
Ronald Robert Capps
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THE CRITICAL CONNECTION: A COMPUTER-ASSISTED RHETORICAL CRITICISM OF THE MESSAGE OF HARRY F. CHAPIN

The Louisiana State University and Agricultural and Mechanical Col. PH.D. 1984

University Microfilms International 300 N. Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, MI 48106
THE CRITICAL CONNECTION: A COMPUTER-ASSISTED RHETORICAL CRITICISM OF THE MESSAGE OF HARRY F. CHAPIN

A Dissertation

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the Louisiana State University and Agricultural and Mechanical College in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

in

The Department of Speech Communication, Theatre, and Communication Disorders

by

Ronald Robert Capps
B.A., California State University--Fresno, 1981
M.A., Pittsburg State University, 1981
December 1984
Acknowledgements

Academic projects, such as this, are labors and products of love and understanding. This project is no exception. This undertaking would have been impossible without the love, support and understanding of my wife Carol and my parents. It is also the product of the contributions made by numerous family members and friends of the late Harry F. Chapin who made themselves and their memories available to me. Special thanks are due to Dr. James B. Chapin, Tom Chapin, and Sandy Gaston Chapin for their assistance and sanctioning of this project. The members of my committee deserve a special appreciation for their guidance and insights, however, special gratitude is owed to Dr. John H. Patton and Dr. Jim Springer Borck, my major and minor professors respectively.
# Table of Contents

Acknowledgements.................................................. ii
Table of Contents................................................... iii
List of Tables......................................................... iv
Abstract....................................................................... v
Chapter One-- Introduction........................................... 1
Chapter Two-- Computer-Assisted Content Analysis........... 13
Chapter Three-- Rhetorical Distinctiveness.................... 37
Chapter Four-- The Rhetoric of Reform......................... 59
Chapter Five-- Conclusion............................................. 82
Endnotes........................................................................ 90
Select Bibliography.................................................... 101
Appendix A-- Biographical Note................................. 111
Appendix B-- Early Lyrics Frequency Count................. 116
Appendix C-- Later Lyrics Frequency Count.................. 124
List of Tables

Table One— Early Lyrics Count Compared to Later Lyrics.......................... 19
Table Two— Early Lyrics Count Compared to Later Lyrics............................ 21
Table Three— Early Lyrics Count Compared to Later Lyrics............................ 21
Table Four— College Student Word Use Compared to Chapin's Word Use in Later Lyrics... 25
Table Five— College Student Word Use Compared to Chapin's Word Use in Later Lyrics... 27
Table Six— College Student Word Use Compared to Chapin's Word Use in Later Lyrics... 27
Table Seven— Dahl's Corpus Compared to Later Lyrics................................. 28
Table Eight— Dahl's Corpus Compared to Later Lyrics................................. 29
Table Nine— Dahl's Corpus Compared to Later Lyrics................................. 29
Table Ten— College Student Word Use Compared to Chapin's Word Use in Later Lyrics... 31
Table Eleven— Dahl's Corpus Compared to Later Lyrics................................. 32
Abstract

In this study I examine the forms, contents, and functions of the rhetoric of singer-songwriter Harry Forster Chapin, in an attempt to more fully understand rhetorical theorist Kenneth Burke's assertion that his grandson was a uniquely powerful rhetorical figure who "could energize people, everyone, the world."

This study was conceived from the perspective of the "New Rhetoric," and therefore, it acknowledges that "identification" may serve as an "end" in itself. It is this willingness to accept "identification" as an "end" in itself that separates contemporary rhetorical theory from its classical counterpart.

In my effort to remain faithful to Chapin's lyrics, I chose to use a computer-assisted content analysis of the lyrical texts. The use of a personal computer and commercially available programs demonstrated the practicability of such a critical "tool" for the rhetorical critic who elects to focus directly on the text of the message itself. My use of the computer provided a heightened awareness of Chapin's reliance on words which encouraged identification and a feeling of consubstantiality through Chapin's use of words clustering around orientations of "other" and the collective bonding of man.
The balance of the dissertation focuses upon the rhetorical distinctiveness and rhetorical strategies demonstrated by Chapin's message. Three areas of rhetorical distinctiveness are explored: Chapin as a representative member of a folk-activist tradition; Chapin's development of a unique cinematic lyric style; and the ritualistic nature of the Chapin-message-audience interaction. Chapin's messages reflect two vital concerns: the common person should have an impact on social problems through a participatory democracy; and the importance of children as a source of truth and clear vision. Through his reliance on rhetorical strategies of identification, the act of overhearing speech acts, self-deprecation, repetition, and personalization of the future by his depiction of young people, Chapin coped with his rhetorical problems. These strategies allowed Chapin to provide potential avenues for change which were in keeping with the heritage and traditions of this country while addressing a generation that had grown increasingly cynical and frustrated in their efforts to promote change.
Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

In this study I examine the forms, contents, and functions of the rhetoric of singer-songwriter Harry Forster Chapin. In the most "humane tradition of rhetoric," I pose three questions:

1. What are the distinctive features of Chapin's rhetoric?

2. What significant themes and symbols dominate Chapin's rhetoric?

3. What social functions do the themes and symbols in Chapin's rhetoric perform?

My pursuit of these three questions allows the exploration of the social function of Chapin's rhetoric and the determination of their social worth, because, "all judgment of discourse resides finally in the realm of values." This is consistent with Robert Cathcart's critical perspective that "no judgement of the effectiveness of a speaker or the artistic qualities of a message can be made without ethical and moral considerations." This perspective encourages the critic to serve
"society in upholding its ethical and moral aims" and stresses the importance for the critic to consider "the larger social purposes of communication and the ultimate values of society."³

This critical perspective gains importance from its humanistic emphasis on "the understanding of man himself," an emphasis that Edwin Black has identified as "the goal of criticism." In joining with other humanistic studies, criticism "seeks to understand men by studying men's acts and creations." By adopting this goal, the critic may find additional motive beyond understanding--the desire "to enhance the quality of human life." Criticism and the critical act have an "inextricable involvement" with "moral values." As a discipline, criticism "seeks as its end the understanding of man himself" and it achieves this understanding through "the investigation and appraisal of the activities and products of men."⁴ In responding to the three queries underlying this study, we gain a more complete understanding of the functioning of Harry Chapin's rhetoric, hence a better understanding of man, and thus fulfill the ultimate objective of a humanistic criticism.
JUSTIFICATION FOR STUDY

I attempt in this study to respond to Bitzer's proposal at the Wingspread Conference that we expand rhetorical criticism "to examine the processes of interaction that are at work" in "poetic and aesthetic art forms" such as music and films. Bitzer claims that "the rhetorical uses" of such forms "account for more value formation than all the sermons, political speeches, and classroom lectures put together." Participants in the Wingspread Conference on Rhetoric concluded: "critical understanding and assessment should be brought to bear upon such objects as contemporary popular music which is helping to educate or otherwise shape the understandings of a generation of young Americans." The participants believed the areas of popular music, news, film, drama, novels, and poetry, "increasingly" influenced "attitudes bearing social consequences." It is precisely the social function of Harry Chapin's rhetoric, and resultant social consequences, that form the heart of my inquiry.

Why study the lyrics of Harry Chapin? Ralph Nader and Mark Green have jointly asserted that "more than any other entertainer in his generation, Harry [Chapin] was a citizen-artist." Nader and Green concluded by expressing the hope "that Harry Chapin's legacy will include not only his music but his citizenship, so that others may
learn of his example and emulate it. For he was a model of what Justice Felix Frankfurter once referred to as the highest position in a democracy--the office of citizen. This critic seeks to discover how Chapin functioned as a citizen-artist and to draw out implications which might be applied to his contemporaries.

A second justification is provided by the assertion of Chapin's grandfather that his grandson's rhetoric is "a subject well worth dealing with." That in itself would be a simplistic justification, because a grandfather is usually not an unbiased observer and, certainly, few grandsons have Kenneth Burke as a grandfather. Thus when Burke asserted, "There are a lot of strong people in this family who are brilliant, original, different, but Harry was a power with a capital P. He could energize people, everyone, the world," I understood that there just might be an "energy" in Chapin's rhetoric which deserves rhetorical study.

A third justification resides in my preference to employ the perspective offered by the "New Rhetoric," an approach which sees a shift in key terminology. Nichols attributes the development of such a rhetoric to "men like [Kenneth] Burke and [I. A.] Richards," noting they "provide a stimulus" and "may give promise of providing rhetoricians with a theory which is better adapted to the learning and thought of modern times than any conception arrived at two thousand years ago for a culture quite different from our own." Specifically,
Burke observes: "The key term for the old rhetoric was 'persuasion' and its stress was upon deliberate design." Burke claims the distinctive feature of the "New Rhetoric" is its stressing of a different "key" term: "The key term for the 'new' rhetoric would be 'identification', which can include a partially 'unconscious' factor in appeal." Burke concludes that while "identification' at its simplest may be a "deliberate device," it also may serve as an "end" in itself.11 It is in Burke's willingness to accept "identification" as an "end" in itself that separates contemporary rhetorical theory from its classical counterpart. Most significantly, such an "identification" may spring from "unconscious," or even unexplainable factors.

Given the three questions underlying this study and the justification for directing critical attention to the rhetoric of Harry Chapin, any study seeking to examine and explain the form, content, and function of a rhetorician must focus on the rhetorical message itself and ask the right questions. In the words of Otis Walter: "Neither the most intelligent nor the most fundamental issues are always revealed by asking about the means of persuasion."12 Prior to addressing the "intelligent" and "fundamental issues," my attention must be directed [through my analysis of Chapin's use of identification] to understanding the centrality of language, the meaning of content analysis, and the primacy of the message.
Centrality of Language:

There are many established critical approaches a rhetorical critic may choose to employ. Like path-clearing pioneers, today's critic relies upon the knowledge, or "sense," that the object studied is characteristically a creation in language and that somewhere in or around the language lies the animate principle of the discourse, pervading all the other principles. When the critic's attention is directed to the qualities of language itself, the critic obtains the proper recognition and humane focus for critical inquiry—the language itself. A letter from Burke reminded me that the "main thing" was to do my "analysis of Harry's work" and to recognize that the "important thing" was to "say" what I "see in Harry's work." Burke cautioned that undue concern should not be directed to his direct influence on Harry, instead the attention must be directed to Chapin's works. Fifty years previously, Burke wrote "man is vocabulary" and if I sought to understand his grandson's rhetoric, the key was in Chapin's use of words.

By critically analyzing Harry Chapin's rhetorical messages, I can achieve a fuller understanding of the way in which individuals and our society are moved by what they hear and subsequently envision. To achieve this understanding, the critical focus should be on the humane dimension which resides in the centrality of language, a language which the critic "searches for the forces—motivations, emotions—
work through the language."\textsuperscript{18} It is precisely such a focus that the critic obtains using a content analysis to supplement and magnify the messages themselves. By engaging the message the critic is encouraged to focus on the "enduring center" of rhetorical theory, a center which is located in "the centrality of language" of human experience. Through attention to the centrality of language as a source for interpretation, the critic relies upon a "permanent core" which "yields the essential identity and purpose of rhetoric in the humane tradition."\textsuperscript{19} Language forms a "permanent core" which resides at the center of any rhetorical theory and analysis.

\textbf{Content Analysis:}

Rhetorical scholars willing to utilize the expertise developed by other disciplines will discover potential foundations for advancement of scholarship within their own discipline. As Albert Croft claimed, a pluralistic approach conceived along these lines is "the only intellectually defensible position."\textsuperscript{20} Croft argued that if rhetorical critics fail to adopt a pluralistic critical perspective "public address" will continue "to turn inward on itself." If rhetorical scholars remain "content with duplicative studies" representing "artificial samples of rhetorical techniques" which are divorced from the ideas they contain, "rhetorical criticism will have passed up its most significant scholarly function."\textsuperscript{21}
Content analysis was developed by the social sciences, and while it is familiar to many rhetorical critic, the concept remains ill-defined and in frequently used by the rhetorical critic. For the purposes of this study, Robert Mitchell's conception of content analysis is the most accurate: "content analysis refers to technical procedures for producing data, not to a methodology for manipulating quantitative materials. That is, content analysis is a data-collection technique." Mitchell notes the similarity of content analysis to "personal interviewing, self-administered questionnaires, and observational protocols" as data-collection techniques. As a data-collection technique, content analysis will be relied upon for the grouping and ordering of word units and themes.

A major benefit of the critic's use of the technique of content analysis is the reflection that such an analysis forces upon the works themselves. This benefit has prompted Charles Redding to claim that "some form of content analysis--no matter how subjective or limited in scope should be the very essence of rhetorical criticism." Bernard Berelson, a pioneer of content analysis in the social sciences, cautions the communication researcher and rhetorical critic alike that "content analysis can describe communications, but it cannot per se, evaluate them." The responsibility for evaluation still firmly resides with the individual critic. Nonetheless, after close observation of the rhetorical artifacts the critic should have a much firmer base for a deeper and
more insightful criticism that is the product of the critic's judgement and the documents themselves.

**Primacy of the Message:**

If Chapin's messages transmit lessons in citizenship or if the use of lyrics is a vital rhetorical form, my analysis of his messages should disclose such lessons while focusing critical attention on the "one indispensable" element in rhetorical criticism—the message. In detailing his "anatomy of critical discourse," Rosenfield observes that the message serves as a "linguistic architecture which supports and gives form to the rhetorical act." He concludes that the "message" is the only indispensable element to any critical analysis. The messages reveal "a great deal" about Chapin and the lessons he considered important. Similar to Rosenfield, Cathcart sees word selection as the essential element in achieving a critical understanding of the message.

