



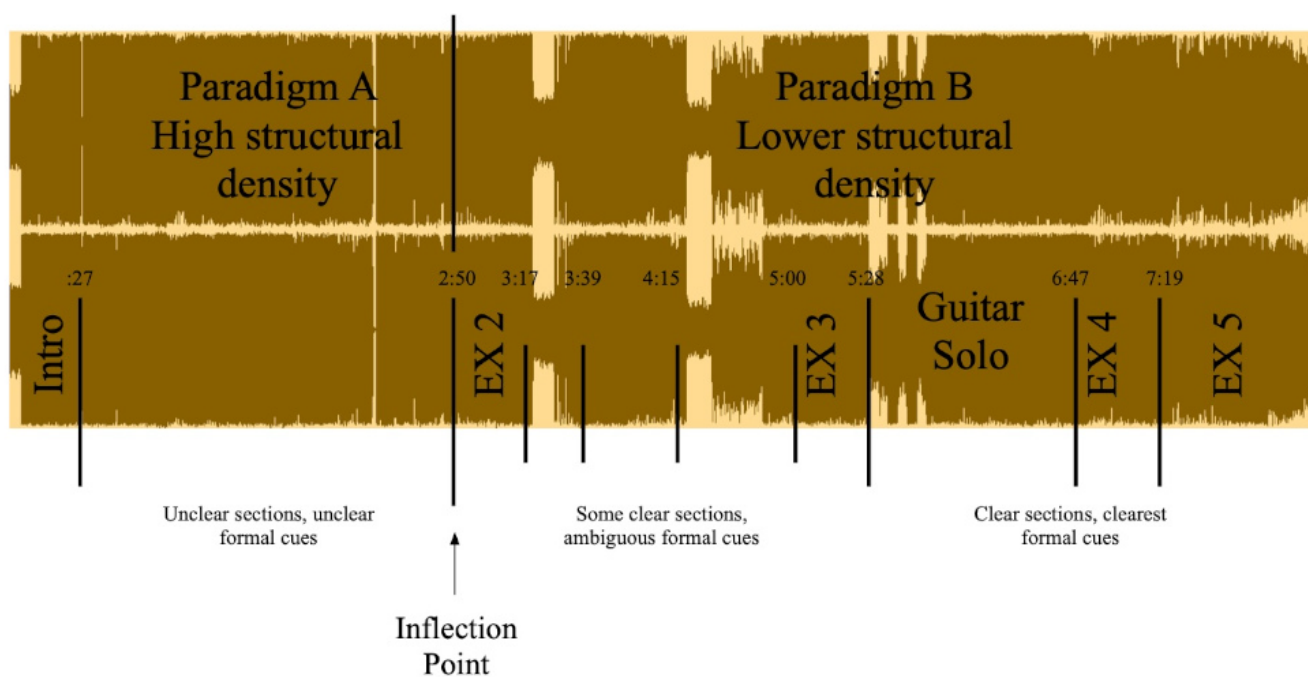
A JOURNAL OF THE SOCIETY FOR MUSIC THEORY

## MTO 28.1 Examples: Hannan, Structural Density and Clarity

(Note: audio, video, and other interactive examples are only available online)

<https://mtosmt.org/issues/mto.22.28.1/mto.22.28.1.hannan.html>

**Example 1.** Overview of “Ohmnivalent,” with inflection point, Paradigm A, and Paradigm B labelled



**Example 2.** Clear segmentation cues in the first riff after inflection point (2:50–3:11)

117 2:50

Dist. Guit. 1-L  
Dist. Guit. 2-R  
Drunkit

121

End/beginning of rhythmic pattern

Break in texture

Change of texture (vocals enter, guitar

3:04

126

End/beginning of rhythmic pattern

Break in texture

Change of texture (vocals enter, guitar

127

End/beginning of rhythmic pattern

Break in texture

Change of texture (vocals enter, guitar

131

End/beginning of rhythmic pattern

Break in texture

Change of texture (vocals enter, guitar

Blas - phe - my ev - ry breath is sin - di - vi - sion line a con - dem - na - tion fire rain - ing down from the ab - so - lute

Example 3. Repetition facilitating segmentation and contributing to structural clarity (5:00–5:16)

The image displays a musical score for three systems, each featuring four staves: Vocals (Voc.), Dist. Guitar 1-L (Dist. Guit. 1-L), Dist. Guitar 2-R (Dist. Guit. 2-R), and Drumkit. The score is divided into three systems, each with a blue bracket at the bottom indicating a repeated metric pattern for all instruments.

