"FINDING THE PROPER SEQUENCE": FORM AND NARRATIVE IN THE COLLAGE MUSIC OF JOHN ZORN

A Dissertation Presented

by

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To my parents, for their love and support.
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I wish to thank my advisor, Gary Karpinski, and the members of my committee, Brent Auerbach, Richard Randall, and Katherine Hudson. Without their guidance, suggestions, and critiques, completing this dissertation would not have been possible. I wish to further thank Richard for his friendship and advice. He has been a resource that I continue to draw upon in matters both professional and personal. I extend my appreciation to Professor Ernest May, who taught the graduate seminar in which I began this research. I am indebted to the faculty and graduate students in the music department at the University of Massachusetts who offered advice at the early stages of this project, and those outside of the university who offered their questions and perspectives when I presented this research at conferences. I also thank Brad Smith and the editorial staff at *Music Research Forum* for their critiques and suggestions that refined portions of this research.

I could not have completed my studies without the support of my family. I thank my parents and my older brother Ethan for their constant love and encouragement. Ethan completed his dissertation during the same time I worked on this project, and it helped immensely to share the ups and downs of this experience with him. I want to thank Becky, who has made my life so enjoyable during the years that we have been together; I cannot imagine life without her. I have been lucky enough to have great friends like Aric who supported me during this time as well. Finally, I wish to thank my pets, Zoey, Mr. P., and Rex. During many otherwise solitary hours of writing, they were my constant companions.
This dissertation examines the linear sequence of segments in musical collages composed by John Zorn between 1988 and 1993. In addition to the use of processes and associations as unifying elements, these pieces present hierarchical organization and narrative structure. The presence of form and narrative in these works illustrates the capacity of postmodern music to be unified in novel and idiosyncratic ways.

I examine Zorn’s collage pieces using an adapted methodology of paradigmatic analysis and incorporate ideas of musical topics as signifiers of delineation in the works. The segmentation of these works, begun in chapter three, reveals a hierarchical organization where individual musical blocks are organized into larger structures that I call collage phrases. This reveals the presence of hierarchical form in the musical surface, showing that organization in the pieces is not limited to background processes. The collage pieces that utilize this structure are described as exhibiting episodic collage form. Collage phrases in such pieces may also be further grouped together into larger units.
I examine narrative in the pieces through the idea of *idiolects*, which I conceive of as approaches and compositional philosophies that are identified through the careful examination of Zorn and his music. Chapter four examines how linear narrative in Zorn’s string quartet *Cat O’Nine Tails* relates to an idea of visual organization that connects to his conception of cartoon music. Chapter five examines how Zorn’s album *Radio* is organized through the idea of the “musical game,” a concept in which borrowed materials and techniques are combined with Zorn’s musical persona. Songs on *Radio* reflect this concept progressively over the course of the album.

This study reveals several things about Zorn’s music and about musical postmodernism. First, it illustrates the organization of the musical surface of these works. Second, it highlights linear musical narratives in the pieces. These elements of linear organization operate alongside other non-linear structures in Zorn’s music. Finally, it demonstrates the capacity of postmodern music to contain innovative approaches towards musical organization.
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INTRODUCTION

This dissertation examines collage music composed by John Zorn between 1988 and 1993. These works present discontinuous textures of short, contrasting musical blocks. The pieces are notable both for their extreme musical disjunctions and their juxtaposition of a broad spectrum of musical styles, genres, and references. It is not the goal of this work to arrive at a definitive explanation of Zorn’s collages, or to identify a single unifying process that occurs in all of his pieces. As will be seen, such aims run counter to the intertextual nature of Zorn’s music. Instead, this analysis proceeds from the experience and perception of the works, and moves towards conclusions that present views of how the works may be understood. These views represent some of many possible explanations for unity and structure in Zorn’s pieces. My intent is to enrich the understanding of the music by illuminating the linear form and structure that constitutes an important aspect of these pieces.

Musical collage is defined as the juxtaposition of distinct musical units, either simultaneously or in succession, in such a way that the various elements remain clearly distinguishable (Burkholder 2012).¹ The technique has clear analogues in the visual arts; photomontages produced by Alexander Rodchenko (1891-1956), for instance, consist of photographic fragments assembled in various combinations with the intent of creating

¹ Glenn Watkins similarly defines collage as “the assemblage and rearrangement of a rich parade of cultural loans involving textures, timbres, temperaments, and generative procedures” (1994, 3).

1
new meanings through juxtaposition (Fer 2003). Because of its temporal nature, film montage correlates even closer with musical collage. In the films of Sergei Eisenstein (1898-1948), shots taken from various angles and perspectives were edited together, sometimes in sequence and sometimes overlapping.\(^2\) To Eisenstein, “meaning in the cinema was not inherent in any filmed object but was created by the collision of two signifying elements, one coming after the other and, through juxtaposition, defining the sense to be given to the whole” (Nowell-Smith 1991, xv). The montage technique took contrasting images and unified them into a singular meaning.

While Charles Ives produced the first works completely based on collage principles in the early decades of the twentieth century, there was not a widespread use of collage techniques until the 1950s (Burkholder 2012). Works by Bernd Zimmermann, Luciano Berio, and George Rochberg used quotations from previous music as building blocks, sometimes combining them with original music, and sometimes, as in the case of the third movement of Berio’s *Sinfonia*, using an entire preexisting piece as the basis for structure in the work.\(^3\) In addition to conventionally notated music, electronic compositions based on tape splices from this period not only produced musical collage but also mirrored the assembly techniques of the visual arts (Watkins 1994, 406). As Catherine Losada notes, collage “created an unprecedented level of heterogeneity in the musical language” (2009, 57).

---

\(^2\) John Brackett sees connections between the idea of unity in Eisenstein’s film montage and in Zorn’s music (2008, xvi-xvii).

\(^3\) Burkholder describes the movement as “the best known collage, and perhaps the most complex” (2012).
Collage and the technique of quotation are associated with musical postmodernism (Heile 2002, 288). Postmodern music is in part distinguished by its perspective on the music of the past. Modernist composers focused on innovation and saw themselves as part of a progressive tradition of musical development (Clendinning 2002, 128). In contrast, postmodern music often involves what Jeongwon Joe calls a “re-engagement with the past” (1998, 24). While one aspect of this re-engagement can be seen musically in the return to tonal idioms by some postmodern composers, it is also reflected by the use of quotation in postmodern works (24-45). Jonathan Kramer believes that postmodern quotation challenges the idea of historical progress that was central to modernism.

Since . . . the quotations and references in postmodern music are often presented without distortion, without commentary, and without distancing, composers treat them just as they might use citations of the present. If a musical style of two hundred years ago is employed in the same way— with the same degree of authenticity (that is, composed as it was when it was current)—as is a newly developed style, then history is indeed challenged (2002, 17).

This compositional tactic has two results. First, it subverts the idea that stylistic development takes place in a linear fashion. Second, it annihilates the idea of a

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4 Heile notes, however, that collage was a modernist creation. Zorn’s collage music has been specifically described as postmodern (Kramer 1995, 22).

5 In an earlier essay, Kramer writes that “modernist pastiche acknowledges history: the past is reinterpreted in the present. But postmodern pastiche is anti-historical: the past coexists with, and is indeed indistinguishable from, the present” (1995, 26).
contemporary musical style. The use of quotation in postmodern works is also seen by Joe as one aspect of the “poststructuralist philosophical skepticism about originality, authorship, subjectivity, and authenticity” (1998, 34). This view is echoed by Bjorn Heile, who sees collage as “a postmodernist principle entailing the abdication of authorship in favor of intertextual references and heterogeneity” (2002, 288).

The precise meaning of the term postmodern is complicated. Heile admits that postmodernism “means many different things, and this multiplicity proves particularly confusing in the realm of music” (2002, 287). Ross Feller sees it as a “term fraught with contradiction” (2002, 250), while Kramer decries it as a “maddeningly imprecise musical concept” (2002, 13). As part of an expression of the exasperation that she experiences as a composer in the postmodern era, Cecilia Livingston articulates the challenge that defining the term presents.

Postmodernism defies definition and invites dismissal by its own criteria: its refusal to accept assumed truths, traditions, and criteria. Instead, it is always questioning, always destabilizing, so that every statement, however pompous or personal, is turned on its back and dissected. Thus postmodernism, in our everyday understanding of it, becomes something which celebrates interrogation and re-examination but leaves us nothing to work with: no beliefs, no meaning, no truth – nothing that can be agreed on. Even if we might feel in agreement, if we articulate those feelings we expose ourselves to postmodernism’s merciless fangs (2010, 31).

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6 Schoenberg articulated a modernist perspective on musical style: “That a young man composes in the style of the time, should not be surprising. It is as natural as using all the other facilities offered by the progress and the developments of the epoch in which one lives. There would not exist the style of Louis XIV if he had liked to live in the style of Louis XIII. And thus Louis XV and his successors were conscious of their own time and abhorred living in a second-hand style” (1975, 376).
These difficulties have not stopped authors from attempting to outline the scope of musical postmodernism, particularly as it contrasts with musical modernism. While acknowledging that “postmodern music is not a neat category with rigid boundaries” (2002, 16-17), Kramer presents the following list of characteristics of postmodern music.

Postmodern Music:

(1) is not simply a repudiation of modernism or its continuation, but has aspects of both a break and an extension;

(2) is, on some level and in some way, ironic;

(3) does not respect boundaries between sonorities and procedures of the past and the present;

(4) challenges barriers between “high” and “low” styles;

(5) shows disdain for the often unquestioned value of structural unity;

(6) questions the mutual exclusivity of elitist and populist values;

(7) avoids totalizing forms (e.g., does not want entire pieces to be tonal or serial or cast in a prescribed formal mode);

Many have presented lists of attributes of the modern and postmodern eras; in some examples, opposing tendencies of the two movements are paired dichotomously. In his essay “Music and Musical Practices in Postmodernity,” Timothy Taylor critiques such tables created by Ihab Hassan, Charles Jencks, and David Harvey, writing that “labels such as ‘postmodern’ imply a fixedness that social processes never have” (2002, 94-98). Heile also cautions against this “check list” approach to the identification of postmodern music, particularly with lists that are “segregated along the modernist/postmodernist divide” (2002, 287), and notes that “there is no definite antagonism between modernism and postmodernism, nor is there a straightforward chronological distinction: postmodern and modern impulses occur simultaneously” (288).
(8) considers music not as autonomous but as relevant to cultural, social, and political cultures;

(9) includes quotations of or references to music of many traditions and cultures;

(10) considers technology not only as a way to preserve and transmit music but also as deeply implicated in the production and essence of music;

(11) embraces contradictions;

(12) distrusts binary oppositions;

(13) includes fragmentations and discontinuities;

(14) encompasses pluralism and eclecticism;

(15) presents multiple meanings and multiple temporalities;

(16) locates meaning and even structure in listeners, more than in scores, performances, or composers (2002, 16-17).

Kramer cautions the reader, however, against employing the list in attempts to identify postmodern works, noting that not all pieces will display all of the given characteristics. Even with this caveat, he still feels that such lists present details that are useful in the discussion of musical postmodernism. “Classifications and oppositions, fuzzy as their boundaries may be, do relate to real cultural divisions. . . . These categories have exerted a discernable influence on composers. . . . The relevance to music of these
dichotomies is undeniable, even if it is not a particularly useful exercise in tedium to try to ally compositions exclusively in one camp” (1995, 23).

Even given the hesitancy apparent in many approaches and the lack of a fixed definition of the subject, there is general agreement around several of the tendencies of postmodernism, some of which, along with the use of quotation, are especially germane to the exploration of Zorn’s music. Many believe that postmodern music abandons traditional dichotomies that have been part of western music. One such dichotomy is the distinction between high and popular culture, a boundary emphasized by modernism (see Joe 1998, 51, and Kramer 1995, 29). Jane Clendinning sees the disintegration of this distinction as a reaction against the extremity of modernist elitism. “The hands of the modernist masters produced works with a special kind of beauty lauded by a small circle of cognoscenti, but which alienated the masses who did not feel comfortable in the presence of the ‘new music’ and did not want to expend the effort to understand the new style” (2002, 130). Instead, postmodern music often fuses high and popular influences in various ways. The embrace of popular art is accompanied by a diminished concern with

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8 Kramer makes a distinction between postmodernism and what he calls anti-modernism, a “yearning for the golden ages of classicism and romanticism” that can be seen in “nostalgic artworks” such as the flute concertos of Lowell Liberman, George Rochberg’s *Ricordanza* and *Violin Sonata*, and Michael Torke’s piano concerto *Bronze*, on the basis that anti-modernism maintains an elitist posture that is eschewed by postmodernism (2002, 13). Anti-modernism is further distinguished from postmodernism through its relationship with musical unity.
mechanical reproduction and the resulting commodification of art, a subject that was anathema to modernist theorists.⁹

Postmodern music also presents a new perspective on musical unity, a characteristic that Kramer has extensively discussed.¹⁰ Modernism had extended the concept of unity from a nineteenth century idea that “a work was thought to be unified if all its parts were understandable in relation to the whole” to an “idea that the parts had to be related not only to the whole but also to each other” (Kramer 1995, 11-12).¹¹ In contrast, unity became an “option” to postmodern composers (Kramer 2002, 14). Kramer identifies two branches of musical postmodernism: a neoconservative branch (he specifically cites Fred Lerdahl’s music) that continues to prize organicism and unity, and a “radical” branch in which some composers “have forsaken this allegiance” to musical unity (1995, 24), and produce pieces featuring discontinuity, juxtaposition, and contrast.¹²

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⁹ Joe sees postmodernism’s comfort with art as a popular commodity as an aspect of an embrace of technology that influenced the change in thinking towards authorship described above (1998, 45).

¹⁰ Joe does not address musical unity in her chapter-long discussion on postmodernism in music (see 1998, 14-87).

¹¹ For a discussion of the principle of organicism in eighteenth and nineteenth-century music see Solie 1980. The modernist idea of unity is plainly seen in the statements and writings of the composers of the second Viennese school. Kramer cites Anton Webern’s definition of unity as “the establishment of the utmost relatedness between all component parts” (1963, 42). See also Schoenberg’s manual Fundamentals of Musical Composition (1970, 8) and Joseph Rufer’s Composition with Twelve Notes (1954, 137) on the musical unity generated by motivic organization.

The exact nature of unity in postmodern music is not clear. Postmodern collage pieces do not seem to fall into clear cut categories of “unified” or “disunified” works. While Clendinning sees postmodern compositions as “purposefully disunified,” she writes that “disunity can be expressed in the surface elements of the piece, with a deeper level organization that provides an overall unity” (2002, 135). Echoing this, Heile writes that even postmodern collage works “cannot function without some regulatory framework” (2002, 288). He concludes that Mauricio Kagel’s collage *Osten* is a “coherent” work of art in which Kagel has retained compositional control and ownership (295). From her study of the music of Berio, Rochberg, and Zimmermann, Catherine Losada determines that “the postmodernism of [collage] works lies not in the way they deny traditional notions of unity, but in how they call it into question” (2009, 96). Clearly, the understanding of the relationship of musical unity and postmodern collage remains incomplete.

Zorn’s music displays many characteristics associated with postmodernism. He employs quotations and musical references, incorporates popular musical styles alongside those of western art music, blurs the separation between composer and performer through the use of improvisation and collaboration, and utilizes recording technology as an important part of his compositional process. More complicated, however, is the nature of musical unity in his pieces. John Brackett notes that Zorn employs various unifying strategies in his works (2008, xiv). Collage segments in *Spillane* (1987), for instance, are related through both extramusical associations and musical processes (Gagne 1993,
Zorn’s pieces reference the extramusical in several ways, including using representations of mood and scene which are employed as unifying elements. Zorn reveals that in *Spillane*, “For every single section of that piece I can tell you specifically, what image I was thinking of and how it related to Spillane and his world. And sometimes they’d be way off the wall but that doesn’t matter. The point is, to me, it holds together” (quoted in Duckworth 1995, 465). Zorn’s focus on studio recording and album-oriented composition also emphasizes extramusical associations, and he considers album art to be an integral part of the composition (Gagne 1993, 531). Extramusical elements may additionally inspire specific musical processes that are incorporated into the pieces. For instance, some of his works are either dedicated to, or make explicit reference to, individuals that have influenced his artistic life. Brackett observes that in Zorn’s dedicated pieces, he finds “ways to incorporate key aesthetic, theoretical, or structural elements associated with his dedicatees in his own musical composition” (2008, xxiii).

When Zorn employs quotation in his music, borrowed elements are often modified or combined simultaneously with other quotations. In the solo piano piece *Carney* (1989), for instance, “brief chunks of music by composers from Mozart to Boulez appear note for note or under various degrees of transformation. . . . Chopin and Schönberg, for example are quoted in reverse; Stockhausen is overlaid with Bartók; and a

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13 The piece is a tribute to Mickey Spillane (1918-2006), author of the Mike Hammer series of detective novels.

14 Zorn admits, “I try to put as much extramusical material and information into my music as I can possibly squeeze in” (quoted in Duckworth 1995, 470).
left hand passage from [Elliot Carter’s] *Night Fantasies* is paired with an entirely new right hand part” (Drury 1994, 197). Zorn views the transformation of quotation in a piece as a musical “game,” a process that can be applied to multiple elements of a given work (Duckworth 1995, 470). He extends his conventional use of quotation by appropriating not only the music but also the musical techniques and styles of other composers.