It is "through the critical study of man's rhetorical act" that we possess "an important" vehicle for the understanding of "man in society, man striving, man seeking to cope with his own public destiny within his concept of his world and how it is constructed and propelled," because, as Richard Weaver reminds rhetorical critics: "We are all of us preachers in private or public capacities. We have
no sooner uttered words than we have given impulse to other people
to look at the world, or some small part of it, in our way." The
ccontent of Chapin's rhetorical messages discloses the way in which his
rhetoric spoke "to man in his whole being and out of his whole past
and with reference to values which only a human being can Intuit
[emphasis added]." Weaver's insight, that only humans can Intuit
values, hints at the potential advantages of a Polanyian approach.
Weaver's insight also encourages a humanistic critical orientation.
According to Nichols, a humane approach to criticism requires the
critic to "make an authentic statement, an honest judgement, and
display a contagious allegiance to truth, justice, tolerance, courage,
and hope, all parts of man's work as citizen and statesman." This
criticism is advanced in the truest spirit of the humane tradition of
rhetoric.

SOURCE OF MATERIALS AND PLAN OF STUDY

The primary materials for this critical analysis are the lyrics
written and performed by Harry Chapin. In addition, other primary
materials include Chapin's unpublished typescripts, speeches,
screenplays, and interviews. Secondary materials will focus on
extensive interviews done with members of his family, members of
Congress, and other private, professional, and government associates.
Hence my investigation has included access to Chapin's files
maintained in his business office, the special collections library of Rutger's University, and the Library of Congress.

In chapter two I present the findings of a computer assisted content analysis I ran on the entire corpus of Chapin lyrics. This frequency content analysis measurement includes both an analysis of stable distribution and an analysis of unbiased representation. An analysis of stable distribution indicates the degree of stability of an individual's vocabulary as reflected by usage spanning several years. Chapin's corpus was divided into early and "integrative" works. Works recorded prior to 1975 were classified as early works. Those works recorded after 1974 were classified as "integrative," because from that point Chapin began to consciously integrate his music, family, country, and beliefs into a unified force that provided him with satisfaction. The analysis of unbiased representation calls for my comparison of Chapin's word selection with the two established frequency tables for spoken American English and, therefore, indicating frequencies of word usage that deviate from what might normally be expected.

In chapter three I explore the distinctive features of Chapin's rhetoric, specifically focusing on Chapin as a representative extension of the folk tradition of Woody Guthrie and Pete Seeger, his uniquely cinematic storytelling form, his perceived relationship with his audience, and the ritualistic nature of the relationship existing between Chapin, the lyric, and the audience.
In chapter four I bring the dominate themes and symbols of Chapin's rhetoric into a narrower focus so that I may discuss how such themes and symbols constitute a rhetoric of reform.

In the fifth and final chapter I discuss each of the three questions posed earlier in this introduction in light of this investigation. In addition, I discuss Chapin's rhetoric as the rhetoric of a mythic Noble Warrior and note the similarity between the tributes to the Noble Warrior in most mythic patterns and Chapin's eulogies.
Chapter 2

Computer Assisted Content Analysis

Before addressing the critical questions outlined in the introduction, I will examine Harry Chapin's complete body of lyrics to objectively ascertain his distinctive word choices. By examining Chapin's word selection, I am able to focus on the "idiosyncracies" of his vocabulary. In this chapter I examine the discriminate word units present within Chapin's lyrics by performing a word frequency count of the content.

Research Procedure

Chapin's lyrics were assembled and processed on a portable computer with commercially available software. I chose to proceed with a computer assisted content-analysis because it afforded certain advantages:

1. a higher reliability than a manual frequency count;

2. a more efficient use of research time.
A total of ninety-seven lyrics were entered for analysis. This portion of my analysis omits: unrecorded Chapin lyrics; lyrics recorded by Chapin which were co-authored or the work of another; and finally, the lyrical score composed by Chapin for *Cotton Patch Gospel*. The unrecorded lyrics were omitted as unshared. The lyrics which were co-authored or the work of another were excluded because determination of Chapin's contribution could not be made. Finally, the lyrics which Chapin composed for the musical *Cotton Patch Gospel* were discounted because they had been commissioned for a special purpose.

Following entry, the texts were subjected to a word count and word frequency analysis. For this analysis, the lyrics were divided into two arbitrary categories.

Chapin's first four albums, containing thirty-six individual songs, were grouped to form the first sample population. These albums were released before 1975, the year that Chapin joined with Bill Ayers in founding World Hunger Year to combat world hunger. The second sample population represents the seven albums, containing sixty-one individual songs, released between 1975 and 1980.

The frequency analysis will examine both a "standard of stable distribution" measurement and an analysis that Krippendorff believes to be "more important," that of "the standard of unbiased representation."
The first measurement "notes changes in frequencies over time" and will be observed in a comparison of the word choices between the two lyric categories. The measure believed to be more important will be applied to both populations. This measurement compares the observed frequencies with a standard established by a representative population to determine if the "observed frequencies are larger or smaller" than what one might normally expect. The population to be used for comparison must be clearly identified before claims may be advanced that the "proportions of observed frequencies are 'surprising.'"\(^5\)

One standard for comparison will be Dahl's *Word Frequencies of Spoken American English*. Dahl's sample consisted of 1,058,888 individual words\(^6\) [Tokens] and 17,871 unique words [Types], which were spoken by thirty different subjects during fifteen randomly selected psychoanalytic sessions in eight different American cities. The subjects included both patients and psychoanalysts. While the choice of speakers was not random, it is believed that this situation "is particularly appropriate for sampling" and may be favorably compared to other spoken samples. Citing Howes 1966 study, Dahl observes: "Spoken English is typically sampled in a monologue situation in which the subject is asked to talk about anything he wishes. When the subject stops talking the investigator usually invites him to continue talking about some general subject such as family or politics."\(^7\) The Dahl word sample is the largest available standardized base for comparison with "spoken" American English.
I chose to supplement the Dahl word sample with Howes' word count of spoken English. My use of Howes' sample allows verification of apparent significance disclosed by my comparative analysis relying on the Dahl data. The Howes corpus consists of 250,000 individual words [Tokens] distributed among 9,699 unique words [Types] gathered during 5,000 word interviews with twenty patients at the Boston Veterans Administration Hospital, twenty college sophomores attending Northeastern University or Massachusetts Institute of Technology, and an individual subject from the VA Hospital who contributed ten 5,000 word interviews over a period of time "to study the stability of word-frequency data for a single individual." In conducting the interviews, the subjects were encouraged to discuss topics of general interest to them, with the Interviewer prepared to inject a lagging interview with "a leading question like 'tell me about your family,' or 'what do you think of the political situation?' Specific questions calling for specific answers were avoided," according to Howes. A particular utility of this sample is the ability to separate the college students from the hospital patients to establish a separate population consisting of 100,000 words. This investigation contrasts Chapin's word use with the word selection of the college students.

The orientation toward "spoken English" was the primary criterion for choosing the Dahl and Howes sample populations over other available standards for comparison, because they are appropriate
for the analysis of language spoken to be heard. While the Thorndike and Lorge word count has been previously employed by researchers in our discipline, I agree with Berger's observations of its inadequacies; not the least of which is it was never claimed to be "representative of English speech." I found the Brown University corpus, constructed by Kucera and Francis, to be extremely comprehensive for analysis of written material but not as appropriate for the analysis of language spoken to be heard.

**Analysis of Stable Distribution**

My frequency count of Chapin's early lyrics disclose a total of 11,247 individual words, 1,847 unique words, and 1,025 words appearing only once. In contrast, his later lyrics contained 22,119 total words, 2,882 unique words, and 1,548 words used once. The early lyrics averaged 312.42 words in length compared to a 362.61 word length on the later works. These discoveries provide the critic potential pathways into the rhetorical work itself. For purposes of my investigation, I chose to scan the frequency counts to discover linguistic "strategies" which I might intuitively group for comparative analysis.

My analysis of the lyrics revealed a shift in Chapin's word selection: Chapin's later lyrics could be characterized as "you"
oriented. Dahl's findings indicate the ten most frequently used words are: 1) "I" [61,586]; 2) "and" [35,906]; 3) "the" [28,098]; 4) "to" [28,004]; 5) "that" [26,025]; 6) "you" [25,119]; 7) "it" [19,400]; 8) "of" [19,162]; 9) "a" [18,307]; and 10) "know" [14,435]. Note that "I" is the most frequently spoken word and occurs more than twice as often as the word "you." These ten words are the most prevalent in Chapin's early lyrics: 1) the; 2) and; 3) I; 4) a; 5) to; 6) you; 7) of; 8) my; 9) she; 10 [and] me. The early lyrics closely parallel the Dahl corpus. Dahl's fifth, seventh, and tenth ranked words [that, it, (and) know] become the fifteenth, thirteenth, and twenty-seventh ranked words respectively. They are replaced by Chapin's use of his eighth, ninth, and tenth ranked words [my, she, (and) me]; which are respectively ranked nineteenth, forty-fourth, and fifteenth by Dahl. Chapin's later lyrics represent a dramatic shift in his use of the word you: His use of the word "you" surpasses the frequency of the word "I". The later lyrics provide the following top ten ranked ordering: 1) the; 2) you; 3) and; 4) I; 5) to; 6) a; 7) that; 8) in; 9) my; 10) [and] of. Dahl's seventh and tenth ranked words [it (and) know] are respectively ranked eleventh and thirty-fourth in Chapin's later lyrics. Chapin's eighth and ninth ranked words [in (and) my] are ranked twelfth and nineteenth by Dahl. This observable consistency highlights the dramatic shift initially disclosed by a comparison between Chapin's early and later lyrics.

Table one presents a comparison between clusters which I refer to as clusters of "self" and "other". The cluster of "self" is composed
TABLE ONE

<table>
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<th>LATER</th>
<th>RATIO **</th>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
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* The anticipated frequency was determined by multiplying the raw frequency count of the early lyrics by a factor of 1.96 to offset the difference between the two sample populations.

** The ratio was computed by dividing raw frequency count of the later lyrics by the anticipated frequencies. A ratio of 1.00 indicates a raw count equal to the anticipated frequency.
of several self-referential personal pronouns. The cluster of "other" is composed of a grouping of other-oriented personal pronouns. "I'll" is the only self-referential personal pronoun to exceed its anticipated frequency in the later lyrics. "I'll" is a contraction for "I will", therefore representing its user's willingness to accept a personal commitment to fulfill a responsibility.

The cluster of other-oriented personal pronouns reveals their unanimous surpassing of anticipated frequencies. Chapin's use of "you're" places the emphasis on the message's recipient; and because it is a "present indicative," it addresses the listener directly. The uniform degree of the shift in orientation is brought into a clearly identifiable focus when the four most frequently appearing words are read in rank order: "The you and I" orientation. Chapin's use of other-oriented words directs and individualizes the message to any and every recipient of the message.

Table two depicts a continuation of the orientation first encountered in my examination of the self-referential and other-oriented words illustrated in table one. My scrutiny of the frequency lists disclosed an increasing reliance on a cluster of personal pronouns which stress the connective and collective bond between the perceived being or persona contained in the message and the recipient of the message. This cluster stresses the bond of we. Chapin's selection of these words provided encouragement to any recipient of
TABLE TWO

<table>
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<th>RATIO**</th>
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<td>9.80</td>
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<td>1.63</td>
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TABLE THREE

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</tr>
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</table>

* See Table One for computational formula.
** See Table One for computational formula.
the message. He extended a semantic hand of brotherhood which stressed the recipient of the message need not feel alone or isolated because both parties suffered the joys and sorrows, triumphs and failures, and, perhaps ultimately, praise and blame for any actions they might mutually engage in or be responsible for, including the health of the society they shared in common.

A third dimension of this comparative analysis of the stable distribution in Chapin's lyrics is represented by the data reported in table three. This table portrays a "journalistic" orientation, stressing the age old questions of who, what, when, where, and why. Upon hearing one of these words, the listener is alerted to a potentially forthcoming question. By using these words one creates an environment of questioning, instead of encouraging the listener to anticipate that the message contained an answer. Likewise, the lower than anticipated use of "who" may only serve to confirm that the implied question was unneeded because the intensified use of other and collectively oriented personal pronouns preemptively implies the answer.

Through close examination of the individual word frequencies present in both Chapin's early and later lyrics, a potentially significant shift in Chapin's lyrical orientation has been detected. The later lyrics reflect an orientation intensifying the importance of the individual encountering the message; and they do this while stressing
the bond they jointly shared as members belonging to a common generation exhibiting a similar base of values, potential guilts, and sense of personal and communal responsibility. According to his brother Tom, "music enabled Harry to help this world and himself." Chapin was acutely aware that he was writing for both himself and his listener. He asked for "a one-to-one attention span" with the intent of sharing "intellectual thoughts," while seeking to sensitize his listeners to the potential burdens of life. Chapin saw the potential for sensitization dependent upon one's being able to write about "something that will apply to a lot of different people, [and] give them, not an answer, but a question that might be interesting for them to ask themselves." The relationship was characterized by Chapin's strength of commitment, his listener's flexibility of imagination, and his listener's mutual willingness to trust and believe.

**Analysis of Unbiased Representation**

Having accomplished the comparison of word selection within the context of Harry Chapin's lyrical data base, a more complete analysis allows us to view such a data base in relation to what frequencies of choice might normally be expected. Viewing Chapin's frequencies of word choice from this perspective discloses the distinctiveness of his choices and the implications of those choices.
In the tables which follow, the reader will observe a comparison between Chapin's word frequencies and two other populations. Initial attention is directed toward a comparison between his word frequencies in his later lyrics and those of Howes' college students. Subsequently, the same words will be examined in a comparison between Chapin's later lyrics with the Dahl word sample. Through these comparisons with the frequency norms of the spoken word, we gain a deeper awareness and understanding of the significant shifts in frequency discovered during the analysis of stable distribution. In addition, we determine the words Chapin's listeners hear most frequently.