**System 1 (Measures 176-180):** The time signature is 11/8. The lyrics are: "I taught my - self to part the red clouds and scale the sky climb my gold chains". The vocal line is marked "Spoken".

**System 2 (Measures 180-184):** The time signature is 11/8. The lyrics are: "but I hit a re - flec - tive gold ceil - ing". The vocal line is marked "(Spoken)".

**System 3 (Measures 184-188):** The time signature is 11/8. The lyrics are: "looked in - to my own eyes and he said 'they've nat.". The vocal line is marked "(Spoken)".

A blue bracket at the bottom of each system indicates a repeated metric pattern for all instruments. A label "Repeated metric pattern for all" is placed to the right of the second system.

**Example 4.** Repeated metric patterns, ending flourish, and changes of texture all contribute to structural clarity in the song’s penultimate section (6:47–7:19)

The image displays three systems of musical notation for guitar and drums. Each system includes staves for Dist. Guit. 1-L, Dist. Guit. 2-R, Dist. Guit. 4-L, Dist. Guit. 5-R, and Drumkit. The notation is in 4/4 time. The first system is marked with a box containing '6:47' and a measure number '237'. The second system is marked with a measure number '241'. The third system is marked with a measure number '249'. Annotations on the right side of each system include: 'Start / end of metric pattern' (blue text), 'Ending flourish' (red text), and 'Change of guitar pattern, addition of new guitar layer' (green text). Red arrows point to specific measures in the guitar parts, and green arrows point to specific measures in the guitar parts. Blue brackets are placed under the drumkit staves in each system.

Dist. Guit. 1-L

Dist. Guit. 2-R

Dist. Guit. 4-L

Dist. Guit. 5-R

Drumkit

Start / end of metric pattern

Ending flourish

Change of guitar pattern, addition of new guitar layer

End of metric pattern, beginning of new pattern

Ending flourish

(Change to new pattern)

**Example 5.** Repetitive metric pattern and long last notes in the song's last section (7:19–end)

The musical score consists of four systems, each with four staves. The staves are labeled on the left as 'Dist. Guit. 1-L', 'Dist. Guit. 2-R', 'Dist. Guit. 3-C', and 'Drumkit'. The first system starts at measure 349 and ends at measure 352, with a time signature of 4/4. The second system starts at measure 353 and ends at measure 356, with a time signature of 4/4. The third system starts at measure 357 and ends at measure 360, with a time signature of 4/4. The fourth system starts at measure 361 and ends at measure 364, with a time signature of 4/4. The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and time signatures. Blue brackets are placed under the first two measures of each system, and red dashed lines are placed at the end of each system. The time signature changes from 4/4 to 3/4 at measure 357.

For all:

Beginning / end of  
metric pattern

Held notes define  
meter and  
boundaries

**Example 6.** Backbeat creates metric structure in the first section after the inflection point (2:50–2:57)

117 2:50

Dist. Guit. 1-L

Dist. Guit. 2-R

Drumkit

And etc.

Detailed description: This musical score snippet shows the first section after an inflection point at 2:50. It features three staves: Dist. Guit. 1-L, Dist. Guit. 2-R, and Drumkit. The guitar parts consist of eighth-note riffs in a key with one sharp (F#). The drumkit part features a consistent backbeat pattern, with blue circles highlighting the backbeats on the snare drum. The section ends with the text 'And etc.'

**Example 7.** Backbeat creates metric structure when the guitar riff returns later (4:01–4:08)

153 4:01

Dist. Guit. 1-L

Dist. Guit. 2-R

Drumkit

And etc.

Detailed description: This musical score snippet shows a later section at 4:01. It features the same three staves as Example 6. The guitar parts continue with the same eighth-note riffs. The drumkit part maintains the backbeat pattern, with blue circles highlighting the backbeats. The section ends with the text 'And etc.'