Brackett sees these kinds of constructions and techniques as generating an “associative unity where coherence is guaranteed by, among other things, correspondences or similarities,” which works alongside “familiar formal devices” (Brackett 2008, xiv). A single work of Zorn’s may employ several such processes, some musical and some extramusical in nature. The use of such devices explains the origin of the individual musical blocks, however, but not their arrangement in the piece. This is because Zorn began composition by generating the individual segments of the collage, composing them without consideration of their position within the finished work (Strickland 1991, 128). When composing his collage *Godard*, Zorn recounted that, “I bought all the books I could about Godard; I resaw all of the films. . . . I made a long list of things that I thought Godard was about—the politics, the romanticism, my favorite sections from some of his films. I ended up with maybe seventy different events that I copied onto file cards. Then I scored the piece and took it into a recording studio” (Zorn, quoted in Gagne 1993, 468). When working on *Spillane* he followed a similar procedure.

First I’d just write images and ideas: “I heard the scream through the mist of the night.” I took the first phrase from my favorite books by him, because he’s got great first lines. Or images: “Girls #1: Velda,” you know a portrait of who Velda is. Or *Kiss me Deadly*; I have synopses of the six
major books. “Knife fight”: I just picked different things that I thought related to Spillane. And then I kind of orchestrated like this: “Harlem nightclub; blues guitar and backup; Arto vocal; question mark; narration; shoot out.” That’s all it would say. Later I’d pick the musicians involved: Weinstein, Hofstra, Staley. So it would start out with image, then I’d begin to get a little more specific in terms of orchestration, then I’d order the thing (Zorn, quoted in Gagne 1993, 468).

The ordering of segments into the final piece was a separate part of Zorn’s compositional process, one that he describes as difficult and time consuming (liner notes to Spillane, 1991). This procedure recalls Jonathan Kramer’s conception of moment form, where the musical work consists of moments composed as “self-contained entities” that are placed in an order that should “appear arbitrary” (1978, 181). In contrast to the goals of a moment form,15 Zorn believes the unfolding of the events in his works to be of paramount importance (Brackett 2008, xvi). “Once in awhile I have to go back through the piece in my mind, in time, and catch up to where I am so I don’t lose the sense of line and narrative. . . . It’s a challenge to keep the piece unified” (quoted in McCutchan 1999, 170). In addition, while he tries to be clear about the programmatic associations of his works, he appears to embrace a more open view of musical esthetics in regard to the interpretation of his music.

For me, if [the audience has] heard it, they’ve understood it. They don’t even have to like it. I like to think that my works are open to many interpretations. . . . There is a crucial difference between “perception” and “understanding,” and of course I don’t expect people to understand what

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15 Kramer stresses the non-teleological nature of moment form, writing that “a proper moment form will give the impression of starting in the midst of previously unheard music, and it will break off without reaching any structural cadence, as if the music goes on, inaudibly” (1978, 180).
I’ve put into a work on the first listening. But I think what I put into a work and what the work becomes are really on different levels (quoted in Gagne 1993, 525).

While the use of processes and associations as unifying elements in Zorn’s music has been detailed, analyses have not fully explored how form or narrative structure can exist in the linear aspect of the music. Finding explanations for the sequence of segments in these pieces is the subject of this dissertation. In particular, I seek to identify the nature of the linear structure of the works, and explore how the sequence of segments relates to the overall impression of the pieces. This exploration utilizes the perspectives of the composer, listener, and analyst as a means to approach the works. I will relate Zorn’s ideas to the impressions gathered by listening to the music, and construct models of hearing and interpreting the pieces that synthesize these various viewpoints.

Chapter one begins by reviewing previous theoretical explorations of musical collages composed by both Zorn and others. These studies present a range of approaches and find various explanations for musical unity in the works, including the programmatic, experiential, and purely musical. Significantly, they provide examples in which the collage texture of juxtaposition has been employed as a way to integrate formal unity and structure into the works. They also expose the idiosyncratic nature of collage music, and demonstrate how its investigation calls for the use of a variety of analytical methodologies that are contextual.

The review of these analyses reveals that Kofi Agawu’s method of paradigmatic analysis (2009) has the potential to be adapted for the study of Zorn’s music. A methodology rooted in semiotics, paradigmatic analysis in basic terms involves
classifying component structures of the work into categories (paradigms) and explaining how the piece functions through the linear arrangement of the components. Agawu’s method is geared towards the study of the music of the romantic period. However, its analytical approach, particularly its system of segmentation and intuitive categorization, is distinctly suited for the study of musical collage. Chapter two discusses paradigmatic analysis in detail and outlines how I will recast the methodology so that it is specifically applicable to Zorn’s music. It also introduces semiotic concepts related to musical interpretation. It extends the idea of musical topics to Zorn’s music, explaining how certain musical signs carry specific meanings within his music that relate to the formal structure of the pieces. In addition, it describes idiolects, characteristics common to the work of a particular composer, and how the application of these concepts is distinctly important in the study of Zorn’s collage music.

Chapters three, four, and five consist of close analyses of Zorn’s collage works. These analytical chapters are not meant to stand alone; instead, each analysis progressively builds upon the last, applying the understanding developed in one chapter as a means to approach the next work. Chapter three explores the question of how to segment the constantly changing collage texture into higher-level units. Analyses of three of Zorn’s collages uncover how certain recurring segments create stronger disruptions within the constantly varied texture of the music, and perceptually divide the pieces into groups of segments called collage phrases. This reveals the presence of higher level form in the musical surface, showing how coherence in the collage is not limited to structures or processes that exist in the musical background.
Chapter four explores how the formal structure of Zorn’s music is related to an idiolect of the visual. It begins by discussing how visual influences, in particular, cartoon music, influence Zorn’s compositional approach and his conception of musical narrative. A close analysis of Zorn’s collage string quartet *Cat O’Nine Tails* (1988) illustrates how segments in this piece are not only organized into higher-level units, but that those units are grouped into structures that I term *episodes*. This kind of organization represents a specific type of collage construction that I call *episodic collage form*. Using concepts borrowed from the understanding of film montage, the narrative structure of *Cat O’Nine Tails* is examined, illustrating how the piece can be understood through a musical “plot” that relates the episodes of the collage across the work’s large-scale unfolding.

Chapter five extends the idea of an episodic collage to include Zorn’s album *Radio* (1993). Albums are an important part of Zorn’s compositional output, both because of his focus on recorded music and because music, visuals, and language are packaged together in an album to communicate a holistic conception the work. Chapter five begins by discussing another idiolect, the idea of the “musical game,” a concept that influences many of Zorn’s pieces. The songs on *Radio* are then analyzed as if they are the segments of a single collage work, and the idiolect of the musical game provides an interpretive framework that explains the arrangement of songs on the album.

This exploration directly reveals much about Zorn’s music. It shows that musical blocks in these pieces are grouped into higher-level structures that are divided by segments that create strong delineations and thus encourage the perceptual parsing of the works. These events are furthermore contained on the musical surface. The presence of
structural organization in Zorn’s works situates his collages alongside those of other composers in the postmodern era. The interpretations of the unfolding of *Cat O’Nine Tails* and *Radio* through the idiolects of the visual and the musical game show how Zorn’s music takes novel idiosyncratic approaches towards musical narrative and development. These findings enrich the understanding of Zorn’s music by illustrating the capacity for structures in his piece to function in linear ways.

This study contributes to research in postmodern music by demonstrating the effectiveness of my adaptation of paradigmatic analysis as a tool in the exploration of musical collage. Not only does the method accurately reflect the construction of a collage work, but its flexibility allows the analyst to employ subsidiary interpretive rubrics that can be tailored to the idiosyncrasies of the piece at hand. Paradigmatic analysis is also used here as way to approach the analysis of the construction of a record album or other such collection of works.
CHAPTER 1
REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

There are relatively few examples of collage music analysis that approach the music from a theoretical perspective.\(^6\) This lack of literature is probably due in part to the contemporary nature of many collage compositions and the absence of a dominant approach to the analysis of the music. Because of this, methodologies tend to be focused towards particular pieces or composers and specifically tailored towards individual analytical goals.

Previous investigations of collage can be characterized according to whether the interpretation made at the initial stage of analysis is intrinsic or extrinsic in nature.\(^7\) Intrinsic analyses look for musical connections between musical elements, and interpret those elements in terms of their meaning within established musical structures. In some cases, these interpretations may then be extrapolated towards significations that go beyond the purely musical. The intrinsic approach has sometimes been thought of as maintaining a more direct connection with musical syntax and structure; this idea is problematic, however, as it is not possible to develop a musical analysis that does not incorporate knowledge external to the piece (Agawu 2009, 28). Extrinsic analyses directly make extramusical interpretations of musical elements, and then interpret the

\(^6\) Several significant musicological works have also thoroughly examined particular pieces or composers, focusing on quotation and compositional considerations. See for instance, Osmond-Smith 1985 on Ligeti’s *Sinfonia*, and Burkholder 1995 on the many techniques employed by Ives involving pre-existing music.

\(^7\) For a thorough discussion on intrinsic versus extrinsic, see Nattiez 1990, 111-127.
sequence and interactions of the resulting signs. These analyses are concerned immediately with the relationship of the music to something external to the piece. While the categories of intrinsic and extrinsic are not always clear cut, this distinction can tell us something about the perspectives, methods, and goals of the analysis, and can assist in the evaluation of various methodologies. One major difference generally apparent in analyses of musical collage is that intrinsic analyses tend to focus on how the elements of the musical work relate to its design, while extrinsic analyses focus on how the elements relate to the perception or impression of the work from the view of the listener or analyst.

Perhaps the most refined, widely applicable methodology for collage analysis was developed by Catherine Losada (2009) in her study of collage works by Berio, Rochberg, and Zimmermann. In this intrinsic analysis, Losada explores how aggregate completion and chromatic saturation govern musical structure in the works. She finds that in these pieces quotations and fragments of original music are often arranged so that the pitch classes they include complete aggregates or chromatically fill in significant gaps between pitches. For instance, Losada identifies how the process of chromatic saturation is used as to connect sections of Rochberg’s *Music for the Magic Theater* (1965) (see Figure 1). As her reduction shows, the first pitch of the section beginning at rehearsal 12 is the final pitch necessary to complete the aggregate presented by the preceding section. She writes that “the function of aggregate completion in this example is to structurally link these adjacent sections of music which feature strong contrasts of texture, instrumentation, rhythm, meter, and pitch organization” (2009, 83).
Figure 1: Losada’s Reduction of Music for the Magic Theater I (r. 11-12) (2009, p. 83)
Through her analysis, Losada illustrates how multiple composers use similar approaches to large-scale structure. This group of composers was active in the mid-twentieth century and bridged the gap between modernism and postmodernism. In addition, they share a formative background in serial music. Losada describes the structural use of aggregate completion in collage music as an extension of serial techniques (97). While this methodology is suited to the music she explores, it is not clear to what extent other composers may have employed the practices that she describes.\(^\text{18}\)

One aspect of her investigation, however, has ramifications for any study of the sequence of elements in a collage work. By identifying connections between the segments of the work and its overall form, Losada is able to show how the works “convert juxtaposition and layering . . . into essential components of the formal structure” (96). Her study therefore uncovers relationships between desultory aspects of the music and formal unity.\(^\text{19}\)

John Brackett’s intrinsic analysis of Zorn’s short collage “Speedfreaks” (1989) shows how the segments of a collage can reflect an established musical form, even in a texture dominated by contrast and juxtaposition. Brackett sees the piece, which consists of thirty-two brief contrasting segments, as an extrapolation of the traditional thirty-two-bar popular song form. The residue of the form’s AABA phrase structure lies in the harmonies of the final segment of each eight-segment phrase. As Brackett notes, the first

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\(^{18}\) For instance, although Zorn studied serial composition as a student, it is only one of many diverse musical influences that contributed to his compositional style (Duckworth 1995, 465).

\(^{19}\) Losada does not see this as an “all-encompassing unity,” but rather a way of structuring the various and diverse components that make up the works (2009, 96).
group of eight segments ends on an Ab (minor) harmony, followed by Ab (major) in segment 16. The third group, standing in for the contrasting B section of the thirty-two-bar form, begins on Eb7 (V7), and ends on A7, the tritone substitute of a retransitional dominant. While the piece does not return to tonic in the final segment, the penultimate segment suggests such a return with dominant Eb harmony. Brackett writes that the thirty-two-bar form “reins in and guides the overall design of ‘Speedfreaks’ . . . and provides the limits or formal prohibitions that the musical surface tries to—but ultimately cannot—break through” (2008, 26). Brackett initially interprets the elements of the composition in relation to an established musical structure. He then explains how the presence of a formal background in the piece relates to how Zorn’s music reflects a concept of transgression that seeks to push traditional boundaries. He interprets the “limits or formal prohibitions” inherent in the thirty-two-bar form as the representation of tradition, and Zorn’s collage texture as playing the role of the transgressive element. Brackett sees this concept of transgression as central characteristic of Zorn’s compositional style.
Judy Lochhead’s analysis of Charles Dodge’s *Any Resemblance is Purely Coincidental* (1980) is an example of an extrinsic analysis, in which extramusical interpretations of identified musical elements are made directly. Lochhead is motivated by “the sense that analytic practice devalues the music it cannot address” (2006, 234). Dodge’s piece is an example of postmodern music that presents structures and meanings that are not easily tackled by conventional analytical methodologies. The composition...
uses a computer generated tape which contains both electronic sounds and samples of a 1907 recording of Pagliacci. Even though a score for Any Resemblance exists, important aspects of the aural experience of the piece, such as the timbre of the sampled music, are not contained within the musical notation. Lochhead views these elements as integral to the listener’s experience, and recognizes that musical “analysis must address those effects or meanings that embody the musical details and give music its power” (235). She interprets the piece by constructing maps of the work that present the constituent elements as she perceives them through listening and preliminary analysis. She then designates the elements according to their representation of embodied oppositions, including “Historical/New,” “Electric/Acoustic,” “Solo/Accompaniment,” and “Humor/Pathos” (244-50). The interplay of these oppositions then is interpreted to explain the narrative experience of the work. Lochhead believes the work reflects the “presence of the historical world in the present world” while commenting on nineteenth-century opera and Romanticism (250).
Figure 3: Lochhead’s Descriptive and Explanatory Maps parts 1 and 2 (2006, 242)
Lochhead’s essay confronts several crucial questions that come into play when an analyst approaches a postmodern work. As Lochhead writes,

The turn towards explicit reliance on experiential evidence for the facts of a piece of music raises an issue regarding the validity of such evidence that can be separated into two parts. One has to do with whether any experiential evidence can be deemed unbiased and hence valid, and the second with the question of whether the experience of one person—the analyst—can have any truth value for others (239).

Lochhead answers the first question by taking a position on the nature of “truth” based in postmodern thought; specifically, that truth is only available to us through human experience, and the notion of objective truth is not a valid one (239). As to the second question, Lochhead establishes her exploration within a tradition where “the analyst’s hearing is authorized as part of the process of building knowledge about musical understanding” (240). The reliance on the experience of the work to construct models of the piece is the only difference between this approach and that of common analytical methods.

Yayoi Uno Everett’s analysis of George Ligeti’s opera *Le Grand Macabre* (1977) also presents an extrinsic approach to collage analysis (2009). Everett employs semiotic concepts to explore how the musical quotations present in the piece interact with dramatic elements in the opera.\(^\text{20}\) Her exploration therefore provides a model of how

\(^\text{20}\) While the drama of an opera is obviously an integral part of the work, Everett’s analysis can be considered to be extrinsic in that she interprets the music in terms of its extramusical meaning.
semiotic analysis can be applied to a work consisting of juxtaposed sections of music that each refer to different styles, genres, and meanings.

Everett identifies how musical quotations are combined in discordant ways that enact expressive states ranging from the ludicrous to the horrifying (33). She charts how the music shifts from one expressive state to the other over the course of the opera, blurring at times to articulate the “trope of the grotesque” (49-51). Everett’s analysis therefore uncovers a programmatic solution to the formal arrangement of the collage.