Table four reports data confirming Chapin's preference for other-oriented words. One apparent glaring exception is the high ratio registered by his use of the word "me." The apparent deviancy might be attributed to Chapin's desire to employ the more informal self-reference form of "me" instead of the more formal, and unapproachable, self-affirmation of "I." I believe that a more accurate explanation can be provided by claiming it to be the deviancy of the student population chosen for comparison, rather than a marked deviancy attributable to Chapin. I feel justified in making this claim by noting that the Dahl sample [table seven] reveals a much lower ratio [1.27] compared with the student-Chapin ratio of 4.05.

My investigation confirmed Chapin's uniformly dominant
### TABLE FOUR

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<tr>
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<th>RATIO**</th>
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<td></td>
</tr>
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* The anticipated frequency was determined by multiplying the student's raw frequency count by a factor of 22.119 to offset the difference between the sizes of the two sample populations.

** The ratio was computed by dividing raw frequency count of the later lyrics by the anticipated frequencies. A ratio of 1.00 indicates a raw count equal to the anticipated frequency.
preference for employing other-oriented personal pronouns; their dominance exceeded that first uncovered when I performed my analysis of stable distribution. Acknowledging the potential for statistical aberrations when dealing with a small population or frequency of occurrence, Chapin's use of "you" and "your" remain remarkable; while each remaining word belonging to this cluster is noteworthy. The raw frequency count indicates that Chapin's later lyrics employed the word "your" thirty-four times more frequently than the entire population of students accomplished in 100,000 utterances. Thus the frequency ratio of 5.65 becomes especially remarkable.

Tables five and six provide further verification of Chapin's greater than expected use of words which facilitate a feeling of unity and shared interests. They also indicate results accrediting my observation that Chapin encouraged a tradition of questioning among the recipients of his message.

The findings reported in tables seven, eight, and nine stem from my comparison between Chapin's later lyrics and the Dahl corpus. I discovered findings which are in general keeping with all data reported thus far. The only noteworthy exception arose in my analysis of the words I have described as "journalistic" in their orientation. Specifically, the previously noted lower than anticipated reliance on the word "who" was joined by a lower than anticipated frequency of "what" and "why." I believe that this deviance is similar to that
### TABLE FIVE

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* See Table Four for computational formula.
** See Table Four for computational formula.
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<th>RATIO **</th>
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* The anticipated frequency was determined by multiplying the adjusted frequency per million count of the Dahl word count by a factor of 2.2119 to offset the size difference between the two sample populations.

** The ratio was computed by dividing raw frequency count of the later lyrics by the anticipated frequencies. A ratio of 1.00 indicates a raw count equal to the anticipated frequency.
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* See Table Seven for computational formula.
** See Table Seven for computational formula.
previously observed in discussion of the word "me" reported in table four. When used in the context of "psychoanalytic interviews," certain words, such as "what" and "why," have a naturally higher frequency than we might legitimately expect. Therefore, I believe that the Dahl corpus offers an implicit bias made explicit by the computer-assisted content analysis.

I will conclude this portion of analysis by briefly commenting upon three additional strategic clusters: Man the Seeker; Man the Judge; and, finally, Man the Optimist. These findings are made available in tables ten and eleven. Table ten presents a comparison between Chapin and the Howes word samples. Table eleven presents a parallel comparison between Chapin and the Dahl populations.

Man the Seeker is a cluster formed by my grouping of the words: find, found, learn, learned, and lesson(s). This cluster yielded an interesting surprise. I assumed that the college students might exhibit a biased preference for these words. My assumption received added support when I compared the Howes student corpus with the Dahl data and discovered the students demonstrated a substantially higher than anticipated frequency for all but the "lesson(s)" item. Despite its potentially inflated frequency standards, Chapin surpassed the student's anticipated frequency level at each point. Chapin's raw frequency count actually exceeded the total student's raw frequency count for the items "found" and "lesson(s)." This cluster serves as an
### TABLE TEN

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* See Table Four for computational formula.
** See Table Four for computational formula.
*** I chose not to collapse the categories of dream and dreams or hope and hopes, because the collapse would distort the data. For example, if I collapsed the ratio for the word dream would become 80.68.
### TABLE ELEVEN

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* See Table Seven for computational formula.
** See Table Seven for computational formula.
*** See Table Ten for rationale for not collapsing categories. While the distortion would not have been as great in this table if I had collapsed the categories, it would have made it difficult to compare the three different word samples.
antithesis to the one cluster which appears to contradict existing assumptions concerning the nature of Chapin's lyrical message. I refer to this antithetical cluster as Man the Prophet.

Man the Judge is a cluster formed by my grouping of the words: "know," "right," and "wrong." Critics frequently attacked Chapin's lyrics for being "preachy and didactic," however, when I broke the lyrics down to their individual word units, I found little to support such a criticism.

Tables ten and eleven indicate Chapin's much lower than expected use of the word "know" and his even lower frequency ratio for the word "right." A pedantic moralist might reasonably be expected to remind us frequently that he "knows" the "right" answer. Chapin did not use his lyrics to make overtly explicit claims of morally "right" action.

I am not claiming that his listener did not perceive a clear sense of "right" action. I am claiming that Chapin did not use the word "right" to signpost the apparent lessons in moral and humane behavior. I believe that these observed frequencies indicate that the listener's own sense of values and conscience may be the more active variable in any formula of morality. When the listener's thoughts or actions come into conflict with what he believes to be morally right he may encounter a state of cognitive dissonance, or lack of mental
.harmony and balance, which creates an impetus for his action in an
effort to regain a sense of balance. The recipient of the message
may determine a bond of identification exists which is strong enough
to encourage the emulation of actions taken by characters portrayed
within the scene created by the message unit. The recipient may
elect to resolve the state of dissonance by ignoring the message,
thereby negating the possibility of the message reawakening the
listener's intuitive sense of right. A third alternative can be witnessed
in some listener's angry attacks, refutations, and denials of the
message and/or the perceived source of the message. This response
may indicate the onset of a grieving process for our potential loss of
"false" and "intuitively" untrue beliefs when they become forced into
close reexamination. Likewise, we may be reminded that our
justifications for actions lack the accreditation of the society and the
superior knowledge at the disposal of that society.

Man the Optimist is a cluster formed by my grouping of the
words: "dream," "dreams," "dreamed," "future," "hope," and "hopes." I
find this to be a core metaphor in Chapir's message. It is a
metaphor which fosters the potential vision of a "better" day, or at
least, a world removed from that existing today—a world of the "what
If?" I believe it is especially interesting to note the absence of a
single mention of the words "dreams," "dreamed," and "hopes" by the
college students. This is most likely a deviancy which reflects the
historical period which served as the context for the Howes study.
The word sample was compiled in the mid-sixties, thus placing it in the wake of the demise of "Camelot" and the assassination of President John F. Kennedy, our society's most visible dreamer. The subjects providing the data also were experiencing the frustrations of a nation embroiled in conflict over civil rights and burgeoning concern over the nation's military involvement in Southeast Asia. Such a historical context provides a sterile ground for the growing of dreams. It is a ground which a dreamer may hope to till and reclaim by choosing words which restimulate people's awareness of their innate capacity to participate in the world of dreams and to ask "what if?"

Summary

I have used this chapter to demonstrate Chapin's use of words and to examine his word choices from the standards of "stable distribution" and "unbiased representation". By focusing on the word unit, I am able to concentrate my criticism on the message. I believe this represents a highly tenable position which serves to amplify one's critical perspective. My use of a computer-assisted content analysis neither negates nor fulfills my critical obligation to determine the social function of Chapin's rhetoric. By using content analysis of the smallest discriminant unit--the word--I am better prepared as a critic: to detect potential uniqueness in Chapin's rhetorical approach to both the message and his listener; to discover thematic emphases of
Chapin's messages; and ultimately to determine what social functions are performed by Chapin's use of themes and symbols.
Chapter 3

Rhetorical Distinctiveness

The rhetorical distinctiveness of Chapin's lyrics stem from a well established musical tradition which experienced a renewed growth and vitality in the blowing soil of America's 1930's "dust bowl." Given this realization, the claim I make in this chapter may appear paradoxical: If Chapin's rhetorical messages sounded as if "they had always been," what justification existed for Billboard magazine naming Chapin as the recipient of its 1972 "Trendsetter Award"? In its citation, Billboard noted Chapin had devised "a story-telling style of songwriting with a narrative impact rare to popular music." Chapin wrote movies for the ear. He created readily identifiable scenes occupied by readily identifiable characters; and through his uniquely cinematic style he triggered, within the minds of his listeners, a communicative process which appealed to both their affective and cognitive worlds.

In this chapter I will discuss Chapin as a representative member of the folk-activist tradition popularized by Woody Guthrie in the 1930's and 1940's and perpetuated and amplified by Pete Seeger, Bob
Dylan, and Phil Ochs in the decades which followed. I will provide an example of the unique cinematic style Chapin strove for in his efforts to reach the minds of his listeners. We will see what communicative advantages Chapin gained from this distinctive form and how those advantages were foreshadowed by the analysis I performed in the previous chapter. This chapter concludes with a brief discussion of the realistic nature of the Chapin-message-audience interaction.

The Ultimate Social Weapon

Chapin discovered folk music, "the ultimate social weapon," during the summer of 1957. The treasure was mined from his aunt "Happy" Burke Leacock's converted barn; the "booty"—an album called The Weavers at Carnegie Hall. From that day forward Pete Seeger, of the Weavers, became a personal hero for Chapin. But to better understand Chapin's musical tradition one must begin with Woody Guthrie, another man Chapin respected as a communicator with a worthwhile message, even though he did not respect the man as a person.

Before Guthrie's death in 1967, the "father of the folk music revival," wrote of his hatred for songs "which make you think you're just born to lose [and] no good to nobody." Guthrie was "out to sing the songs that will prove to you that this is your world, no matter
what color, what size you are, or how you are built." The songs which he sang were "made up, for the most part, by all sorts of folks just about like you." Guthrie admitted that he could have "hire[d] out to the other side, the big money side," and gotten paid for singing the kind of songs "that knocks you down still further; and the ones that make you think you've not got any sense at all." But he stressed the mettle of his conviction, deciding long ago that he would "starve to death" before he "would sing any such songs as that. The radio waves, and your movies, and your jukeboxes are already loaded down and running over with such no good songs as that anyhow." The common people needed a source of pride and belief that they were worthwhile members of their society, and that was the type of song Guthrie chose to sing.

Harold Leventhal, longtime Guthrie friend, points to the transfer of knowledge and Guthrie's belief in the folk forum to future generations claiming: "Woody's life was music. Woody's life [was his] lyrics. Woody's life was involved with social protest and the beginning of the sixties [brought] the movement of folk music and social protest [which were] a continuation of exactly what Woody meant all his life." Woody's son, folksinger Arlo Guthrie, cites Bob Dylan and others who saw Woody as a "philosopher" and "human who inspired them in some way or another." In one of his songs Dylan addressed Guthrie with a verse containing a line that Chapin loved to paraphrase in his concerts and speeches,
Bout a funny old world that's comin' along
Seems sick and it's hungry and it's tired and it's torn
Seems like it's a dyin' and it's hardly been born.

To Chapin the words captured man's present condition; it was a condition which a responsible member of society should willingly confront.

Chapin more closely resembled a second generation folk-activist cast in the mold and philosophy of Pete Seeger than Woody Guthrie. Chapin believed that Guthrie "was a genius writer," but, in Chapin's words, "Guthrie couldn't hold Seeger's socks as a human being." As for Dylan, Chapin felt a debt to Dylan for his role in the resurgence of the folk genre, but he "always felt Phil Ochs was truest to the spirit of folk music, apart from Seeger."8 And while Dylan wrote songs to Guthrie, Chapin wrote songs to Seeger, Ochs, and the "black and bluesman" Bob Gibson.

Seeger influenced both Chapin the lyricist and Chapin the man. Chapin, the lyricist, identified Bob Gibson, and "especially Pete Seeger," as the two songwriters that he was "trying to be like."9 Both Chapin and Seeger viewed the audience as a group of people capable of taking positive action, a perspective which Seeger explains stems from a faith that "if only people get a chance to hear a lot of different kinds of things, they'll decide what are the good ones."10 How will they reach this decision—they will just know. It's an
intuitive process of knowing that we utilize during every waking hour. They "know" something is good because they "believe" it to be good, or because it represents something they know to be true, or because it esteems values they too cherish.

Chapin, the man, proudly shared Seeger's counselings with concert audiences, not in an arrogant and boastful way, but rather as a student sharing the wisdorns of a favored teacher, or a proud son or daughter passing on the sage advice of a parent or grandparent. Chapin explained: "Pete Seeger once said to me, 'Harry, I'm not sure if my involvement in a cause with marches or benefits has made any difference. But I can tell you, being in these issues mean you're involved with the good exciting people--the ones with the live hearts.'" By vowing Seeger was "the kind of person" he wanted to be, Chapin had chosen his personal hero. With that decision, Chapin's voice united with Seeger's and became the voice behind a message which might infect thousands of people and send them forth "like fireflies in the night," to countless places they could never hope to go.

