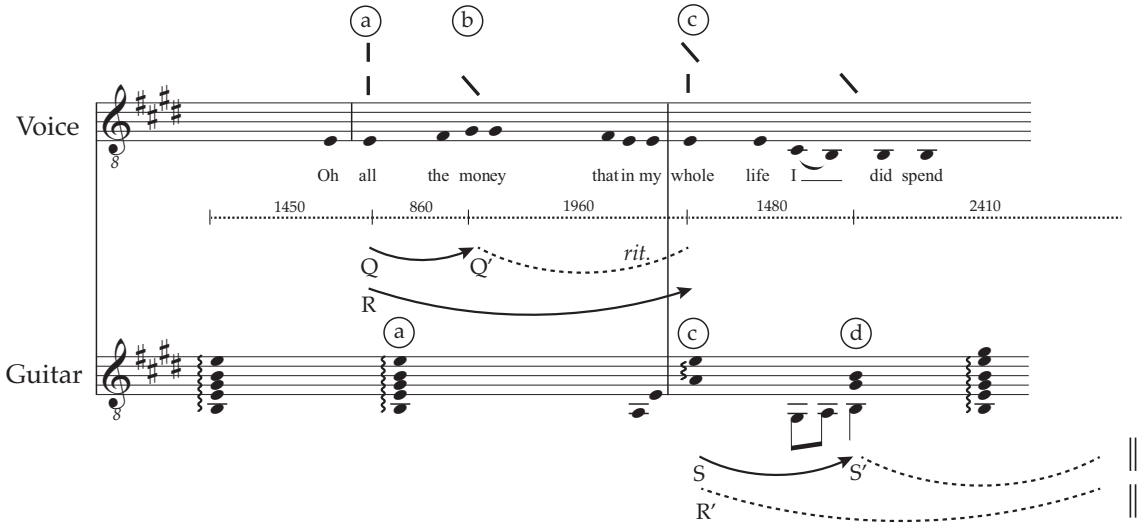
The accompaniment of "Restless Farewell" lacks the fast strumming of many other folk-influenced songs – like "Talkin' New York," examined in Chapter 4. In the absence of regular beats in the guitar, sung dynamic accents on text stresses provide significant input for hearing projective meter. We shall see that the metric process is not reinforced by alignment between both instruments; instead the voice initially takes a prominent role in meter articulation.

Despite an initial guitar strum in the first line (0:01-0:08), the first vocal accent takes aural precedence. As shown in Figure 7.3, Dylan's dynamic accent on "all" creates a dominant beginning that initiates the Q duration. In this way of hearing the opening, the dynamic accent on "all" also takes precedence over the onset of the guitar's E/B chord at (a), which occurs later than the voice.[249] Q becomes definite at the next vocal stress, on the first syllable of "money." Its projection Q' from "money" cannot be heard to be realized until the next prosodic stress on "whole," at (b) since there are no other cues in

[248] Lyrical stresses transcribed from the studio recording Dylan, *The Times They Are a-Changin'*.
[249] Since there are no measure numbers in these transcriptions, I have included encircled letter names to help identify the location of specific events. These events at times correspond to dominant beginnings, but in other passages, they simply locate specific events to which I will refer in the analysis.

the guitar or voice for its realization any earlier. To hear this realization, however, would necessitate accepting the 1960 ms duration between "money" and "whole" as a duplication of the 860 ms IOI between "all" and "money," even though it is more than twice as long. Following durational cues, a listener would be more likely to hear a hiatus during the longer IOI. However, the regularity of vocal stresses helps the listener to accept the timespan from the second to the third lexical stresses as equivalent, if not equal to Q. The potential for this hearing is illustrated as the Q' arrow with a long *ritardando* in Figure 7.3.[250]

Figure 7.3: Dylan, "Restless Farewell," line 1



Dylan provides additional stress to the dominant beginning at (c) by aligning the onset of the guitar A4-E5 dyad with the prosodic stress in the voice. Subsequent references to (c)

[250] Another reading would be to hear the arrival of "mon-" occurring earlier than expected. We can interpret this based on the 1450 ms IOI between the initial guitar chord and the vocal stress on "all" as similar in length to the 1480 IOI that occurs between (c) and (d). We could then interpret the duration between "all" and "mon-" as too short, and the duration between "mon-" and "whole" as too long, subsequently returning to a duration in the approximately 1400 ms IOI range for the S duration later in the line.

in the analysis address this moment as an alignment between the metric process of the voice and that of the accompaniment.

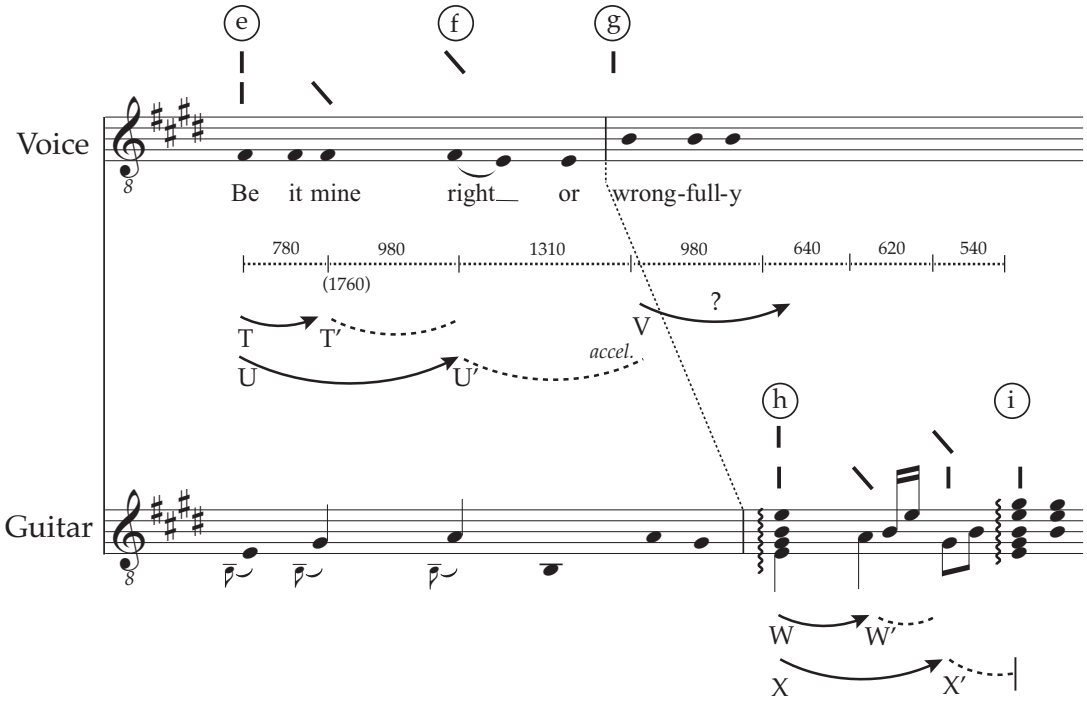
At the end of the line, the guitar becomes more active in articulating meter. Hearing the events at (c) and (d) as metrically determinate, the dominant beginning at (c) initiates the S duration. Rather than spanning to the next prosodic stress on "spend," as occurred for the Q duration, S can be heard instead to be realized by the dynamically accented tonic arrival in the guitar at (d), which is highlighted by an anacrustic G-A-B bass line. This moment of arrival only occurs in the guitar, not in alignment with any vocal onsets.

The final lexical stress on "spend" sounds delayed in comparison to this striking guitar accent. At (c), therefore, the voice yields the role of continuing metrical process to the guitar. Nonetheless, their coordination at (a) and (b) creates a larger-scale meter in which a dominant beginning at "all" leads to a continuation at "whole," shown with the R-R' arrows and the | and \ symbols on the top stratum of the figure.