As part of a dissertation on Zorn’s music, Tom Anderson Service presents an extrinsic analysis of Spillane that emphasizes a non-linear view of the work. The piece, a large-scale collage based upon Mickey Spillane’s series of Mike Hammer detective novels, contains a multitude of references to the detective’s fictional world. Like Zorn’s other collages, Spillane was constructed by assembling a series of independently composed musical “scenes,” each of which references a different aspect of Zorn’s view of the Mike Hammer character. Disagreeing with Susan McClary, who sees the work as “a soundtrack of a film that doesn’t—but easily could—exist” (McClary 2000, 147), Service views Spillane as hybrid space that “is as much a critique of the genres of fiction, film, and music it references as an embodiment of them” (2004, 58-9). He creates a map of the piece in which each section is labeled as one of four types: noise, genre, scene, or narration. Noise elements are extreme, chaotic outbursts that are used as transitions or contrasts; genre sections contain references to familiar styles of music; scenes contain sounds from the outside world; and narrative sections contain spoken quotes from the Mike Hammer novels (69-71). Service notes that between adjacent sections hardly any
Service views the diverse elements as distinct sections that exist independently of a large-scale narrative. He believes that unity in the work results from the “fusion of compositional and dramatic voices” of Zorn and Spillane (83).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TIME</th>
<th>DURATION</th>
<th>DESCRIPTION</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 0’00”-0’03” 3”</td>
<td>Scream</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 0’03”-0’52” 49”</td>
<td>High-tempo lick for ensemble: piano and guitar over sizzling cymbal and bass; keyboard with Route 66 tune.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>3 0’52”-1’04” 12”</td>
<td>Scene with dog and sirens; trumpet mute (quasi-vocal, ‘barking’ sound), sampled dog barks; sirens, cars, and people as real-world underscore.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>4 1’04”-1’20” 16”</td>
<td>Continuation of high-tempo lick from second section (Route 66), but with prominent sax solo; builds in textural energy (piano crashes) and dissonance, and breaks down.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>5 1’20”-2’08” 48”</td>
<td>Narration section: drips, feedback, guitar harmonics, first narration sequence for The Voice of Mike Hammer; ‘You kill ten guys. . . . You better wake up’. Strings underscore, vibes and piano and windscape noises, which all continue after the speech finishes, followed by a piano blues line that segues into next section over vibraphone resonance.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 2’08”-2’47” 39”</td>
<td>Strip-joint scene: piano, sleazy sax line, drums; continuous clapping and hollering, testosterone-fuelled vocals. Achieves ‘closure’ of melody and harmony; vocals give appreciative claps and screams. Elision, via guitar harmonics, into next section.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 2’47”-2’59” 12”</td>
<td>Noise: whines, modified windscreen washer squeak sample, and guitar plunks, far back in the mix.</td>
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Figure 4: Service’s descriptive chart of Spillane, segments 1-7 (2004, 86)
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<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Duration</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Species</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0’00”-0’03”</td>
<td>3”</td>
<td>Scream</td>
<td>NOISE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0’03”-0’52”</td>
<td>49”</td>
<td>High-tempo lick: Route 66</td>
<td>GENRE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0’52”-1’04”</td>
<td>12”</td>
<td>Scene: dog, siren</td>
<td>SCENE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1’04”-1’20”</td>
<td>16”</td>
<td>High-tempo lick: Route 66</td>
<td>GENRE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1’20”-2’08”</td>
<td>48”</td>
<td>Narration</td>
<td>NARRATION</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2’08”-2’47”</td>
<td>39”</td>
<td>Strip-joint</td>
<td>SCENE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2’47”-2’59”</td>
<td>12”</td>
<td>Noise: whines</td>
<td>NOISE</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 5: Service’s categorical chart of *Spillane*, segments 1-7 (2004, 91)

Kofi Agawu’s analysis of Stravinsky’s *Symphonies of Wind Instruments* (1920) directly demonstrates how his method of paradigmatic analysis can be applied to a piece formed from disparate segments. While composed earlier than the pieces discussed in the analyses above, *Symphonies* shares characteristics with later musical collages. It has been "regarded as a paradigm of discontinuity" (Rehding 1998, 39) and posses a structure described by Malcolm Macdonald as “a kind of mosaic, made out of discrete blocks of contrasting material, separate yet interlocking, in different but closely related tempi” (2001, v). One important feature separating musical chunks in the piece is variation in the combinations of instruments. MacDonald writes that, “The work is not a symphony in the accustomed sense; Stravinsky went back to the word’s ancient connotation of groups
of instruments sounding together, and used the plural to indicate that the music is made up of several of these instrumental colloquies” (2001, v).

Agawu’s analysis begins with an intrinsic approach in which he segments the piece into 39 units. Regarding this process, he writes, “Segmenting Symphonies is easy. . . . This is in part because Stravinsky himself has done it for us” (2009, 302). He describes each block in turn, addressing the characteristics and functions of each segment. In his prose, segmentation and categorization of the units is discussed simultaneously. His verbal description addresses the following items:

- The musical characteristics of the unit.
- How it is musically distinct from adjacent units, and the relative strength of discontinuity in respect to previous linkages.
- Tendencies or implications gleaned from the segment.
- Musical function (e.g., cadential, transitional) in terms of the immediate hearing of the piece.
- Immediate identity in terms of interpretive rubrics (see chapter two).
- Identity as a repetition of a previous unit.
- Connections between segments (voice leading progressions, etc.)

In addition, Agawu’s prose includes a running commentary on the progression of the piece up to that point, detailing a linear listening experience. This commentary is not from the perspective of an initial hearing, but is created with retrospective analysis. Agawu acknowledges the retrospective influence on his segmentation. “Although timbral and tonal contrasts at the onset of unit 12 (bar 40) confirm its separateness from 11, there
is a topical continuity between the two units. Later, when the melodies are recapitulated in a different order, we will be able to confirm this segmentation” (306). He also discusses relative strength of contrast between sections.

Once the segmentation is complete, the units are arranged into a chart in two axes according to their linear order and equivalence, an analytical diagram called a “paradigmatic display” (187). Agawu assembles the paradigmatic display of the piece as he goes, using the structure to summarize the results of his segmentation and categorization. He describes the display of units 1-35 (mm. 1-216);

For some time now, we have been hearing familiar materials in the manner of cinematic flashbacks. Their order reveals no consistency, their individual lengths vary, but their topical identities are preserved. This is Stravinsky’s formal strategy (309).

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21 Agawu variously labels these diagrams “displays,” “charts,” or “arrangements.”
Figure 6: Agawu’s Paradigmatic arrangement of units 1-35 (mm. 1-216) in Stravinsky’s

*Symphonies of Wind Instruments* (2009, 309)

Agawu sees two recurring units in *Symphonies*, which he calls “the bell motive”
(apparing in the first column of the diagram) and “the chorale” (in the third column), as
“anchors; they occur periodically throughout the movement” (310). The repetition and positioning of these sections is interpreted both in terms of the structure of the work and its narrative. “The most dramatic reorientation in the form will be registered as an absence; the bell motive makes its last appearance as unit 27. After this it cedes power to the chorale which, in an expanded form, dominates the ending of the work. Absence and presence in paradigmatic representation are often equally telling” (310).22

Agawu interprets Symphonies by comparing its qualities with Beethoven’s Opus 130, no. 1. The two composers share connections—Agawu notes that Stravinsky admired Beethoven’s use of rhythm, while Beethoven’s late works were known for their discontinuity (312). He writes that in these works both composers used repetition to perform “not only a (necessary) structural function but a rhetorical function as well. It is as if the medium (‘function’) and the message (‘rhetoric’) reinforce each other through imaginative and extensive uses of repetition” (312), particularly in rhythmic and motivic areas. The difference between the works lies in their use of discontinuity and contrast. Where units in Beethoven are “burdened with tendency, implication, and dependency” (313), connections between the segments of Symphonies “speak in an emphatic present tense” and are “apprehended in retrospect, rarely in prospect,” (313). In discussing a sense of narrative in the piece, Agawu feels that “if there is a subject in Stravinsky, it is a split one,” disguised because the sense of a main voice (“hauptstimme”) is compromised by the unclear division of melody and accompaniment (314).

22 Agawu shows the final appearances of the chorale in a separate paradigmatic display of units 36-39 (mm.217-371). See 2009, 312.
The analyses discussed above all follow a standard practice of identifying types of musical structures and then interpreting their arrangement in terms of an organizing principle. They also provide important examples of approaches to Zorn, in the case of Brackett and Service, and to collage in general, in the case of Losada, Lochhead, Everett, and Agawu. In general, these analyses show how approaches to collage music are idiosyncratic—there are as many methodologies in use as there are pieces under consideration. These analyses have taken different paths based on the characteristics of the piece and analytical goals in each exploration, and show that no established approach to the music is dominant.

Though Agawu’s other analyses concern nineteenth-century tonal music, several aspects of the paradigmatic approach make it particularly appropriate for the analysis of the postmodern collage. First, the analytical method is primarily concerned with the individual content of the piece and can be adapted to the individual mode of presentation in the work. Such an approach befits music such as collage in which fundamental ideas of musical succession and progression are in question. Agawu notes that musical semiologists have employed paradigmatic analysis in the study of various musics of the twentieth-century, particularly to “repertoires the premises of whose languages have not been fully stabilized” (165-6).23 Famously, Jean-Jacques Nattiez’s paradigmatic analysis of Edgar Varèse’s _Density 21.5_ begins at the level the motive or gesture and works towards the identification of larger units specifically because of the lack of a commonly

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23 Agawu specifically sites the work of Nattiez on Debussy and Varèse, and of Ruwet on medieval monodies.
accepted criteria for division of the work (1982, 252). Agawu trumpets this aspect of the approach. “The paradigmatic method fosters a less knowing stance in analysis; it encourages us to adopt a strategic naïveté and to downplay—without pretending to be able to eliminate entirely—some of the a priori concerns that one normally brings to the task” (2009, 166).

In addition, Agawu recognizes how well the methodology suits the study of *Symphonies*. He writes that “we might say that paradigmatic representation is more faithful to Stravinsky’s material than it is to Beethoven’s. The autonomy asserted by discrete numbers (1, 2, 3, etc.) captures the presumed autonomy of Stravinsky’s units more meaningfully than it does Beethoven’s” (315).

Zorn’s collages share several characteristics with *Symphonies*. Similarly to Zorn’s pieces, *Symphonies* was assembled from pre-existing sections rather than being composed according to a traditional scheme of development.²⁵

Stravinsky had been messing around with these ideas for the best part of a year with no clear idea what sort of work they would make. Now, having been forced to write a two-and-a-half minute ending,²⁶ he surveys his sketchbooks, pastes ideas together, inserts other ideas, adds inserts to

²⁴ Nattiez also focuses on what he calls the “neutral level” of the musical work—the music as it exists in the score, divorced to the greatest extent possible from aspects of the work related to its production (the poietic level) and its reception (the esthetic level). Together, the poietic, neutral, and esthetic levels of the work form what Nattiez calls the tripartition of the work (1990, 15).

²⁵ Zorn cites Stravinsky’s music as one influence in the development of this method of composition (quoted in Gagne 2003, 512).

²⁶ The first portion of the work that Stravinsky composed was the chorale that concludes the movement.
inserts, then assembles the whole thing in an order and an architecture which seems to bear not the slightest relation to a coherent or organic plan. No wonder the resulting work is in formal terms one of the most radical even he had ever written (Walsh 1999, 317).

Stravinsky’s use of various instrumental groups in Symphonies is echoed by Zorn’s employment of permutations of instrumental combinations to govern form in his works. Speaking about his “game pieces,” Zorn explains that,

I had another way of solving [the issue of form], which was, to me, very similar to the way Schoenberg dealt with his early atonal pieces. He used a text, and at the end of the text the piece was over. Moses and Aron was like that; Erwartung was certainly like that. The text was what gave the piece a form. For me, the form was taking all the possible combinations of players involved, and then ordering them in a certain kind of way. If it was a sextet, using all the duos, all the trios, all the quartets, all the solos, and so on. When we had finished all the permutations of the players, the piece was over (quoted in Duckworth 1995, 460).

Combinations of the players also are a source of material in Zorn’s collages. Describing the composition basis of the blocks of music in Cat O’Nine Tails, he states that improvised elements would be based on “permutations of the players” (quoted in Duckworth 1995, 473). The similar approaches taken by the two composers resulted in pieces that shared a characteristic use of disjunct musical blocks juxtaposed in various combinations.²⁷

²⁷ The description of Symphonies as “a series of differentiated or maximally contrasted blocks” (Agawu 2009, 302) recalls Nicholas Cook’s portrayal of Zorn’s collage “Snagglepuss” as “a hard-driven amalgam of riotously different genres and styles, organized as a series of sound blocks” (2006, 120).
Agawu’s analysis of *Symphonies* reveals paradigmatic analysis to be an effective methodology for the analysis of a discontinuous work. In addition to these musical connections between Zorn’s pieces and *Symphonies*, the basic issues in the analysis of Stravinsky’s work are also present in the study of musical collage. The questions asked by Agawu when exploring *Symphonies* (“What is the status of the individual blocks? Are they autonomous, or are they burdened with tendency and implication?” [2009, 302]) are central to almost any exploration of collage works. It is also apparent that collage music’s basic characteristic of clearly delineated blocks of material set against each other in various ways directly suggests the parsing and categorization that are basic parts of the paradigmatic approach. Indeed, Zorn’s collages, like *Symphonies*, may be an even more fitting repertoire for deconstruction using this method than the less segmented music of the Romantic period.

My approach towards Zorn’s music will be rooted in Agawu’s method of paradigmatic analysis. The methodology provides a basic framework upon which to base the analysis of the works, and in particular seems appropriate for the analysis of collage. The next chapter begins with an extended review of paradigmatic analysis as outlined by Agawu. In the final sections of the chapter, I summarize how I intend to utilize the method in the exploration of Zorn’s music.
CHAPTER 2

METHODOLOGY

Paradigmatic Analysis

The methodology of paradigmatic analysis developed from musical semiotic pursuits that were based on structuralism and connections to linguistic studies (Tarasti 1994, 5; see also Cumming 2007). The use of linguistic methods was originally seen as a way to instill scientific objectivity into musical analysis (Lidov 2005, 95). The methodology is based on the idea that music is structured and functions in the same way as language. A piece of music therefore could be thought of as a series of signs, and meaning in the piece could be interpreted from the sequence of these signs.

My approach to paradigmatic analysis adapts and expands the method as outlined in Agawu’s book *Music as Discourse* (2009). The book is a thorough guide to the employment of the paradigmatic methodology in the study of music of the Romantic period. Agawu’s application relies on approaches to segmentation and interpretation that have their basis in the common practice theoretical tradition. My methodology expands the capacity of paradigmatic analysis to take a piece-specific approach through the application of topics and idiolects that are developed from the close examination of

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28 See Brown and Dempster 1989 for a discussion of the capacity for music theory to be objectively based.

29 Among others, the book includes analyses of works by Liszt, Brahms, Mahler, Beethoven, and Stravinsky.
the composer and music under consideration. I expand the concept of musical topics to include composer-specific topics that then provide the basis for the segmentation of the pieces. The topics germane to the study of Zorn’s collages are formulated and discussed in chapter three. My application of topics illustrates how a piece or composer-specific segmentation can be generated in a work that does not exhibit conventional musical structure.

My use of idiolects as models for the interpretation of the piece also expands the capacity of paradigmatic analysis to approach musical works for which a theoretical foundation has not yet been established. In chapters three, four, and five, I develop idiolects from the close study of Zorn and his music and use them as lenses through which to interpret the structures of the pieces. My use of topics and idiolects in conjunction with the mechanical aspects of paradigmatic analysis demonstrates an analytical method that can be applied to music which challenges the capacity of conventional theoretical approaches.

The basic process of paradigmatic analysis begins with the linear segmentation of the piece. The units that make up the piece are categorized into paradigms, i.e., groups of equivalent structures. The analyst then examines syntagms, the linear sequences of paradigms, to uncover how repetition governs the structural and rhetorical unfolding of the work (312). Interpretation of the piece is based on the relationship of the structures and the network of their repetition to themes that are particular to the work, composer, or genre. The intuitive and individual assessments of the analyst are relied upon at each
point in the process. As Agawu notes, the basic tenets of paradigmatic analysis are implicit in many theoretical methodologies (164).\(^{30}\)

Segmentation of the work is obviously a critical step in the paradigmatic method. Agawu notes that “units must be meaningful and morphologically distinct. Repetition may be exact or varied” (255). Discontinuity and contrast can also play an important role in segmentation. While segmentation is a necessarily subjective process, the analyst must be willing “to accept the idea of segmentation as being unavoidable in analysis and to approach the sense units with flexible criteria” (271).

In Agawu’s sample analyses, segmentation is based primarily on musically intuitive and theoretically supportable characteristics—for the most part, the works are parsed into motivic units, phrases, and groups of phrases separated by contrasts or discontinuities within fundamental musical parameters or by important structural moments. The characteristics of the segments and the scheme of segmentation are dependent on the nature of the piece being explored. The initial segments identified in second movement of Brahms’s First Symphony are two-measure phrases framed by closed progressions (240-1). In contrast, the segmentation of Stravinsky’s _Symphonies_ follows the distinct “blocks” presented by the music. When analyzing Mahler’s _Symphony No. 9_ Agawu segments the 454 measures of the work into 33 large units,

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\(^{30}\) Agawu cites Hugo Riemann’s harmonic theory of chordal function, Roland Jackson’s 1975 analysis of the Tristan prelude (which classified elements of the piece according to their idiomotivic content) and Edward T. Cone’s 1962 analysis of Stravinsky’s _Symphony of Psalms_, where blocks of music are classified into different “strata,” as examples of analysis that utilize these basic ideas without explicitly identifying them as such (164). Consider also the analyses of Losada, Lochhead, Brackett, Everett, and Service. In each case, the analyst is concerned how component musical structures work together in the overall form and function of the piece.
allowing large works to be segmented into groups of phrases based on ideas of contrast, discontinuity, and retrospective perceptions of beginnings and endings (254-5).  

Once identified, units are categorized into classes according to relative equivalence based on the exact or varied repetition of musical structures, a procedure that must be based on explicit criteria (168). Agawu posits “that there is often an intuitive sense of what the contextually dominant element is” that governs the equivalence of the blocks of the musical structure, and that the analyst must not dilute the importance of the dominant element by adopting a system that does not clearly categorize the units (222).

When segmentation and categorization are complete, the units are arranged in the paradigmatic display. The diagram makes clear the patterns of repetition that govern the structure of the work. The advantage of this arrangement is that large-scale orderings of units are exposed according to the unfolding of the piece. The paradigmatic method builds a large-scale view of the work from the organization of component foreground structures, forcing the piece to be viewed through its own context of repetitions.