Chapin was vulnerable to the folk-citizen-activist tradition Seeger represented because Seeger's philosophies meshed closely with the threefold Burke-Chapin family tradition of: literary-artistic productivity, political involvement through the exercising of one's citizenship for the benefit of one's fellow man, and a willingness to
accept man's responsibility to question those things which potentially affect both man and nature. When interviewers questioned a singer's involvement in social issues, Chapin would refer to Pablo Picasso, saying "When somebody asked him why he got involved in politics, he got quite annoyed and said, 'You mean when I pick up my palette, I give away my brain.'" Chapin's lyrics reflect similar sentiments, sentiments which Folanyi explained are natural in a free society because, "a man who has learned to respect the truth will feel entitled to uphold the truth against the very society which has taught him to respect it." Not only would the person be "entitled to uphold the truth" he would have a personal and social responsibility to uphold and defend the truth.

Chapin expressed his admiration for Seeger in his song "Old Folks." In the song Chapin credits Seeger with "putting the meaning in the music book." The song tells us that Seeger sings "the songs that tell us who we are" and that we can trust Chapin's personal "master," because:

When you look in his eyes you know that somebody's there.
Yeah, he knows where we're going and where we been.
And how the fog is gettin' thicker where the future should begin.
When you look at his life you know that he'd really been there.

Chapin directs the listener's attention to Seeger's eyes—which
we have been taught are the window to the soul—to emphasize the sincerity of the man. He also stresses the prophetic vision that Seeger offers: a vision which can penetrate the "fog" of the future with the wisdoms of the ages and an active awareness of the present. In the last line of the verse Chapin uses a phrase which closely parallels one used by Dylan in the song he wrote for Woody Guthrie:

Hey Woody Guthrie  
But I know that you know  
All the things that I'm sayin'  
And many times more  
I'll sing you this song  
But I can't sing enough  
'Cause there're not many men  
that done the things that you've done

Through their lyrics, both Bob Dylan and Harry Chapin paid tribute to their personal mentors.

In the refrain, Chapin defines what he must expect of himself if he hoped to emulate the role model provided by Seeger. Chapin must be willing to accept criticisms that "he's always bleedin'," because "whenever somebody's needing him, he's the one who cares," and so he will be there. In a recurring metaphor, Chapin likens the problems confronting mankind to a fire, and "whenever something's burning" you can depend upon Seeger or his protege to be there to fight the "fire". Each man was fearless in his defense of truth and good as he confronted misdirected or apathetic human masses seeking to redirect them "to a better world somewhere." Seeger and Chapin sought to
turn the "lice" by triggering the listeners' basic human sense of the humane and intuitive awareness of what was right.

Chapin was willing to sing "for the hopeless cause," for as Polanyi observed: "Our duty lies in the service of ideals which we cannot possibly achieve." It is in our service to these ideals that we express our belief in the possibility of man's progression to a higher plane, a plane whose existence we acknowledge in our axioms [such as: "what the mind can conceive, the mind can achieve."], in our works of art, our dreams of "what if," our noble acts, and our belief in the potential to make scientific discoveries. In fact, "all cultural life is based on the assumption that the standards set by our masters were right and hence the kind of truth or other mental excellence that they achieved is valid and capable of indefinite expansion." Chapin entered his apprenticeship under Seeger with the firm conviction that Seeger was a man of right principles who offered the way to a fuller and more complete life.

The "Old Folks" was still singing the night I met with him to discuss Chapin. Seeger is an extremely shy man; the antithesis of the outgoing and depressingly effervescent Chapin. Seeger appeared genuinely embarrassed that people "fussed" over him for doing what any human should do. That night he had appeared with Tom Chapin in a one hundred year anniversary celebration for the Brooklyn Bridge. The performance was brought to a close with the performance of
three of Harry's songs. Seeger saw in Harry the fully developed traditions of a folksinger who had managed to convey a "coffee house intimacy" to crowds of thousands. Equally important, Chapin had been a good person who did the right thing because it was the right thing. And while Harry may have had some personal flaws, he was a powerful voice for the powerless and a dynamic voice for the voiceless. That is what a folksinger is all about. The tradition had come full circle and in the words of William Wordsworth: "The Child is father of the Man." Chapin learned his lessons well.

A Teller of Tales

Harry Chapin's storytelling style made him different as a songwriter. His lyrical style allowed him to integrate his folk-citizen-activism and his documentary film training. This combination was in the finest traditions of Guthrie and Seeger, for as Seeger explains, "one of the most important things Woody taught" Seeger and "a lot of others" is that "you could make a combination between the best of the old and the new. It didn't have to be one or the other; you could mix them together." Chapin combined the well-seasoned medium of folk music with his award winning skill as a documentary filmmaker.

The storytelling format allowed Chapin to employ a form which
possessed "all the weight of the interest of humanity as opposed to any particular format that may be hot for any particular short amount of time." Consequently, Chapin was surprised to discover that he was "the only artist using the narrative form on a consistent basis." His experience led him to conclude that there was a need for "meaningful music."

Chapin strove "to capture the American condition as well as Jacques Brel had captured the French" condition. Chapin was positive that America needed "an American singer" who could capture American life. He believed that an American singer would "deal with life" and "sing about people's hopes and fears." Grounded in his belief that his lyrics were "more important" than his music, he fashioned his lyrics to capture the American Spirit and rekindle the American Dream. Once Chapin captured the American spirit he tried to revitalize the American Dream through the articulate framework of one's society by using the readily recognizable scenes, magical words, and mythic symbols.

Cinema Verite

Chapin's work with his uncle Ricky Leacock profoundly altered Harry's approach to songwriting, leading him to "a completely different style" than he had previously employed. Leacock, now director of
the film program at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, was instrumental in the development of a new form of film documentary in this country—cinema verite. This new documentary style presents scenes as they are, through an "honest" lens; a cinema of truth. While proponents of this style argue for its absolute objectivity, critics cite the judgmental role of the editor, thus denying absolute objectivity.

Chapin saw potential advantages of this cinema verite style for his narrative style of songwriting, causing him to choose to combine the art forms. He identified his experience with documentary films as "the single most important influence" on his songwriting. He began to "write aural movies," and "each album" premiered several "mini-films." Chapin no longer wrote just music for the ear; he began to write music that required the listener to enter into a thinking relationship with the work, a "music for the mind." 

This newly adopted style stressed the use of lyrics to create scenes which would let the audience "discover for themselves." Chapin believed that "everybody's world starts in their own head; they are the ringmasters of their own world." Consequently, it is the songwriter's responsibility to trigger "something that happens in the listener," because that is "the whole idea of the communication art." Chapin's lyrical style encouraged just such an integration by painting a visual scene which invited the listener's willing participation.
According to Chapin, the artist's use of specifics is the key to successful communication: "The art of communication, in general, is based upon specifics. The most successful communications are not what you say to somebody, 'God, it was incredible' or 'God, it was unique' or 'God, it was something.' What really communicates things are things that call forth images in people's mind." Chapin emphasized the need for specific images when he instructed "would-be" songwriters to "talk about specifics that allow the other person to tune in on the images you're talking about and then [form] generalizations in his own way." To Chapin "words that don't call forth specifics, even though they mean something, they mean nothing," because they fail to trigger the images required for effective communication. Chapin advised songwriters to recreate the situation that gave rise to the attitude, and, hopefully, the listener will sense the atmosphere and "feel" for himself.

Chapin believed that the story-song format had an inherent advantage because it respected the audience and treated it intelligently; because if the songwriter had as strong a respect for his audience—as did Chapin—the writer would recognize that "you don't have to emphasize everything so strongly." Consequently, the songwriter minimized the potential abortion of the listeners' imaginative powers and allowed them to rely upon their own storehouse of personal experiences to provide the emotional and
interpretive shadings.

The shortest song Chapin ever recorded is titled "The Shortest Story". The entire song portrays a period spanning twenty days in three verses; the scenes flooding before the mind's eye take on the vividness and potency of the history of mankind. It testifies to the potential influence which the cinematic style of lyric adopted and developed by Chapin could have on both the cognitive and affective levels of the human mind.

I am born today
The sun burns its promise in my eyes
Mama strikes me and I draw a breath and cry
I am glad to be alive

Chapin invites the listener to see a scene that is described from the view of a child born into a world of hope. He never specifies where this child might live; and while the listener may imagine a Third World baby resembling those seen in television commercials for CARE, Chapin knew that it might just as well be a baby born in a Chicago ghetto or a farmworkers shack. The race of the child is unimportant. The gender is unimportant. What is important is the child's thwarted promise. The baby is in total harmony with the joys and promise of nature and is "glad to be alive."

It is my seventh day
I taste the hunger and I cry
My Brother and Sister cling to Mama's side
She squeezes her breast but it has nothing to provide
In the second verse, Chapin heightens the listeners' interest by referring to the baby's ability to "taste the hunger"; the antithetical phrase possesses the qualities of a finely honed oxymoron. The surviving children, one of each sex, cling to "Mama's side." Chapin does not need to physically describe the children, the listener intuitively "knows" what they look like, the state of their attire, their bodily hygiene, and the look in their eyes. The listener senses "Mama's" silent desperation as she confronts the futility of her position. It does not matter who weeps. Perhaps it is the brother. Maybe it is the sister. Possibly, it is "Mama." In truth, it should be the sound of mankind weeping for its own. Like the troubled adult, the baby gains refuge from the problem by the serene escapism of sleep.

It is twenty days today  
Mama does not hold me anymore  
I open my mouth but I am too weak to cry  
Above me a bird slowly crawls across the sky  
Why is there nothing now to do but die?

In the final verse the listener is shown the disengagement and disintegration of the most unbreakable of bonds, the umbilical bond between "Mama" and child. Failure to portray the other children illustrates the loss of the fraternal bond among siblings. The baby is too weak to "taste the hunger," and also too weak to cry in hope or
pain. The light and liveliness of the first verse yields to a slowly crawling bird in the sky, which, twenty days previously, had represented the promise of life. The passiveness of the child is expressed in the resigned question: "Why is there nothing now to do but die?"

These three simple verses touch us at the core of our humanity. More important, they remind us of a "supreme trust" which "is placed in us by the whole creation." This trust makes it a "sacrilege" for us "even to contemplate actions [or inactions] which may lead to the extinction of humanity." In the words of Polanyi: "Nothing can then justify such actions in any circumstances." He concludes by expressing his belief "that no one who thankfully acknowledges man's calling in this universe, be he religious or agnostic, can avoid this ultimate preemptory conclusion."37

Certain charges are possible. Perhaps the scene is melodramatic. That does not negate the fact that people, "our own kind," are living and dying that scene at this very moment. Possibly, the critic who asked Chapin, "Who the hell appointed you God, anyway?"38 was justified in his attack; however, it is equally possible that it was a question screamed in guilt, or pain, like a person that hurts his or herself and angrily protests that everyone leave him alone. Humans do not like to hurt. But sometimes the pain of our honest emotions are necessary to tear away the scar tissues that act
as desensitizing barriers. In Chapin's words: "You must go through the fire to the better world"; and somewhere along that journey we would learn that "the devil's in all of us just as is God," therefore, "we all possess that philosophical range from the sacred to the profane." It is up to each individual to decide the nature of the comment he chooses to make of him or herself. That is not Chapin telling you what your choice should be, that is the history of mankind. That is the tacit dimension within each of us which intuitively recognizes the proper—and humane—response.

I can reflect on the tendencies disclosed by the computer-assisted content analysis and point to the same orientation clusters in Chapin's approach to songwriting. These tendencies account for the advantages Chapin claimed for the unique form I have been discussing.

The folk-citizen-activist origins and orientation of the form encouraged the forming of a ritualistic bond between Chapin and his audience. The typical member of a Chapin concert audience was between twenty-five and forty-five years old and generally knew what he was going to hear and the form of communion to be shared. There were few surprises in a Chapin concert. A listener knew that Harry would be informal, approachable, and challenge him to think and feel. He knew in advance that an evening spent at a Chapin concert would serve as a pumice stone to his values and soul, sensitizing him,
and energizing him to make that next step, because he mattered. We all mattered.

While Chapin used a slightly different style and vocabulary than Woody Guthrie, a person knew he would walk away from a Chapin concert with little doubt that "this land is your land" and "this land is my land" and together we have been given a sacred trust to preserve the world and mankind. One knew that it would be a communion of shared dreams and visions, and they would not be self-centered dreams of Chapin the redeemer but dreams with Chapin the redreamer. The dreams would be of hopes like he expressed in the conclusion of "What Made America Famous?":

I had the kind of dream that maybe they're still trying to teach in school.
Of the America that made America famous and of the people who just might understand that how together, yes we can, create a country better than the one we have made of this land.
We have the choice to make each man who dares to dream, reaching out his hand, a prophet, or just a crazy Goddamn dreamer of a fool.
Yes a crazy fool.

And something's burning somewhere.
Does anybody care?
Is anybody there?
Is anybody there?

With these universal expressions of hope, Chapin did not seek to knock anyone down, instead he sought to raise our awareness that each of us had it within our power to choose the values we want our children to learn in school.
Chapin's use of "we" places the emphasis on the collective nature of our task while avoiding passing judgment or blame. He reminds each of us, "who just might understand," that we have the potential to do something to put out the metaphoric fire that was threatening to consume our land.

Chapin had a reasonable expectation that his listeners would accept their human responsibilities because "we are all bound to one another, by a band that is invisible; Yet stronger still in time." This is the shared human bond which allows us to trust, feel, and heal with one another. It is a bond sealed by our unwritten personal contract with humanity and our willingness to submit to the sanctions that such a contract implies, including the tacit acceptance of Chapin as a source of superior knowledge. For Chapin the contract authorized his actions and his solemn vow to fulfill his obligation to the folk tradition:

So I'll sing you
Every silly, sad, and happy song I know.
And you'll open every part of you
That you've got left to show.
And I'll pour myself around you
Like the sunshine drowns the field.
And in the golden softness
We will yield.

