The Form and Meaning of Bob Dylan's *Blowin' in the Wind*[*]

Masao Okazaki

1. Introduction

In 1962, Bob Dylan wrote the lyrics for his song entitled *Blowin' in the Wind*. The lyrics, as indicated in (1), are divided into three parts, each of which consists of four couplets (Dylan (1985:53)).

(1) Blowin' in the Wind

How many roads must a man walk down	1
Before you call him a man?	2
Yes, 'n' how many seas must a white dove sail	3
Before she sleeps in the sand?	4
Yes, 'n' how many times must the cannon balls fly	5
Before they're forever banned?	6
The answer, my friend, is blowin' in the wind,	7
The answer is blowin' in the wind.	8
How many times must a man look up	9
Before he can see the sky?	10
Yes, 'n' how many ears must one man have	11
Before he can hear people cry?	12
Yes, 'n' how many deaths will it take till he knows	13
That too many people have died?	14
The answer, my friend, is blowin' in the wind,	15
The answer is blowin' in the wind.	16
How many years can a mountain exist	17
Before it's washed to the sea?	18
Yes, 'n' how many years can some people exist	19
Before they're allowed to be free?	20
Yes, 'n' how many times can a man turn his head,	21

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Pretending he just doesn't see? 22
The answer, my friend, is blowin' in the wind, 23
The answer is blowin' in the wind. 24

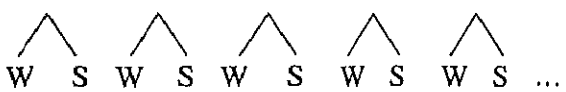
The purpose of this paper is to describe several peculiarities of *Blowin' in the Wind* from linguistic and musical-theoretical viewpoints and to clarify the way the form of the song corresponds to its meaning. The following three sections are concerned with descriptions of its linguistic rhythmic peculiarities (section 2), its musical rhythmic peculiarities (section 3), and its pragmatic peculiarities (section 4). The final section (section 5) discusses the form-meaning correspondence in the song on the basis of the descriptions in the preceding three sections.

2. Rhythmic Peculiarities

2.1. Facts

Blowin' in the Wind is composed of twelve couplets, each of which, containing two lines, serves not only as a poetic unit but also as a syntactic and semantic unit. In each couplet, the first line contains either nine, eleven, or twelve syllables, and the second line either seven or nine syllables. The lines are basically constructed on the basis of the template of iambic meter, for alternations of weak and strong syllables are most frequently observed in the song. Their rhythms build on a template like (2), where a pair of syllables, one weak and one strong, forms a basic poetic unit called a foot and regularly alternates, depending on the number of syllables in a single line.

(2)



The lines containing even-numbered syllables (lines 13 and 21) are genuine iambic meter lines, and the lines containing odd-numbered syllables (those other than lines 13 and 21) are permissible variants which lack the last strong syllable.

It is noteworthy that there are cases where the linguistic rhythm of a line does not strictly match the rhythm of the template in (2). Take lines 1 and 2, for example. In these lines, there are some W-positions in the template which correspond to the prosodically strongest syllable at the right edge of a syntactic phrase. In line 1, as shown in (3a), the noun *man*, which is the strongest element at the right edge of the NP, and the particle *down*, which is the strongest element at the right edge of the VP, are both aligned with a W-position in the template. The same is true of the mismatch in line 2. As shown in (3b), the noun *man* in line-final position is the rightmost strongest element in the NP and aligned with a W-position in the template.

(3) a.
```
              x              x          x
          x   x              x       x  x
     x    x x x     x     x  x       x  x        linguistic rhythm
```
How many roads must [$_{NP}$ a man] [$_{VP}$ walk down] ϕ

W SW S W S W S W S — poetic rhythm

b.
```
              x          x
       x      x          x
     x x   x  x  x    x  x                       linguistic rhythm
```
Before you call him [$_{NP}$ a man]? ϕ

W S W S W S W S — poetic rhythm

The above-mentioned mismatch between the template in (2) and the actual rhythm within a line, henceforth called the W-S mismatch, is observed in almost every line of *Blowin' in the Wind*. The examples are given in (4) and (5), where the italicized words indicate the places where the mismatch occurs.