In the second line (0:08-1:15), the voice and guitar are less coordinated. The voice provides the stresses until the end of the line until the guitar takes over. The three main vocal stresses are salient, but Dylan also adds durational and dynamic emphasis to the word "mine." This produces a series of durations each shorter than Q, the shortest duration from phrase 1. Figure 7.4 interprets them projectively. In this figure, the T arrow, beginning at (e) represents the first of these shorter durations between "Be" and "mine." The stress on "mine" initiates the projection T', which is realized at (f), where the vocal stress on "right" aligns with the durationally accented guitar pitch on the seventh of V^7. I hear the dominant beginning at "Be" as the onset of a longer duration realized by the prosodic stress on "right," indicated by the U arrow in the figure. This span is parallel to the duration between "all" and "money" from the first line. The onset of "wrong-" in the voice at (g) comes a little early, but can still be heard as the realization of the

projected U' through an *accelerando*. The dominant beginning at (g) has the potential to initiate a duration, V, but this potential is interrupted by the dominant beginning (h) at the onset of the guitar's phrase-ending gesture. At this moment, the guitar seems to begin its own measure, out of sync with the voice.

Figure 7.4: Dylan, "Restless Farewell," line 2



The series of projected durations begun in the guitar at (h) become more metrically determinate than the duration V begun at (g). The chord at (h) occurs too early to act as a realization of a potential V projection, and is therefore heard to interrupt the potential for the duration V to be projective. The question mark above the V arrow indicates its failure to become projective as the guitar's meter takes over.[251]

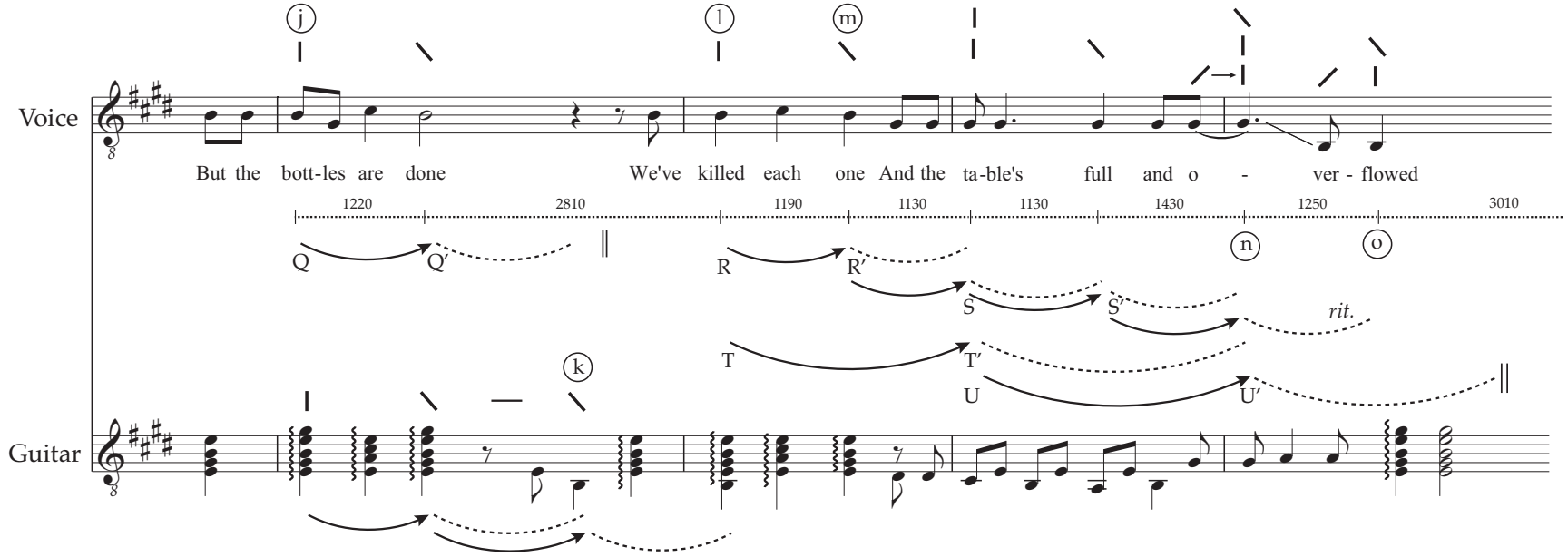
This reading conceptualizes the dominant beginning at (g) as overridden by the subsequent beginning, but it is also possible to conceive of both dominant beginnings as

[251] The symbology for this follows Hasty's explanation of the failure of a duration to become projective, as shown in scenario 8 in Figure 2.9.

part of the same moment. In this conception, the beginning heard at (g) is heard to be misaligned from (rather than superseded by) the dominant beginning at (h) in the guitar. The transcription in Figure 7.4 places both beginnings as downbeats and includes a dotted line to connect the bar lines and illustrate their misalignment. Since the phrase-ending gesture occurs only in the guitar, projective arrows are included below the guitar staff in the figure. The bass tonic pitch at (h) initiates a duration realized by the next bass note on A3. Since this 640 ms duration is essentially equal to 620 ms, between A3 and G#3, we can hear a projected W' duration realized, and hear it as the continuation of a longer duration X that also began on the dominant beginning at (h). However, the tonic harmony at (i) arrives much earlier than could be projected from the preceding durations, disrupting the X-X' projections.

The irregularities of this phrase disrupt not only local durational projections, but also the emerging larger metric structure of the song, to expressive effect. In line 1, the organization of dynamic and lexical accents, shared by voice and guitar, suggests a duple meter that has the potential to occur in the second phrase, with accents on "Be" and "wrong." However, Dylan's extra dynamic stress on "mine" marks this possessive pronoun for attention and disrupts the expected poetic meter. Then the misalignment of dominant beginnings in the voice and guitar creates conflict between the metric processes of the two instruments. This recasts the role of sharing meter articulation, established in phrase 1, as a struggle to share the metric pattern between the two parts. If the narrator is indeed singing "Restless Farewell" at the end of a social gathering, as the lyrics suggest, then these irregularities can be read as a musical restlessness that resist the gathering's natural conclusion – an effort to "tie up the time most forcefully," as line 4 would have it.

Figure 7.5: Dylan, "Restless Farewell," line 5



The subsequent phrases create meter as did line 1: lexical stresses create the first three dominant beginnings, and the guitar takes a more prominent role to articulate the final stress of the phrase. In the fifth phrase (0:29-0:41), however, this pattern does not occur; instead, both the voice and guitar work in close coordination to articulate regular stresses. The transcription in Figure 7.5 interprets these stresses as regular quarter-note beats, and so represents durations as multiples of the beat, using common music notation, as well as clock timings. When the vocal stresses are two beats apart, they create the half-note projections indicated by the arrows and dotted arcs below the staff of this line.

The organization of half-note durations, however, is not a consistent 4/4 meter. The first projective half note, Q, arises between the first two lexical stresses on "bott-," beginning at (j), and "done." Its projection, Q', begins on the lexical stress on "done" but the next prosodic stress in the voice is far too late to realize it. This situation contrasts with the one in the first line, in which we could hear a realized projection through ritardando from the second to the third lexical stress because of the absence of guitar articulations across the long time span. In line 5, though, the timespan from "one" to "killed" cannot be heard as the realization of a half note because the guitar plays a low dominant pitch at (k) that can be heard to realize Q' and "killed" appears about the same duration after that low pitch. As a result, we would likely hear a triple grouping of the half-note durations (with beginning, continuation, and deferral functions) – a 3/2 meter – in the guitar accompaniment. Considering the unexpectedly long pause between lexical stresses, though, I can hear a sense of metrical hiatus in the voice.