**Interpretation**

The paradigmatic approach can readily be adapted to accommodate any number of subsidiary analytical methodologies and perspectives on musical meaning. Agawu, in his studies of music of the Romantic period, analyzes motivic connections, basic harmonic structure, and voice-leading as part of his process of segmentation and categorization. The interpretations of musical and formal function can be based on

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31 The procedure for segmenting Zorn’s collages will be developed in chapter three.
whichever themes are appropriate to the piece. Since Agawu’s work is concerned with music of the Romantic period, his interpretations are based on “rubrics for distributing the reality of Romantic music” which he considers as “enabling mechanisms, as schemes for organizing intuited insights, and as points of departure for further exploration” (41).

Agawu’s rubrics for the understanding of Romantic music include “topics or *topoi*; beginnings, middles, and endings; high points; periodicity (including discontinuity and parentheses); three modes of enunciation, namely speech mode, song mode, and dance mode; and narrative” (41). While the montage of units in *Symphonies of Wind Instruments* differs in many ways from the linearly functional units of Romantic works, the analysis of the music still seeks to answer questions of musical and rhetorical function (302). In this study, I intend to interpret Zorn’s musical structures in two ways, which could be considered analogous to Agawu’s “rubrics.” First I will apply the concept of musical “topics” to Zorn’s works. Second, I will consider his pieces through mechanisms established by the study of *idiolects*.

**Topics**

Theories of musical topics are based on the assumption that the composers and listeners of a given period possessed a shared knowledge of a repository of cultural meanings connected with musical figures: as Agawu describes, “commonplaces of style known to composers and their audiences” (43). Contemporary theory of musical topics began with Leonard Ratner’s analysis of eighteenth century music. He writes that “Music in the early 18th century developed a thesaurus of characteristic figures. . . . Some of these
figures were associated with various feelings and affections; others had a picturesque flavor. They are designated here as topics—subjects for musical discourse” (Ratner 1980, 9). Cultural knowledge allowed historical listeners to understand such figures and gestures in terms of musical and extramusical meanings.

The studies of Ratner, Robert Hatten (1994 and 2004) and Raymond Monelle (2000 and 2006) concern music of the classical and romantic period. Ratner’s initial topics, which included dance forms, military and hunt music, and stylistic characterizations such as strict or learned, formed the basis of studies of the classical repertoire and are seen as continuing in various forms into later western music. In *Music as Discourse*, Agawu lays out a concise history of musical topics.

In the eighteenth century, topics were figured as stylized conventions and were generally invoked without pathos by individual composers, the intention being always to speak a language whose vocabulary was essentially public without sacrificing any sort of will to originality. In the nineteenth century, these impulses were retained, but the burgeoning of expressive possibilities brought other kinds of topic into view. Alongside the easily recognized conventional codes were others that approximated natural shapes. . . and some that were used consistently within a single composer’s oeuvre or idiolect . . . . Twentieth-century topical practice became, in part, a repository of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century usages even as the universe was expanded to include the products of various strategic denials. Thus, certain rhetorical gestures associated with Romantic music took on a “historical” or topical role in twentieth-century music. . . . Musics associated with specific groups (Jewish, gypsy) retained their vitality for quotation and allusion, while newer musical developments—such as the African-American traditions of blues, gospel, funk, jazz, and rap—provided material for topical exploration and exploitation by composers (2009, 48).
In order to qualify as a topic, a musical figure must signify a meaning beyond its initial reference or interpretation. In Monelle’s words, we must ask if “the musical sign passed from literal imitation (iconism) or stylistic reference (indexicality) into signification by association (the indexicality of the object)” (2000, 80). Following the tradition of topical theory, Monelle also argues that topics must be conventional signs and be common to periods, composers, and pieces (80). This quality of topics, however, is not universally agreed upon. Yayoi Uno Everett writes that “topics are not restricted to historically established ones,” and allows for the existence of contextually-specific topics (2009, 29). In her analysis of *Le Grand Macabre*, Everett uses the example of Ligeti’s characteristic sound mass texture. Within the opera, this texture represents the apocalyptic threat of an approaching comet. Everett’s identification of this topic is significant in that not only is the musical figure idiomatic to Ligeti as a composer, but the signified meaning of the figure is specific to the opera. These composer or piece-specific topics must be uncovered and developed through close analysis.

Connections between topics and musical form have been tenuous. In his article “On the Relation of Musical Topoi to Formal Function” (2005), William Caplin casts doubt on the potential for topical analysis to be connected with meanings contained within established musical forms. In his study, Caplin attempts to relate musical topics to the general formal functions of beginning, middle, and ending, extended from ideas of formal functionality of Arnold Schoenberg and Erwin Ratz. “If form is conceived as a succession of functions at multiple levels in the hierarchy of the work, then an essential condition for relating a given musical topic to a given formal function is that the topic
itself embody specific form-defining characteristics” (115). In his analyses, Caplin finds that among topics that are more likely to have a connection to form, “for every case that we find of pastoral functioning as a formal initiator or brilliant style as a cadential close, it is easy to find cases of these topics appearing in almost any other formal position” (120). In addition, Caplin also finds musical characteristics responsible for the formal connections of such examples that are not specific to the given topic (120). Further complicating the issue is the fact that it is difficult to establish what would be an “inappropriate” or “playful” use of topic outside of its “normal” formal position (122-3). While a firm relationship between topics and form has yet to be established, Caplin does not see this as detrimental to topical analysis. “Even if the relation of topoi to form is ultimately a fragile one, this in no way invalidates the potential that topics may have within their primary function as bearers of musical meaning” (124). Caplin therefore does not disqualify piece or composer specific topics from having a relationship to musical form. The question of the relationship of topics to form in Zorn’s music will be discussed in chapter three.

**Idiolects**

The second interpretive concept I intend to apply to Zorn’s music is the *idiolect*. An idiolect, a concept that has its roots in the philosophy of language, is a language or part of a language that is specific to a single person (Barber 2010). The musical application of the idea of idiolect has its genesis in Leonard Meyer. In his definition of musical style, Meyer writes that “a rule or strategy may serve as a constraint in the
repertory of a group of composers, in the *oeuvre* of a single composer, or in a specific composition” (1989, 23). He defines his concept of *idioms* as those characteristics common to a composer individually within a given *dialect* (the characteristics common to a style), that is, “substyles that are differentiated because a number of composers . . . employ (choose) the same or similar rules and strategies” (23).

Within any dialect, individual composers tend to employ some constraints rather than others; indeed, they may themselves have devised new constraints. Those that a composer repeatedly selects from the larger repertory of the dialect define his or her individual idiom. Thus, though Bach and Handel use essentially the same dialect, they tend to choose somewhat different strategic constraints and hence have somewhat different idioms. Like dialects, idioms may be subdivided in various ways. . . . The most common division made by historians and analysts is historical. That is, when the strategies chosen by a composer change over time, his or her idiom may be divided into periods such as early, middle, and late. This is the case with Beethoven, Verdi, and Stravinsky (24).

Idioms or *idiolects* thus operate at a subsidiary level to the style or dialect employed in the music. Following Meyer’s definition, Allan Moore conceives an idiolect to “refer to the more local level,” where two artists writing music in the same style “carve out different spaces . . . that is why we recognize their work as their work individually, and do not confuse the two” (2005, 140). The idea of idiolects is implicit in many composer specific analyses. For instance, Kathryn Bailey’s 1991 study of Webern’s twelve-tone music explores in part the idiosyncratic way in which the composer incorporated the formal structures of earlier western music into his serial pieces.

Identifying idiolect in the postmodern era is complicated. As discussed in the introduction, the dialect of musical postmodernism is incompletely defined. Identification
of the idiolect of a postmodern composer thus cannot be approached by selecting appropriate traits from the repertory of that dialect. Because of this, my conception of idiolect departs slightly from Meyer’s definition.

Instead, I conceive of idiolect as a part of the language of a specific composer. I will extract general approaches or compositional philosophies from the study of Zorn and his music. The idiolects I discuss are important aspects of Zorn’s approach, defined without attempting to describe the totality of Zorn’s individual style. These idiolects are specific constraints of Zorn’s that form part of the as yet incompletely defined postmodern dialect. Their position within the dialect remains uncertain with regard to whether these idiolects are constraints selected by multiple composers, or whether they are individual to Zorn alone. This approach towards idiolect contributes to the understanding of dialect, as idiolects defined here may be added to the repertory of postmodern traits.

Whereas the study of earlier music has enjoyed the benefit of historical reflection and accumulated discourse, the study of contemporary music lacks such a basis of theoretical thought. It is difficult to establish the themes and strategies common to a time period without the benefit of historical perspective. The development of a composer-specific lens for interpretation in the form of idiolects follows the practice seen in the analysis of collage music of the use of piece specific methodologies in individual studies.
Paradigmatic analysis and Zorn’s music

My application of paradigmatic analysis to Zorn’s music begins with the segmentation of the piece into component units. The most meaningful way to segment Zorn’s works, however, must be determined. His collages cannot be effectively segmented based on the criteria Agawu applies in his analyses of tonal works of the Romantic period. While Stravinsky’s *Symphonies* shares many characteristics with Zorn’s pieces, Agawu’s analysis of *Symphonies* also does not provide an appropriate model for the segmentation of Zorn’s works. Although it is discontinuous, *Symphonies* contains thematic repetition, while Zorn’s pieces in general do not feature literal repetition. The criteria for segmentation of Zorn’s works must therefore be formulated before the in-depth analysis of his pieces can begin. Chapter three is devoted to identifying a process by which Zorn’s music can be methodically segmented. There, I will identify and define recurring topics in the music that signal delineations. The employment of topics provides a consistent way to parse Zorn’s music, and the remaining chapters use this method of segmentation.

As I identify the units that make up the collages, they will be described and classified according to their musical characteristics. Over the course of examining the units, common characteristics between units will emerge, providing a way to categorize the units. As well as communicating the characteristics of the units and showing how they represent one of several types of structures that are present, the prose descriptions of the units in the analytical chapters have other functions. First, they provide a running
commentary on the unfolding of the piece. Second, they are a place for the discussion of musical subtleties, including similarities and differences between units. These prose descriptions should not be overlooked, as they are integral to the understanding of the analysis. Once units are segmented, described, and categorized, their relationship will be shown in the paradigmatic display, which provides an insight into the network of repetition that governs the piece.

The analytical chapters will also define relevant idiolects that pertain generally to Zorn’s music and specifically to the pieces under discussion. The idiolects will be gleaned from Zorn’s comments on his music and his compositional strategies, and from the examination of the music itself. These idiolects provide a way to understand what is going on in the music, and are a means to interpret the unfolding of the pieces. The application of these idiolects will shed light on progressive processes that reflect linear organization in the works.
CHAPTER 3

“THERE’S NOT ONE MOMENT . . . THAT I CAN’T JUSTIFY”: STRUCTURE IN ZORN’S COLLAGE MUSIC

The first step of paradigmatic analysis is the segmentation of the piece into “meaningful and morphologically distinct” units (Agawu 2009, 255). In the case of Stravinsky’s *Symphonies*, Agawu’s segmentation coincided with the discontinuities presented by the contrasting blocks of the composition. Segmentation of a collage along these lines, however, is only one option in the parsing of a discontinuous texture. As Jonathan Kramer notes, postmodern collage pieces, “encourage the perceiver to make his or her own perceptual sense of the work” (Kramer 1995, 28). An experiential approach towards a piece, such as employed by Lochhead (2006), can provide intuitions towards other schemes of segmentation. Careful exploration of Zorn’s works, in fact, reveals factors that suggest that the discontinuous segments of his pieces are grouped into higher-level units. This chapter identifies a way to segment Zorn’s music into these units through the exploration of three of his collages: “Speedfreaks,” “Krazy Kat,” and “American Psycho.” This method of segmentation will be used as the basis for the analyses in the following chapters.

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32 Christopher Hasty’s segmentation of modernist works proceeds by using a similar intuitive approach, one that is “introspective in nature and entails listening to the music very carefully and noting various structural perceptions” (1981, 55).
Segmenting “Speedfreaks”

Zorn’s composition “Speedfreaks” is a short collage that appears on the Naked City album *Torture Garden*, first released in 1989. The piece contains thirty-two separate segments, each consisting of a few seconds’ worth of music in various popular styles. The excessively short duration of the musical segments in “Speedfreaks” challenges a segmentation scheme such as the one Agawu constructed from Stravinsky’s *Symphonies*. In contrast, some of the collage segments in “Speedfreaks” are fundamentally different in a perceptual way than other segments, and the disjunctions created by these segments can help formulate an interpretation of the piece’s segmentation and formal structure. These disjunctions suggest a way to parse the piece into meaningful units made up of groups of collage segments, and offer clues as to how Zorn’s other collages may be understood. They further highlight the importance of texture in the organization of Zorn’s pieces, and illustrate how his works lend themselves to interpretation as perceptible narrative structures.

Zorn has said that he considers himself “rootless,” and this quality is reflected both in the range of musical styles in which he has composed and in his use of collage techniques (Zorn, quoted in Gagne 1993, 516). From 1988 to 1993, Zorn composed and arranged music for his ensemble Naked City, a group of virtuoso musicians with the

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instrumentation of a rock band. While the group’s recorded music is diverse, including ambient “noise” pieces, rearrangements of film music, and jazz compositions, a significant part of their output consists of miniatures, most of which are characterized by sudden changes in musical style. Since his time as a college student, Zorn had been interested in small compositions, particularly those of Webern (Gagne 1993, 512). Like the pieces of Webern’s aphoristic period, the forty-two tracks on Naked City’s album Torture Garden are extremely brief, ranging from eight to seventy-five seconds in length. During his studies in college, Zorn also became interested in what he refers to as “block structures”—sudden changes in texture and style—which developed through his study of Ives, Xenakis, Stravinsky, Stockhausen, and most important, cartoon soundtracks (512). His study of cartoon music focused on that of Carl Stalling, who wrote soundtracks for Warner Bros. cartoons from 1936-1958 (Goldmark 2005, 10).

Zorn was intrigued by the fact that Stalling’s musical structures were often entirely dependent on the visuals of the cartoon. Compounding this, the cartoons themselves often consisted of scenes only loosely tied together. When composing a soundtrack, Stalling could choose whatever music fit the particular moment at hand without needing to support a narrative structure (17). As Daniel Goldmark writes,

34 The personnel in Naked City consisted of Zorn, saxophone; Bill Frisell, guitar; Fred Frith, bass; Wayne Horvitz, keyboards; Joey Baron, drums; and Yamatsuka Eye, vocals. Eye does not appear on all of the group’s output.

35 Zorn studied music for one and one-half years at Webster College in St. Louis, Missouri.

36 Zorn was also influenced by Stalling’s free use of quotation (Brophy 2002, 264).
Warner Bros. never exhibited much concern about narrative development; typically each short centers on a generic situation or set-up. Instead of building a trajectory toward a traditional climax and dénouement, Warner Bros. cartoons constantly introduce new gags and shtick, equal in intensity, to move the story forward. Similarly, Stalling’s scores have no emotional arc, instead carefully complementing and conveying whatever joke is being perpetrated at a given moment in the narrative (16).37

The absence of musical narrative structure in cartoon music attracted Zorn, who studied the soundtracks he had recorded from the television (Gagne 1993, 512). On Torture Garden, Zorn applied this idea of quick and unexpected changes to pieces in which the components reflect divergent musical styles (Chiti 1998, 27).

The mixture of styles in Zorn’s works has been compared to flipping through the channels of a television set (Drury 1994, 199). What results is a constant changing of musical style, where, as Marcel Cobussen writes, “just [at the moment] we have identified with a style and the corresponding context, these change and we are back to square one” (1999, 42). The relentless juxtapositions in the pieces on Torture Garden result in a sense of disorientation, and furthermore, can lead to analytical interpretations that emphasize the music’s disjunction.

Despite the amount of literature on Zorn, his influences, and his philosophy, only two pieces from Torture Garden other than “Speedfreaks” have received analytical attention. In discussing the forty-one second track “New Jersey Scum Swamp,” Alberto Pezzotta finds that “themes and genres . . . are juxtaposed and made to clash to the very

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37 This description of cartoon soundtracks has much in common with Jonathan Kramer’s conception of moment form, in which a piece starts and later comes to a stop, but does not have a traditional progression from beginning to end (Kramer, 1978).
limits of being superimposed: yet, however interrupted, fragmented or disturbed one is by
the other, they still remain identifiable” (1998, 30). This intense juxtaposition is typical of
many of the pieces on *Torture Garden*.

In her analysis of “Osaka Bondage,” Ellie Hisama approaches Zorn’s music from
the dual perspectives of Asian-American cultural studies and feminism, focusing on the
representation of women, Japanese culture, and sexuality in his works (2004). In
particular, she relates the texture of juxtaposition present in “Osaka Bondage” to the
actual human dismemberment implied by the album’s title and packaging (80).³⁸ While
both Hisama and Pezzotta concentrate on the disjunctions created by the collage texture,
they do not discuss how the juxtapositions interact in terms of large-scale form.

As discussed in chapter one, John Brackett presents an alternative method of
formal analysis, using “Speedfreaks” specifically to challenge the view that Zorn’s music
is completely not unified.³⁹ Instead, Brackett believes that Zorn “embraces multiple
unities, various methods for achieving some sort of continuity, and a strong belief in the
unifying functions of narratives” (2008, xxi). To illustrate this, Brackett’s analysis of
“Speedfreaks” outlines a large-scale harmonic background in the piece (25) that views
the work as a thirty-two-bar song form upon which the texture of rapid style changes has
been superimposed.