(4) a. Yes, 'n' how many seas must a white dove [$_{VP}$*sáil*] 3

W S W SW S W S W S W

b. Yes, 'n' how many ears must [$_{NP}$ one *mán*] have 11

c. Yes, 'n' how many deaths will it [$_{VP}$ *táke*]till he knows 13

d. Yes, 'n' how many times can [$_{NP}$ a *mán*] turn his head, 21

(5) a. Before she sleeps in [$_{NP}$the *sánd*]? 4

W S W S W S W

b. Before they're [$_{VP}$forever *bánned*]? 6

c. Before he can see [$_{NP}$the *ský*]? 10

d. Before he can hear people [$_{VP}$*crý*]? 12

e. That too many people [$_{VP}$ have *díed*]? 14

f. Before it's washed to [$_{NP}$the *séa*]? 18

g. Pretending he just [$_{VP}$doesn't *sée*]? 22

h. The answer, [$_{NP}$my *fríend*], [$_{VP}$is blowin' [$_{PP}$in [$_{NP}$the *wínd*]]], 7, 15, 23

i. The answer [$_{VP}$is blowin' [$_{PP}$in [$_{NP}$the *wínd*]]]. 8, 16, 24

In addition to the mismatch at the right edge of a maximal projection, another mismatch, generally called inversion, takes place in a medial position of a line. The examples are given in (6).

(6) a. Yes, 'n' how many times must [$_{NP}$ the *cánnon* balls] fly 5

W S W SW S W S W S W S

b. The answer, [$_{NP}$my friend], [$_{VP}$is *blówin'* [$_{PP}$in [$_{NP}$the wind]]], 7, 15, 23

c. The answer [$_{VP}$is *blówin'* [$_{PP}$in [$_{NP}$the wind]]]. 8, 16, 24

d. How many years can [$_{NP}$a *móuntain*] exist 17

e. Yes, 'n' how many years can [$_{NP}$some *péople*] exist 19

In (6a), the noun *cannon* occupies the position of the foot [WS] in the template but exhibits a trochaic stress pattern. In (6b, c), the disyllabic verb *blowin'* undergoes inversion. The same applies to *mountain* in (6d) and *people* in (6e), the latter of which is seen to be disyllabic in that the word-final /l/ serves as a syllabic consonant. Both are aligned with the foot [WS] in the template but have a trochaic stress pattern. The mismatch in (6) is illustrated in (7) by example (6c).

(7)
```
 x              x                   x
 x              x                   x
xx    x     x  xx     x       x x                linguistic rhythm
```
The answer [$_{VP}$ is blowin' [$_{PP}$ in [$_{NP}$ the wind]]]. ϕ
```
WS  W    S   WS    W     S  W     S              poetic rhythm
```

2.2. The Nature of the Facts

The two sorts of mismatches that Bob Dylan makes use of are frequently utilized by other poets. The W-S mismatch at the right edge of a maximal projection, although viewed in the literature as an illegitimate way of composing poems because of its seemingly rare occurrence in EModE poems (cf. Kiparsky (1975, 1977) and Hayes (1983, 1989), among others), is a legitimate way of composing poems (Okazaki (2001a, 2001b)). It is frequently utilized by poets in the EModE period like Shakespeare and Donne and those in the LModE period like Dickinson. Typical examples are given in (8)-(10), where a W-position in the template corresponds to a stressed syllable which lies at the right edge of a maximal projection and is prosodically most prominent.

(8) Shakespeare

a. Thou of thyself [$_{NP}$ thy sweet *sélf*] dost deceive (*Sonnet* 4.10)
W SWS W S W S WS

b. Resembling [$_{NP}$ strong *yóuth*] in his middle age, (*Sonnet* 7.6)

c. For through his mane and tail [$_{NP}$ the high *wínd*] sings (*Venus and Adonis* 305)

d. And [$_{NP}$ all this dumb *pláy*] had his acts made plain (*Venus and Adonis* 358)

e. That from [$_{NP}$ the cold *stóne*] sparks of fire do fly; (*Lucrece* 177)

(9) Donne (The spelling is modernized, contrary to the convention of Donne's text editing.)

a. Though he be ivory, yet [$_{NP}$ her *teéth*] are jet ϕ (*Elegy* 2.4)
W SWSWS W S W S WS

b. To comfort [$_{NP}$ my *sóul*], when I lie or rise (*Elegy* 11.16)

c. Take [$_{NP}$ such *wíves*] as their guardians offer, so (*Satire* 3.61)

d. The ends crown [$_{NP}$ our *wórks*], but thou crown'st our ends, (*La Corona* 1.9)

e. But [$_{NP}$ black *sín*] has betrayed to endless night (*Holy Sonnet* 5.3)

(10) Dickinson

a. On [$_{NP}$ this wondrous *séa*] ϕ (4.1)
W S W S W S

b. In [$_{NP}$ the peaceful *wést*] (4.7)

c. Beside the Autumn poets [$_{VP}$ *sing*] (131.1)
d. But we bolt [$_{NP}$ the *door*] tight (196.3)
e. To prevent [$_{NP}$ a *fiend*] (196.4)

Inversion is the most popular device in English poetic meter. It is typically observed either in line-initial position or in a position immediately after a syntactic boundary corresponding to an obligatory pause, as the examples in (11) show.