Thereafter, the regular durations in both voice and guitar together are organized into a 4/4 meter. The stress on "killed" at (l) is reinforced by a guitar chord, creating a dominant beginning to the duration R that is realized by the next stress and chord at (m). Its projection R' can be heard as realized by the next prosodic stress on "table." We

can also hear a longer duration, T, initiated by the events at (l) and completed by this stress on "table." Its whole-note duration thus comprises a 4/4 measure, which is indicated on the transcription by bar lines. The 4/4 meter continues until the end of the phrase at (n), where the final measure contains a syncopation to the downbeat at (n), as shown in the symbols provided on Figure 7.5.

In the context of the song's lyrics, we can understand this fifth phrase as a process of gradually stilling the restlessness brought out by the second phrase. The opening of this phrase has clearly articulated quarter notes and half notes, but resists a 4/4 grouping of them until after the narrator has noticed that the tables are full of empty bottles, and realizes that the party must conclude. The metrical uncertainty at and after (n) in the phrase expresses the idea of "overflow" sung in the lyrics. Dylan's performance, then, allows the 4/4 meter to be actualized as the narrator comes to this realization. Coordinating the two instruments in this way resolves their restless conflict, allowing the narrator to cease his efforts to "tie up the time" and instead "bid farewell" to his company.

7.2 Flexible Timing and Blues Progression in "Down the Highway"

As explored in Chapter 3, the influence of rural blues on Dylan's accompaniment style is evident in his guitar strumming that occasionally adds or removes beats to break up regular meter and hypermeter. In other songs, like "Down the Highway," from *The Freewheelin' Bob Dylan* (1964), metric regularities are further obscured by a larger-scale avoidance of settling into a meter.[252] Although composed in a harmonic progression characteristic of the 12-bar blues, "Down the Highway" is essentially a 12-bar blues without bars, since it lacks the regular 4/4 meter – or indeed sometimes a consistently

[252] When I describe metric irregularities in this section I mean violated expectations of metric regularity according to a steady hierarchical grid. This is to be distinguished from the types of non-isochrony so commonly found in the blues style that they are considered normative to that genre.

regular pulse – typically associated with blues songs. Todd Harvey positions this song as signaling "Dylan's arrival as a bluesman," suggesting that the songwriter, having assimilated the style of the "real blues singers," was now venturing wholly original material.[253] Yet Harvey acknowledges the un-stylistic lack of any "clear meter" in this song, which I interpret as his assessing that it is often difficult to locate a pulse in Dylan's studio recording. Indeed, the song's durational projections are so often interrupted or left unrealized that the listener may have a feeling of constantly searching for definite beginnings of measured timespans.

Such a listening behavior is encouraged by specific accompanimental cues borrowed from the blues style. The song's intermittently salient meter is created by metrically definite motivic gestures, by dynamic accents in the voice on lexical stresses, and by the 12-bar blues harmonic progression, which exists without the presence of twelve clearly articulated measures. When these cues appear after periods of metric uncertainty, they give certain moments the quality of downbeats (or dominant beginnings) that have the potential to create regular meter. Although regularity rarely persists long enough to create successive measures, it is nonetheless striking, especially in the otherwise only vaguely metrical context.

As in "Restless Farewell," vocal stresses in "Down the Highway" are salient cues for meter. Though it is possible to read Dylan's lyrics as a series of simple trochees, four per line (with occasional monosyllables in place of trochees), his performance in the first stanza gives dynamic accent to only twelve syllables, two per line. These syllables are highlighted in bold face in Figure 7.6. The accentuation conforms with normal pronunciation, except for two disruptive dynamic accents – both on the second syllable of the word "highway" at the ends of lines 1 and 3 (rather than on the first syllable, which

[253] Harvey, *The Formative Dylan: Transmission and Stylistic Influences*, 27.

the first syllable, which would typically be emphasized in speech, and which would match the otherwise consistent trochaic tetrameter).

Figure 7.6: Dylan, "Down the Highway," performed dynamic accents in stanza 1[254]

Well I'm **walk**-ing down the high-**way**
With my **suit**-case in my **hand**
Yes I'm **walk**-ing down the high-**way**
With my **suit**-case in my **hand**
Lord I **real**-ly miss my **ba**-by
She's in **some** for-eign **land**[255]

Although the twelve dynamic accents could conceivably align with downbeats in a twelve-bar blues, Dylan's setting features several motives that do not always coordinate with his vocal stresses. One of them is the very first gesture of the piece, shown at (a) in the transcription in Figure 7.7 (which encompasses 0:00-0:14), a tremolo gesture in the guitar on a minor seventh chord with omitted third.[256] In the blues, this gesture signifies tonic harmony, so it seems metrically active, its onset a dominant beginning that initiates what may become a definite projective duration.[257] Indeed, one reading of this duration is to hear the strumming as thirty-second notes grouped into a quarter-note tactus and lasting for a dotted-half note duration.[258]

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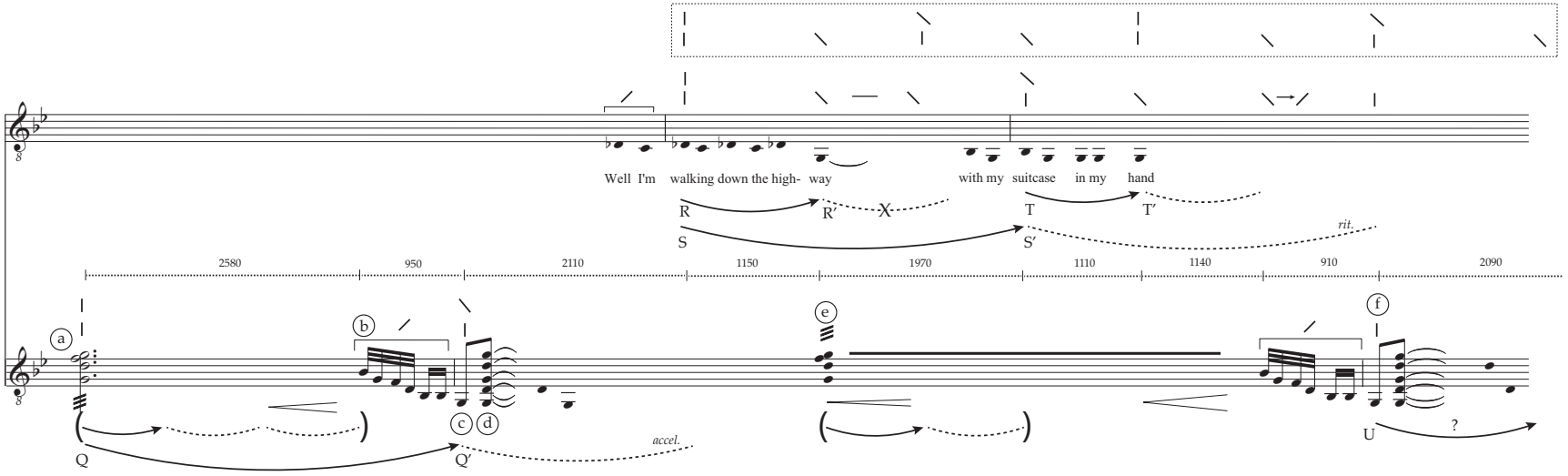
[254] Vocal stresses transcribed from Dylan, *The Freewheelin' Bob Dylan*, 1963.
[255] This reading follows Bickford's interpretation of the second syllable of "highway," but contrasts his interpretation of Dylan's emphasis on "suitcase." In this study, the first syllable of "suitcase" is read as dynamically accented, not the second. See T. Bickford, "Music of Poetry and Poetry of Song: Expressivity and Grammar in Vocal Performance," *Ethnomusicology* 51, no. 3 (2007): 449.
[256] Harvey calls this the "flatpicked tremolo guitar riff." See Harvey, *The Formative Dylan: Transmission and Stylistic Influences*, 26.
[257] We can hear an example of similar articulation of tonic harmony in Robert Johnson's "Ramblin' on My Mind," in which Johnson occasionally increases his strumming speed at tonic arrivals. See Robert Johnson, *Robert Johnson: The Complete Collection* (Not Now Music, 1998).
[258] This first instance of the tremolo figure is the only one in the song that I hear to have such a determinate duration. Subsequent statements of the figure feature solid note heads and bolded lines in the transcription to indicate irregular duration spans.