**Example 8.** Nested ABAC phrase structure in the song's last section (7:19–end)

The musical score illustrates a nested ABAC phrase structure in the song's last section (7:19–end). The score is divided into four systems, each with staves for Dist. Guit. 1-L, Dist. Guit. 2-R, Dist. Guit. 3-C, and Drumkit. The systems are labeled A, B, A, and C. The first system (A) has measures 349-356 with time signature changes to 4/4 and back to 3/4, and is divided into phrases 'a' and 'b'. The second system (B) has measures 357-364 with time signature changes to 4/4 and back to 3/4, and is divided into phrases 'a' and 'c'. The third system (A) has measures 365-372 with time signature changes to 4/4 and back to 3/4, and is divided into phrases 'a' and 'b'. The fourth system (C) has measures 373-380 with time signature changes to 4/4 and back to 3/4, and is divided into phrases 'a' and 'd'. The score ends with a double bar line at measure 380.

**System A (Measures 349-356):** Dist. Guit. 1-L and 2-R play a melodic line. Drumkit plays a steady rhythm. Time signature changes from 3/4 to 4/4 at measure 350 and back to 3/4 at measure 354. Phrases 'a' and 'b' are indicated.

**System B (Measures 357-364):** Dist. Guit. 1-L and 2-R play a melodic line. Drumkit plays a steady rhythm. Time signature changes from 3/4 to 4/4 at measure 358 and back to 3/4 at measure 362. Phrases 'a' and 'c' are indicated.

**System A (Measures 365-372):** Dist. Guit. 1-L and 2-R play a melodic line. Dist. Guit. 3-C plays a bass line. Drumkit plays a steady rhythm. Time signature changes from 3/4 to 4/4 at measure 366 and back to 3/4 at measure 370. Phrases 'a' and 'b' are indicated.

**System C (Measures 373-380):** Dist. Guit. 1-L and 2-R play a melodic line. Dist. Guit. 3-C plays a bass line. Drumkit plays a steady rhythm. Time signature changes from 3/4 to 4/4 at measure 374 and back to 3/4 at measure 378. Phrases 'a' and 'd' are indicated. The score ends with a double bar line at measure 380.



Example 9. 2:02–2:18 with motivic segmentation

This musical score illustrates motivic segmentation for three instruments: Dist. Guit. 1-L, Dist. Guit. 2-R, and Drumkit, spanning measures 82 to 161. The score is organized into three systems, each with a measure number (82, 86, 90) at the beginning of the first staff.

**System 1 (Measures 82-90):**

- Dist. Guit. 1-L:** Features a melodic line with notes marked with 'x' (accents). Motivic segments are labeled:  $a_1$ ,  $b_1$ ,  $c_1$ ,  $b_2$ ,  $a_1$ ,  $c_1$ ,  $c_2$ ,  $a_2$ ,  $b_1$ , and  $c_1$ . A time signature change to 4/4 occurs at measure 90.
- Dist. Guit. 2-R:** Features a melodic line with notes marked with 'x'. Motivic segments are labeled:  $a_1$ ,  $b_1$ ,  $c_1$ ,  $b_2$ ,  $a_1$ ,  $c_1$ ,  $c_2$ ,  $a_2$ ,  $b_1$ , and  $c_1$ .
- Drumkit:** Features a rhythmic pattern with notes marked with 'x'. Motivic segments are labeled:  $a_1$ ,  $b_1$ ,  $c_1$ ,  $b_2$ ,  $a_1$ ,  $c_1$ ,  $c_2$ ,  $a_2$ ,  $b_1$ , and  $c_1$ .

**System 2 (Measures 86-94):**

- Dist. Guit. 1-L:** Motivic segments are labeled:  $b_3$ ,  $c_3$ ,  $b_1$ ,  $a_3$ ,  $c_4$ ,  $b_4$ ,  $c_3$ ,  $b_5$ ,  $a_4$ ,  $b_1$ , and  $c_3$ .
- Dist. Guit. 2-R:** Motivic segments are labeled:  $b_3$ ,  $c_3$ ,  $b_1$ ,  $a_3$ ,  $c_4$ ,  $b_4$ ,  $c_3$ ,  $b_5$ ,  $a_4$ ,  $b_1$ , and  $c_3$ .
- Drumkit:** Motivic segments are labeled:  $b_3$ ,  $c_3$ ,  $b_1$ ,  $a_3$ ,  $c_4$ ,  $b_4$ ,  $c_3$ ,  $b_5$ ,  $a_4$ ,  $b_1$ , and  $c_3$ .