(11) a. *Others* a sword-knot and laced suit inflame. (Pope: *Dunciad* II, 38)
W SW S W S W S W S
b. *Friendly* at Hackney, faithless at Whitehall (Pope: *Moral Essay* I, 76)
c. When that the poor have cried, *Caesar* hath wept;
W S W S W S W S W S
(Shakespeare: *Julias Caesar*, III.2, 91)
d. Appear in person here in courts. *Silence*! (Shakespeare: *Winter's Tale*, III.2, 10)

Bob Dylan makes use of the most typical device for mismatch in an unusual way. He places prosodically inverted words in a position which does not correspond to a syntactic boundary preceded by an obligatory pause.

2.3. Generalizations

Having demonstrated that the two types of mismatches Bob Dylan utilizes in *Blowin' in the Wind* are common devices for composing English poems, we are now in a position to make generalizations for these phenomena.

I argue that the W-S mismatch falls under Okazaki's (2001b) generalization. It is a rhythmic variant licensed by the generalization in (12), which is formulated in terms of a prosodic category called the Phonological Phrase (PPh) in the sense of prosodic phonology, as advocated by Selkirk (1986), and Hayes (1989), among others.

(12) A W-position in the template in (2) is allowed to be aligned with an S-position at the right edge of a PPh.

The PPh is one of the prosodic categories included in a phonological structure, called the Prosodic Hierarchy, which contains prosodic categories like Utterance, Intonational Phrase, Clitic Group, Prosodic Word, and so forth (Hayes (1989)). It is constructed through syntax-phonology mapping by the following rules, which are simplified and slightly modified versions of Hayes's (1989:218) rules.

(13) In the configuration [$_{XP}$ ... X YP ZP],
a. [$_{XP}$ ... X YP] corresponds to a PPh if YP contains only one content word (nouns, adjectives, verbs, and adverbs).
b. ZP corresponds to a distinct PPh.
c. Function words (auxiliaries, pronouns, prepositions, conjunctions, and so forth) may not form a PPh of its own and are incorporated into an adjacent PPh.

Rule (13a) says that the lexical category X, the head of XP, forms a PPh with elements in its left domain of the same maximal projection and YP in its right domain which contains only one content word. When YP contains more than one content word, it forms an independent PPh. Rule (13b) says that the second maximal projection in the right domain of X cannot form a PPh with it and constitutes a PPh of its own.

Rule (13c) is not proposed by Hayes (1989) but must be added to the set of rules for constructing PPhs (Okazaki (1998)). It says that elements which are able to form a PPh are restricted to content words. Function words are not capable of forming PPhs, even if they meet the syntactic conditions for PPh-formation.

The prosodic generalization in (12) works well. Take lines 1 and 2 again as examples. The positions where the relevant mismatch takes place lie at the right edge of a maximal projection, as shown in (14a). This syntactic structure is mapped to the prosodic structure in (14b) through the application of the rules in (13). The positions are characterized as the right edge of a PPh.

(14) a. How many roads must [$_{NP}$ a *man*] [$_{VP}$ walk *down*]
Before you call him [$_{NP}$ a *man*]?
[$_{PPh}$ Before you call him a *man*]?

The same applies to all the other W-S mismatch cases in *Blowin' in the Wind*.

Let us now turn to a consideration of inversion. It has been said to occur at the left-edge of a PPh (Hayes (1989:223)). Notice, however, that the rules in (13) produce the prosodic structures in (15) for the examples in (6).

(15) a. Yes, 'n' how many times [$_{PPh}$ must a *cánnon* balls] fly 5
b. The answer, [$_{PPh}$ my friend], [$_{PPh}$ is *blówin'* in the wind], 7, 15, 23
c. The answer [$_{PPh}$ is *blówin'* in the *wind*]. 8, 16, 24
d. How many years [$_{PPh}$ can a *móuntain*] exist 17
e. Yes, 'n' how many years [$_{PPh}$ can some *péople*] exist 19

The inversion cases in (6) are all deviations from Hayes's (1989) prediction. The noun *cannon*, as shown in (15a), lies in the medial-position of a PPh. The same applies to the verb *blowin'* in (6b,c). The nouns *mountain* in (6d) and *people* in (6e) lie at the right edge of a PPh as in (15d, e). In none of the cases is inversion expected to occur. In fact, however, it occurs. From this fact follows generalization (16) on the occurrence of inversion in *Blowin' in the Wind*.

(16) In *Blowin' in the Wind*, inversion is licensed to occur in the medial or the final position of a PPh.