The metaphor of the gardener finds its roots in the word of God and the experience of man in nature. It is a metaphor of life,
promise, and potential beauty. It is the core metaphor of traditional folksongs sung by Pete Seeger such as "Inch by Inch", where those of us "made of dreams and bones" were charged to "find [our] way in nature's chain, tune [our] body and [our] brain to the music of the land"; and to "season" the rows we planted "with a prayer and a song" because "Mother Earth will make [us] strong if we give her loving care."

When Harry Chapin needed an appropriate song to close his concerts, he approached the problem very pragmatically and chose to invoke the unspoken ancient myth of the seasons and metaphor of the gardener. The merger of "You Are the Only Song" with "Circle" reinforced each other with the recursiveness of life and nature to form a fitting benediction:

Oh, I've sung it all tonight,
Almost every story that I know.
And now when they turn out the spotlights
I'm not sure where I'm supposed to go.

And I'm so hoarse I can't hit the high notes.
It's just a whisper when I'm low.
But when you sing from the inside
You hope that something shows.

With these words Chapin announces to all that he has fulfilled his responsibility by turning himself inside out. They are words of hope that his audience would recognize the genuine nature of his message.

And that is why,
Yes, you are the only song,
The only song I need
You're my laughter
And you're my lonely song,
You're the harvest and you're the seed.
And you're my first and my final song.
You own me, indeed,
Ch yes, oh yes, yes after all is said and done,
You're the one song that I need.

I see this as the core philosophy of the folk tradition, as interpreted by Chapin. This represents his full and precise emphasis on the importance of "you" for Chapin's rhetorical approach, rooted in identification and mutuality that Burke sees as the potential consubstantiality of man.

I've sung my songs to silence,
To empty clubs and crowded bars.
I've sung my songs to standing room,
Even sung 'em to the stars.
But the faces they fade together
And the applause it's gone so fast.
And the story of every darkened stage
Is that the glory just does not last.
And that is why,
Yes, after all is said and done,
You're the one song that I need.

You see,
All my life's a circle
Sunrise and Sundown
The moon rolls through the night time
'Til the daybreak comes around.
All my life's a circle
But I can't tell you why
The seasons spinning round again.

This song also demonstrates Chapin's tendency to place his emphasis on "the you and I" orientation commented upon in chapter two, and to use two specific rhetorical techniques: self-deprecation and
self-disclosure. These two techniques were largely responsible for our acceptance of Chapin as "one of us" and not as an unapproachable "star" without time for the common man. Chapin believed that "being able to shoot yourself down gives you instant authority,"\(^43\) because it admits to your basic humanity. Chapin also knew that Americans loved an underdog, so "If you have a lot of self-deprecation in your song, everybody is going to be rooting for you,"\(^44\) and with that awareness in the forefront of his mind, Chapin would burst out into a rousing, off-keyed rendition of "Six String Orchestra". The self-disclosure provided the listeners with a sense that they "knew" Chapin as a person. He wrote of his loves, joys, and sorrows. He shared with his listener a friendship that grew from their human kinship. He told them that if they wanted to "know him" they could find him in his music, because he was "putting [himself] here inside each song."\(^45\) The people populating Chapin's songs were people that we all knew, or thought we knew: he sang of his wife Sandy and of loves of past and present; and he sang of his five children by name, sharing the joys and sorrows of parenting, and the hopes for tomorrow that the children and youth of today promised. The listener became an extended member of his family, bound by the lyrics, experiences, and feelings they shared.
Summary

Chapin used his cinematic skills to extend his rhetorical messages to a higher level while remaining rooted to the historic, myth-invoking genre of the folk-citizen-activist tradition. This distinctive form enabled Chapin to develop the questioning environment I observed and discussed in the previous chapter. The focus on questioning instead of knowing allowed Chapin to avoid being put in the awkward position of elevating himself to a position where he had all of the answers and was better than everybody else. The form Chapin chose encouraged each listener to provide the emotional dimension for the scenes and situations staged by Chapin. As if performing magic with mirrors, Chapin used word magic to hold up vivid scenes for our consideration. In the best of folk traditions, Chapin remained ever vigilant, willing to sacrifice himself heroically, as those before him, for what he and they believed to be right. In the following chapter I will examine individual song lyrics and Chapin's rhetorical strategies to explain his rhetoric of reform.
Chapter 4

The Rhetoric of Reform

Testifying before the U. S. House Committee on Agriculture's hearing on the establishment of a commission on domestic and international hunger and nutrition, Chapin stressed that "we have the potential to do something. It is all of our commitment to the survival of the human race." Chapin reasoned: "If we cannot make commitments to human beings who are dying right now, our own kind, then we are making the ultimate commitment about ourselves."¹

In this chapter I will examine two areas of vital concern to Chapin: the potential of the common person to have an impact on social problems through participatory democracy and the importance of children as a source of truth and clear vision. By examining these two concerns my purpose is to provide an awareness and understanding of the kind of commitments Chapin made available through his rhetoric. The best means of observing Chapin's concerns is through an examination of specific song lyrics, along with comments made by Chapin in his Songwriter's Workshop Manual, interviews, and unpublished typescripts.

- 59 -
Let us begin by examining Chapin's lyrical autobiography, "There Only was One Choice." The words of this song demonstrate the various dimensions of Chapin's rhetoric functioning in one work. Chapin begins the song with a youth "strumming" what we later learn to be a guitar and "shivering in his dungarees." We are not told if the youth is shivering because it is cold out on the corner where he is playing or if the shivering is caused by the anxiety of one who has "signed up as a soldier out to play the music game" meeting a cynical public. Chapin notes that the youth is like many other young people and uses a specific feature, "his face a blemish garden", to encourage identification with the youth.

In the fourth verse Chapin expresses the hopes and ideals he has for his own personal path to glory:

He's got Guthrie running in his veins  
He's the hobo kid who's left his home  
And the Beatles Records and the Rolling Stones  
This boy is staying acoustic  
There's Seeger singing in his heart  
He hopes his songs will somehow start  
To heal the cracks that split apart  
America gone plastic

These words indicate Chapin's personal quest to heal the troubles he perceived in American Society. It was a quest which led to his familiarity with Dylan's words and the blues style of Bob Gibson and other black street musicians. And for the youth considering a career
In music, Chapin offered this advice:

Strum your guitar--
Sing it kid
Just write about your feelings--
Not the things you never did
Inexperience--
It once had cursed me
But your youth is no handicap--
It's what makes you thirsty

And it was thirst for truth quenched by asking the questions that come from seeing things with virgin clear eyes. A "truth" which could be found in the rustlings and whispers of the shadows, because they inspire your natural feelings and senses:

And the rustling in the shadows
Tells you secrets you can trust
The capturing of whispers
Is the way to write a song
It's when you get to microphones
The music can go wrong

Chapin warned that if the lad were to succeed in capturing the whispers he must not allow himself to lose touch with the people and sights of everyday life that contained those truths which others might recognize. He must always remember he is a human speaking to humans of human experiences, hopes and fears. If the youth forgot his common folk roots and the social awareness which brought him to the attention of the public all communicative power would be lost. With that purpose in mind Chapin writes:
You can't see the audience
With spotlights in your eyes
Your feet can't feel the highway
From where the Lear jet flies
When you glide in silent splendor
In your padded limousines
Only you are crying there
Behind the silver screen

Now you battle dragons--
But they'll all turn into frogs
When you grab the wheel of fortune--
You get caught up in the cogs

When the bond is strained and the whispers and the rustlings are no longer heard, the cynics and critics will quickly point to the inadequacies. Chapin captures this thought by noting that the boy who had slain the mythic dragons had feet of clay.

In a particularly important passage Chapin discussed a basic dilemma facing man from the beginning of time: a fear of early death or of a long and empty life.

When I started this song
I was still thirty-three
The age that Mozart died
And Sweet Jesus was set free
Keats and Shelley too soon finished,
Charlie Parker would be
And I fantasized some tragedy'd
Be soon curtailing me

Chapin provided the audience with a specific spot in his lifetime when he personally grappled with the problem. This constituted a rhetorical commonplace which allowed others to find their own personal recognition of the dilemma. The language works here to invite
listeners to recall their own private discussions of the premature end of their own lifetime. The verse also demonstrates Chapin's ability to cast a wider net over the potential points of connection with his audience. He accomplishes this by citing a spectrum from classical music to jazz and from the sacred to the romantic.

The following verse expressed the doubts that Chapin and others of his generation began to feel as they entered into their middle years.

Well just today I had my birthday—
I made it thirty-four
Mere mortal, not immortal,
Not star-crossed anymore
I've got this problem with my aging
I no longer can ignore
A tame and toothless tabby
Can't produce a lion's roar

One result of Chapin's language was to create a pattern for self-questioning and personal growth. Chapin believed that "if ever there's been a country in need of self-questioning it's America right now." Continually reminding us that "it is our choice to make," Chapin would argue that, "we are supposed to be knowledgeable enough to ask not only the first question, but also the second, third and fifteenth questions about what is going on." Chapin contended that it was through our insistence on consideration of "alternative actions" that testified to our seriousness. By posing the question, instead of giving a direct answer, Chapin encouraged his listeners to
ask themselves where they were going. Before we can answer, Chapin reminds us of the present conditions in the country that he sees slipping through our grasp in a scene reinforced by Chapin adopting a "carney barker" pitch for the selling of America to an ever-consuming public.

Step right up young lady—
Your two hundred birthdays make you old but not senile
And we see the symptoms
There in your rigor mortis smile
With your old folks eating dog food
And your children eating paint
While the pirates own the flag
And sell us sermons on restraint

BUY Centennial
Sell 'em pre-canned laughter
American Perennial
Sing happy ever after

Chapin's genuine concern "with the attitudes of Americans during the bi—that's 'BUY'—centennial," grew from his belief that "they seemed content to stand pat rather than look to the future." Chapin considered such an attitude as resulting in the failure of many Americans "to look forward and constantly re-evaluate their goals," a failure which would eventually lead to stagnation.

Chapin was also concerned with the response by fellow musicians who appeared to be content to "sing happy ever after" and make their success not matter. He believes most members of the music industry failed to put anything beyond self-interest back into the society which provided the base for their personal elevation to a
higher class. Rather than actively assume their role in a participatory democracy and attempt to bring about change, they would concentrate on entertaining the public so the public wouldn't see the iceberg's which were about to sink the values of the society:

Dance Band on the Titanic
Sing Nearer By God to Thee
The iceberg's on the starboard bow
Won't you dance with me

Expressing the conflicting emotions he was experiencing, Chapin discloses to his listeners that he thought that he had finally found the answer, an answer that did not come from within, but instead from without—without the depth of the wellspring of man's hopes and worlds of "what if." Chapin's inner voice of humanity challenged him with direct questions, while his conscience asked of Harry what he asks of us:

Harry--Are you really so naive
You can honestly believe
That the country's getting better
When all you do is let her alone
Harry--Can you really be surprised
When it is there before your eyes
When you hold the knife that carves her
You live the life that starves her to the bone

Here the language operates to show us that if things have gone wrong in this country, we only have our lack of participation to blame. Our country reflects, the argument goes, what we as citizens make of her. It requires our active and vigilant involvement with her daily
functioning to steer her clear of the icebergs. If we leave her alone
and assume that someone else is serving as lookout, we are at the
mercy of the tide.

The end of the internal debate is swift and final. Chapin
argues that the worth of the quest is paramount. The value it
represents surpasses the realm of self-doubt. In his words,

Well I got up this morning--
I don't need to know more
It evaporated nightmares
that had boiled the night before
With every new day's dawning
My kid climbs in my bed
And tells the cynics of the board room
Your language is the dead

And as I wander with my music
Through the jungles of despair
My kid will learn guitar
And find his street corner somewhere
There he'll make the silence listen
To the dream behind the voice
And show his minstrel Hamlet daddy that
There's only was one choice

This tells us that we must uphold the sacred trust so that our children
will be able to make a better land. The rhetoric here invokes a
pattern of youthful innocence and intuition as the pathway to
knowledge and a sense of what is right.

Chapin brings the pattern of life full circle as he advises his
child how to remain faithful to himself and accept his father's calling
as a lookout for society with "an early warning system pitched up to

his soul":

Strum your guitar--
Sing it kid
Just write about your feelings
Not the things you never did
Inexperience--
It once had cursed me
But your youth is no handicap--
It's what makes you thirsty

Dance Band on the Titanic
Sing Nearer By God to Thee
The iceberg's on the starboard bow
Won't you dance with me

This evidently sermonic language is characteristic of the form and content of Chapin's rhetoric. If man remained faithful to the trust and the teachings of his forerunners, there was only one choice. The choice, however, is about the process that goes into arriving at knowledge, not simply about the ends of knowledge alone.

Strategies of Persuasion:

After examining the pattern of motivation in several Chapin lyrics, it is important to understand how Chapin designs his appeals. Several key strategies are employed.

Sometimes Chapin allowed the members of his audience to overhear a conversation he seemed to be having with himself, yet the
process was still the same—questioning and dreams in the world of "what if?" The calling of man to become involved was expressed in the lyrics of "I Wonder What Would Happen to this World", lyrics which later were to appear on Chapin's funeral announcement.

Chapin begins to build slowly by using repetition in the form of a quasi-southern negro spiritual of questioning wonderment:

Oh well I wonder
Yes I wonder
What would happen
What would happen to this world
Well I wonder what would happen to this world

His listener is left to wonder what Chapin is wondering about. Before the listener can become overly concerned with the opening, the ultimate question confronting all human beings is thrust into his consciousness:

Now if a man tried
To take his time on earth
And prove before he died
What on man's life could be worth
Well I wonder what would happen to this world

And if a woman
She used a life line
As something more than...
Some man's servant--mother--wife time
Well I wonder what would happen to this world

Similarly, Chapin adopts the strategy of personalizing the future by his depiction of young people. He focuses attention on the
representatives of an age group that many of us go out of our way to avoid. He forces us to consider the possibility that those we may be unwilling to recognize are among the healthier seeds growing in our diverse garden. Hence, he observes:

Disciple children walk the streets
Selling books and flowers
Can they be the last ones
With a semblance of a dream
If we say that no one's out there
And we say we're goin' nowhere
And we avoid the question
Is this all that it means?