**System 3 (Measures 90-161):**

- Dist. Guit. 1-L:** Motivic segments are labeled:  $b_2$ ,  $c_3$ ,  $b_1$ ,  $a_5$ ,  $b_1$ ,  $c_1$ ,  $b_6$ ,  $c_3$ , and  $(b_1)$ . A time signature change to 4/4 occurs at measure 161.
- Dist. Guit. 2-R:** Motivic segments are labeled:  $b_2$ ,  $c_3$ ,  $b_1$ ,  $a_5$ ,  $b_1$ ,  $c_1$ ,  $b_6$ ,  $c_3$ , and  $(b_1)$ .
- Drumkit:** Motivic segments are labeled:  $b_2$ ,  $c_3$ ,  $b_1$ ,  $a_5$ ,  $b_1$ ,  $c_1$ ,  $b_6$ ,  $c_3$ , and  $(b_1)$ .

The score uses a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a common time signature of 4/4. The notation includes various musical symbols such as notes, rests, and accidentals, with 'x' marks indicating specific rhythmic or melodic features.



**Example 10.** Strong sectional boundary at end of intro section going into Paradigm A (0:22–0:33)

The image displays a musical score for Paradigm A (0:22–0:33), featuring a strong sectional boundary at the end of the intro section. The score is written for five instruments: Dist. Guit. 1-L, Dist. Guit. 2-R, Drunkkit, Voc., and Dist. Guit. 1-L. The tempo modulation is indicated by a blue line and the text "Tempo modulation". The vocal entrance is marked with a green arrow and the text "Vocal entrance". The intro riff pattern dissolves, indicated by a blue dashed line and the text "Intro riff pattern dissolves". A texture break is marked with a red arrow and the text "Texture break". The drums switch to a blastbeat, indicated by a green arrow and the text "Drums switch to blastbeat". The lyrics are: "De - feet - ive from the start my will bent at the knee for pro - spect - ive a - ward".

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Dist. Guit. 2-R  
Drunkkit  
Voc.  
Dist. Guit. 1-L

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De - feet - ive from the start my will bent at the knee for pro - spect - ive a - ward

Tempo modulation

Vocal entrance

Intro riff pattern dissolves

Texture break

Drums switch to blastbeat

**Example 11.** My attempt at notating a brief passage (at :34) that resists rhythmic quantization

19

Voc.

Dist. Guit. 1-L

Dist. Guit. 2-R

Drumkit

pan to - mine sing - ing nec - rot - ic hymns of res - sur - ec - tion I drain the poi - son plas - ma that runs through me

Transcription of guitar rhythm is approximate - it's very fast, and not entirely lined up with drums

Guitars and vocals seem to part ways with drums until...  
...everything realigns at  
this brief tresillo figure

The musical score is written for four staves. The top staff is for the vocal line, with lyrics in French. The second and third staves are for two distorted guitar parts, labeled 'Dist. Guit. 1-L' and 'Dist. Guit. 2-R'. The bottom staff is for the drumkit. The music is in 4/4 time. The guitar parts feature a complex, fast-paced rhythm that is difficult to quantify. A dashed line indicates a point where the guitars and vocals part ways from the drums, and an arrow points to a specific figure where they realign.

**Example 12.** Ascending tritone section, in which the guitar pattern is difficult to discern directly because of masking and non-coordinating rhythmic layers (0:42–1:03)