This generalization does not seem to apply to the poems in the EModE period, where inversion mostly takes place at the left edge of a PPh. The inversion examples in (11), repeated in (17), are all characterized as cases occurring at the left edge of a PPh.

(17) a. [$_{PPh}$ *Óthers*] a sword-knot and laced suit inflame.
b. [$_{PPh}$ *Fríendly*] at Hackney, faithless at Whitehall

c. When that the poor have cried, [$_{PPh}$ *Cáesar*] hath wept;

d. Appear in person here in courts. [$_{PPh}$ *Sílence*]!

It follows, then, that the distribution of inversion in *Blowin' in the Wind* stands in sharp contrast to that in EModE poems.

3. Musical Peculiarities

3.1. Background

Having provided a description of the linguistic rhythmic peculiarities of the of *Blowin' in the Wind*, we now turn to a consideration of peculiarities of its musical rhythm.

The musical structure of English songs has been investigated form a variety of perspectives. Investigations that focus on the relation between music and language include Lerdahl and Jackendoff (1983), Jackendoff (1989), Hayes and Kaun (1996), Hayes and MacEachern (1998), Temperley (2001), Hayes (2002), Kiparsky (2003), and Kodaira (2003), among others. They assume that musical structure constitutes a module distinct from that of linguistic structure. At the same time, however, the two modules share common rhythmic properties, and the linguistic and musical rhythmic structures can be represented with the same notation. Both musical and linguistic rhythm can be represented with metrical grids.

Grid representations of musical structure vary from song to song, depending on genre, style, and so forth. In the case of *Blowin' in the Wind*, I assume the musical rhythmic structure in (18).

(18)

x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
x x	x x	x x	x x	x x	x x	x x	x x
xxxx	xxxx	xxxx	xxxx	xxxx	xxxx	xxxx	xxxx

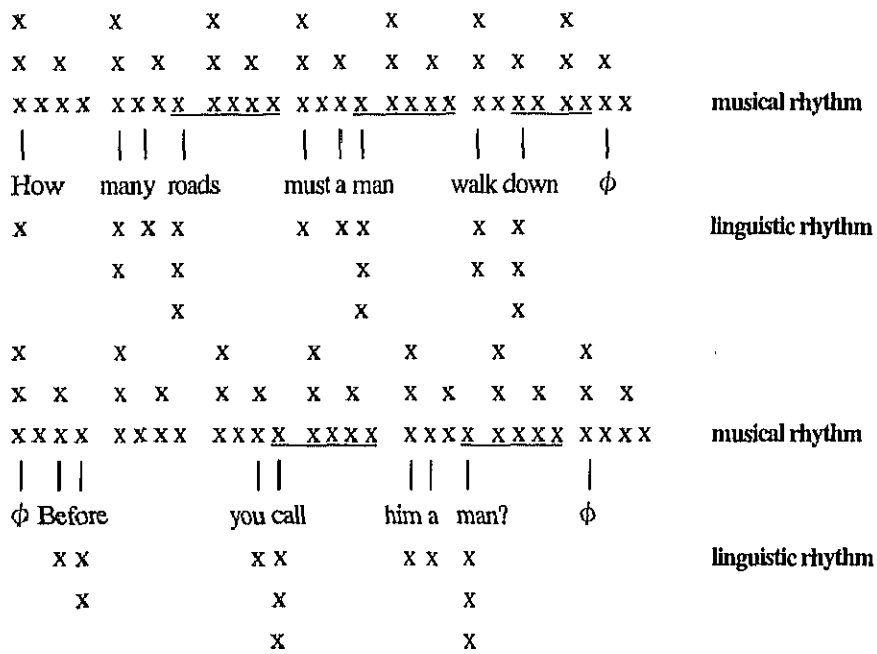
Here, each grid corresponds to a sixteenth note (𝅘𝅥𝅯), and four grids correspond to one fourth note (♩). Positions which have a grid at the third level from the bottom correspond to a strong position in musical structure. In the song under discussion, most of the lines have a length of twenty-eight sixteenth notes, or seven fourth notes. Lines 7, 15, and 23 are exceptions in that they have a length of thirty-two sixteenth notes, or eight fourth notes. For further details of grid representations of musical structure, see Hayes and Kaun (1996), Hayes and MacEachen (1998), and Hayes (2002), among others.

3.2. Facts

It is generally assumed that musical strong positions match linguistic strong positions. This assumption works well for the Anglo-American folk songs which Hayes and Kaun (1996) and Hayes and MacEachern (1998) analyze. However, it does not work when we consider correspondences between the musical and the linguistic rhythm in *Blowin' in the Wind*. There are mismatches between a musical weak position and a linguistic strong position in every line of the song. The mismatch is called syncopation, and its frequent occurrence serves as a characterizing feature of the song.