The strategies Chapin used were derived from his perceptions of the people, places, and issues he encountered. In travels which were more reminiscent of Walt Whitman than of a recipient of the 1975 "Grammy" nomination for the "best Performance by a Male Vocalist," Chapin "found a unanimous feeling throughout America from hard hats to teenagers that we've lost our sense of commitment and values." He discovered an America that reminded him of the "last years of the Roman Empire." He noted frightening similarities between contemporary American society and the society of a fallen Rome: "the cities themselves, inner city rot, our interest in sports....All places must be born, peak, and die." Chapin was "not sure if we are at our peak or already on the downhill-slide," but he was sure that we were running away from the American dream and our realization that we were was "the first step toward any action. Without that recognition of our problems," Chapin believed we were "completely awash."
Fortunately, Chapin's folk heritage enabled him to recognize that "the American system is not the flag. It is the potential to rebuild, to be redreamed with," and Americans were ready for a redreaming. Chapin grounded his hope for the future in the real concern expressed by young Americans "that this country is being born." With that concern he believed that we could give the "country direction and give us an active hold on our dream again." As a former student of architecture, Chapin expressed his preference for the construction and direction of the dreams and hopes for society as a restoration. He thought that "some of the best architecture being done" was in the area of restoration. Similarly, his choice to work within the established system, rather than to advocate its condemnation, was a choice made in an effort "to make what we've got to work before tearing it down and building something new." Chapin was tired of new for the sake of being new and was willing to heed the lesson Guthrie taught Seeger, and Seeger taught Chapin: "You could make a combination between the best of the old and the new." What the country needed was belief!

In order to work within the established system, an individual must "believe one person can make a difference." Central to that belief is an awareness that "we have a system responsive to citizen pressure to implement the logistics for change." According to Chapin,
the lessons of history have "shown us that positive articulation, humaneness, flexibility, ingenuity and perseverance are important," however, "most important, it is deeply committed individual people who create the process for change, and who generate change itself." Americans must participate in the continual process of change, restoration, and rebirth. For Chapin, the members of society who hold the key to the rebirth were those recently born—the children. Because reliance on children is such a distinctive feature of Chapin's rhetoric, it deserves special attention in the remainder of this chapter.

Children as Symbols of Reform

In terms that even the most ardent supporter of an America "gone plastic" might understand, "the bottom line is that all of us should be involved in our own futures, especially if we have or want to have children." Chapin was not only concerned with the starving child discussed in chapter two; he wanted all children to be able to live and have a future. His rhetorical goal was to convince people to understand that "we all deserve" and "have a right to live." Furthermore, he tried to evoke the kinds of images which would create an awareness that "we all have the right to a future," and with the future comes the responsibility "to insure that everybody has a future," most especially the children of our society.
His persuasive task was frequently frustrated by an attitude that one should "live for today" and not give "a damn about the future." Chapin heard "most" music "telling the kids and the country to go to hell"; a message which ran against everything he had come to learn and respect. In "There was Only One Choice," he worried that Americans were beginning to believe that it was "naive to have dreams" and that was an especially dangerous attitude when it affects the children. According to Chapin: "It all starts with the kids. If they can't believe in themselves, and think they can have an impact, then the problems are already built in." Chapin set out on a one man crusade to recover and reestablish respect for the idyllic child-like dreams, dreams which say, "yes we can."

Chapin's song, "The Rock," is especially significant in its use of children as symbols of social reform. In that song Chapin described the heroic actions of a boy willing to act on his vision, despite the rebuffs of all sources of traditional wisdom. The boy first turns to his parent with the truth which he has learned:

The rock is gonna fall on us, he woke with a start
And he ran to his mother, the fear dark in his heart
He told her of the vision that he was sure he'd seen
She said: "Go back to sleep child, you're having a bad dream!"

Silly child--
Everybody knows the rock leans over the town
Everybody knows that it won't tumble to the ground
Remember Chicken Little said the sky was falling down
Well nothing ever came of that, the world still whirls
The vision of the child is matched with the stagnation of a parent who no longer questioned but instead assumed that things were unchanging and unchangeable.

If a parent was not prepared to question, then certainly the boy would find a receptive ear at school.

"The rock is gonna fall on us," he stood and told the class.
The professor put his chalk down and peered out through his glasses.
But he went on and said; "I've seen it, high up on the hill.
If it doesn't fall this year then very soon it will!"

Crazy boy--
Everybody knows the rock leans over the town
Everybody knows that it won't tumble to the ground
We've more important studies than your fantasies and fears
You know that rock's been perched up there for a hundred thousand years

Immediately, the listener is directed to the specifics of chalk and a professor with glasses, items designed to trigger recollections from the listener's own experience which places them at the back of the classroom witnessing the scene. The young boy's intuitive vision is discounted as fantasy, therefore meriting little consideration in the scholarly pursuit of knowledge. After rejection by both parent and teacher, the child decided to take his case to the magistrates and present it to them in terms they might understand:
"The rock's gonna fall on us." He told the magistrates.  
"I believe that we can stop it but the time is getting late.  
You see I've done all the research my plans are all complete."

He was showing them contingencies when they showed him to the street.

Just a madman—
Everybody knows the rock leans over the town.
Everybody knows that it won't tumble to the ground.
Everybody knows of those who say the end is near.
Everybody knows that life goes on as usual round here.

Following his third rejection the youth was forced to take action on his own. He knew that something must be done even if others chose not to accept the vision originating in the mind of a child.

He went up on the mountain beside the giant stone.
They knew he was insane so they left him alone.
He'd given up enlisting help for there was no one else.
He spent his days devising ways to stop the rock himself.
One night while he was working building braces on the ledge.
The ground began to rumble the rock trembled on the edge.

"The rock is going to fall on us! Run or you'll be crushed!"
And indeed the rock was moving, crumbling all to dust.
He ran under it with one last hope that he could add a prop.
And as he disappeared the rock came to a stop.

In the finest folk tradition the youth cried out a warning and willingly sacrificed himself in a heroic effort which temporarily saved the town.

The people ran into the street but by then all was still.
The rock seemed where it always was or where it
always will be
When someone asked where he had gone they said: "Oh he was daft.
Who cares about that crazy fool." And then they'd start to laugh

Unfortunately, the people of the town cared little for the youth of unverifiable vision, and they failed to ask the questions which lay on their tongues, as they reassured themselves that the rock "seemed where it was or where it always will be."

But high up on the mountain
When the wind is hitting it
If you're watching very closely
The rock slips a little bit.

Here the child becomes the symbolic agent of redemption, a means of showing society what needs to be done.

A different sort of symbolic reform is presented in another lyric. The wisdom of the child did not always have to be in defiance of a parent or other authority figure. In "Dancin' Boy" Chapin wrote of the relationship between himself and his youngest son. Chapin was scared by the way a child blindly trusts in a parent, yet, that trust provided the energy for restoring the future:

'Cause you're my dancin' boy
And it's scary how you trust me
Just one look from you
And I come pourin' out like wine
You're my dancin' boy
I'm sure by now that you must see
Your dancin' means much more to me
Than any dream of mine
The listener overhears Chapin's unspoken conversation with his four
year old son. It is a conversation which provides the most concrete
evidence that we have a responsibility to pass our knowledge and
traditions from one generation to the next. This transfer of shared
wisdom gives a parent a particular pride as he leaves the seeds of his
personal knowledge in the product of his loins.

Yes I'm so proud when you are with me
That my heart lives in my throat
And when you start to strut your stuff
My eyes go all afloat
When I have to leave you home
As sometimes it must be
I feel that with my leavin'
I leave far too much of me

Chapin also manages to reaffirm his willingness to feel. This openness
to feeling' frees the listener also to feel. More importantly, Chapin
acknowledges his own mortality by reminding his son Josh that in the
days and years to come, others would seek to persuade Josh to dance
with different "steps" than his father had taught. Therefore, it was
the responsibility for Josh to keep the dancing days they shared in his
mind to pass on to his own son someday.

You know the time will come my dancin' boy
When your dancin' days are done
And when Daddy and his dancin' boy
Will have dwindled down to one
You know the world will have taught you other steps
To match the march of time
So you'll have to keep our dancin' days
Dancin' in your mind
Chapin could have chosen the myth of "marching to a different drummer." However, he elected an even more ancient myth, the dance, which is an artistic and communicative form in almost all cultures.

Summary and Conclusions

In this Chapter, I have described the ways Chapin attempted to use the foundations of participatory democracy and the potential of children to cope with the social problems he perceived. Mankind always seems to be willing to accept the greater sacrifices when it believes that it will be of lasting benefit to the safety of its child. Chapin encouraged his listeners to consider the possibility that our children are more in touch with their basic intuitive natures, because they refuse to accept the world as a static thing that must be blindly accepted in the "fallacy of tradition." Instead, the youth hear the voices of other traditions which say "yes, we can" and seek to make a better world of their land.

As a rhetorician, Harry Chapin found himself confronting a basic problem: How to convince his listeners that through their actions or inactions they were making comments about themselves and the nature of their commitment to themselves and their fellow being. Chapin recognized the need to create an environment of social awareness and
action which encouraged his listener to understand that he or she possessed the means to combat the social ills present in America. If his listener did not believe that he could be heard or bring about change, there was no reason to accept his personal calling or accept personal responsibility for the actions or inactions of society. Chapin believed that participatory democracy provided the listener with both means and obligation to influence the course of this society.

Chapin had a tremendous faith in the system of government provided by the founding fathers. America had been blessed by a form of government which "invited" citizen participation. Indeed, to Chapin it was more than an invitation, it took on a commandment-like stature which demanded citizen participation. Chapin interpreted the phrase "participatory democracy" to mean "everybody should get involved." Those who chose not to be involved Chapin viewed as less than good citizens because they squandered the trust received from the nation's forefathers.

Chapin reminded others that "this country was set up as a participatory democracy." Chapin observed that Thomas Jefferson, Ben Franklin, and the Adams cousins had seen the leaders fail to be responsible for and responsive to the collective will of the people "in every other society." Consequently, Chapin continued, they founded a participatory democracy that "was to have maximum citizen participation." The system was designed to have continual
participation which would "reflect the actions and interest of society." Because Chapin was at all times a "citizen," he felt the need to reestablish a connection with the world. This became a "personal imperative," for in order to make his success as a singer real he needed to feel that he was having an "impact on the world." Chapin reasoned, "In a participatory democracy, everybody is supposed to be doing things, and if we are not, we are not Americans. We have a country that is in trouble, and if we are not participating it seems we are essentially part of the problem."

Chapin's heavy reliance on the traditions and historical foundations of this country presented him with an additional problem: How to convince his listener that he or she could matter without his message sounding simplistic and utopian. Chapin sought to overcome this problem by presenting scenes populated by characters who were as familiar to his listeners as the waitress or bartender they had met so many times before in their own personal lives. By relying on his storytelling form he was able to present readily identifiable images which appeared more real than utopian.

The storytelling form adopted by Chapin yielded a second rhetorical strategy which allowed his listener to overhear the speech acts present in the lyric and, in effect, learn from the actions and reactions of these characters in their interactions with one another and the manner in which they exercised their power of choice. The
act of overhearing is less threatening for a listener than being addressed directly and being told what he or she must do.

Chapin's use of self-deprecation supplemented the strategies of identification and the indirect act of overhearing by making Harry Chapin appear very human. Because Chapin's self-deprecation led to his being perceived as a human who was vulnerable to similar pains and doubts which plagued his listener he was seen as more identifiable than if he portrayed himself as a never erring star.

Chapin discovered the strategy of repetition was inherent within the lyric form and the use of refrain. The strategy is neither new nor unique, however it remains extremely effective. Exposure to a repetitive message erodes resistance to change in some listeners and reinforces the attitudes and beliefs of other listeners already sympathetic to the message being shared.

Through his reliance on the rhetorical strategies of identification, the act of overhearing speech acts, self-deprecation, repetition, and the previously discussed personalizing of the future by his depiction of young people, Chapin coped with his rhetorical problems. These strategies allowed Chapin to provide potential avenues for change which were in keeping with the heritage and traditions of this country while addressing a generation that had grown increasingly cynical and frustrated in their efforts to promote change.
In essence, Harry Chapin's rhetoric provides a framework for re-interpreting the "mess" we have made of this land.
Chapter 5

Conclusion

In my effort to remain faithful to Chapin's lyrics, I chose to use a computer-assisted content analysis of the lyrical texts. The use of a personal computer and commercially available programs demonstrated the practicability of such a critical "tool" for the rhetorical critic who elects to focus directly on the text of the message itself. My use of the computer facilitated my disclosure of certain shifts in language orientation and allowed the clustering of certain words to compare their frequency of usage with what might be anticipated in spoken American English. Specifically, computer use provided a heightened awareness of Chapin's reliance on words which encouraged identification and a feeling to consubstantiality by using words clustering around orientations of "other" and the collective bonding of man. The word frequency count analysis also revealed Chapin's preference for words which triggered a questioning process in the minds of the recipients of the message; consequently, instead of excluding them from the process, by presenting them with a sermon of explicit statements of right and wrong, Chapin's word choices demanded the listener's active involvement in the communicative
process.