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³⁸ The artwork contains stills from a Japanese sadomasochistic film, and a *manga*
(a style of Japanese cartoon) image that is violent and sexual in content.

³⁹ Brackett cites comments by Jonathan Kramer and Renée T. Coulombe (2008,
xiii).
The fast tempo, changing styles, irregular segment lengths, and complete lack of functional harmony leading to and from phrase endings make hearing the AABA structure in this piece difficult. Brackett writes that “while we might not be able to perceive exactly what is happening in [this] or other tunes, it is clear that Zorn is concerned with the details associated with the moment-to-moment interactions as well as the larger-scale formations described” (29). However, he leaves the question of the existence of a perceptible unity in the work unanswered.

From his statements, it is clear that Zorn himself is concerned with the overall impression presented by his pieces. Brackett describes an experiment in which he digitally rearranged the segments of “Speedfreaks” and played the rearrangement for the composer. In reaction, Zorn responded that “this new version does not work at all for me. . . . Finding the proper sequence to keep the interest and flow is a delicate operation. And crucial. . . . Energy, keys, tempos, feels, instrumentation . . . all these parameters need to be properly balanced/unbalanced” (quoted in Brackett 2008, xvi). It seems that Zorn values the overall aural impression of the piece as well as the unity provided by a background structure.

During the forty-eight-second length of “Speedfreaks,” Naked City quickly cycles through a diverse set of stylistic quotations that are grounded by a constant pulse. There are only two points at which a segment is less than a full number of pulses in length: the first in segment 13, and the second at the very end of the piece. The first time this occurs, the metrical position of the downbeat is shifted by half a pulse for the remainder of the piece. The component segments of the collage are exceedingly brief; individually they
vary between one and seven pulses in length, or from slightly less than one second to approximately four seconds long.

The segments that make up the piece are stylistically varied, including quotations of traditional jazz, Latin jazz, hard rock, and country, as well as short idiomatic musical gestures. Although brief, almost every segment has a clearly perceptible style. Figure 7 shows a cataloging of the segments of the piece based on a close listening, notating the music in what Judy Lochhead calls a descriptive “map” (2006, 240). Such a map “visually [captures] the significant sonic features of the piece as they occur in experience” (240-1). In contrast to the adaptation of the score that Brackett includes in his analysis, 40 Figure 7 is my own transcription of the piece cross-referenced with Brackett’s diagram. The labels attached to each segment are convenient handles that describe how I interpret their stylistic content. In some cases, these labels are the same or similar to those in Brackett’s chart. For the purposes of this analysis, it is not necessary for readers to agree with all the specific designations, only to recognize that each segment refers to a familiar and discernible style.

40 His chart is based on Zorn’s handwritten chart of “Speedfreaks” that was reproduced in the liner notes to The Complete Studio Recordings (Naked City 2005). Brackett includes labels of the stylistic reference of each segment (2008, 25).
Figure 7: Descriptive Map of "Speedfreaks"
**Figure 8: Description of segments in “Speedfreaks”**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Segment</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>The opening segment is a shocking outburst, predominantly cymbals and vocalizations, that lasts for two beats. Both Brackett and I label this as “noise.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>A two-beat segment that clearly references “Oompah” music (labeled such independently by both me and Brackett).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>A brief portion of swing music, with saxophone playing the melody (labeled “Jazz on Zorn’s chart, and “Sax. Jazz” on Brackett’s).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>A piano glissando that lasts for one beat (labeled such on all three maps).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>A one beat unison “hit” (labeled by Brackett as “stinger”).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Four beats of stylistically familiar music, labeled by Zorn and Brackett as “rockabilly.” It reminded me of video-game music.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Two beats of music focused on two guitar chords. In Zorn’s score, this is labeled “Heavy Rock”; Brackett labels it “Hardcore.” Again connecting the music with a visual reference, I labeled it “TV Crime Drama.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>A single chord (Ab minor) on the piano.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Four beats of reggae music, emphasizing an expansion of physical space through delay and reverb effects as well as an open musical texture.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Description</td>
</tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Latin Jazz, labeled “Gtr. Chord Latin” in Brackett’s chart. This segment presents a metrical “double-time” compared with the previous section.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Another noisy section, this time with saxophone filling for the screaming vocals. Brackett labels this segment “Noise/Thrash,” but the screeching saxophone also evokes the free jazz of Ornette Coleman.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>The emphasis on the downbeat led me to label this section “march.” Brackett, following Zorn, labels it “waltz;” the triple meter is partially disguised by the segment’s five-beat length.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>One of only two sections that is not a whole number of beats in length. Again, this section emphasizes noise. The vocals present a low-pitched grunt, and are dominantly accompanied by cymbals.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>A section of driving hard rock.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Four beats of saxophone-heavy music I labeled “50s Rock n’ Roll.” In Zorn’s chart it is labeled “R&amp;B Stripper Sax,” while Brackett labels it “Stripper Music.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>A clear reference to country music, which Brackett calls “Country &amp; Western (‘Happy Trails’).”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Up-tempo straight-up jazz music, labeled by Zorn as “piano trio Fast swing” and by Brackett as “Piano Jazz.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Four beats of “surf” music.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Brackett labels this “sax noise;” I agree with Zorn’s label of “Free Jazz.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
20. A six-beat section of funk music.

21. The longest segment in the piece, segment 21 features cartoonish vocals over jazz music, which I labeled “Electric Jazz,” and Brackett calls “F-modal jazz.”

22. Another section of hard rock.

23. Noise, led by saxophone.


25. Latin Jazz, differentiated from the previous Latin section.

26. Brackett calls this measure “cartoon noises.” It appears to be an example of Zorn’s “cartoon trades” (see below).

27. One beat of descending piano.

28. Another noise section featuring vocals, labeled “thrash” by Brackett.

29. A loud buzzing sound. This is labeled “Bass Noise” by Zorn and Brackett. In live performances of the song, that is indeed how the noise is generated. In this recording, the buzzing sound does not sound like the typical noise made by a bass amplifier.

30. A descending guitar line.

31. Spacey funk, what Brackett calls “Keyboard.”

32. Another section of cartoon trades.


Noise as a Musical Topic

A central concern of “Speedfreaks” is the contrast between segments that are perceptible as a stylistic quotation and those that I have categorized as “noise” segments: segments 1, 11, 13, 23, 28, and 29. Two other segments, numbers 26 and 32, are neither stylistic quotation nor noise segment. Instead, these are examples of what Zorn calls “cartoon trades,” passages in which each instrument performs a single unrelated event in turn (quoted in Strickland 1991, 136; see also Gagné 1993, 512). While Pezzotta writes that all of Zorn’s collages on Torture Garden use a common principle of “putting melody and noise on the same level, [whether it be] “fine” music (jazz) and “rough” (hardcore, noisecore, or whatever we choose to call it)” (Pezzotta 1998, 30), the noise segments perceptually clash with the other segments in the composition. My analysis and interpretation of the piece’s form are based on the contrasting quality of these segments.

Three aspects of the noise segments serve to distinguish them from the other stylistic quotations. First, all of the noise segments are similar to each other in texture and are perceived as sound mass. Second, as opposed to the stylistic quotations, the noise segments lack clear reference to common musical styles. Third, they contain harsher timbres than the other segments, particularly in the vocals, saxophone, and drum set.

The noise segments are stylistically consistent with each other in most performance aspects as well. The clearest sounds of these sections are fast drumming with either vocals and/or saxophone improvisation. Such a similarity is not as prominent even between related segments of stylistic quotation. For instance, while segments 10 and
25 are both Latin jazz, they have clearly differentiated accompaniment patterns. The same is not true of the noise segments, which exhibit such similarity that they can be experienced as repetitions of the same musical idea.

The musical material contained within the noise segments also differentiates them from the other segments of the composition. While in other segments, the various instruments contribute to the impression of a particular musical style, the components of the noise segments exhibit a splintering quality. This impression is further emphasized by their relative shortness; the longest noise segment is only three pulses long, in contrast with the other segments, the longest of which is seven pulses.41

The instrumentation and timbres used in the noise segments further distinguish them from the surrounding material. With the exception of segment 21, in which an electric jazz accompaniment underlies a cartoonish vocal part, only the noise segments contain vocals. In “Speedfreaks,” as in much of Naked City’s music, the vocals of Yamatsuka Eye alternate with Zorn’s screeching saxophone improvisations. In contrast to the more traditional instrumental sounds present in the other segments of the piece, these sounds explore completely different timbres, utilizing harsh screeches, screams, and

41 Although Zorn’s compositions for Naked City are influenced by hardcore and thrash metal, the noise segments in “Speedfreaks” do not appear to be representative of a distinct hardcore or thrash style in the same way that other segments of the piece are stylistically derived. Some representative hardcore and thrash albums contemporary with Torture Garden include Carcass, Symphonies of Sickness, Earache MOSH18CD, 1989, CD; Napalm Death, Utopia Banished, Earache MOSH53CD, 1992, CD; Boredoms, Pop Tatari, Reprise Records 45416-2, 1992, CD; and Brutal Truth, Extreme Conditions Demand Extreme Responses, Combat Records 1992, CD.
growls. They are accompanied by crashing cymbals and repeated snare and bass drum attacks. This timbral contrast further distinguishes the noise segments.

Definitions of noise also support this description of the segments. In his book *Rhythm and Noise*, Theodore Gracyk outlines three ways in which sounds can be labeled as noise (Gracyk 1996, 103-4). First, noises can be sounds that prevent or obscure communication. Second, they can be sounds that disturb us or break our concentration. Finally, noises can be sounds that “threaten us with physical harm” (104).

The noise segments in “Speedfreaks” display all three of these qualities. In stark contrast to the other segments of the song, they do not communicate specific information about musical style and cause a greater degree of disruption than is already present in the constantly changing texture of the music. In addition, the screaming and screeching timbres, and the thickness of the overall texture engenders emotions associated with aggression and anger that in turn can be perceived as threatening.

**Segmenting “Speedfreaks” Through the Noise Topic**

With the noise segments differentiated from the remainder of the work, they represent the obvious starting point for structuring a formal segmentation. In this way, noise in Zorn’s music can be thought of as a musical *topic* that communicates a greater disjunction and marks the beginnings and endings of larger scale units in the collage. This interpretation provides a consistent way to segment the piece into units made of
chains of collage segments (see Figure 9). \(^{42}\)

Unit 1: Segments 1-10

The piece begins with a two-pulse noise segment, followed by nine segments ranging from one to four pulses in length. Six of the nine are stylistic quotations; the other three are idiomatic musical gestures: a piano glissando, a single unison “hit” on piano and drums, and a piano chord. All of these are sounds that have more in common with the surrounding style quotations than with the noise segments. The eleventh segment of the piece is another noise segment. If the noise segments are viewed as both disruptive and demarcating, the first ten segments of the piece can be heard as a complete musical statement comprising a stylistic collage phrase delineated by noise.

Unit 2: Segments 11-13

The eleventh segment of the piece is a three-beat noise segment with saxophone improvisation instead of vocals. A march and a noise segment of one and one-half pulses follow. The irregular length of segment 13 alters the position of the downbeat for the

\(^{42}\) There is precedent within other compositions by Zorn that noise may be utilized in a transitional or delineating way. In the liner notes that accompany the recording of \textit{Spillane} Zorn writes that the violent quality of the Mike Hammer detective novels lead to the use of “a variety of noise aggregates which were used here predominantly as transitional devices and for dramatic contrast” (liner notes to \textit{Godard/Spillane}, 1999). In his analysis of \textit{Spillane}, Service writes that these segments “amplify the violence of the juxtaposition from one type of musical material to another” (2004, 67), and function in a way to disturb the continuity of the piece.
following music. Together, the two noise segments and the march constitute a transition from the first phrase of the piece to the second, highlighted by the metrical displacement of the downbeat. The emphasis on the downbeat in segment 12 further stresses this displacement and draws contrast between the positions of the pulse in the first and second phrases.

Unit 3: Segments 14-22

The second collage phrase consists of nine stylistic quotations ranging from three to seven pulses, and presents a further and extended exploration of the collage texture. Not only does it contain more segments, but those segments are longer than the ones in the first collage phrase. The increase in both of these parameters generates more stability in the second phrase compared to the first.\(^{43}\)

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\(^{43}\) It should be noted that the transitions to and from the noise segments that delineate this section are somewhat mitigated by segments 14 and 22, which form the first and last segments of the phrase. These segments are stylistic quotations of hard rock music, and in a timbral sense are similar to the adjacent noise segments.
Figure 9: Explanatory Map of “Speedfreaks”
Unit 4: Segments 23-32

The piece’s final formal components separate into two sections. The first is another transition, and begins with segment 23, a two-pulse noise segment. Segments 24 and 25, both style quotations, refer back to the collage phrases of the piece. Segment 26, the first appearance of Zorn’s “cartoon trades” follows. This segment, itself a miniature collage, increases the instability of the section. The final noise segment forms the first part of a cadential gesture. The close proximity of the two noise segments and the cartoon trades cause an acceleration of tension towards the conclusion of the piece. The actual cadential gesture occurs as segment 28 leads into segment 29, a loud buzzing sound that, despite its two-pulse length, overwhelms the texture of the piece. The buzzing does not release tension, but rather is the most disruptive moment of a piece based on disjunction and contrast. Segment 29 presents unmitigated noise, and in this sense is the climactic moment of the work. The final three segments conclude the piece, with the last cartoon-trades segment providing a soft fade-out.

To summarize in terms of overall form: The piece begins with an initial collage phrase, followed by a transition, which leads to a second, longer collage phrase. “Speedfreaks” builds tension in the first phrase through the disruptive nature of the collage. The lengthening of each collage segment provides a more stable texture in the second phrase. The piece climaxes by positioning noise segments and cartoon trades in
close proximity before the arrival of the buzzing sound of segment 29, the work’s most
disruptive moment.

Although “Speedfreaks” could appear at first hearing to be a random collection of
diverse musical segments, analysis reveals at least two aspects of large-scale
organization: the background harmonic framework as described by Brackett; and the
narrative structure of textural change. This textural structure of “Speedfreaks” follows
conventional conceptions of progressive musical form, specifically the use of a sectional
design that contributes to the building of tension towards the climax of the piece.
Although “Speedfreaks” is dominated by a texture of disjunction and juxtaposition, this
large-scale organization mediates its disruptive nature, and renders the work
comprehensible.

Other Delineating Topics

The noise topic can serve as a model for the function of other delineating
structures in Zorn’s works. Zorn’s collages “Krazy Kat” and “American Psycho,” also
performed by Naked City, use additional topics that signify delineations. Such topics
include periods of silence, segments that imply musical endings or transitions, and
segments of drastically atypical lengths.

The existence of two simultaneous modes of organization within “Speedfreaks”
could be meaningfully contrasted with modernist examples of the multiple employment
of formal structures, such as Anton Webern’s Op. 28 no. 1 and Op. 30. Within these
works, Webern sought the “fusion of the structural principles of a variation movement
and an adagio form” (Letter, in Bailey 1991, 197). As Kathleen Bailey writes, “both
works represent the union of two theoretically antithetical forms: variation, which is
reiterative and essentially linear, and ternary form, which is circular with a reprise” (198).
Silence

A very straightforward structure that creates delineations in Zorn’s other collages is a segment of silence. While there are no moments of silence in “Speedfreaks” or “Krazy Kat,” “American Psycho” features many silent moments that separate groups of collage segments. An example of this occurs between segments 2 and 3 (see description below) where over three seconds of silence separates the segments. The disruption caused by the silence is not mediated by any musical factors that suggest that it occurs in the middle of a higher level structure. Instead, the silence creates a clear break between the musical units. Silence therefore can be thought of as another topic signifying higher level delineation in the context of Zorn’s music.

Traditional Endings and Transitions

Zorn’s collages also contain musical figures that imply traditional endings or transitions. In some cases, such figures appear in combination. In “Krazy Kat,” Segment 7 features snare drum that leads to a V-I cadence on the piano in the key of C# major. In segment 8, the saxophone and guitar play a figure that emphasizes a tritone (D#—E—Bb). As a V-I cadence, segment 7 implies an ending, whereas the unresolved tritone of segment 8 intimates a continuation. In either case, the segment suggests that one musical structure has come to an end and that a new one is about to begin. Because they are used in combination, this effect is reinforced. Such structures are another sign that a delineation occurs.
Atypical Segment Length

While a difference in the length of musical structures does not traditionally signify a new beginning or ending, the organization of Zorn’s collages magnifies changes in segment length and sets atypically long or short segments apart from others in the surrounding texture. One characteristic that sets the noise segments apart from others in “Speedfreaks,” for instance, is their brevity. As in “Speedfreaks,” segments in “Krazy Kat” and “American Psycho” are generally of a similar length. Until the twentieth segment of “Krazy Kat,” a segment does not exceed 5.1 seconds; many are between 1 and 2 seconds long. In “American Psycho” the early portion of the piece also establishes a typical segment length (the first five segments are each 10-13 seconds long). When segments that are drastically longer than the established length occur, these longer segments are emphasized and create disruptions in the musical texture. Departures from typical established length can therefore be seen as a musical topic signifying delineation.