0:42

Voc. melt a - way Wax mar - i - on - ette

Diat. Guit. 1-L

Diat. Guit. 2-R

Drumkit

28

Voc. un - bound vib - ra - tions

Diat. Guit. 1-L

Diat. Guit. 2-R

Drumkit

37

Voc. the light greets me all my life been wait - ing this shell is no - thing

Diat. Guit. 1-L

Diat. Guit. 2-R

Diat. Guit. 3-C

Drumkit

38

Voc. re - lease me re - lease me from this poi - son

Diat. Guit. 1-L

Diat. Guit. 2-R

Diat. Guit. 3-C

Drumkit

0:59

Voc. of plas - tic flesh

Diat. Guit. 1-L

Diat. Guit. 2-R

Diat. Guit. 3-C

Drumkit

Inferred repeating  
structure  
increasingly  
obscured by  
masking

Especially with  
entrance of low  
palm-muted  
guitar accents

Example 13. Re-barring of 2:02–2:18 so that each motive gets its own measure

The image displays a musical score for three instruments: Dist. Guit. 1-L, Dist. Guit. 2-R, and Drumlkit. The score is divided into three systems, each representing a different time signature: 2:02, 2:02, and 2:02. The first system (2:02) shows the initial re-barring. The second system (2:02) shows the continuation of the re-barring. The third system (2:02) shows the final re-barring. The score includes measures 103 and 161, indicating the progression of the piece. The notation for the guitars uses a 12-string configuration, and the drum kit part uses a standard drum notation with various rhythmic values and rests.

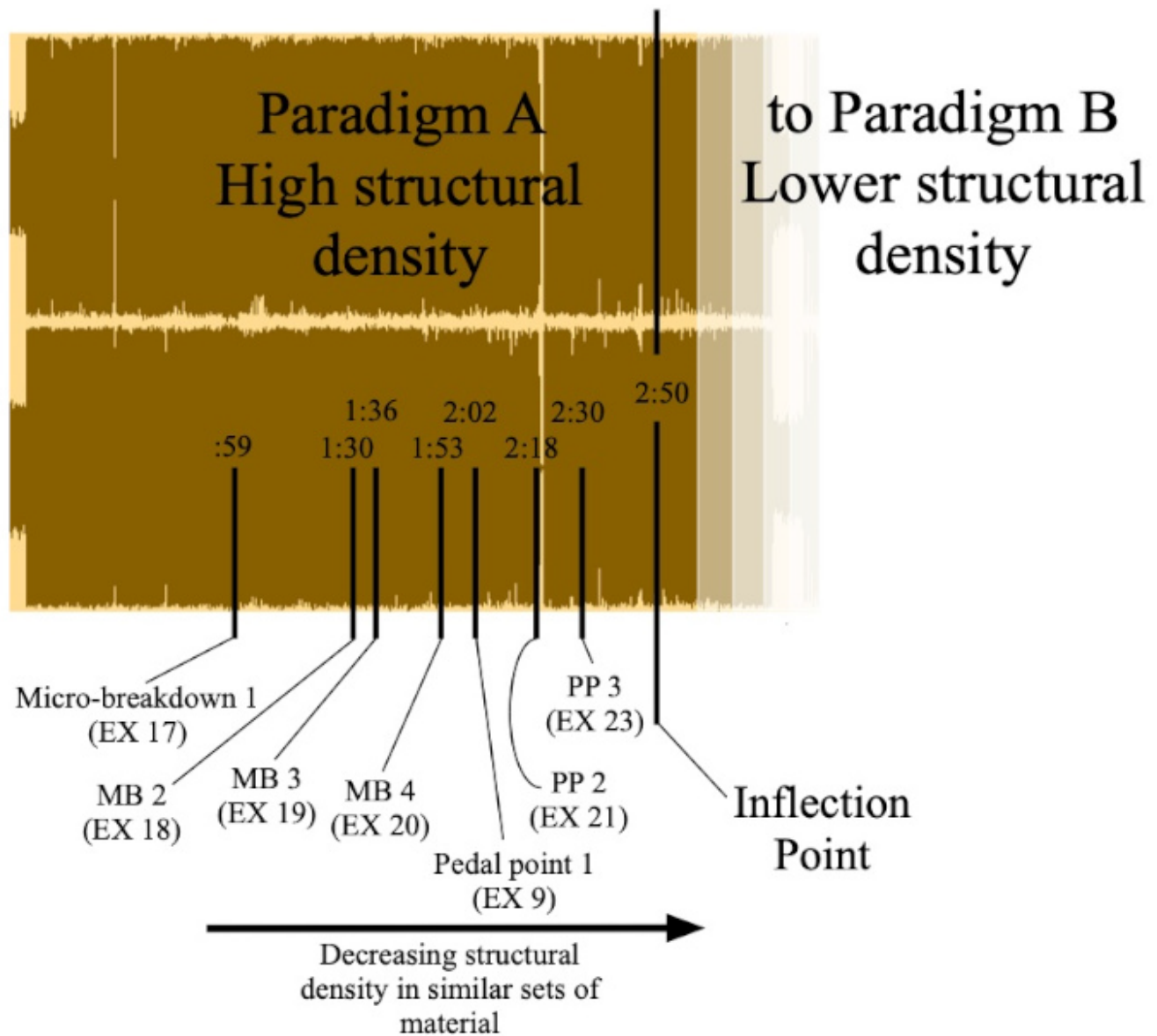
**Example 14.** Another re-barring of 2:02–2:18 so that motive c always ends a measure