Following Temperley (2001:243), I assume here that syncopation is characterized as a kind of musical transformation which shifts a linguistically strong syllable matching a musical strong position in the deep musical representation forward to a preceding weak position in the surface musical representation. With this assumption, let us next examine where syncopation takes place and whether its occurrence is characterized in linguistic terms or not. Take lines 1 and 2 again as sample cases. The music-language rhythmic correspondences of the lines are represented in (19).

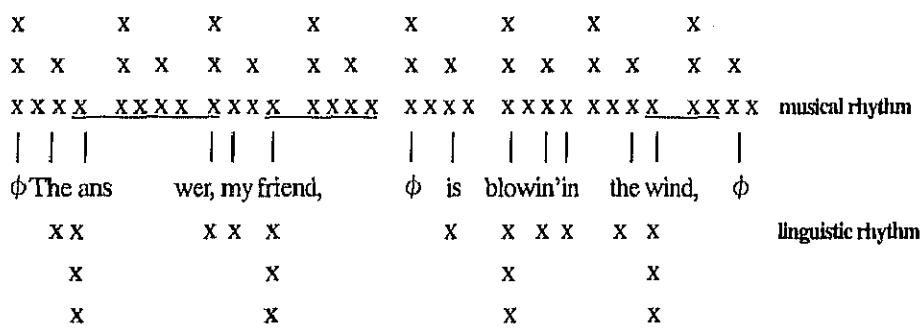
(19) a.



In (19a), the nouns *roads* and *man* and the particle *down* are syncopated, and the latter two words also exhibit the W-S mismatch. In (19b), the verb *call* and the noun *man* are syncopated, and the latter exhibits the W-S mismatch. The noun *roads* and the verb *call* do not exhibit the W-S mismatch.

Let us next observe the occurrence of syncopation in lines 7, 8, 15, 16, 23, and 24.

(20) a.



b. x x x x x x x
x x x x x x x x x x x x x x
xxxx xxxx xxxx xxxx xxxx xxxx xxxx **musical rhythm**
| || | | | | | | |
ϕ The ans wer is blowin' in the wind, ϕ
xx xx xx xx x **linguistic rhythm**
x x x
x x x

In lines 7, 15, and 23, the nouns *answer*, *friend*, and *wind* are syncopated, as represented in (20a). In lines 8, 16, and 24, the nouns *answer* and *wind* are syncopated, as represented in (20b). Of the three syncopated nouns, *friend* and *wind* exhibit the W-S mismatch, and *answer* does not exhibit inversion. Note, in addition, that the verb *blowin'* does not undergo syncopation but exhibits inversion.

The other syncopated words are listed in (21).

(21) a. sail (line 3), sand (line 4), cannon (line 5), banned (line 6)
b. man (lines 9 and 11), up (line 9), sky (line 10), cry (line 12), take (line 13), died (line14)
c. mountain (line 17), exist (lines 17 and 19), sea(line 18), free (line 20), man (line 21), see (line 22)

Most characteristic of the words in (21) is that all are monosyllabic except *cannon*, *mountain*, and *exist*. In fact, the monosyllabic words exhibit the W-S mismatch, as shown in the previous section, and the disyllabic nouns *cannon* and *mountain* exhibit inversion in the medial position of a PPh. The verb *exist* does not exhibit inversion in lines 17 or 19.

3.3. A Generalization

The above observations reveal that the words exhibiting either the W-S mismatch or inversion are syncopated in musical structure, except for the case of *blowin'*. This correspondence further implies the possibility that environments where a word is syncopated are to be characterized in terms of the prosodic category PPh. In fact, pursuing this possibility will enable us to obtain a clear picture of the occurrence and nonoccurrence of syncopation.

Kodaira (2003:25) proposes a prosodic generalization as in (21) on the occurrence of syncopation based on her detailed observations of the occurrence and nonoccurrence of syncopation in the fifty-five Beatles songs.

(22) *Kodaira's Generalization*

In the sequence of words ... X Y ..., Y may be syncopated when both X and Y are contained in the same PPh.

This generalization makes the following predictions:

(23) a. In the structure [$_{NP}$ Det N ...], the noun may be syncopated, for it forms a PPh with the determiner (rule (13a)).

b. In the structure [$_{VP}$ V NP ...], the NP may be syncopated if it contains one content word. It forms a PPh with the verb if it contains one content word (rule (13b)).
c. In the structure [$_{PP}$ P NP ...], the NP may be syncopated. It always forms a PPh with the preposition, for the latter is a function word and cannot form a PPh of its own.
d. In the structure [$_{IP}$ NP [$_{VP}$ V]], the verb may not be syncopated. It does not form a PPh with the subject NP, unless the latter is a pronoun (cf. rule (13c)).