Figure 7.7: Dylan, "Down the Highway," line 1[259]



[259] It is also possible to read this passage as part of a slow four-beat structure, as shown with the alternate reading above the staff, enclosed in the dotted-line box. In this interpretation, the dominant beginning at "walk-" leads to a second beat on "way." A third beat would be heard at the peak of the crescendo starting at (e) and the fourth beat at "suit-." The next dominant beginning would occur on the next stress on "hand," with another four-beat unit occurring in the remainder of the system. For this study, the triple reading has been given priority in connection with the triple meter that emerges in line 2, and has the potential to occur again in line 3.

Projective arrows symbolizing this hearing are included below the staff in Figure 7.7, but enclosed in parentheses to indicate that nothing articulates this pattern other than the subjective grouping of the thirty-second notes. If we make this grouping, then we would likely hear the onset of a fourth quarter note coinciding at (b) with the beginning of the song's second gesture: a descending arpeggiation of the minor-seventh tonic. In each appearance, this gesture leads to a low, durationally accented tonic pitch that takes on the function of a dominant beginning. This descending gesture will be referred to as the "anacrustic figure," since its initial function – as anacrusis to the subsequent tonic – is retained in each subsequent statement. Whether or not a listener hears the tremolo figure divided into quarter notes, the duration begun at (a) can be heard as realized by the tonic pitch at (c), shown as the Q duration below the staff.[260] Its projection Q' could be heard to be realized through an *accelerando* to the first prosodic stress on "walking."

The vocal stresses in this first line are salient cues for meter, but are not always coordinated with the guitar. The stress on "walking" initiates the duration R that can be heard as realized by the dynamic accent on the second syllable of "highway." This accent is surprising, since in speech, the first syllable of "highway," not the second, would be emphasized. Yet the dynamic accent is strong enough to hear R realized by "-way" rather than the lexically stressed "high-." The realization of R at "way" coincides with the re-entry of the guitar, which initiates a tremolo figure.

R's projection R', however, is unlikely to be heard realized in the voice. Like the unrealized duration between "done" and "killed" in Figure 7.5, the activity in the guitar across the duration between "-way" and "suit-" prevents R' from being realized by a vocal

[260] It may be possible to read this two-part gesture – of tonic pitch followed by strummed chord – as a nod to Dylan's idiosyncratic accentuation of the second syllable of the word "highway." This is a technique common to the blues, in which instruments are used to mimic vocal and environmental sounds; see, for example, A. Yemisi Jimoh, *Spiritual, Blues, and Jazz People in African American Fiction: Living in Paradox* (Knoxville, Tennessee: University of Tennessee Press, 2002), 188.

dynamic accent. Instead, I hear the 1970 ms duration beginning with the tremolo onset at (d) to be subdivided, in the same way the introductory tremolo duration could be subdivided. As indicated by the parenthesized symbols below the score, the dynamic accent on "-way" initiates a duration at (d) that is made definite and projective by the peak of the tremolo's *crescendo*, and its projection is realized by the next prosodic stress on "suit-." If we hear the passage this way, then the duration initiated by "-way" continues (\) a long duration S begun (|) by the prosodic stress on "walk-," and the inferred stress in the guitar tremolo duration acts as a deferral (-\).

The next prosodic stress on "suit-" initiates a similar measure for the rest of the line. Dylan's dynamic accent on "suit-" begins a 1110 ms duration T that becomes definite and projective at the next prosodic stress on "hand." Its projection T' is realized by the 1140 ms duration to the onset of the anacrustic figure, and continues, as a deferral, the realization of projection S', just as S itself involved a deferral. Hearing the dynamic accent on tonic at (e) as a dominant beginning results in a reinterpretation of this deferral as anacrusis, as shown with the \ → / symbol above the staff. The projected S' spans these stresses, and can be heard as realized through a *ritardando* to the tonic pitch at (e).

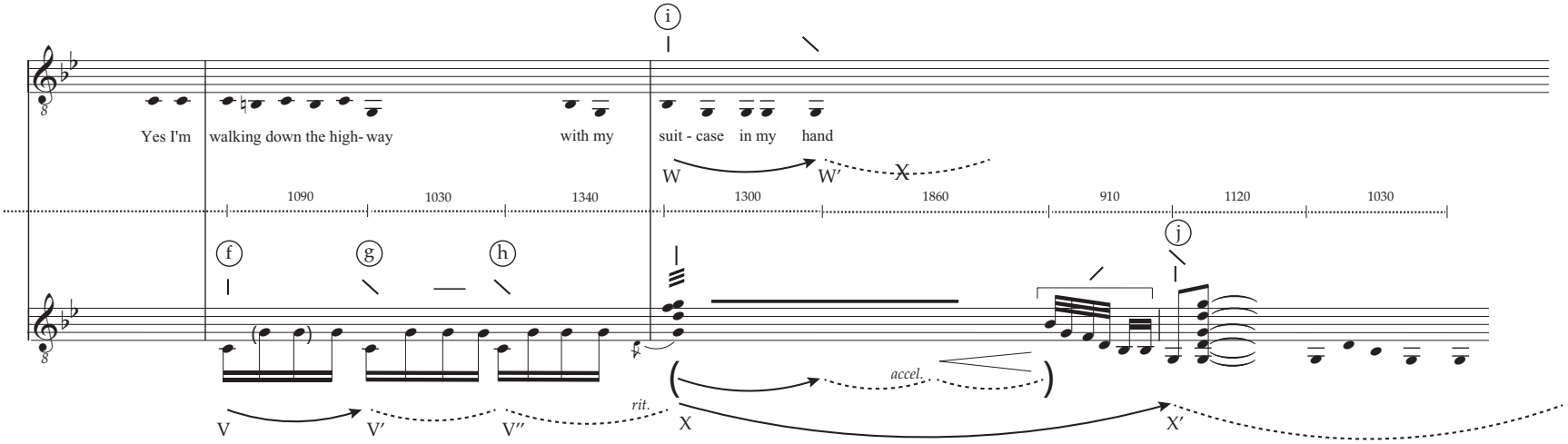
In this meter, the voice and guitar coordinate to articulate two measures, each with triple meter, as shown with the lower strand of symbols above the vocal staff. Another reading is possible, however, in which the metric processes of the two instruments conflict. The guitar introduction established a meter in which a dominant beginning at (a) leads to a continuation at (c), shown with the uppermost | and \ symbols above the staff. A parallel meter is plausible for the guitar accompaniment during the vocal phrase: the dominant beginning at (d) created by the voice and a quiet onset of the tremolo, can be heard as followed by a continuation on the tonic dynamic accent at (e). If heard, this meter would be out of sync with the vocal line, with a dominant beginning at

(d) misaligned from the dominant beginning on the prosodically stressed "walk-." In either reading, Dylan avoids a clear, duple construction of this passage that his listeners would expect from a blues-influenced song.

Following a loss of meter between the first two lines, the second line (0:14-0:24, shown in Figure 7.8) initiates a clearer meter than the first. A shift to subdominant harmony, following the blues prototype, coincides with a vocal stress and dynamically accented bass note in the guitar to create a dominant beginning of a duration V that can be heard to be realized when that bass note is rearticulated at (g). This 1090 ms IOI is subdivided by sixteenth-note articulations. Its projection V' can be heard as realized by a third articulation of the bass at (h). The third instance of this sixteenth-note figure might initially sound like the third beat of a 4/4 measure – the typical blues meter – however, there is no subsequent fourth beat. The figure beginning at (h) is instead followed by the now-familiar tremolo figure and prosodic stress that together create a dominant beginning and new series of projections. Retroactively, the preceding material comprises a triple meter, with a beginning at (f) aligning with "walk-," followed by a continuation at (g) on "high-," and a deferral at (h) on the final bass subdominant.