The image displays three systems of musical notation for a guitar duo and a drumkit. Each system consists of three staves: Dist. Guit. 1-L (top), Dist. Guit. 2-R (middle), and Drumkit (bottom). The music is written in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#). The time signature changes from 3/4 to 4/4 in the middle of the first system. A tempo marking of  $\text{♩} = 161$  is located at the bottom of the first system. A box labeled "2:02" is positioned above the first system. The notation includes various musical symbols such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings like  $\text{mf}$  and  $\text{f}$ .

**Example 15.** The barring for 2:02–2:18 that I ultimately adopted, balancing manageable measure lengths with my experience of grouping while highlighting parallelisms

The image displays three systems of musical notation for a guitar duo and a drumkit. Each system consists of three staves: Dist. Guit. 1-L (top), Dist. Guit. 2-R (middle), and Drumkit (bottom). The music is written in 4/4 time, with a key signature of one sharp (F#). The first system starts at measure 82, the second at measure 85, and the third at measure 89. A tempo marking of 161 is indicated at the end of the third system. The notation includes various musical symbols such as notes, rests, and bar lines, with a specific barring pattern highlighted in the first system.

**Example 16.** Overview of material under discussion in Examples 17–23





**Example 17.** First in a series of “micro-breakdowns” in Paradigm A (0:59–1:03)

49

0:59

Fleeing repeated guitar pattern helps stabilize

Voc. of plas - tic flesh

Dist. Guit. 1-L

Dist. Guit. 2-R

Dist. Guit. 3-C

Drumkit

Dramatic textural simplification from preceding

Obscured 4/4 backbeat phases against 5/4 guitar pattern

**Example 18.** Second micro-breakdown, clearer than the first (1:30–1:35)

68 1:30

Voc  
Tempt - ing me once was the man whose law is writ in stone

Dist. Guit. 1L  
Dist. Guit. 2R

Drumkit

2 + 2 + 2 + 1 2 + 2 + 2 + 1

All parts have same accents, relatively high clarity

Guitars repeat pattern, drums phase backbeat against it

**Example 19.** Third micro-breakdown, still clearer (1:35–1:38)

71

Voc.

Tempt - ing me twice was the man whose blood I've known

Dist. Guit. 1-L

Dist. Guit. 2-R

Drumkit

2 + 2 + 2 + 1 2 + 2 + 2 + 1

Same guitar pattern with accents in every part,  
more familiar (= more clear) this time because  
we are hearing it  
soon after its first appearance

Example 20. Last micro-breakdown, clearest of all (1:53–2:02)

79 1:53

Voc. Temp - ing me last were the se - ven swords for chip - ping bone

Dist. Guit. 1L

Dist. Guit. 2R

Drumkit

8/4 interpretation secured by texture break

Briefly lines up with normative 4/4 backbeat (schema)

87

Dist. Guit. 1L

Dist. Guit. 2R

Drumkit

Same guitar accent pattern  
(2+2+2+1) repeats six full times

**Example 21.** Second pedal point melody section (2:18–2:32)

93 2:18

Voc. No wrath no venge-ful god de-ny-ing your right to af-firm your life and live it

Dist. Guit. 1-L

Dist. Guit. 2-R

Drumkit

97

Voc. now Your heart mind and will are your on-ly laws

Dist. Guit. 1-L

Dist. Guit. 2-R

Drumkit

103 11 10 11 11 10 11 11

Dist. Guit. 1-L

Dist. Guit. 2-R

Drumkit

♩ = 142

## Example 22. Paradigmatic layout of 2:18–2:32 to show repeating motive structure

The musical score is divided into three systems, each with four staves: Vocals, Dist. Guit. 1-L, Dist. Guit. 2-R, and Drunkit. The time signature is 4/4. The key signature has one sharp (F#).