The use of a computer to collect and assist in the critical analysis of song lyrics presents two potential limitations. The first limitation is the differences between the unconsciously conceived acts of spoken American English and the language consciously employed by the songwriter to form a purposive communication. This limitation is most valid if the critical focus is on the creative act of invention and the rhetorician or source of the message unit, however, if the focus is on the relation between the message and its recipient this limitation may prove less severe. The recognition that an index of spoken American English is also an index of heard American English leads to the possibility that it may serve as a standard measure to determine the words the listener will be most frequently exposed to by a particular rhetorician. The second limitation is concerned with the failure to determine the distinctiveness of Chapin's word choices from the word choices made by his contemporaries. While it was beyond the scope of this investigation, the second limitation might be surmounted by a separate study which has as its objective the comparison of Chapin's lyrics with his contemporary singer-songwriters.

Examination of Chapin's rhetoric revealed how it belonged to a much larger body of lyrical rhetoric and, yet, remained distinctive from the traditional folk genre. Chapin was able to merge the
communicative powers of the cinema verite documentary film technique with the social potency of the folk genre to create a message which communicated word movies for the mind. His use of aural movies triggered scenes which played upon the internal screens of his listener's minds, experiences, and intuitive sense of right and wrong.

Chapin provided a voice for a significant part of his generation. He expressed sentiments which could be understood by a generation of Americans whose desire for change was rooted in their veneration of many traditional values. During the fifteen years which separated Chapin's discovery of the Weavers and the release of his own first album, Chapin and the nation saw changes which shook America and forced a people to question the values and beliefs which served as the foundation for our society. During the decade of the sixties, we accepted a President's challenge to place a man on the moon and accomplished the "impossible" task. We watched assassin's bullets snuff the dreams and aspirations of a United States President, a would-be President, and the couldn't-be President who led the Blacks of the nation and dared to tell his fellow man "I have a dream." Our televisions brought the heat of the streets into our homes as we observed fires light the skylines of Watts and Detroit. Less than three years later we observed the chaos of a national political convention in Chicago streets. Lastly, the people shared the experience of a poorly explained war that some believed beyond comprehension, while others
argued it was clearly in the defense of a people's right to self-determination, a right of increasingly questionable value in our own land. It was a time of personal and national confusion and frustration.

It was against this background that we listened to Chapin's rhetoric. A shared background which provided the identifiable connections that allowed a healing grounded in an awareness that the truth will eventually claim the high ground. Chapin's message called upon our basic sense of responsibility and duty to uphold the collective wisdom entrusted to us by our forefathers in the expectation that we will expand on the legacy for future generations.

In his discussions of the "combat myth," Kenneth Burke identifies eleven main themes:

1. The Enemy was of divine origin.

2. The Enemy had a distinctive habitation.

3. The Enemy had extraordinary appearances and properties.

4. The Enemy was vicious and greedy.

5. The Enemy conspired against heaven.
6. A divine Champion appeared to face him.

7. The Champion fought the Enemy.

8. The Champion nearly lost the battle.

9. The Enemy was finally destroyed, after being outwitted, deceived, or bewitched.

10. The Champion disposed of the Enemy and celebrated his victory.

Like the "Champion" who is the one willing to fight the "Enemy" while others choose to appease the "Enemy" or flee the battle, Chapin sought to combat the evils he perceived in hunger and the responses of the American business community to the social ills of America. While other members of the music industry chose lyrics which appeased the "Enemy" of commercialism, Chapin sought to concentrate on lyrics which challenged people to choose between what they knew to be right and wrong. He fulfilled the combat myth by fighting the battle with the enemy in the public arena before his listeners' very eyes and ears.

While not all elements identified by Burke are clearly seen in the case of Harry Chapin, the combat myth clearly serves as a
unifying principle which helps us to understand his rhetorical mission. The similarity between Chapin as a "Noble Warrior" and the "Champion" of the "combat myth" serves as a potential explanation for the responses and tributes paid to Chapin following his death. Burke explains that "because of certain ambiguities regarding death and immortality among the gods, the period of near-defeat can even be carried to the 'perfect' point where the Champion is slain and lamented."²

Chapin's death elicited a deep and intense public reaction, perhaps more so than anyone expected. The memorial service held in honor of Chapin provided both family members and friends with their first indication of the scope of Chapin's influence on the lives of others.³ Michael Harrington captured the essence of the memorial service held in Brooklyn's Grace Episcopal Church on July the twenty-third in an article for The Village Voice. Harrington described it as a celebration of Chapin's life by a "congregation" that "stood and clapped and whistled and stomped and cried."⁴ The secular congregation included idol-mentor Pete Seeger and fellow folksingers Steve Goodman, Oscar Brand, and Mary Travers and Peter Yarrow of Peter, Paul and Mary. As one might expect, numerous other singers and musical cronies attended the Chapin service; however, the crowd assembled in the Brooklyn church also included: Senator Patrick Leahy representing the United States Senate; Congressmen Tom Downey and Ben Gillman representing the United States House of Representatives;
James Grant, executive director of UNICEF, representing the United Nations; former United States Attorney General Ramsey Clark; and a railway brakeman who served as the symbolic representative of Chapin's common man. Sue Gensel of Chapin's staff reported that one thousand friends and family members attended the service and more than 40 spoke or sang in tribute to Harry's memory and deeds. In addition to those attending the service, Presidents Reagan and Carter joined more than 75,000 individuals who wrote letters of consolation and appreciation.

During the week following Chapin's death, a total of nine United States Senators and thirty-four United States Representatives paid tribute to Harry Chapin on the floor of Congress and in the pages of the Congressional Record. They represented political philosophies as diverse as the conservatism of Senator Robert Dole and the liberalism of Senator Edward M. Kennedy. Journalist David Marsh of Rolling Stone observed that "the immediate response to his [Chapin's] death, in the media and among the fans, was overwhelming." The man once branded "America's most overground underground singer" became more "widely honored by the nation's legislators" than Bing Crosby, Elvis Presley, or John Lennon. The Honorable Claudine Schneider claimed that "we must learn a lesson from Harry Chapin's life and pursue his dream," proclaiming that while she may "grieve at his death" she would "celebrate his life." Senator Leahy disclosed that he had "shed more tears," in the days following Chapin's death, than at "any other
It is through this outpouring of a diverse public's sentiment that we see the true social worth of Chapin's rhetorical message: Chapin spoke of and for the values which we as a people hold to be true, because we believe them so; thus leaving the rhetorical products of a man as a contribution to the collective superior knowledge of our culture to serve as a potential model for generations to come.
Chapter One:

1 Appendix A contains a biographical sketch of Harry Forster Chapin.


3 Cathcart, p. 121, p. 119.


8 Letter received from Kenneth Burke, 11 October 1982.


13 Neo-Aristotelian, dramatistic, fantasy theme, analog, and others.


19 Patton, 134.


21 Croft, p. 411.


26 Cathcart, p. 66.


31 Harry F. Chapin, autobiographical document contained in his private office files, TS, p. 6.

Chapter Two:

1 Harry F. Chapin, Songwriter's Workshop Manual, TS, copy obtained from Chapin's personal files, no page number.
The computer used was a Kaypro-4 and the software was a combination of "Perfect Writer" developed by Perfect Software, Inc. and "The Word Plus" program developed for text processing by Wayne Holder.

During these years, Chapin actively sought to integrate his music, family, country, and beliefs into an elaborate tapestry focusing on humanitarian efforts and civic concerns. See Appendices B and C.


I report all frequency counts from this corpus in terms of occurrences per million spoken words.


Howes, 573.


Appendices B and C respectively contain a listing of all words appearing more than four times in Chapin's early and later lyrics.

Dahl, p. 185. These numerical counts represent frequency per million spoken words.

Gloria Dilibert, "Harry Chapin's Family Fights to Carry on
his Extraordinary Legacy of Compassion," People Weekly, 15 March 1982, p. 34.


17 Pollock, p. 219.

18 I believe that these clusters represent two major orientations present within Chapin's lyrics and a third cluster which appears to contradict commonly held assumptions made by many critics of Chapin's music.

19 Personal interview with Tony Kornheiser, 17 May 1983.

Chapter Three:

1 Chapin, Songwriter's, TS, no page number.


3 Harry F. Chapin, Autobiography, TS, copy obtained from Chapin's personal files, p. 2.

4 Seeger later became a close personal friend of Chapin, appearing in numerous concerts with both Harry and his brother Tom, and served as a major influence on Chapin the lyrical activist.


11 Matthew Monahan, "Harry Chapin has Rocked the Cradle and World Hunger has Benefited," *Tablet Scene*, no date. Clipping obtained from Chapin's personal files.


15 Polanyi, *Study*, p. 61.

16 Personal interview with Pete Seeger, 27 May 1983.


20 Chapin's film "Legendary Champions" won the New York and Atlanta Film Festivals and was nominated for an Academy Award.

21 Dooley, p. 21.

22 Green, p. 8.


24 "An Informal Interview," no page number.


26 Jeannine Lauber, "Chapin Sincere, Involved," Columbus Dispatch, 5 February 1979, no page number.

27 Chapin, Autobiography, TS, p. 4.

28 Green, p. 6.

29 Monahan, no page number.


31 Chapin, Songwriter's, TS, no page number.

32 Chapin, Songwriter's, TS, p. 46.
When Chapin was confronted with the over-exposure that had been created by performing over one hundred benefit concerts per year, he reasoned that the negative was "balanced by the fact that people come to think of you as a good human being." He concluded that, for him, being viewed as a good person was "obviously more important" than other professional considerations. (Hunt, p. 64.) Tony Kornheiser jested that Harry "couldn't have been more over-exposed if he did two shows a night in a bathing suit in Antartica." Tony Kornheiser, "Harry Chapin: Words and Music," New York Times, 4

Chapter Four:

1 Harry Chapin, testimony before the U. S. House Committee on Agriculture, Hearing to Establish a Commission on Domestic and International Hunger and Nutrition, 95th Congress, 1st Session, 20 October 1977, p. 20.

2 McLean, no page number.


5 Mary Campbell, "For Chapin, Success is a Chance to be Generous," Waterbury Sunday Republican, 21 August 1977, p. 3.


8 "JC Outstanding," no page number.

9 Chapin, Hearing to Establish, p. 21.


Chapter Five:


3 Harry's brothers, Tom and James, disclose the memorial
service gave the family their first opportunity to discover Harry's impact beyond the family.


5 Harrington, p. 25.


8 Kornheiser, "Words," p. 18.

9 Marsh, p. 25.


11 Marsh, p. 25.
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Appendix A

Harry Forster Chapin was born on the seventh of December 1942. His father James was a "big band" drummer who played with Tommy Dorsey, Woody Herman, and others. In addition to playing with the bands and playing jazz, his father wrote the primary texts used by students learning *Advanced Techniques for the Modern Jazz Drummer*. His father was the son of American scenic artist James O. Chapin. Harry's grandfather James "Big Jim" Chapin was considered one of the outstanding American artists between the 1920's and 1950's. "Big Jim" Chapin illustrated Robert Frost's first two books of poetry and became well known for his "storytelling" style of painting, and in particular, for a group of paintings referred to as the "Marvin Family," which were of a New Jersey farm family. His father's mother was Abby Forbes Chapin, a 1904 graduate of Vassar who became an English teacher, edited numerous English textbooks, and wrote on the craft of storytelling as a form of communication.

Chapin's mother was Jean Elspeth Burke. Elspeth entered Hunter College at the age of fourteen where she earned a Masters Degree in the History of Science. Presently, she is an editor with Garland Press where she supervised the first complete publication of the sixty-three volume set of James Joyce's manuscript facsimilies. She is the eldest
daughter of American critic, poet, and philosopher Kenneth Duva Burke.

Chapin's childhood was divided between Greenwich Village (until age 11) and summers spent at the Burke family compound located in Andover, New Jersey. Chapin described the time spent in New Jersey as "three magical months" where with "no extra money available in a family of artists all the magical kingdoms of the mind were opened early." Throughout his life, Chapin maintained a room at the family compound.

Chapin's grandmother paid for Harry and his brothers James, Tom, and Steve to take music lessons; however, Harry abandoned the trumpet for the banjo and guitar in 1957. During the following years, Chapin joined with his brothers Tom and Steve to form a "Kingston Trio-type" folk group which played church socials, neighborhood parties, band breaks, and society dances.

After abortive tries at the Air Force Academy and Cornell University, Chapin began to concentrate his creative efforts on the documentary film industry. After working with Drew and Associates, Ricky Leacock (Aunt "Happy" Burke's first husband), Donald Pennebaker, and Jim Lipscomb, Chapin began a two and one half year project with Cayton, Inc. editing "fight" films. The project, Legendary Champions culminated in 1969 with its release of a "theatrical"
documentary which was written, directed, and edited by Chapin. The film won the New York and Atlanta film festival gold prizes as "Best Documentary" and was nominated for an Academy Award as "Best Feature Documentary."

Following the release of the Chapin-Lipscomb documentary _Duel in the Wind_, the economic recession brought about a dramatic depression in the film industry. By the end of 1970 Chapin, who had married Sandy Gaston in 1968, found himself with a wife, three children from her former marriage, their own baby due within three months, and no visible means of support. Chapin applied for a license to drive a New York City taxi; however, he never actually drove a taxi. During the summer vacation season of 1971, Chapin rented out their home in Point Lookout Long Island and temporarily relocated the family to the Andover compound. He used the rental fees to rent the Village Gate in Greenwich Village for a ten week period starting June 29, 1971. Each night following the show _Jacques Brel is Alive and Living in Paris_ the Village Gate became "Club Chapin."