In the next measure of this second line, the meter returns to the looser construction of line 1. The onset of the tremolo at (i) aligns with the prosodic stress on "suit-," and has a more definite onset than the tremolo at (d) in Figure 7.8. The duration beginning at (i) in the voice becomes definite as W at the next prosodic stress on "hand." Its projection W', however, is not realized in the voice (as illustrated with the "X" over the dotted curved line) since "hand" is the final stress of the line.

Figure 7.8: Dylan, "Down the Highway," line 2

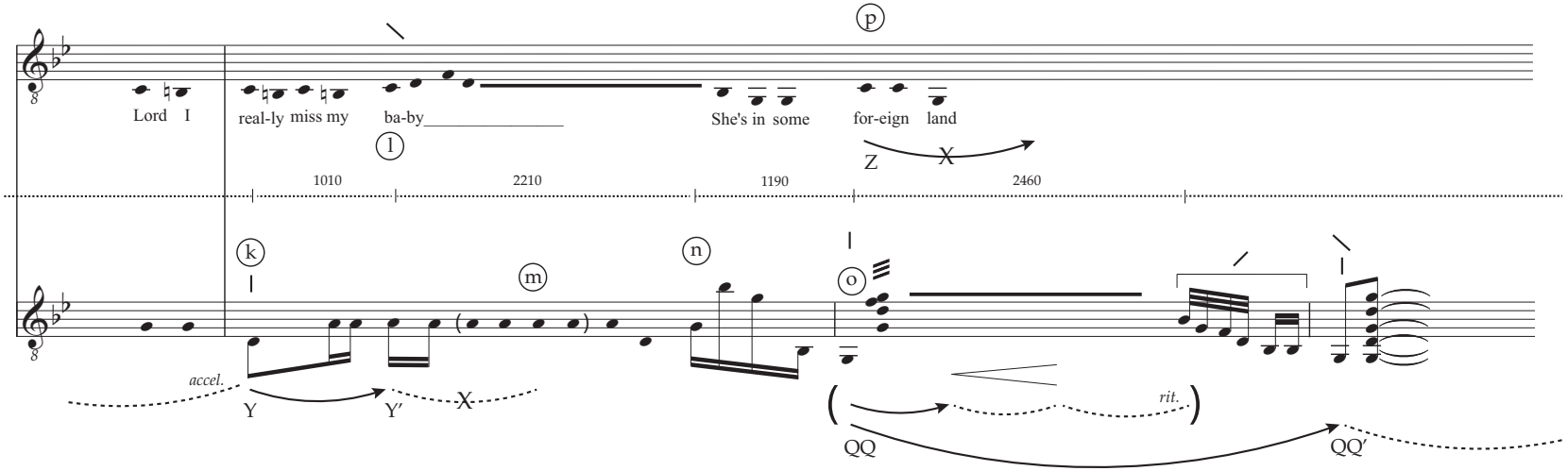


Instead, the tremolo duration can also be heard as subdivided, as during its first instance. The initial subdivision can be heard to be articulated by the prosodic stress on "hand," and its projected duration realized, at a faster tempo, by the onset of a crescendo. The next projected duration begins at the crescendo and can be heard as realized by the onset of the anacrusis gesture. This hearing creates a meter parallel to that in the guitar introduction, with a dominant beginning at the tremolo onset at (i) and a continuation at the dynamically accented tonic pitch at (j). Unlike at the end of line 1, however, Dylan coordinates the metric processes of the voice and guitar in this large-scale duple meter.

This second phrase provides a moment of clear meter as Dylan repeats the phrase "walking down the highway." We can read this metric regularity as an illustration of the physical regularity of that gesture. This regularity dissipates, however, when the tremolo gesture returns, with only inferred durations possible until the return of the anacrusis figure leads to the tonic pitch at (j).

The final line of the stanza (0:24-0:34), shown in Figure 7.9, begins similarly to the second, setting up expectations for a parallel moment of metric regularity. The bass note at (k) confirms a change to dominant harmony (following the blues scheme) and aligns with the prosodic stress on "really." The duration begun at this dominant beginning, shown as Y, can be heard as realized by the prosodic stress on "baby" at (l). At the corresponding moment in the second phrase, another bass note was articulated, but that does not occur here. The A3 pitches that follow the initial bass note become nearly imperceptible, with no salient onset in the guitar or voice at (m) to confirm a reproduction of the Y duration as Y'. During Dylan's singing of "baby," the meter that was promised by the repetition of accompaniment figures from line 2 is lost.

Figure 7.9: Dylan, "Down the Highway," line 3



The tonic pitch at (n) seems to signal a return to the tonic, the expected next harmonic arrival in the blues progression, but is later overshadowed by the stronger tonic onset at (o), which matches the register of the phrase-ending tonic pitches. This loss of meter can be read as expressing the loss mentioned in the lyrics: that the song subject's relationship ended because his "baby" moved away. [261]

Her location is not revealed until later in the song, but the word "foreign" in the phrase "she's in some foreign land" is expressively highlighted. The dominant beginning at (p) is created by the dynamic accent on the first syllable of "foreign" (which may sound surprising, since it was not a lexical stress in the lyrics) and the onset of the guitar tremolo.

All three events are accented, but the low tonic pitch takes precedence as a dominant beginning since it occurs first, and has registral accent as the same G2 as the tonic arrival pitches at the end of each phrase. This tonic at (o) acts as the dominant beginning of the QQ duration, which can be heard as realized with the final tonic arrival at the end of the phrase.

The harmonic progression across these lines follows a blues prototype without a steady stream of beats. Harmony changes, along with motivic, and vocal gestures, act as salient cues for meter, guiding a hearing of realized durational projections within this flexibly timed context. Influenced by a tradition of blues artists, who themselves demonstrated an ebb and flow in timing, and nonisochrony of beat groupings, Dylan's own original blues eschews metric regularity in service of self-expression.[262] Hearing meter as process in this song helps to precisely describe the sensations of moving in and

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[261] Harvey suggests that "Down the Highway" is one of several songs Dylan wrote during his separation from girlfriend Suze Rotolo (who appears on the album's cover), who had moved to Italy to study art. Harvey, *The Formative Dylan: Transmission and Stylistic Influences*, 26; Scorsese, *No Direction Home*.

[262] This idea also has precedents in Dylan's blues influences, whose musical phrases varied in length as part of the spontaneous delivery of blues narratives. See Neal, "Song Structure Determinants," 112–113.

out of meter that we hear with Dylan's performance, and to connect moments of significant metric change with meaningful words or phrases in his lyrical narrative.

7.3 Folk Style and Politics in "Only a Pawn in their Game"

In the mid-1960s a shift occurred in Dylan's studio recordings from imitating original sources in folk and blues, examples of which have been analyzed above, to composing in a style of his own that blended those precedents. On his third album, *The Times They Are A-Changin'* (1964), songs like "Only a Pawn in their Game" exemplify the union of Dylan's stylistic influences with lyrics that challenged popular perceptions in the 1960s. As the analysis below will show, the blend involves not only melodic and harmonic aspects, but also metric elements of folk and blues genres.