Segmentation of “Krazy Kat” and “American Psycho”

Together with noise, these topics can be employed in the segmentation of Zorn’s collages. In each case, these ideas of segmentation can be used to generate paradigmatic descriptions of the collages by identifying higher-level groupings of segments. The segments of “Krazy Kat” group into seven higher-level units.
Figure 10: Description of units in “Krazy Kat”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unit</th>
<th>Segments</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Segments 1-8: Noise; piano;</td>
<td>The first segments of the piece are all of roughly similar length and present a variety of textures and styles. The first unit is separated from the second by a cadence (segment 7) and transitional gesture (segment 8), as well as the noise segment that begins unit 2.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Segments 9-12: Noise; descending</td>
<td>This shorter phrase begins with a noise segment. Its final segment (segment 12) is longer than all previous segments and consists only of buzzing, a sound that also invokes the noise topic. This creates a delineation between units 2 and 3.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^{45}\) *Mickey-Mousing* is the creation of cartoon sound effects on an instrument.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Segments 13-18: Guitar harmonics; cartoon trades; alternating saxophone screeches and chords; drums with <em>Rite of Spring</em> fragment; cartoon trades; noise.</th>
<th>This collage phrase is quite varied and more extensive than what has been previously heard. The segments are longer in general, so much so that the length of segment 16 does not create a particular disjuntion. The phrase contains a variety of noises alongside quotations, both stylistic and exact. The noise of segment 18 marks the end of the unit.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Segments 19-21: Guitar; country; screeches alternating with hits.</td>
<td>Unit 4 begins with a meandering guitar line that transitions cleanly into a slow country section. The screeches and cymbal crashes of segment 21 mark a transition to the next unit.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Segments 22-26: Spacey; squeak; guitar; snort; cadence.</td>
<td>Beginning with a spacey section, unit 5 contains several blasts of sound effects surrounding a descending guitar line before concluding with a cadence.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Segments 27-28: Piano; snare drum roll with interjections.</td>
<td>Segment 27 provides an intro into the longest segment of the collage (segment 28), a section where a snare drum roll is interrupted by various clanks and buzzes. Its length (over twenty-two seconds) strongly distinguishes it from the unit that follows.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Segments 29-31: Noise; hard Latin jazz; melodic ascending lines.</td>
<td>The final section of music features three brief segments beginning with noisy trades before presenting a moment of Latin jazz and a final ascending line. The CD track for “Krazy Kat” finishes with fourteen seconds of silence, far more than present between the other songs on Radio. This would seem to indicate that this silence is an important part of either the song or the album as a whole. See chapter 4 for a further discussion of Radio.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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46 The CD track for “Krazy Kat” finishes with fourteen seconds of silence, far more than present between the other songs on Radio. This would seem to indicate that this silence is an important part of either the song or the album as a whole. See chapter 4 for a further discussion of Radio.
In contrast to the topics that segment the other collages, “American Psycho” uses silence, either alone or in combination with strong style or texture change, to distinguish between collage phrases. The piece lasts over six minutes, and its 29 segments are in many cases individually longer than those in the other two collages.

**Figure 11: Timeline of “Krazy Kat”**

**Figure 12: Description of units in “American Psycho”**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unit</th>
<th>Segments</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Segments 1-2: Pointillistic “hits”; fast rock.</td>
<td>The piece begins with instrumental hits, followed by a section that sounds like it has been sped up. Around three seconds of silence occur between the first two units.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Segments 3-5:</td>
<td>The “noise” segment of screams and crashes that begins unit 2 adds to its separation from unit 1. Three and a half seconds of silence follow segment 5.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Screams and trash-metal; hot jazz; cartoon trades.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Segments 6-8:</td>
<td>The heavy-metal of segment 7 is bookended by two shorter and softer jazz sections, making this unit a miniature ABA structure. About three seconds of silence follow.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Latin jazz; heavy metal with screaming; light jazz.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Segments 9-10:</td>
<td>The aphoristic quality of segment 9 contrasts with the brief scream presented by segment 10. Again, four seconds of silence marks the end of the unit.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Guitar string noises; screaming and drums.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Segment 11: Surf.</td>
<td>Segment 11 is a twelve second snapshot of light surf music. It is bookended by silence.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Segments 12-15:</td>
<td>This disruptive section begins with thrash metal. It is possible to see the jazz piano and vocal noises that make up segment 15 as a synthesis of the soft jazz of segment 13 and the noise trades of segment 14.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Noise; Latin jazz; cartoon trades; piano and vocal noises.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Segment</td>
<td>Description</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Segment 16: Noise interjection. The briefest unit in the piece, this is 2 second noise interjection surrounded by a sea of silence.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Segments 17-21: Cartoon trades; punk; fast free jazz; straight-up jazz; funk/hip-hop. Unit 8 begins with a long section of cartoon trades and follows that with four stylistic quotations.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Segment 22: Country. Another lone segment surrounded by silence, this one is in the style of country music with slide guitar.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Segment 23: Sound effects. More silence surrounds this segment, which features soft, aquatic sound effects.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Segments 24-25: Noise; fast country-rock. The two segments that make up this unit are further tied together by the fact that the guitar begins segment 25 during segment 24. Around two and a half seconds of silence follow.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Segments 26-29 The final four segments consist of four separated quotations on piano with shimmering cymbals in the background. This interesting unit contrasts with the rest of the song in both length and affect. The end of the piece features a long vocal exhalation, and the work concludes in a quiet, ambient way.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Examination of these three pieces reveals the regular presence of segments that are associated with the sense of a break or delineation in the music. I have designated these segments as musical topics, and Zorn’s music can be consistently parsed through the identification of these topics. In addition, the segmentations that result show how higher level form can exist in these works. The structure of these pieces can illuminate our understanding of their place as postmodern compositions, and reflects an idiolect of Zorn’s, one that concerns the dual influence of modernism and postmodernism on his

**Conclusions**

Figure 13: Timeline of “American Psycho”
work. Zorn’s interpretation of cartoon music, for instance, could suggest a departure from traditional musical organization. He sees cartoon soundtracks as expressing a different kind of musical development, one that is connected to a visual narrative, as opposed to a musical narrative (Zorn 2004; see also Duckworth 1995, 471). This attitude aligns his works with Kramer’s definition of radical postmodernism, music in which unity has been deliberately forsaken (1995, 24).

Zorn, however, also has a modernist view of his compositions as unified structures. He states that “there’s not one moment . . . that I can’t justify in terms of why it belongs there and why, if you took it out, the whole piece would fall apart. I mean, that was my uptight twelve-tone upbringing where everything had to have its place. And that transferred itself even into my free improvisations” (Zorn, quoted in Duckworth 1995, 465). This speaks to a compositional approach that values the overall impression of the work and how that impression is constructed from its component elements. As opposed to the organization of Carl Stalling’s music, where musical segments are connected only by the visual aspect of the cartoon, the individual segments in “Speedfreaks,” are parts of perceptible musical structures. This shows that a view that Zorn’s work lacks continuity overlooks unifying aspects of his compositional approach.

The presence of formal structures in these works also situates Zorn’s pieces among other postmodern collages. As Losada describes, segments in the works of Berio, Rochberg, and Zimmerman were organized through processes of chromatic completion and saturation (2009). The arrangement of topics in “Speedfreaks,” “Krazy Kat,” and

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47 Visual aspects of Zorn’s music will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter 4.
“American Psycho” achieves a result similar to what is accomplished by such other organizing systems in musical collage by governing the unfolding of discontinuous components. As with other collages, these pieces are therefore characterized by a conflict between surface discontinuity and unifying formal structures. Most important however, is the fact that the unifying elements in Zorn’s pieces are not only contained in the musical background, but are present at the most apparent levels of listening. While other postmodern collages possess unifying aspects, the perceptible nature of unity in Zorn’s works distinguishes his attitude from that of other postmodern composers. Such differences in approach are the definition of an idiolect, in this case an idiolect characterized by how Zorn synthesizes modern and postmodern ideas in his music.

This chapter established the potential for Zorn’s collages to be organized in a perceptible way through the use of delineating devices. It further demonstrated how the presence of these devices can be used to consistently segment the pieces. In these analyses, I approached each piece by identifying its component structures and then categorized the structures based on their shared characteristics, a procedure that forms the first portion of paradigmatic analysis. In the next chapter I will show that the arrangement of segments into higher level units in Zorn’s music is related to an idiolect of the visual. Understanding the nature of visual organization in Zorn’s works can in turn lead to the understanding of structure and narrative in the pieces.
CHAPTER 4
“CAN YOU MAKE A FILM THAT’S MUSIC?”: THE VISUAL ASPECTS OF COLLAGE ORGANIZATION

Zorn’s comments on narrative structure often reference visual elements. In addition, they suggest that his music is organized linearly. In this chapter, I will examine the nature of this type of organization by drawing on both Zorn’s comments and on the structure displayed by his college *Cat O’Nine Tails*. I will show how *Cat O’Nine Tails* presents a linear narrative in the form of musical changes that occur between successive musical blocks and groups of blocks.

Visual elements and modes of thinking are an intrinsic part of Zorn’s music. A variety of visual mediums influence Zorn, including architecture, television, film, and sculpture.\(^{48}\) Zorn’s formative musical experiences were often tied to television and film.

\[\text{\textquoteleft\textquoteleft I’m a complete media freak; a TV baby. \ldots The first record I actually remember buying was *The Sorcerer’s Apprentice*: I saw *Fantasia*, you know, and I liked Mickey Mouse running around in that. And I thought the music was great. \ldots After that, I got into the monster movies, you know, *The Werewolf*, and *The Hunchback*. And the Phantom of the Opera...}^{48}\]

\[\ldots\ \text{Zorn states the “furthest out” things ever got for him was in attempts to composed pieces that were “completely visual and didn’t use sound” (quoted in Gagne 1993, 515). “I began developing this theory that Music is not sound itself but a way of manipulating sound, a certain aesthetic, and is it possible to then work with a visual medium in a musical way. Can you make a film that’s music?” (Zorn 2004).}\]
played organ, so I got into organ music; I bought every Bach organ record I could get my hands on (Zorn, quoted in Duckworth 1995, 446).

The experience of music in connection with a visual experience, i.e., as soundtrack, had a profound effect on Zorn. Kevin McNeill notes that “many of the composers [Zorn] admires—Ennio Morricone, Carl Stalling, and Bernard Herrmann especially—work exclusively on soundtracks for popular movies and cartoons” (1995, 13). The idea of soundtrack music seems to permeate Zorn’s thinking and experience of the world.  

I grew up on TV; there’s always been sound with the image. It’s like I live in a movie or something. I see an image and I hear music with it. I was brought up that way. I walk down the street and I hear a soundtrack in my head for the movie that I’m in (Zorn, quoted in Duckworth 1995, 473).

Given this perspective, it is no surprise that the extramusical is an important aspect of Zorn’s music. He actively seeks to infuse his compositions with extramusical elements such as accompanying programs. These programs are reinforced with the visual elements of album packaging. “With me, the packaging is essential—that is my artwork, making records, and I want to give people as many clues as I can. I don’t want to mystify everybody; I’m not into making some kind of cult. I’m trying to be as clear as I can, and when I put the pictures on the covers that I do, it’s really to tune you in to what’s going on, rather than to turn you off” (quoted in Gagne 1993, 531). As he clearly explains, these elements...

49 Similarly, Zorn uses language connected with film when discussing his music. In an interview with Edward Strickland, Zorn stated that “The music is put together, as you say, in a very—‘picaresque’ is an interesting word—I would use maybe ‘filmic’ way, montage” (quoted in Strickland, 1991, 128).
extramusical connections are directly related to ideas of unity and narrative, and are one way that Zorn structures his music.

There are many ways to unify a compositional structure—I like using dramatic subjects. Music is not just notes on the page, it’s not just pitches in the air. It’s got to have some kind of cultural resonance to it, it’s got to tell a story in some way. Every piece on Torture Garden, for example, has some kind of subtext to it; a story that’s being told. In Spillane it’s more obvious, but even with something like Torture Garden, there’s a story there. The titles help with that too, they give the pieces a cultural resonance, something that can get thinking patterns going, which someone can identify with or not identify with or get pissed about. My record covers are involved with this too. You try to create a package that really tells a story and says something within a larger context then just the abstract world of sound or pitches (Zorn, quoted in Gagne 1993, 526).

While programs are part of Zorn’s compositional approach, his method of composition also deliberately avoids consideration of any kind of large-scale linear narrative at the early stages of the process. This occurs because the individual segments of the collage are composed without thought to their position in the assembled work. In Zorn’s works Godard and Spillane, all individual segments are related to a central topic, even if the representations they present seem incongruous in the context of the linear unfolding of the piece. As Zorn states on Spillane, “For every single section of that piece I can tell you specifically, what image I was thinking of and how it related to Spillane and his world. And sometimes they’d be way off the wall but that doesn’t matter. The point is, to me, it holds together” (Zorn, quoted in Gagne 1993, 465). These unifying connections are one way that Zorn supplants traditional musical means of narrative design. As Zorn states, “My works often move from one block to another such that the
average person can hear no development whatsoever. But I always have a unifying concept that ties all the sections together” (liner notes to *Godard/Spillane*, 1999).

The most central visual influence on Zorn’s collages comes from cartoons. During his time in college, Zorn studied cartoon soundtracks that he had recorded from television (Gagne 1993, 512). Cartoon music subsequently continued to be a strong influence on his musical style. These comments from the documentary *A Bookshelf on Top of the Sky* detail his view of the relationship of cartoon music to his compositions.

Cartoon music for me was a real breakthrough in terms of musical form, how it was structured. It seemed to me that it was completely revolutionary for the time. Maybe watching Road Runner as a kid or what have you. . . . Maybe it was all the different kinds of music that was used, the quotations. I always loved Ives as a young composer, Ives was one of my favorites and cartoon music seemed to relate to Ives in some way in terms of quotation and different genres, everything being treated the same, the same slapstick kind of way. But you know, a little bit of jazz would appear, classical would appear, all of these different things would appear really in a new way, and it was really kind of revelatory in a lot of ways, and really inspiring, and I used to tape shit off the TV, and I’d have my little cassettes. . . . Road Runner was the best because there was no dialog. I used to listen to it and just try to imagine it without the picture. And it was difficult because we’re trained from children to tie those sounds together that you hear. . . . I tried to listen to it as abstract music and learn something about musical form. Maybe new ways of creating music. Ways of breaking established ideas of musical development. Nothing is really developed in that music. What is developed is what you see on the screen. There is a drama going on, a drama is played out. But to the director the sound is secondary. To me the sound was primary. So I tried to find some kind of analysis, some kind of new structures and I think I learned a little bit about new ways of putting sounds together by analysis of what happens in Carl Stalling’s, specifically Carl Stalling’s cartoon music (Zorn 2004).

This statement touches on several of the characteristic elements of Zorn’s music: its use of quotation, blending of various styles, and fusion of art and popular music.
Notably, however, Zorn begins to define what he sees as a different way of organizing music, one that incorporates a visual narrative but nevertheless remains divorced from direct programmatic implications. In an interview with William Duckworth, Zorn makes similar comments about the nature of narrative in cartoon music. “[Critics’] perception of what development is is different from mine. See to me, cartoon music is important because it follows a visual narrative. It’s following the images on the screen. Now separate it from those images and you still have music—valid, well-made music. But it does not follow any traditional development that I know of. It’s following a visual narrative—all of the sudden this, all of the sudden that” (quoted in Duckworth 1995, 471). In both of these instances, Zorn clearly differentiates between traditional musical development and a narrative that exists in cartoon music when heard in the abstract.

In order to explore the linear structure of Zorn’s collages, it is necessary to consider the notion of narrative conception that he cites in his discussion of cartoon music. Richard Taruskin has speculated that there is an unseen visual drama that accompanies Zorn’s music, writing that “while no short-range “structural” coherence could be detected in a Zorn composition—that was in a way the whole point—his performances made sense as accompaniments to a vividly implied scenario” (2005, 505). Susan McClary has a similar view, seeing Zorn’s collage Spillane as presenting “narrative schema easily followed by anyone acquainted with urban pulp fiction and the Hollywood movies that translated that genre to the screen” (2000, 146). Characterizations such as these, however, may oversimplify the relationship between visual ideas and Zorn’s music. For one, Zorn’s own comments stress that he tried to view cartoon music
in a detached or absolute way and ignore its programmatic implications—to “imagine it without the picture” (Zorn 2004). Furthermore, the cartoon soundtrack composer who most influenced Zorn, Carl Stalling, employed a compositional method that created soundtracks that did not directly support the visual narrative that was presented by the moving image, and in many cases, brought their own subsidiary narratives into the cartoons.

In contrast to other cartoon composers of his era, Stalling arranged music separately for each scene and gag in the cartoon; parts were not logically connected to each other except through their immediate relationship with the cartoon visuals. The lack of linear connections in the music was emphasized by the plots of the cartoons, particularly those directed by Tex Avery, who worked with Stalling at Warner Bros. between 1936 and 1941. Avery’s contributions to cartoons shorts was the visual analog of Stallings music, as his works stress the individual joke at the expense of the cartoon storyline. As Daniel Goldmark writes, “Avery’s narratives consisted largely of sequences of black out or spot gags—jokes that quickly came and went, held in place by only the thinnest of storylines” (2005, 74). This visual style would work in synergy with the non-linear nature of Stalling’s soundtracks.