**System 1 (Measures 18-22):** The vocal line begins with "No wrath no venge - ful god de - ny - ing your right". The drumkit staff shows a sequence of motives labeled c, b, c, b, a, b. Blue dashed lines connect these motives across the systems.

**System 2 (Measures 23-27):** The vocal line continues with "to af - firm your life and live it now". The drumkit staff shows motives labeled c, b, c, b, a, b.

**System 3 (Measures 28-32):** The vocal line continues with "Your heart mind and will are your on -". The drumkit staff shows motives labeled c, b, c, b, a, b. The system ends with a "transitional flourish" marked with a double bar line and a repeat sign.

Cycle through same sequence of motives contributes to clarity; alterations to rhythmic and pitch profile of motives contribute to density

**Example 23.** Last and clearest pedal point melody section (2:32–2:43)

105 2:30 **stronger backbeat**

Voc. I am the om - ni - anth - ro - lo - gos I'm the ser - pent this is my flesh blood king - dom and

Diat. Guit. 1.L.

Diat. Guit. 2.R.

Drumkit

109 **cycle through exact same motives makes it clearer**

Voc. mine a - lone

Diat. Guit. 1.L.

Diat. Guit. 2.R.

Drumkit



**Example 24.** First fleeting, texturally buried appearance of pyramid motives (1:17–1:26)

= 156  
 1:17  
 67

**Example 25.** More pyramids, now in full octaves, obscured by speed and dense texture. (1:40–1:48)

73

Voc. —

Dist. Guit. 1:L —

Dist. Guit. 2:R —

Drumkit —

75

Voc. throne

Dist. Guit. 1:L —

Dist. Guit. 2:R —

Drumkit —

No one can tell if I'm shack - led or on a

Example 26. Clearer version of pyramid motive (3:17–3:40)

Handwritten musical score for Example 26, featuring a clearer version of the pyramid motive (3:17–3:40). The score is written for five staves: Voc., Dist. Guit. 1:L, Dist. Guit. 2:R, Dist. Guit. 3:C, and Drunkkit. The tempo is marked as  $\text{♩} = 126$  and the time signature is 3:17. The score begins at measure 133 and ends at measure 138.

The notation includes various musical symbols such as notes, rests, and accidentals. A blue triangle is drawn over the Dist. Guit. 2:R staff, with the text "etc." written below it, indicating a repeating pattern. The Drunkkit staff shows a series of rhythmic patterns, including eighth and sixteenth notes, and rests.

The score is divided into measures by vertical dashed lines. The measures are numbered 133, 134, 135, 136, 137, and 138. The key signature is one sharp (F#).

**Example 27.** More fleeting pyramids in one of the most structurally dense parts of Paradigm B (3:39–3:46)

142

3:39

Voc.

I'm

I'm so weak

Dist. Guit. 1-L

Dist. Guit. 2-R

Drumkit

**Example 28.** Pyramids under the clean guitar ostinato in the bridge-like section (4:15–4:45)

161 4:15

Cl. Guit. 1-C

Cl. Guit. 2-L

Cl. Guit. 3-R

164

Cl. Guit. 1-C

Cl. Guit. 2-L

Cl. Guit. 3-R

etc.

166

Cl. Guit. 1-C

Cl. Guit. 2-L

Cl. Guit. 3-R

168

Cl. Guit. 1-C

Cl. Guit. 2-L

Cl. Guit. 3-R

Example 29. Final version of pyramid motives in last section (7:19–end)

249 7:19

Dist. Guit. 1-L

Dist. Guit. 2-R

Drumkit

Etc.