The lyrics focus on the white supremacist who killed civil rights activist Medgar Evers in 1963. The event was recounted in songs by Dylan's contemporaries Tom Paxton, Phil Ochs and Bob Gibson; however, Dylan's lyrics announce a unique perspective on the situation by describing how politicians and policemen used the "poor white man" to enact their anti-African American agenda.[263] Teaching the white man to "keep up his hate" against another marginalized group, he will "never think straight" about his own status as the "pawn in their game."[264]

Dylan's original perspective is expressed in a somewhat original musical form. The strophic song form features each stanza cycling through a series of lines I will label *a*-*b*-*c**-*d**-*e*. The asterisks indicate variability in the *c* and *d* lines: the *c* lines may feature internal repetition of its initial melodic segment, and each stanza contains from three to

[263] Harvey, *The Formative Dylan: Transmission and Stylistic Influences*, 82.
[264] Harvey cites several articles published around the time of Evers' funeral from which Dylan may have gained this perspective. See Ibid., 80–81.

eight versions of the *d* line.[265] The form of the first verse, shown in Figure 7.10, can thus be expressed as *a-b-c1-c2-d1-d2-d3-e*.

The *a, b,* and *e* lines vary little between verses, sharing the same melody and number of vocal stresses. Each *a* line has five syllables stressed by the coincidence of vocal dynamic accents with accents in the accompaniment pattern.[266]

Figure 7.10: Dylan, "Only a Pawn in their Game," lyrics[267]

a	A **bul**-let from the **back** of a **bush** took **Med**-gar Ev-ers' **blood**
b	A **fing**-er fired the **trig**-ger to his **name**
c1	A **hand**-le hid **out** in the **dark**
c2	A **hand** set the **spark**
d1	Two **eyes** took the **aim**
d2	Be-**hind** a man's **brain**
d3	But **he** can't be **blamed**
e	He's **only** a **pawn** in their **game**

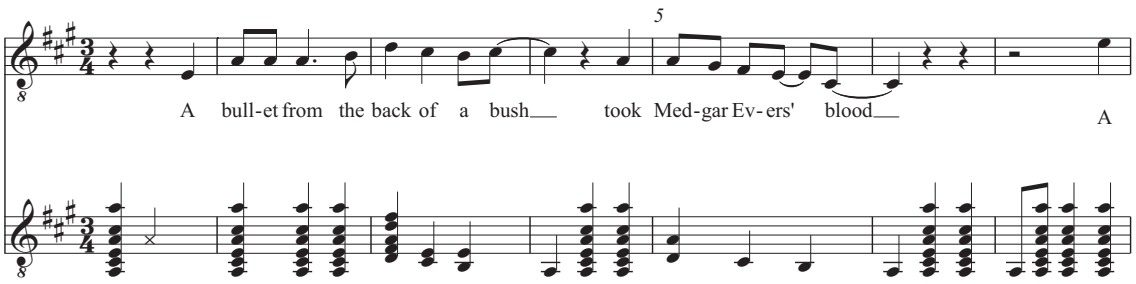
The *b* lines in each stanza have three prosodic stresses and each refrain line *e* accents the three syllables "**on**-ly," "**pawn**," and "**game**," to emphasize the central point of the song. Dylan aligns each of these vocal stresses with metric accents that he creates with his guitar accompaniment.

Figure 7.11 illustrates the five-stress line that comprises the song's first phrase (0:00-0:08). Dylan creates a 3/4 meter by articulating strumming every quarter note and changes of harmony every dotted half note. The vocal stress on the first syllable of "bullet" aligns with the onset of the quarter-note guitar-strumming pattern on an A major harmony, which occurs throughout the song. In m. 3, the harmony change to D major aligns with the vocal stress on "back." The next stress on "bush" is syncopated to the return of tonic harmony in m. 4. A similar syncopation is given to the word "blood"

[265] Dylan explored a similarly flexible form in "A Hard Rain's a-Gonna Fall" from Bob Dylan, *The Freewheelin' Bob Dylan* (Columbia, 1963).
[266] Other readings of the poetry are possible outside of the musical context that further subdivides the lyrics into stresses. For this analysis, only Dylan's emphases within the musical setting are examined.
[267] Dylan, *The Times They Are a-Changin'*.

two measures later, drawing attention to the parallelism of the repeated accompaniment pattern between mm. 3-4 and mm. 5-6.

Figure 7.11: Dylan, "Only a Pawn in their Game," mm. 1-6



The first phrase establishes a regular meter for "Only a Pawn," but later in the song, Dylan expressively disrupts it by changing the meter and timing between lines *b* and *c* of each verse. The first instance of this occurs in the first verse between the lyrical lines "A finger fired a trigger to his name" and "A handle hid out in the dark," the passage of which (0:07-0:20) has been transcribed in Figure 7.12. The tonic harmony and prosodic stress on the first syllable of "finger" initiate the Q duration, a dotted half note, like those in Figure 7.11. Q can be heard to be completed at the harmony change and prosodic stress on the first syllable of "trigger." R-R' and S-S' show a continuing of the dotted half-note durations spanning changes of harmony at the next two notated downbeats and prosodic stresses.

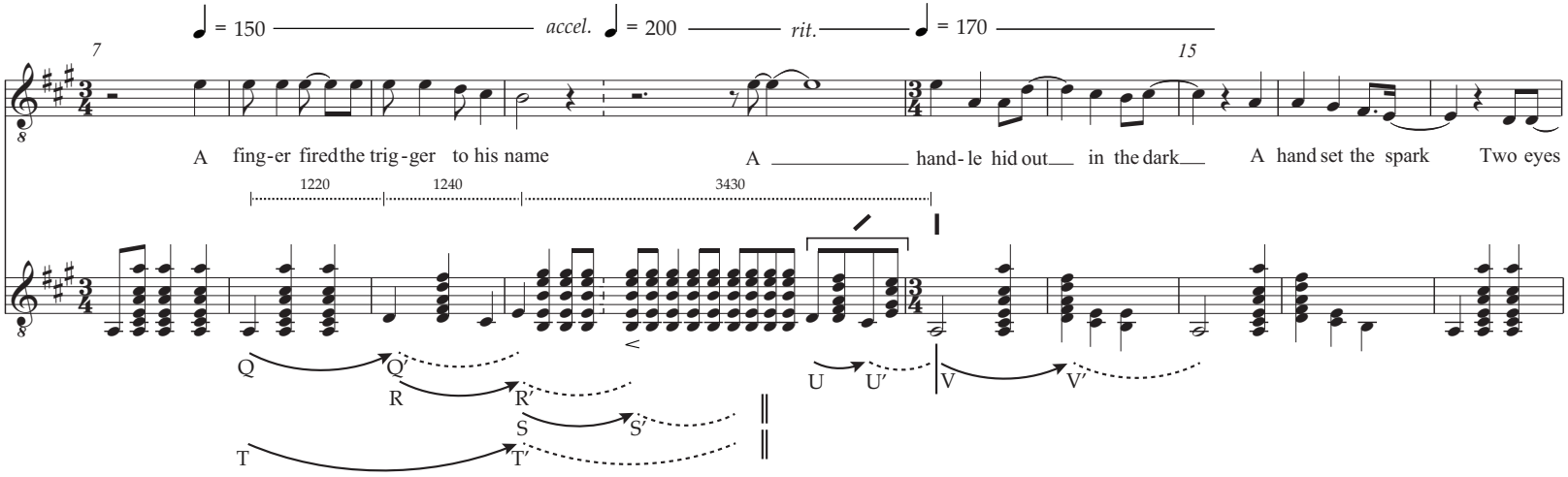
After the end of this vocal line, we begin to hear a loss of meter. It is possible to hear the S duration realized by the dynamic strumming accent indicated in m. 11, after the dotted bar line. However, since there is no change of harmony here, nor a vocal stress, the listener may not hear this dynamic accent as a beginning. If it is salient enough to realize S, it may also initiate the projected S'. If it is not salient, the listener may instead her a longer duration, T, spanning from "fin-" in m. 8 to the change to dominant harmony in m. 10, and project its replication T'. But whichever way the

listener hears it, neither S' nor T' are realized. The 3430 ms span from "name," at the onset of dominant harmony, to the next prosodic stress on "hand" on tonic, is too long. The guitar articulations subdivide this long duration by repeating dominant harmony at an accelerated tempo. This offers no salient accents to realize either S' or T', resulting in the loss of quarter-note beats and a hiatus for both projected durations. This is indicated in the transcription by the vertical lines at the end of both projective arrows. The expressive hiatus gives the listener time to register the description of murder.