Chapin constructed a five man group which included Chapin, a lead guitar, a bass, drums, and a cello. This combination of instruments led to the distinctive and readily identifiable Chapin sound. By the end of 1972, Chapin had received _Billboard_ magazine's "Trendsetter Award" and been nominated for a "Grammy" as "Best New Artist of the Year." In 1974, "Make a Wish," a show hosted by his
brother Tom which featured music written by Harry, won both "Emmy" and "Peabody" awards. Chapin received gold records for a "number one" album, Verities and Balderdash, and a "number one" single, "Cat's In the Cradle," during 1975. That year also brought Chapin a "Grammy" nomination for the "Best Performance by a Male Vocalist" and the debut of his Broadway musical The Night that Made America Famous, which won two "Tony" nominations. More significantly though, Chapin joined with Father Bill Ayres to form World Hunger Year and embarked upon a tireless effort to combat hunger and malnutrition throughout the world.

The years following 1975 brought Chapin greater recognition for his humanitarian efforts. At the time of his death, Chapin had contributed over six million dollars to various charities concerned with both hunger and the arts. Chapin was named one of the Jaycees "Ten Most Outstanding Young Men in America" in 1976. During 1976, Chapin received the "Long Island Distinguished Leadership Award" and won his first "Rockies" Public Service Award. In 1977, Chapin became the first entertainer to be awarded the "Rockies" Public Service Award two years in a row. During that year, he also received the Performing Arts Lodge of the E'nai Brith "Humanitarian" award, and was named "Man of the Year" by both the Long Island Association and Junior Achievement of New York. 1978 brought Chapin the Public Relations Society of America's "Lone Eagle Award," and appointment to President Carter's Commission on World Hunger, a commission whose existence
Congressional observers credit to Chapin's personal lobbying efforts. After being inducted into the Long Island Hall of Fame, and receiving the "Long Island Distinguished Leadership Award," from the Long Island Business Association, in 1979, Chapin served as co-founder of the Democracy Project during the last year of his life.

He was killed in an automobile accident on the Long Island Expressway, on the sixteenth of July 1981.
Appendix B

Early Lyric Frequency Count

Five or More Mentions

498  THE
373  AND
363  I
308  A
262  TO
235  YOU
163  OF
151  MY
148  SHE
143  ME
139  WAS
130  IN
120  IT
118  HE
117  THAT
97  BUT
93  HER
92  ON
73  FOR
68  IT'S
65  JUST
63  SO
61  ALL
61  HIS
57  HAVE
54  BE
51  I'M
50  WITH
50  KNOW
49  NOT
48  YOUR
47  WE
47  SAID
46  THEY
45  OUT

- 116 -
TIME
COULD
BEEN
HAD
GOT
GO
NO
AS
WHAT
NEVER
I'VE
NOW
IS
UP
WHEN
COME
HEADING
DOWN
THAT'S
THIS
THERE'S
AT
WERE
HIM
LOVE
WOULD
LIKE
LIFE
SONG
MAKE
DON'T
LITTLE
KIND
MAN
OLD
ONE
CAN
THERE
THROUGH
SOUND
MORE
TOOK
HOW
THEN
ABOUT
WAY
LIGHT
LONELY
EMPTY
BACK
GOOD
WON'T
SOME
ONLY
MADE
BEFORE
NEED
NIGHT
HEAR
FIND
HOME
HERE
OR
FROM
YES
TAKE
ARE
ANOTHER
OFF
STILL
LEARN
TOO
AM
LONG
EVER
HEARD
GONE
AWAY
WILL
MORNING
LEFT
I'D
BABE
IF
SEE
MUSIC
WANNA
GOING
MYSELF
ONCE
WHERE
THEM
LET
MUCH
EASY
PLACE
AN
INTO
BY
GET
DID
SAY  DREAM  DAY  AMERICA  CAME  SHORT  DO  SOMETHING  MAYBE  STORIES  WELL  WHO  STREET  CAUSE  BURNING  SONGS  YOU'RE  OUR  AGAIN  TOWN  SAME  TWO  EVERYBODY'S  SING  POUNDS  PUT  WHILE  THINGS  WENT  AROUND  WIFE  MIND  HEAD  THINK  BANANAS  TELL  DARK  EYES  CRAZY  THAN  FAMOUS  THOUGHT  THEIR  SOMEWHERE  NOTHING  FOUND  PLEASE  PLAY  WORLD  SHE'S  GIRL
ALONE      PAST      BEHIND
FULL       FINE      INSIDE
MUST       SHOULD    BOY
GONNA      SANG      HALF
FAR        COMING    WOMAN
WHY        SEEN      TRYING
GUITAR     FEEL      SAW
SET        MANY      YEARS
SIX        KNEW      HAS
SINCE      TOMORROW
BABY       LAND      HEART
CITY       WANT      TIL
GIVE       KEEP      PEOPLE
BRIGHT     LIVING    VACANCY
ANY        MEET      KNOWN
BELIEVE    CAN'T     FEELING
EACH       HAPPY     DREAMS
FIRST
GUESS
BETTER
SAT
NEW
SILENCE
BROUGHT
WITHOUT
CARE
SURE
COUPLE
WINDOW
THINKING
WORDS
WINTER
CALL
DOG
MR
SWEET
TOGETHER
COMES
VERY
LOST
BUS
YOU'VE
RAIN
OVER
BRING
LEAVE
KIDS
LIFE'S
BOUT
SAD
FUNNY
TIMES
OH
LORD
TONIGHT
SMILE
DAYS
SUN
SEEMS
WANTING
ROUND
SOMEONE
VOICE
FACE
THING
GREYHOUND
GAVE
RIGHT
HELP
ORCHESTRA
ALWAYS
USE
THESE
ANNIE
WALKED
BAR
WARM
SINGER
WIND
RUNS
TRIED
SOON
MIGHT
ORDER
LED
TURNED
HALFWAY
HUNDRED
WE'D
ASKED
CIRCLE
BED
RUN
LAUGHING
WORD
DONE
REMEMBER
SAYS
Appendix C

Later Lyric Frequency Count

Five or More Mentions

1156 THE
656 YOU
621 AND
574 I
521 TO
517 A
306 THAT
264 IN
243 MY
237 OF
230 IT
226 ME
189 HE
188 BUT
177 WHEN
172 IS
170 YOUR
169 ON
158 WAS
152 WE
149 FOR
144 SHE
137 ALL
134 JUST
131 SAID
129 WHAT
129 HIS
127 SO
126 WITH
124 IT'S
117 BE
114 THEY
113 THERE
105 KNOW
97 UP

- 124 -
LIKE
GOT
I'M
ARE
OLD
AS
TIME
NOT
MAN
NOW
OUT
SEE
DON'T
WERE
THIS
CAN
HAVE
ONE
YOU'RE
HIM
FROM
DO
HEADING
DOWN
IF
LITTLE
AT
HER
HAD
WHERE
OUR
NO
I'VE
BEEN
COULD
OH
SOME
WOULD
ONLY
GET
WELL
NEVER
COME
LOVE
MORE
SAY
HE'S
BACK
THAT'S
WAY
WILL
DREAM
WHY
BOY
OR
ALWAYS
BY
CAN'T
GO
US
LIFE
THEN
YES
THINGS
THROUGH
STILL
NIGHT
HOW
AWAY
NAME
WORLD
THERE'S
EVER
CAUSE
CAME
DAY
FIRST
FOUND
NEED
BOYS
SAYS
GOOD
SHOULD
THAN
TOLD
AROUND
TOO
FIND
LAST
HEARD
AGAIN
YOU'VE
MAKE
INTO
HERE
ABOUT
DONE
MUSIC
BABE
Babe
PUT
DREAMS
TAKE
DID
LEFT
WHILE
SING
GONE
MADE
ANOTHER
OVER
AN
HE'D
OFF
WHO
WONDER
GIRLS
TELL
THEY'RE
STORY
THOUGH
PLEASE
BEFORE
WON'T
YOU'LL
SHE'S
KID
TRUTH
LADY
GUITAR
REALLY
YOUNG
THEIR
HEAR
CALLING
YEAH
YEARS
ELSE
MUCH
EVERY
SOMEBODY
HOME
SOMETHING
GIVE
SOMEONE
EYES
TIL
FALL
ONCE
WENT
SONG
BETTER
WATCH
KNEW
I'D
NOTHING
COMING
SWEET
HAS
USED
THEM
STARTED
WOMAN
GOD
PLAY
MAYBE
KEEPS
SEEN
START
LAND
TIMES
THING
PAST
HEAD
PEACE
WORDS
I'LL
AM
THOUGHT
GIRL
DANCE
TOOK
OWN
HEART
HOLD
WE'D
LOST
AH
YOURSELF
SINGING
REMEMBER
LET'S
CHILDREN
PRETZEL
MANY
LOOK
GOING
WE'RE
EM
FAR
MAY
FLOWERS
BROUGHT
ALONE
15 TEN
15 FOOL
15 WIFE
15 KEEP
15 FEEL
15 BOUT
14 TALKIN'
14 AFTER
14 JOB
14 SAME
14 NEW
14 TOWN
14 WE'LL
14 ROCK
14 INSIDE
14 GREW
14 OTHER
14 SONGS
14 FRIEND
14 BLUES
14 HAPPEN
14 WANT
14 WORK
14 MIND
13 LIVE
13 CALL
13 SANDY
13 REAL
13 SMILE
13 GREEN
13 DAYS
13 KNOWS
13 LATE
13 TWO
13 WIND
13 YEAR
12 GONNA
12 HELL
12 BODY
12 LIGHT
12 SOMEWHERE
12 MEAN
12 ENOUGH
12 ODD
12 LET
12 LEAVE
12 MAKES
12 CAUGHT
12 HANDS
12 HELP
12 BIT
WEEK
GUESS
TONIGHT
LEARN
SOMEDAY
HIGH
KIND
BED
LONG
WORD
MYSELF
UNDERSTAND
BABY
END
BAND
GETS
LEARNED
FACE
RIGHT
MUST
SAW
PLACE
UNDER
SET
BELIEVE
SHE'D
TODAY
STOP
MORNING
SAD
FREE
YOU'D
MAYOR
STREET
COLORS
COUNTRY
MONEY
VOICE
LOU
EVEN
RED
THREE
TRIED
BOTH
SOON
GROW
ROOM
HIMSELF
DANCIN'
HAND
STAND
BEHIND
STRONG
FRIGHTENED
DEAD
SOMETIMES
SAYING
SEEMS
MARY
DOING
CHORD
GETTING
TREAT
VERY
WHITE
PAIN
DOES
LAUGH
PART
ANY
ASK
HOUSE
TRY
MIGHT
FATHER
SEEMED
WAIT
SHOW
TALKING
BLACK
FOUR
WRITE
WEREN'T
BIG
RUN
MAMA
CRY
HAPPENED
KINGDOM
HUNDRED
MOTHER
SUPPOSED
SKIN
SILENCE
SIR
STAY
JENNY
FEELING
THOUSAND
PROMISE
SELLING
GLORY
WALK
THESE
SKY
HOLDING
PAID
SEND
TRYING
LEAST
HOLY
LIVIN'
OFFER
LEAVES
EARLY
SECRET
STRANGER
SHELF
ITS
HIT
HAVEN'T
BAD
PARK
ADMIT
READ
CHANGES
ICEBERG'S
FULL
RAIN
MIDNIGHT
HOLDS
SUNG
COREY'S
CANNOT
LESSON
AGO
GIFT
ANYMORE
KILL
BLIND
CHOICE
EVERYTHING
GUN
SLOW
WORTH
PASSING
JOY
CARES
ALREADY
FAST
HOT
GOIN'
LONELY
JOBS
BOW
FIVE
FLY
CRYING
MOUNTAIN
FASTER
BOUND
PICK
HARD
FACTORY
CHANGE
EVERYWHERE
WORKING
PAINTING
BIRD
GREAT
NEARER
WHOLE
LOVER
THEY'VE
BURNING
TOUGH
SHARE
ENDED
NIGHTS
SHOUT
FINGERNAILS
AMERICA
HURRY
LAID
NEXT
FEET
SLOWLY
MAGIC
TURNED
RUSTLING
TELLS
STREAM
EMPTY
COLD
ROLLING
CARE
DIED
POOR
FEW
BECAUSE
STARBOARD
LAUGHED
BLOOD
WAYS
RHYTHM
DAMNED
TALKED
VITA

Ronald Robert Capps was born on August 20, 1947 in Fresno, California. He received his primary education in the Fresno City Schools System. From 1962 through 1965 he attended C.L. McLane High School. In the summer of 1965 he enrolled at Fresno City College and transferred to Fresno State College for the fall of 1965. He left Fresno State during the spring of 1969 and married Anita C. James. His first son, Robert Anthony, was born on April 11, 1970.

During the years between 1970 and 1980 he was active in automotive sales, leasing, and management. Following his divorce in 1974, he married Carol Thompson on October 27, 1976. His second son, Justin Taylor was born July 14, 1980.

In the fall of 1980 he returned to California State University--Fresno, from which he graduated in 1981 with a Bachelor of Arts in Communication Arts and Sciences.

In the summer of 1981 he accepted a graduate teaching assistantship at Pittsburg State University, Pittsburg, Kansas from which he graduated in December, 1981 with a Master of Arts in Speech.
In the spring of 1982 he enrolled at Louisiana State University A & M, Baton Rouge, Louisiana, however, an unanticipated illness forced his withdrawal from the graduate program. In the fall of 1982 he accepted a graduate teaching assistantship and returned to Louisiana State University A & M. His dissertation was successfully defended on July 20, 1984. Beginning with the fall of 1984 he will serve as an Assistant Professor at the University of Wisconsin—Platteville.
EXAMINATION AND THESIS REPORT

Candidate: Ronald R. Capps

Major Field: Speech Communication


Approved:

[Signatures]

Major Professor and Chairman
Dean of the Graduate School

EXAMINING COMMITTEE:

[Signatures]

Date of Examination: July 20, 1984