253

Dist. Guit. 1-L

Dist. Guit. 2-R

Drumkit

257 7:38

Dist. Guit. 1-L

Dist. Guit. 2-R

Dist. Guit. 3-C

Drumkit

261 7:55 8:19

Dist. Guit. 1-L

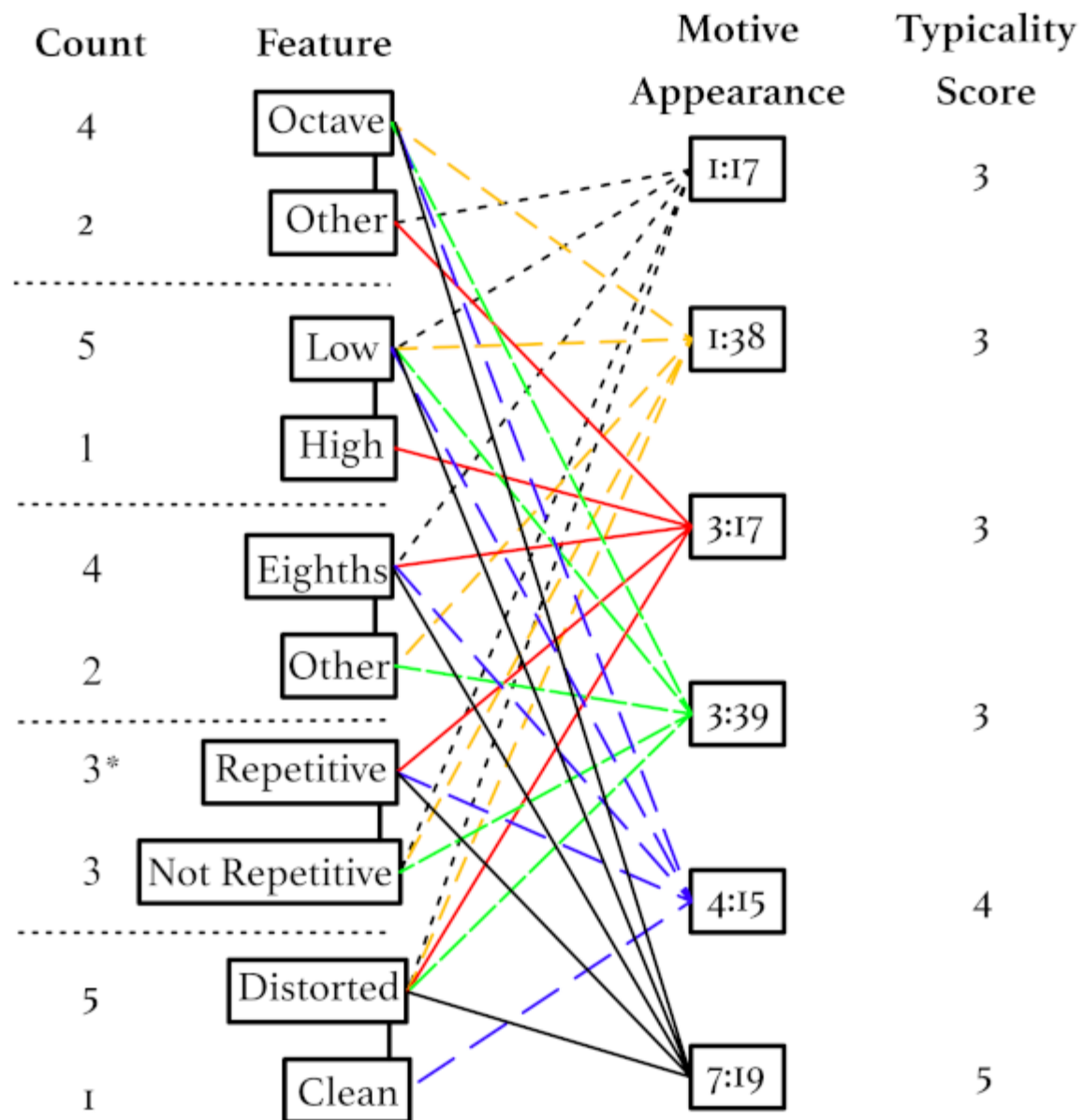
Dist. Guit. 2-R

Dist. Guit. 3-C

Drumkit



**Example 30.** Typicality diagram for pyramid motives, after Zbikowski (2002, 44. Adapted from his figure 1.2)



\*Repetitive deemed more typical; tiebreaker based on repetitive structures taking more time and being more familiar



**Example 31.** Summary of factors contributing to structural density and clarity