When composing scores for cartoon shorts, Stalling relied heavily on pre-composed music; in fact, he did so to such an extent that he was criticized for using too

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50 Stalling composed the music for over 45 of Avery’s Warner Bros. cartoons. After leaving Warner Bros., Avery worked at MGM studios until 1945. Notably, the subtitle of Cat O’Nine Tails is “Tex Avery directs the Marquis de Sade” (liner notes to Kronos Quartet, Short Stories, 1993).
little original music (Goldmark 2005, 11, 22). Stalling’s practice of quotation often focused specifically on creating a commentary on the action that formed an additional level of humor in the film. Instead of always choosing music that matched the mood and tenor of the current action, Stalling would insert musical jokes based on connections between the action and the title or lyrics of the song used (22-23). Such humor assumed an audience that was familiar with popular songs of the time, and could make quick connections between the screen actions and the songs employed. As Goldmark writes, “Stalling’s sense of humor often determined what song he might use for a specific visual gag; frequently, he took advantage of a unique moment in a cartoon’s plot to slip in a song whose title referred ironically to the narrative” (26). Stalling’s employment of such jokes stems from his early experience as a live accompanist for silent film, where accompanists could choose whether to follow a film’s narrative or create their own commentary.

The real allure of accompanying was the film composer’s freedom to tell a story. Stalling’s willingness to push against the boundaries of comprehensive humor in his scores makes sense in this light. The Warner Bros. cartoons did all they could to stretch generic story lines (as exemplified by Disney) until all was topsy-turvy. Because Stalling had no particular reason to uphold a story’s master narrative, he could create new meanings for the songs without worrying that they would detract from the cartoons (Goldmark 2005, 24).

Stalling’s use of quotation was aided by two related factors. First, Warner Bros. invested heavily in music publishing and owned a large library of popular songs, which Stalling increasingly drew upon during the 1930s (Goldmark 2005, 11, 21). Second, as part of their marketing of this library, the company instructed cartoon directors to feature company-owned songs in their films (17). The series-titles “Looney Tunes” and “Merrie Melodies” are direct reflections of this practice.
The lack of traditional development in Stalling’s cartoon scores is the result of this musical commentary and the fact that the music did not follow and support a central idea. Stalling’s scores can be seen as several steps removed from a musical narrative—not only is the only connection between the musical blocks based on visual images, but the blocks also do not follow the narrative that connects those images. This approach complicates the hearing (or “seeing”) of a visual accompaniment to the music when it is divorced from the cartoon.

If the individual segments are composed without recourse to an overriding linear progression, what is the nature of the ordering process that Zorn uses when assembling the piece? As Zorn states, “In Spillane each section relates to an adventure in the picaresque detective novel: he goes to a strip joint to relax or goes to a country and western bar and gets the shit beat out of him” (quoted in Strickland 1991, 134). Does this mean, however, that there is a continual visual progression to which the music is scored, a “film” for which Spillane is the soundtrack?

Service’s analysis of Spillane suggests that the overriding visual narrative in the work does not involve this sort of imagined drama. Service attempts to hear the piece in terms of such a disembodied soundtrack and looks for clues that there is a dramatic narrative that runs through the piece. He notes that the piece resists any attempt to imagine a continuous dramatic accompaniment; even in the sections of the piece containing narration,\(^52\) there is no continuity or connection between segments other than

\(^{52}\) The text is in the style of the detective novels but is not directly quoted from the novels, and instead was written by Arto Lindsay, a musician and composer. The text for the first narration section is “You kill ten guys one of them is bound to come back. He
the peripheral connections to the world of Mike Hammer (2004, 76). He writes that “The coherence of Spillane does not just subsist at the level of direct narrative connections. . . . Instead of hoping to chart a cause-and-effect narrative through the whole piece, it is better to think of it as an accumulation of different, but related, species of material” (69). Such a hearing reflects Zorn’s compositional approach: each individual section was composed with the overriding topic in mind, and so while all relate in some concrete or abstract way to Mike Hammer’s world, they operate as different facets of that world, as opposed to being constructed as a soundtrack.

For Service, the result of Spillane is the “creation of a character through the accumulation of information in the soundscapes of the narrative sections” (77). It would then be the accumulation of all of the musical blocks that presents the final outcome of the piece. He sees Zorn’s piece as an example of the kind of development that Zorn hears in the un(visually)accompained cartoon music of Carl Stalling. “Spillane’s structure is one of Zorn’s developments of the ‘block’ architecture he hears in Stalling’s soundtracks. Spillane is composed without an accompanying visual track but creates a special kind of narrative logic, analogous to the experience of listening to a cartoon soundtrack ‘in the abstract.’ Spillane, then, may be interpreted as Zorn’s realization of the ‘new dimension’ he hears in Stalling’s soundtracks” (58).

Zorn’s conception of narrative in his own music, however, seems to go one step further. The composer himself clearly believes in a perceptible narrative generated by the
music, as he details in these comments about his “block structure” compositions. “Most of my work involves the manipulation of musical blocks, of moments . . . something that Stravinsky was famous for and something that Stockhausen maybe took another step, with moment form. Each moment is complete in itself, like building blocks. And the moments are positioned one after the other in a linear fashion so that it ends up telling a story [italics mine]” (Zorn 2004). Here, Zorn seems to be indicating that while there is no traditional musical development in the collage, the necessarily linear construction of the work results in the piece presenting some species of musical narrative. This idea corresponds with Zorn’s interest in “finding the proper sequence” in which to order the blocks of the collage (quoted in Brackett, xvi). In the works, even in the presence of extra musical associations, “sound is primary” (Zorn 2004). It therefore can be assumed that the arrangement of segments in Zorn’s collages presents some sort of narrative that can be understood through musical means alone, without recourse to any extramusical associations. In order to explore the nature of this structure, I will examine a more expansive collage piece of Zorn’s, his string quartet Cat O’Nine Tails.

Segmenting “Cat O’Nine Tails”

Zorn composed Cat O’Nine Tails on commission from the Kronos Quartet in 1988. The string quartet, like “Speedfreaks,” “Krazy Kat,” and “American Psycho,” is a

53 Other times, however, Zorn speaks more abstractly about the effect of his block structure pieces. “[Sculpture in the Theater of Musical Optics] relates a lot to my ideas about form and structure, the idea of blocks, the idea of cartoons: Things that appear in succession, and are very different from one another, can spark thinking patterns” (quoted in Gagne 1993, 515).
collage that features abrupt changes between contrasting musical segments. This style of composition grew in part from Zorn’s earlier explorations into organized improvisations that he calls “game pieces.” He states that, “I had begun to hear sections of music created in the game pieces in very specific combinations and wanted to orchestrate them in a more controlled way” (Zorn, quoted in McCutchan 1999, 164). This led to what Zorn calls his “file-card” or “block-structure” works, in which he composed musical moments individually, and then assembled the piece by arranging the moments sequentially.

Originally (as with Spillane and Godard) the file-card pieces were not fully notated, but consisted of sketches that were further developed in the studio during rehearsal and recording. In these cases, Zorn considers the recording of the piece to be the final score, as the tape is the only representation of the completely realized piece (166).

*Cat O’Nine Tails* is a file-card work, but was designed for live performance instead of being sonically constructed in the recording studio. Because the piece was composed for a classically trained string quartet, Zorn transferred the final arrangement of file cards into a conventional score. In an interview with William Duckworth, Zorn described his compositional approach to the piece.

With *Cat O’Nine Tails*, I worked out that I wanted the piece to deal with collage elements, cartoon elements, noise elements, improvisational elements, and interludes. And I decided that there were going to be twelve of each of them, sixty sections, and they would be ordered in some way. And I knew what the cartoon stuff would be like; that’s in my head day and night. It’s always there. With the collage elements, I knew I wanted to draw upon the great string-quartet composers. The improv stuff was going to be permutations of the players. And the interludes would be like interludes, slow and melodic kinds of pieces. At that point, basically, the
piece was finished; it was in my head. I just had to do the slog work of actually writing it down (quoted in Duckworth 1995, 473-4).

Zorn’s “collage elements” are transformed quotations. In them he will often combine music or traits of more than one composer—for instance, “the pitches from a melody of Ives broken up the way Webern would do it” (470; see also Gagne 1993, 426-7). When writing improvisatory sections for classical musicians, Zorn always provides performance directions through notation. There is no completely free improvisation in either Cat O’Nine Tails or Zorn’s other Kronos-commissioned string quartet, Forbidden Fruit. He believes that “to best take advantage of improving musicians you don’t give them written material. On the other hand, to take advantage of classical musicians at their best, you give them written material, because that’s what they do best. But you have to inspire them from the page. I try to put as much extra musical material and information into my music as I can possibly squeeze in” (quoted in Duckworth 1995, 470). The score to Cat O’Nine Tails includes conventional notation alongside instructions, graphical notation, and titles that in many cases cite particular musical styles or composers.

Cat O’Nine Tails uses the same musical topics that create delineations within the texture as “Speedfreaks,” “Krazy Kat, and “American Psycho.” My segmentation of the piece is therefore based on the presence of those structures. The particular device creating the delineation is identified in the description of each unit.54

54 This segmentation of Cat O’Nine Tails does not correspond to Zorn’s description of the piece as consisting of sixty blocks. In my extensive exploration of the piece, I was also unable to uncover any segmentation that fully agreed with his
Unit 1: Mm. 1-7, Segments 1-7

The opening section of the piece comprises seven segments. Similarly to “Speedfreaks,” Cat O’Nine Tails opens with a shocking blast of noise. Unit 1 contains internal repetition and contrast: the fast runs of m. 2 and the “Virtuoso Freak Out” sections in mm. 3 and 5 are separated by the slow, soft alternating pizzicato of m. 4. These opening measures lay out a pattern of juxtapositions between loud and soft, fast and slow, busy and sparse. If listeners expect, however, that such contrasts and alternations would continue or be developed, they would be incorrect. In segment 6 the piece presents for the first time homorhythmic music in a distinct key (Bb major) following a conventional chord progression (ii6-I6-vii6-I). In the context of what has occurred before, the gesture could appear clichéd, jocular or ironic. The cadence

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description of there being twelve blocks of each type. Service encountered a similar incongruity in his segmentation of Spillane (2004, 63). Interestingly, Zorn also describes Spillane as containing sixty sections (Service uncovers fifty-five sections).
Figure 14: *Cat O’Nine Tails*, mm. 1-10, unit 1 and part of unit 2.
presented by segment 6 is followed by an outlined augmented triad (segment 7), a gesture that implies a musical transition. The overall effect of the unit is to create the sense that listener is floating in the immediate experience of the piece with no point of reference, where juxtaposed musical figures continually seek to undermine preconceptions or implications.

Unit 2: Mm. 8-14, Segments 8-13

Unit 2 begins with an additive unison passage that over three measures incorporates the entire quartet. Instead of employing repetition, the phrase linearly presents diverse moments. The ascending unison runs of segment 8, which appear to be heading to some dramatic gesture through their increase in pitch and accelerando, instead lead to a cartoon pratfall (segment 9), which seems to trivialize the previous music. This is followed by a series of tone clusters and improvised “high harmonics” on the two violins. A three-second pause provides a clear separation between units 2 and 3. Although the linear segments are strikingly discontinuous, the music is vertically cohesive, with instruments each contributing to the presentation of a single particular texture in each moment.

The Kronos Quartet recording of *Cat O’Nine Tails*, which I employed while studying the piece, does not include one segment (segment 10) that appears in the score. I have chosen to keep my numbering consistent with the score of the piece.
Unit 3: Mm. 15-29, Segments 14-19

In unit 3, the opening cartoon “mickey-mousing” section (“Cat and Dog Fight”) is followed by a segment of “country swing,” which again is replaced by contrasting music. The sound effects of “Cat and Dog Fight,” which would seem to be at home in a cartoon based collage like *Cat O’Nine Tails*, seem to be as removed from context as the “country swing” that follows. If one attempts to follow the piece from event to event, such a listening strategy will lead to the conclusion that there is no consistency, structure, or implication as the music flows from segment to segment in the piece. Unit 3 is similar to unit 2 in that there is no internal repetition of textures or genres.

Unit 4: Mm. 30-38, Segments 20-21

The fourth unit is set off from the third through a change in texture and length – whereas previous collage segments were no more than six seconds long, unit 4 features two longer moments, totaling over 30 seconds in length. This length is out of character with the material contained in the previous phrases; this difference delineates the unit from the surrounding material. Both of the segments that are part of unit 4 feature slow, melodic music, and, following Zorn’s description of the components of the piece, the unit could be characterized as an “interlude.” Silence marks the end of the unit.
Figure 15: *Cat O’Nine Tails*, mm. 30-38, unit 4.
Unit 5: Mm. 39-47, Segments 22-27

Unit 5 begins with an alternation of noises (scrapes, high harmonics, glissandos), and improvised bowing (with the instruction “bow behind left hand”). In the segments of this unit, the instruments simultaneously play different, non-cohesive sounds. The unit ends with ascending arco and pizzicato lines. The repetition contained within the phrase recalls unit 1, although in unit 5, discontinuity has spread to the vertical (simultaneous) aspect of the collage. A three-second pause separates units 5 and 6.

Unit 6: Mm. 48-53.2, Segments 28-33

In unit 6, soft glissandos alternate with staccatissimo interjections. Another transitional gesture (ending with a 3rd inversion A7 chord) ends the phrase. Segments 31 and 32 feature the strings in duos.

Unit 7: Mm. 53.3-54, Segments 34-38

Unit 7 presents somewhat of a chimera between the tutti collage segments of the first half of *Cat O’Nine Tails* and the later solo cadenzas. After a lyrical passage outlined by chordal interjections, the cello plays three disjunct gestures. The last of these outlines an F—B tritone, providing a transition to the first segment of unit 8, where the violins and
viola begin on middle C. While segments 34 and 35 features a tutti ensemble, focus turns to the solo gestures of the cello during the unit.

Unit 8: Mm. 55-67, Segments 39-47

Unit 8 begins with noise (a long “scrape”) on the cello accompanied by fast unison passages in the other instruments. The phrase accelerates into a measure of improvisation (labeled “Go Crazy”) and a quick montage of short fragments (labeled “cartoon”), increasing energy throughout. While the “cartoon” section features strong linear discontinuity, the four instruments play similar events in almost every segment. The transition to unit 9 is made through an outlined tritone (A—D#).

Unit 9: Mm. 68-70, Segments 48-50

This unit presents three segments. The first acts as an introduction to the following two, which are labeled “Xenakis” and “Ives.” There is a considerable slowing of the pace in this unit, appropriate considering that a slow “interlude” follows. All sections involve the entire ensemble.
Unit 10: Mm. 71-78, Segment 51

Unit 10 is similar to unit 4, in that it is a lengthy, slow, melodic section. A pause follows.

Unit 11: Mm. 79-91, Segments 52-65

Unit 11, similarly to unit 8, begins with longer segments and accelerates through a cartoonish section (labeled “Pandora’s Box”) and short lyrical gestures. A ritardando, however, decreases energy as the unit concludes. Before a three-second pause, the cello and viola play a transitional gesture, this time outlining a tritone from F# to C. The segments alternate between those involving the whole ensemble and those featuring a solo or duo.

Unit 12: M. 92, Segment 66-68

This unit is in many ways unique in the piece. It is set off from the surrounding material through three-second periods of silence, and is as long as the “interlude” sections. However, it is not in character with those units, as it does not reference melodic styles of music. Instead of presenting an excerpt of cohesive music, the segment consists of slow lines in contrary then similar motion, separated gestures that possess no clear stylistic reference.
Unit 13: Mm. 95-110, Segments 69-76

Unit 13 is the opposite of units 8 and 11. It begins with shorter segments, accelerates through unison runs, and ends with a slow bluesy section. Again, it is completely linear in design, and features a mixture of instrumental combinations. Silence follows.

Unit 14: M. 111, Segment 77

This unit is a single long cartoon section, titled “Whipping Scene.” It is outlined by silence.

Unit 15: Mm. 112-122, Segment 78

Unit 15 is an interlude like units 4 and 10, and is followed by a pause.

Unit 16: Mm. 123-133, Segments 79-97

Unit 16 is formed of longer musical ideas. A segment of improvisation gives way to a “country shuffle,” which is followed by an alternation of scrapes and suspenseful music (labeled “stalking”). The unit is completed by a fast montage of sounds (labeled “cartoon trades”). The unit contains internal repetition as well as a large amount of vertical
discontinuity, particularly in the “cartoon trades” section. The two-second pause that follows the unit is not indicated in the score, but is performed on the recording.

Unit 17: Mm. 134-141, Segments 99-104

Unit 17 presents another acceleration of musical segments. A longer slow section begins the unit, followed by briefer gestures. Another transition (G—Db tritone) concludes the unit. The unit contains no internal repetition, and is only moderately cohesive.

Unit 18: Mm. 142-145, Segments 105-106

Unit 18 is an interlude. A sound effect (“Tyson Hits Spinks”) acts as a pickup to the main long melodic section. Three seconds of silence follow.

Unit 19: Mm. 145-155, Segments 107-113

This unit is another linear collection of segments, this time longer and developed, each presenting enough music to identify its character and genre. Aside from the first segment, all feature the entire ensemble playing cohesively.
Unit 20: Mm. 155-156, Segments 114-121

Unit 20 is as viola cadenza, and is the first extended cadenza to appear in *Cat O’Nine Tails*. Each of the cadenzas presents a montage of musical gestures, noise, and sound effects. A scrape begins the section, and a tutti section of noise separates units 20 and 21. This cadenza contains a mixture of musical gestures, sound effects, and flourishes, and it presents a musical focus on the individual instrument instead of on the ensemble.