These predictions are borne out by the syncopation facts in the Beatles songs explained by Kodaira (2003).

The generalization in (22) also applies to the syncopation facts in *Blowin' in the Wind*. In lines 1 and 2, the words which undergo syncopation are as follows: *roads*, *man*, *down*, and *call*. The noun *roads* is the head of the NP *how many roads* and is contained in the same PPh with *many* (rule (13a)). The same applies to the syncopation of *man*. It is also the head of the NP *a man* and forms a PPh with the indefinite article (rule (13a)). The particle *down* is in the VP and forms a PPh with the immediately preceding word *walk* by the natural extension of rule (13b). The verb *call* might be expected not to undergo syncopation, for the immediately preceding element is its subject NP, which generally does not form a PPh with a verb. In this case, however, the subject is the pronoun *you*, which, being a function word, cannot form a PPh of its own and forms a PPh with the following VP (rule (13c)).

The syncopation facts in lines 7, 8, 15, 16, 23, and 24 are explained in the same way. The nouns *answer*, *friend*, and *wind* are syncopated, and this is correctly predicted by the generalization in (22). The noun *answer* forms a PPh with the definite article. The same is true of *friend*, headed by *my*, and *wind*, headed by *the*.

The other syncopation cases listed in (21) include both cases which follow the generalization in (22) and those which do not. The syncopated nouns (*sand*, *cannon*, *man*, *mountain*, *sky*, and *sea*) are preceded by a determiner or a determiner-like element with which they form a PPh. The same applies to the syncopatped particle *up*, which is preceded by the verb *look*. The past participle *banned* and the adjective *free* are preceded by the auxiliary *be*. The auxiliary, being a function word, forms a PPh with the following predicate. The verb *take* is preceded by the pronoun subject *it*, the past participle *died* by the auxiliary *have*, and the verb *see* by the auxiliary *doesn't*. The three verbs form PPhs with their respective preceding elements.

The three verb cases remain to be considered. The verbs *sail* (line 3), *cry* (line 12), and *exist* (lines 17 and 19), although syncopated, do not form a PPh with their respective preceding elements. *Sail* in line 3 is preceded by the full subject NP *a white dove*, *cry* in line 12 by *people*, and *exist* in lines 17 and 19 by *a mountain* and *some people*, respectively. Kodaira's generalization predicts that none of them are syncopated. Contrary to the prediction, however, they are syncopated. The reason for the occurrence of the three syncopation cases is still unknown. (For similar cases in the Beatles songs and their explanation, see Kodaira (2003:42-51).)

3.4. Summary

The above arguments lead us to conclude that the environments where the syncopation cases in *Blowin' in the Wind* occur can be generalized in prosodic terms. They fall into a group of facts which Kodaira's (2003) prosodic generalization covers.

Another interesting aspect of the relevant syncopation cases is that they have correspondence to the occurrence of either the W-S mismatch or inversion. As clarified in section 3.2, the following generalization holds:

(24) If a word exhibits the W-S mismatch or inversion, it also undergoes syncopation in musical structure.

As the generalization reads, the occurrence of the mismatch is not a necessary and sufficient condition for syncopation. Even if a word is syncopated, it does not necessarily exhibit either of the mismatches. In fact, there is one exceptional case where a word exhibiting inversion is not syncopated.

The above-mentioned correspondence shows a further interesting formal aspect of the song. The two types of rhythmic mismatches and syncopation, although they seem to be distinct in nature from each other, occur in exactly the same position within the same prosodic category. The correspondence therefore does not seem to be a mere rhythmic device. It is highly likely to have some semantic or pragmatic aspects and be characterized as stemming from the semantics or pragmatics of the song.

4. Pragmatic Peculiarities of the Mismatches and Syncopation

Viewed from a discourse perspective, *Blowin' in the Wind* is divided into three parts, and each part consists of three questions and their answers, as indicated in (1). The questions are concerned with ugly and unjustifiable aspects of human beings and the real world, including racism, terrorism, suppression, war, and so forth. The nine questions posed in the song ask how long it will take for these things to perish from the earth. The answer to each is, however, that we have no definite answers. In spite of the existence of problems to be solved in the real world, it is hardly possible to solve them immediately.

The words which both exhibit one of the two mismatches and undergo syncopation are listed again in (25).