After this loss of meter, anacrustic gestures in the voice and guitar reorient us to triple meter during the rest of the phrase. The vocal onset of the unstressed, indefinite article "A" (as part of the phrase "A handle hid out in the dark") signals to the listener that a prosodic stress in the voice will follow. It does, on the first syllable of "handle," which functions as a dominant beginning, as many of the previous prosodic stresses did. The guitar's D3 followed a quarter note later by C#3 signals the return of the quarter-note pulse, as shown with the U-U' projections. This guitar bass line recalls the bass from m. 3 that moved from D-C#-B before progressing to a downbeat tonic. In m. 12, the bass pitches also signal a return to tonic, acting as anacruses to the dominant beginning created by the A3 in m. 13. The metric process begun with the quarter-note U-U' durations is overshadowed by the dominant beginning at the tonic in m. 13, which re-starts the dotted half-note durations (here V-V') from the beginning of the phrase, recalling the meter of the lines that describe Evers being shot.

Each parallel moment in subsequent verses features a loss of meter similar to this first occurrence. The most dramatic example (beginning at 2:58), transcribed as Figure 7.13, is saved for the final verse. The meter of the beginning of this phrase is similar to that of Figure 7.12, with one notable exception. Dylan's singing gives unexpected extra time to "him," and extra strumming occurs in the guitar to accommodate this longer vocal duration.

Figure 7.12: Dylan, "Only a Pawn in their Game," mm. 7-15

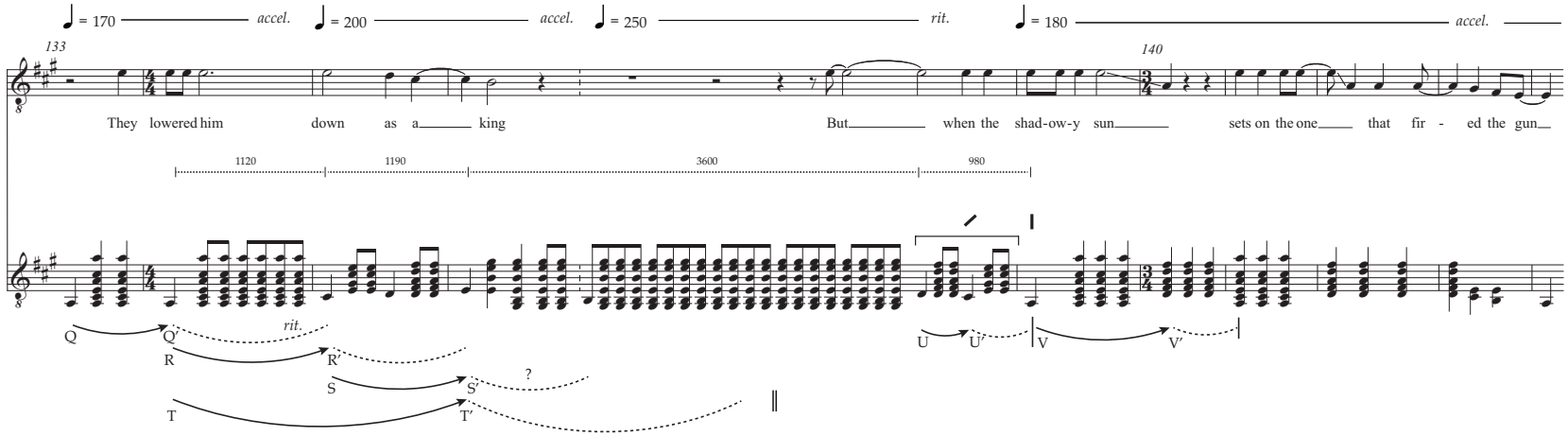


As a result, the projected dotted-half duration Q' is realized through a *ritardando*, spanning a whole-note duration to the prosodic stress on "down" that aligns with the bass note C#3. This longer duration itself becomes projective (thus relabeled, with its own arrow, as R), and its projection R', that can be heard to be realized at the arrival of the dominant a whole note later (in what is labeled as m. 135). This realized projection effects a decisive shift of meter. Rather than regain 3/4 after the longer duration on "him" this seemingly "added beat" is retained, and mm. 134-136 continue in a stately 4/4 meter.

The following passage between vocal phrases features a loss of meter similar to the one in Figure 7.12. The completion, at the dominant chord in m. 136, of the longer duration T that was initiated by the A3 in mm. 134 gives rise to a projection T', but T' is not realized by any salient stresses within the fast strumming pattern that follows. As a result, a hiatus occurs in the passage of dominant harmony strumming between lines *b* and *c*, as it did in verse 1.

Also as in the first verse, meter is regained at the onset of the subsequent phrase but at first it is not 3/4. The unstressed preposition "But" begins earlier than it did in the first verse, giving a heightened anacrustic anticipation of the next prosodic stress. The guitar's final gesture further emphasizes this sensation; its anacrustic figure is twice as long as previously (Figure 7.12), and also slows the beat from 250 bpm to 180 bpm by the next measure. The whole-note duration of mm. 134-135 recurs here as V, from the stress on the first syllable of "shadowy" to the onset of subdominant harmony in m. 140. Its projection V', however, is interrupted by the return to tonic in m. 141, which occurs a quarter note earlier than expected, creating a 3/4 bar in m. 140. After m. 140, the 3/4 meter is consistent.

Figure 7.13: Dylan, "Only a Pawn in their Game," mm. 133-143



The metric irregularities in this passage can be read as a dramatization of the lyrics. The stately 4/4 metric context accompanies the lyrics that speak of Evers' memorial, in which he was lowered down and revered "as a king." Metric emphasis is withheld from the word "king" to weaken the posthumous title in its comparison with the "pawn" who fired the gun.[268]

This change to 4/4 can be understood as an allusion to a funeral march, albeit a fast one, as the lyrics depict the burial. The long duration and hiatus between phrases provides a moment of reflection that pauses the meter in commemoration of his passing. Dylan's delay in returning to the 3/4 meter highlights the subsequent lyrics that speak of the death of the murderer himself, whose future gravestone will be engraved as proof of his status as a "pawn in their game." The more extreme timing in this final verse highlights the song's moral.

7.4 Summary

These analyses demonstrate how Dylan appropriated into his own compositions the distinctive metrical processes of the folk and blues styles with which he was familiar. "Only a Pawn" incorporates accompanimental gestures, like those found in "Down the Highway" that retain metric quality in each appearance, helping the listener to re-orient to a meter after passages of flexible timing. Dylan's politically-charged lyrical narrative – an acclaimed component of his mid-1960s acoustic style – is emphasized by passages of metric irregularity.

Together these three songs show some of the different ways that voice and guitar can interact, either with guitar and voice in a coordinated metric process, or trading the role of metric articulation. It also demonstrates the important role of prosodic stress in

[268] Todd Harvey encourages such a reading of the lyrics, describing Dylan's perspective as in support of the "common man," "even excusing a racist because he is a hapless pawn," instead saving condemnation for the corrupt officials who condone racism. Harvey, *The Formative Dylan: Transmission and Stylistic Influences*, 82.

articulating meter, especially when regular beats are not present in the accompaniment, following the procedures of folk-influenced songs like “Restless Farewell.” The significance of Dylan’s varying meter can be understood when examined in connection with words and themes in his personal and political texts. Conceiving of meter as process allows us to explain precisely how the varying stresses and durations he performs function as conveyors of lyrical meaning.