(25) a. lines 1-8: man, down, sail, sand, cannon, banned, friend, wind
b. lines 9-16: man, up, sky, cry, take, died, friend, wind
c. lines 17-24: mountain, sea, free, man, see, friend, wind

The words in (25) can be classified into two groups. All except the nouns *friend* and *wind* are contained in one of the questions. They do not have the focus status. Rather, they serve as background knowledge for posing the questions. Take lines 1 and 2, which constitute the first question in the song.

(26) How many roads must a man walk down before you call him a man?

In this sentence, the focus of the question is the sentence-initial *wh*-element *how many roads*, and the other elements in the sentence function as background for posing the question. In the background domain, however, a distinction also arises between semantically prominent and nonprominent elements. The main clause, being questioned, is a generic sentence which describes an obligation of the subject NP *a man*. Thus, the subject NP *a man* and the predicate *walk down* serve as a topic and a focus, respectively.

This characterization is, however, not enough to identify the nature of the sentence. The sentence, although generic in nature, is the first sentence in the song and introduced into discourse out of the blue. In such a context, the full subject NP of a generic sentence can be seen as an important element in discourse and become prosodically prominent to attract the hearer's attention to the sentence (Okazaki (1998:140)). Take sentence (27) as an example. It describes a permanent characteristic of the NP *your shoes* according to the speaker, and its subject NP and the predicate adjective are both accented.

(27) (out of the blue) Your SHOES are NICE.

It follows, then, that in the main clause of sentence (26), both the subject NP and the predicate are semantically prominent for different reasons. The former is prominent for its additional status in the discourse, and the latter for its focus status in the sentence.

The same reasoning applies to the focus-topic structure of the subordinate clause in (26). This is characterized as a generic sentence which describes the habit of the subject NP *you* and contains the small-clause complement of the verb *call*. The predicate is semantically more prominent than the subject. The small clause *[$_{SC}$ him a man]* describes a permanent property of its subject *him*, as do adjectival small clauses (Basilico (2003)). The focus of the small clause lies in the predicate NP, which also serves as the focus of the entire sentence.

The above arguments lead us to conclude that the words which both exhibit one of the W-S mismatches and undergo syncopation in lines 1 and 2 of *Blowin' in the Wind* are to be pragmatically characterized as semantically prominent elements. The same reasoning applies to the words which occur in the nine questions in the song.

Let us turn to a pragmatic characterization of the NPs *my friend* and *the wind*. The latter NP is in the domain of the focus of the answer and semantically prominent elements. The former NP serves as a vocative, which is usually treated as an element out of a proposition whose focus-status does not matter. In this case, however, the vocative expression is to be treated as semantically prominent in the answer sentence. It plays an important role in that it indicates that the three questions are posed by a friend of the person who answers the question.

The arguments concerning whether the relevant phrases are semantically prominent or not lead us to formulate the following generalization.

(28) In *Blowin' in the Wind*, the words which have semantic prominence in various senses

exhibit two types of mismatches simaltaneously: the W-S mismatch in linguistic structure and syncopation in musical structure.

The words which do not exhibit one or the other of the two mismatches but undergo syncopation are as follows:

(29) a. lines 1-8: roads, call, answer
b. lines 9-16: answer
c. lines 17-24: exist, answer

The NP *the answer* occurs in subject position of each answer sentence. The NP is seen to be semantically less prominent than the predicate. That is because the occurrence of an answer is easily predicted from the occurrence of the questions. More important is the content of the answer, which is expressed by the predicate *is blowin' in the wind*.

The noun *roads* in line 1 is contained in the interrogative NP *how many roads*, which serves as the focus of the question and is most important in the sentence, and is predicted to become the prosodic nucleus. However, the *wh*-element in an interrogative sentence, although semantically important, does not become the nucleus of the sentence in an out-of-the-blue context, as shown in (30).

(30) a. Where is this MUSIC coming from? (*Rear Window*, movie)
b. How much do the TOMATOES cost? (Oakeshott-Taylor (1984:2))

This also applies to *how many roads* in line 1. It is prosodically less prominent than the particle *down* in sentence-final position.

The verbs *call* and *exist* have the same prosodic property. The former occurs in the subordinate clause headed by the conjunction *before*, where the VP forms a focus domain. The verb becomes less prominent than the NP *a man* in sentence-final position, because transitive verbs forming focus domains with the object NPs do not become nuclei, as the following examples illustrate.

(31) a. What happened?---I saw a strange MAN. (Okazaki (1998:61))
b. Anything the matter?---Got a HEADache. (Bolinger (1989:240))

The verb *exist* is contained in the predicate of an interrogative sentence and expected to be accented. However, it is less prominent than the subject NP, as it is characterized as a nonaction predicate in that it denotes the state of its subject NP at the time of speech. Nonaction intransitive predicates, when forming focus domains with their subject NPs, do not become prosodic nuclei (Okazaki (1998)). This is illustrated by the examples in (32). Each of the predicates *arrived* and *is on fire* forms a focus domains with its subject but does not become the nucleus due to its being a nonaction predicate.

(32) a. What happened?---My FATHER arrived. (Okazaki (1998:44))
b. What's up?---Your COAT's on fire. (Schmerling (1976:21))

Finally, let us consider the mismatch pattern of the verb *blowin'* in lines 7, 8, 15, 16, 23, and 24.

The verb is very peculiar in that it is the only word that exhibits inversion but does not undergo syncopation. It has the same prosodic property that *call* and *exist* have. It forms a focus domain with the following PP *in the wind* and does not become the nucleus, as illustrated in (33).

(33) The ANSWER is blowin' in the WIND.

From the above observations, the following generalization can be formulated.

(34) The words which do not become prosodic nuclei either exhibit one of the mismatches or undergo syncopation.

5. Effects of the Mismatches and Syncopation

The simultaneous occurrence of one of the rhythmic mismatches and syncopation must not be seen as a mere accident. It has a close connection with, and significant effects on, the content and theme of *Blowin' in the Wind*.

The words in (25), which simultaneously undergo a mismatch—either the W-S mismatch or inversion—and syncopation, can be viewed as keywords of the song and classified into two groups. One includes the monosyllabic words which describe events in the real world and function as bases for posing the nine questions. The other group includes the words which play the most important role in the answers to the questions. Most of the words belong to the former group, and *friend* and *wind* to the latter.

The occurrence of both a mismatch and syncopation does not seem to be effective for keywords. Our usual prediction is that important elements in a sentence are accented and become more prominent than those which are less important.

This prediction is not on the right track, however. The occurrence of both one of the W-S mismatches and syncopation is the most effective way of foregrounding the monosyllabic keywords in *Blowin' in the Wind*. Their simultaneous occurrence forces the words to be placed in a weak position both in the poetic template ((2)) and in the musical template ((18)). Actually, however, they are accented and become nuclei within PPhs. Creating the discrepancy between the positional phonological status and the actual phonological status is an unexpected method of word placement and, exactly for this reason, is the most effective way for them to be in the foreground.

The monosyllabic accented keywords placed in a weak position, both poetic and musical, apparently behave as if they were in the background and very similar in nature to the negative of a photograph. Actually, however, they are phonologically most prominent in a PPh and exhibit the same behavior as the positive print of a photograph. They take on a more vivid appearance than they do in a strong position, either poetic or musical.

The same holds for the simultaneous occurrence of inversion and syncopation in the disyllabic keywords. It also brings about the discrepancy between the positional phonological status and the actual phonological status. In this case, they behave at first glance as if they had a similar property to that of the negative of a photograph. In fact, however, they have a property which is very similar in

nature to the positive print of a photograph and become much more vivid than they are placed in SW-position in the poetic and musical templates.

Given the effect of the simultaneous occurrence of a mismatch and syncopation, we are able to clarify the effect of the occurrence of syncopation despite the nonoccurrence of either of the mismatches. The occurrence of syncopation without the W-S mismatch or inversion also causes the accented nouns in (29) to become vivid, but the degree of vividness is lower than the cases of the simultaneous occurrence of the two devices are. It has no effect on the two verbs in (29), for they are not accented. They exhibit complete matches between the linguistic rhythm and the rhythm of the poetic and musical templates.

Whether a word simultaneously exhibits a mismatch and undergoes syncopation or not exactly corresponds to the theme of the song. The theme can roughly be summarized as follows:

(35) Even if one poses questions for a lot of unjustifiable things and events in the real world and demands quick solutions to them, it is hardly possible to achieve. It is still unclear whether or not there are definite answers to them. It is much more important to recognize the problems than to demands immediate answers to them.

It is natural that the keywords concerning descriptions of the situations in the world simultaneously exhibit a mismatch and undergo syncopation. It is also natural that the words which correspond to the focus of a question undergo syncopation without any mismatch. They are less important than those which describe the real situations. It follows, then, that the poetic and musical forms of Bob Dylan's *Blowin' in the Wind* directly correspond to its content and theme.

The correspondence between the W-S mismatch and the content of a text can also be seen in Emily Dickinson's poems. The correspondence between syncopation and the content of a song can also be seen in *Top of the World*, sung by the Carpenters. For lack of space, however, I will not go into these issues any further. See Okazaki (2004a, b), for further details. Suffice it to say here that the pattern of form-meaning correspondence in *Blowin' in the Wind* is not at all exceptional but must be taken to be one of its vivid examples.

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College of Humanities
Ibaraki University
e-mail: okzk@mx.ibraki.ac.jp