Chapter 8: Conclusion

The transcriptions and analyses presented here have exposed some of the techniques of metric irregularity and flexible timing used by 1960s and 70s singer-songwriters to emphasize lyrical meaning. Drawing on theories of meter designed for the analysis of art music, and concepts from studies of prosody, I was able to precisely describe the sensations of listening to meter in this music and make connections to its themes and personal storytelling. I advocate for a wide range of metric engagement when approaching a flexibly timed song like "The Fiddle and the Drum." Instead of asking, "Is this meter?" I have shown that it is more productive to investigate what aspects of meter are salient in a particular performance and, further, how engaging with those aspects may affect the listener's appreciation of how the music expresses the text.

At the outset, I posed three questions about meter that asked how we should describe and appreciate how it is developed, how the rhythms of lyrics and the vocal line interact with the meter of the accompaniment, and to what degree we need to modify existing theories of meter to be suitable for the analysis of non-groove based popular music. The examples discussed throughout this dissertation have demonstrated that in order to properly address meter in contexts of irregularity and flexibilities in timing, we first need to have a more flexible conception of meter. Then, we may draw from the theory of meter necessary to represent the aspects of meter that are engaged in a particular performance.

The primary theoretical contribution of this study is the detailed analysis of the aspects of meter, manifest in two approaches to metric analysis. In grid-oriented music, this theory focuses on those aspects of meter – stresses, durations, and pulse streams – that create and sustain the conceptual metric grid in a performance, accounting for metric irregularities as reinterpretations to the grid. Rather than assume a context of

regularity and repetition, I specifically investigated how a grid is formed and what musical factors – like grouping parallelism or unexpected stress – encourage disruptions to the grid. For more flexibly timed examples, I focus on stress and timing to help determine the precise degree to which certain aspects of meter are engaged. For these analyses, I applied concepts of Hasty's processual theory of meter, such as unrealized durational reproductions, that had not previously been employed for the analysis of popular music. In many cases of flexible timing, passages of unrealized durational projections were later contrasted with realized projections to highlight the meaning of the text, as we saw in "The Fiddle and the Drum."

For each analysis, I chose a particular approach to transcribing metric irregularities and timing flexibility, which was then used to suggest an expressive rationale for a particular metric setting. Several interpretations are often possible for a single example, as was demonstrated Dylan's "With God on Our Side," in Chapter 3. Despite my refraining from exploring multiple transcriptions of each recording, this potential for multiple metric readings would be a valuable starting point for future study. Another productive approach would be to analyze multiple performances of a single song, as Steven Rings' study of Dylan has confirmed. Indeed, the application of the theory in this study to multiple recordings would provide further insight into Rings' discussion of the relationship between song and performance.[269]

One of the aims of this study was in part to distinguish the singer-songwriter style from other music of the same period, primarily for its use of metric irregularities and flexibility of timing in text expression. In addition to examining songs by famous singer-songwriters (Bob Dylan, Paul Simon, and Joni Mitchell), I sought to bring attention to artists Buffy Sainte-Marie and Cat Stevens, whose work is under-studied in the music

[269] Rings, "A Foreign Sound to Your Ear: Bob Dylan Performs 'It's Alright, Ma (I'm Only Bleeding)'," [6].

theoretical literature.[270] Though differing in individual style, the solo, acoustic performance tradition of these artists gave the impression of unmediated intimacy with their listeners and created a musical context in which meaning, in varying degrees of biographical accuracy, could be conveyed. Whether seemingly improvised – as many metric irregularities in Dylan's songs may have been – or carefully calculated, as demonstrated in identical metric structures in various recordings of "The Sound of Silence," meter and timing are essential musical factors – alongside harmony, form, and instrumentation – that these artists used to express lyrical meaning to their audiences.

It is interesting to consider why these musicians were drawn to these particular techniques, that is, what artistic goals these techniques helped the musicians to achieve. Certainly the tension between conformity to metric regularity and disruption can be read as expressing the ambiguity, conflicting emotions, irony, or multiple meanings of the song lyrics. But these conflicts serve different goals for different artists. For Dylan's writing in this period, the meter-text relationship helps to express rebellion against prevailing political ideology; for Mitchell, it helps to express the sentiments of characters in her narrative.

An extension of this research could move chronologically forward, analyzing meter and text relationships in the music of singer-songwriters in the later 1970s, like Kate Bush, Nick Drake, and Tom Waits.[271] This repertoire could also be extended to those, predominantly female artists, who sustained the acoustic singer-songwriter style through the 1980s and 90s, particularly Sarah McLachlan, Tori Amos, Alanis Morisette,

[270] One recent remedy to the lack of research on Buffy Sainte-Marie is a paper presented by Steven Rings at a special session on "voice" at the 2014 Society for Music Theory conference; See Steven Rings, "Why Voice Now?" (Society for Music Theory, Milwaukee, Wisconsin, November 8, 2014).

[271] A study of prosody in Waits' music has already been undertaken. See Lemire, "At the 'Crossroads.'"

and Fiona Apple.[272] Twenty-first century artists, like Sufjan Stevens, Regina Spektor, and pop/soul songwriter Adele, among others, continue a similar songwriting aesthetic, with attention to lyrical structure and meaning that could benefit from analyses similar to those found in this dissertation.

To use the term "singer-songwriter" to classify all the aforementioned styles that span several decades, we must identify some common features of these repertoires – particularly the acoustic, self-accompanied format – which has its antecedent in the traditions begun in the 1960s. In some cases, this stylistic influence is most evident in cover versions of 1960s and 70s songs that include metric irregularities in service of text expression, particularly when contemporary artists include additional meter and timing irregularities. For example, both Tori Amos and jazz singer Diana Krall have recorded versions of Joni Mitchell's "A Case of You" that include additional expressive metric irregularities and fluctuations in timing to those Mitchell herself recorded.[273] Exploring the role of metric disruptions and expressive timing practices in these cover versions, and in the music of the subsequent generations of singer-songwriters, would be a worthwhile area for future research. The metric features that this study discovers in this repertoire might be starting points for investigations into the meter-text relationship across several decades of the singer-songwriter tradition.

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[272] Some studies have already been undertaken on Sarah McLachlan's music, examining harmony and its connection to lyrical meaning as well as phrase rhythm; see Timothy Koozin, "Fumbling Towards Ecstasy: Voice Leading, Tonal Structure, and the Theme of Self Realization in the Music of Sarah McLachlan," in *Expression in Pop-Rock Music*, ed. Walter Everett, vol. 2, Studies in Contemporary Music and Culture (New York: Garland, 2000), 267–84; Lori Burns, "Meaning in a Popular Song: The Representation of Masochistic Desire in Sarah McLachlan's 'Ice,'" in *Engaging Music*, ed. Deborah Stein (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 136–48; Robin Attas, "Sarah Setting the Terms: Defining Phrase in Popular Music," *Music Theory Online* 16, no. 3 (2011).
[273] Both Amos and Krall recorded versions of "A Case of You" with more flexible timing than Mitchell's studio recording. For a full list of Mitchell's song covers, see "Joni Undercover," August 20, 2015, http://jonimitchell.com/music/covers.cfm.

More generally, this approach can be easily applied to any music in which the prosodic stresses of the lyrics have a contributing role to the marking of musical meter, not only the popular music repertoire. Flexibly timed musical contexts, like recitative or chant, could particularly benefit from such an approach. One could also explore applications of this theory to music without text, modifying the aspects of meter to remove prosodic factors as possible stress markers. That some popular music lyrics are too enigmatic to correlate with flexible meter may provide some precedence for such a study. Meter involves different sorts of sensations, which can reinforce each other or even contradict each other within a musical work. The richness of these sensations can be brought out in analysis, and should be valued in both texted and untexted music.

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