Unit 21: M. 157, Segments 122-126

The brief cello cadenza is similar in texture and affect to unit 20.

Unit 22: Mm. 158-160, Segments 127-160

Violin 2 cadenza.

Unit 23: Mm. 161-169, Segments 133-135

Unit 23 is another linear montage of several longer musical segments. It begins with a jocular imitative section, accelerates through ascending runs, and arrives at a marching band section that comes cadence in the key of Bb major. The cadence is undermined by a vernacular tritone gesture in a similar way as the end of unit 1.
In unit 24, glissandos lead into another interlude.

Unit 25 is a completely linear montage. It begins with a disjunct segment, moves through a series of individual gestures like the “cartoon trades” segment that came earlier in the piece, and ends with a diverse pizzicato texture. A pause follows.

This is another cadenza, this time in the first violin.

Unit 27 is a linear montage. It begins with a discontinuous segment labeled “Xenakis/Schönberg,” is followed by one labeled “Messiaen,” continues with a segment of an improvised “Violin Duo” where the first violin is instructed “Virtuoso” and the
Figure 16: Cat O’Nine Tails, m. 187, unit 28
second “Like a Beginner,” and ends with a block labeled “adlib hocket.” Three seconds of silence follow.

Unit 28: M. 187, Segment 166

While this section is long (31 seconds), it is not in character with the interludes. In it, the music for each instrument is completely unrelated.

Unit 29: M. 188, Segment 168

The final unit in the piece is another slow and melodic interlude of seven sustained chords.

**Cat O’Nine Tails and Episodic Form**

Following the segmentation of the piece, the next step in paradigmatic analysis is the classification of the units into categories according to their common characteristics. The units of *Cat O’Nine Tails* can be placed into six categories. Twenty of the units contain multiple segments of music. Sixteen of these feature the whole ensemble performing collage phrases. These form the first category. Six of the units contain only a single musical idea and are “slow and melodic,” fitting Zorn’s categorization of “interludes” (Duckworth 1995, 474). These six units form the second category. Three of the remaining sections also present a single musical idea, but do not resemble the
“interludes.” Unit 12 presents alternating similar and contrary motion, unit 14 is a cartoon scene, and unit 28 presents a mish-mash of unrelated music. These three sections are unique in the piece, and each is placed in its own category. The final category consists of the units marked “cadenza.” While they are collage textures, these feature only one instrument, marking them as different from the first category of unit. The paradigmatic display of *Cat O’Nine Tails* is based on these categorizations. In the display, the categories are arranged according to their chronological appearance.

The display reveals important details about the piece. A general proportional structure to *Cat O’Nine Tails* clearly can be seen, where interludes (column 2) are positioned throughout the piece, dividing it into different sections that each contain several units. Such a division is even clearer in the timeline of *Cat O’Nine Tails* (see Figure 18). In general, units are of a similar length in the piece (between approximately 12.5 seconds and 44 seconds). The length of the interludes also corresponds to this general length (they are between approximately 20 and 35 seconds long).

The remarkable evenness of proportion that can be seen in the structure of the units in *Cat O’Nine Tails* is further shown how the units themselves are grouped. The piece is divided by the interludes into six sections, each of roughly similar length (the length of these sections is between approximately one and two minutes). In addition, the same means (the presence of an interlude, a vastly different kind of unit than the collage
Figure 17: Paradigmatic Display of *Cat O' Nine Tails*
phrases that form the majority of the piece) groups the units. *Cat O’Nine Tails* thus displays the use of perceptual division at the sectional level as well as at that of the segment and unit. This piece exhibits what can be seen as an extension of the organizational principle that characterizes Zorn’s other collages. In *Cat O’Nine Tails*, segments are organized into units that are further hierarchically organized into episodes.

Figure 18: Timeline of *Cat O’Nine Tails*

The pieces examined to this point can be regarded as exhibiting *episodic collage form*, a characteristic related to the concept of the visual and Zorn’s idea of “visual
development.” Episodic collage form is a musical organization in which a disjunct piece divides through perceptible means into structures consisting of groups of segments or groups of units of roughly similar length. This concept of form corresponds with Zorn’s conception of cartoon music, which he sees as possessing “a visual narrative—all of the sudden this, all of the sudden that” (quoted in Duckworth 1995, 471). It also is similar to the cartoon soundtracks produced by Stalling and Avery’s collaborations, where each “gag” in a series of barely related visual jokes was accompanied by its own idiosyncratic montage of music and sound effects. Larger structures in Cat O’Nine Tails are differentiated in the same way that adjacent units are delineated from each other in the shorter works. There is no linear continuity between the episodes of the collage, just as there is no linear continuity between adjacent segments. In Cat O’Nine Tails, units combine to form even larger structures; I call them “episodes” here, but it is important to understand that, as in the other works, units themselves can also be episodes in a piece (and indeed, where a single segment forms a unit, that segment alone can make up the entirety of an episode).

This episodic construction is similar to a piece in moment-form. It is important, however, to note the difference in intentionality between moment-form and the episodic collage. Where moment-form is seen by Kramer as specifically to consist of blocks that strike one as arbitrarily sequenced (1978, 181), Zorn’s works are designed to present a linear narrative regardless of the overwhelming discontinuity of the component segments. Zorn’s comment that “each moment is complete in itself, like building blocks. And the
moments are positioned one after the other in a linear fashion so that it ends up telling a story” is particularly apt here (Zorn 2004).

**Narrative in Musical Collage**

This understanding of episodic structure can be used to interpret linear narrative in the works. Obviously, these collages present narrative in an untraditional way. Because episodic collages present disconnected periods of music, however, their narrative can be understood through ideas of presentation and replacement, an understanding tied specifically to visual art.

In his essay “Uncanny Moments: Juxtaposition and the Collage Principle in Music,” (2006) Nicholas Cook presents a theory of the meaning of musical montage and the interaction of musical discontinuities that applies to the idea of episodic collage. Cook bases his theory, a “semiotics of juxtaposition,” on interpretations of film montage borrowed from Russian formalist theory (121). He writes that in a film montage, “meaning is not primarily inherent in the individual shot, but in the relationships with adjacent shots established through montage” (122). He distinguishes between the juxtaposition of two discrete elements, as in a fine art visual collage, and the replacement of one element with another, as in film or musical montage, where ideas are set against each other linearly and rarely overlap. In his interpretation of Herbert Eagle’s ideas, Cook states that “the relationship between successive stills selects certain of their potentially infinite properties, makes them available for signification, while suppressing
other properties” (124). The collision of two elements therefore distinguishes the signification that each presents.

Cook writes that in a montage, where one shot replaces another, “the essential nature of film lies in the activity of the viewer who makes sense of the film by understanding each shot in terms of the one preceding it. The basic principle, as Tynyanov explained, is that of ‘differential replacement’—the principle that ‘each shot should be related in some way to the preceding shots (either in terms of a ‘plot’ or ‘syntactically’), but in other respects should be contrastive and differential” (122). The technique of montage presents material in a much different way than a standard sequence in film, and that difference affects the way that individual shots communicate with the viewer. “Meaning is not primarily inherent in the individual shot, but in the relationships with the adjacent shots established through montage. . . . Film is a time-based medium in the most radical sense.” (122-3)

Comparing the montage process of film practice to Zorn’s collage “Snagglepuss,” Cook writes, “The juxtaposed blocks do not “unfold” in a successive formation, a gradual order—they replace one another. . . . And because each block in itself contains potentially infinite properties, it is only in collision with other blocks that signs can emerge as distinct by opposition; the result is a blended space in which the exchange of qualities gives rise to the uncanny, haunting, obsessive sound image to which I referred” (125). In an analysis of the band Queen’s epic “Bohemian Rhapsody,” Cook applies this idea to the moment when the entrance of the hard rock band replaces the operatic imitations of the piece’s middle section. At the abrupt change, “ocular and aural space
open up to reveal a live heavy-rock performance with all the signifiers of authenticity fully in evidence—although one of the effects of the juxtaposition is to call this authenticity, and perhaps the whole idea of authenticity, into question: the rock vocal style retroactively infects the operatic vocal style, and vice versa, the collision of two incompatible constructions of vocal style transforming each into a ‘marked’ term, revealing each not as a natural expression of passion but as a construction of artifice” (127).

Cook’s approach to musical montage can be extended to apply to the analysis of the episodic collage. In these works, the process of replacement occurs not just between adjacent segments, but between adjacent units and episodes. Narrative is not created by the processes of implication, variation, or development common in much music. Instead, as each episode is replaced by the next, without any implication as to what would follow, a narrative is created that finds its basis in the characteristics of each episode that are highlighted by contrast, or to use Cook’s words, the characteristics that emerge as “distinct by opposition.” To follow Cook’s analyses, each successive episode reframes, illuminates, or calls into question some aspect of the previous.

Thus, it is the characteristics of each episode, and the differences shown when compared with adjacent episodes, which create the sense of narrative in the piece. The differences between successive episodes of Cat O’Nine Tails are related to the types of units that they contain. Episode 1 and Episode 2 contain only units from the first category in the paradigmatic display. In terms of form and character, Episode 2 is a modified repetition of Episode 1. The third episode contains one unit from category one and two
from category 3; those two units, 12 and 14, present only a single idea. When contrasted against Episode 2, Episode 3 displays a slower rate of texture change while still utilizing the same basic collage principles. Like the first two episodes, the fourth episode contains only collage phrases. *Cat O’Nine Tails* presents a texture type in Episode 1 and 2 and then contrasts it against one of slower change in Episode 3 before returning to the initial texture. This kind of AABA structure establishes a sense of pacing and flow in the piece.

Episode 5 consists mostly of cadenzas. These sections present two major differences from the standard texture of the collage phrase. First, the shortness of the segments contributes to a greater sense of discontinuity. Second, by splintering the ensemble and focusing only on the individual instruments, the cadenzas bring a new element of disjunction to the collage. Here, the piece presents a focus on the solo instrument and abandons the tightly controlled texture change that figures prominently in Zorn’s collage works.

Episode 6 brings the increased heterogeneity to a climax. The episode contains the final cadenza as well as unit 28, a unit from the third category. Unit 28 presents a texture that is unique in *Cat O’Nine Tails*. In it, each instrument in the quartet plays a separate line of unrelated music. Unit 28 verticalizes the idea of the cadenza sections into a simultaneous mash-up of various styles. The penultimate episode shows that the linear discontinuity that is a consistent aspect of the collage has permeated into the vertical aspect of the music. *Cat O’Nine Tails* creates a narrative by varying the levels of discontinuity and their presentation during the course of the work, and creates a musical
plot by establishing a texture and then introducing more disruptive material to bring the piece to a climax.

Zorn places much importance on the linear design of his music. He writes that “sorting the filing cards, putting them in the perfect order, is one of the toughest jobs” (liner notes to *Spillane*, 1991). The outcome of this process can be understood through the “visual” idiolect. While Zorn’s music is unified through various musical and extramusical processes and associations, we see in *Cat O’Nine Tails* that he does not abandon narrative or progression in the linear unfolding of his collage works. The linear sequence of segments and units presents a narrative in the form of musical changes that occur between successive blocks and groups of blocks. It is fitting that the linear narrative in *Cat O’Nine Tails* results from the varied textures of discontinuity over the course of the piece; as Kramer writes, “the unexpected is more striking, more meaningful, than the expected” (1978, 177).
Albums are an important part of Zorn’s compositional output. In many cases, the recorded music is conceptually tied to the album’s title and packaging, presenting an assemblage that can be conceived of as a singular work as opposed to a collection of disparate pieces. A record is similar to a musical collage in that both consist of a series of distinct musical blocks. In the case of Zorn’s music, it is not inconceivable to consider the arrangement of songs on an album to be the result of the same kind of ordering process that governs the sequence of segments in his collage music. In this chapter, I will explore the arrangement of songs on Naked City’s album Radio using the perspectives that I have developed and employed in the analysis of Zorn’s collage pieces. I will show how the arrangement of songs on Radio relates to an idiolect of the “musical game,” a concept that influences Zorn’s music in many ways.

Zorn and Musical Games

The earliest association of the word “game” with Zorn relates to his “game pieces.” These works, which Zorn composed between 1974 and 1990 (Cox 2004, 196), were built around ideas of controlling improvisation and developing new relationships

Musical games have been present throughout western music history. For one fascinating example, see Zbikowski 2002, 139-149, on *Musickalisches Würfelspiel*, a compositional game attributed to Mozart.
between composer, conductor, performer, and the work. The pieces were written for
improvising musicians, and developed from Zorn’s study of the techniques of John Cage,
Earle Brown, Cornelius Cardew, and Karlheinz Stockhausen (Cox 2004, 196; see also
Duckworth 1995, 463-4). Zorn was motivated by dissatisfaction with completely
improvised pieces and was interested in coordinating improvisation within an ensemble
(Duckworth 1995, 461).

A game piece consisted of instructions that guided the improvised performances
of the players, “a complex set of rules that, in a sense, turned players on and off like
toggle switches” (Zorn, quoted in Cox 2004, 200). While Zorn conducted rehearsals and
performances, the responsibility of guiding the unfolding of the piece was equally in the
hands of the players, who not only improvised according the instructions of a given
moment but could determine in real time the sequence of events in the piece (199). As
Zorn states, “I never specifically told anyone anything. I set up rules where they could
tell each other when to play” (quoted in Duckworth 1995, 462).

Zorn was in search of novel ways of relating to improvising musicians. “My
particular thrust in writing the game pieces—as with all of my music—is to engage,
inspire, and enthrall a group of musicians into doing music that they are excited about, so
that the excitement is passed on to the audience” (quoted in Cox 2004, 197). He

57 Zorn notes the peculiar relationship between Cage and improvising musicians
and contrasts it with how he composes in ways designed to stimulate the performer,
saying that, “Cage perversely thrived on the friction between what he wanted and what
they didn’t want to do” (quoted in Cox 2004, 197).

58 The sets of rules that make up each piece are unpublished and explained only in
rehearsal in an oral tradition, and Zorn considers versions not organized by himself to be
amateur, outlaw, or renegade (Cox 2004, 197).
recognized how many composers from the second half of the twentieth century had utilized hand-picked ensembles to perform their compositions, and did the same in his game pieces. This careful selection of musicians enabled Zorn “to harness the personal languages that the improvisers had developed on their own, languages that were so idiosyncratic as to be almost unnoteable” (197). The game pieces were written for a distinct community of “kinds of musicians that have specific kinds of skills” (198).

Zorn’s conception of the piece was intimately tied to the musicians involved. He states that “the answer for me was to deal with form, not content, with relationships, not with sound. The instructions in these early game pieces do not have musicians on the stage relating to sound. They have musicians on the stage relating to each other. The improvisers on the stage were themselves the sound” (199).

This idea of turning improvisers “on and off like toggle switches” is reminiscent of the use of a radio as an instrument in a piece like Cage’s Imaginary Landscape No. 4. In many ways, the rules to the game were a way of playing the performers, a way of using the ensemble as an instrument. In designing the piece for a specific ensemble, Zorn took advantage of his knowledge of the improvisatory style of the particular musicians, and therefore had some idea of what kind of sound the musicians could produce. Zorn thus had control over the realization of the piece to a further extent then would be expected for a work that is completely improvised.

In addition to the use of the word “game” to describe controlled improvisation, Zorn uses the word in reference to compositional processes, specifically when discussing his use of quotation. In Zorn’s works, quotations often do not appear as segregated blocks
of unaltered music. Instead, they are modified through various techniques and/or set simultaneously against other quotations or original music. Zorn refers to these techniques as compositional “games.” Discussing the composition of *Cat O’Nine Tails* he said,

There’s a very deep element of quotation in my music, which is something that relates to Ives very directly. But it’s quotation also in the way that, say, Berg liked to play games with himself—the way that Webern liked to play games with pitches, Berg liked to play games with melodies, and so did Ives. . . . I put [*Cat O’Nine Tails*] together as a game, but I can also hear it fitting together . . . The point is the game that I’m playing. One section is the pitches from a melody by Ives broken up the way Webern would do it (quoted in Duckworth 1995, 470).  

In a different interview, Zorn described a string quartet he had written in which one measure featured original material in the first violin, improvisation in the second violin, a quote from Boulez in the viola, and the retrograde inversion of a quote from Stravinsky in the cello. Zorn will also compose in the style of a certain genre (tango, blues, etc.) or of a certain composer, a technique he views as a tribute (Gagne 1993, 527). Discussing his piece *Elegy*, Zorn explained how he used Boulez’s *Le Marteau Sans Maître* in “the way Schoenberg would use a 12-tone row. . . . As a point of departure. Sometimes I would reverse pitch sequences; sometimes I would use every other pitch from the viola part and give it to the flute; sometimes I would take rhythm from one instrument and pitches from another and put them together. . . . It’s never a case where I’ll take a whole bar; it’s more like, this is just raw material that I’m using – this scale,

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59 Zorn also describes taking all of the pitches from a bar of *L’Histoire Du Soldat* and “putting them in a different rhythmic matrix” (Gagne 1993, 527).
this set, this multiphonic” (529-30). Zorn sees this kind of borrowing as a way of
unifying the music, much in the same way as musical blocks could be related through
programs.

In a compositional game, Zorn modifies pre-existing material; a quotation, a
musical style, or a compositional technique associated with some composer. Pre-existing
music is transformed by Zorn’s idiosyncratic compositional persona, sometimes
combined with another outside source of music or technique, and sometimes with
original material or processes. The music produced is therefore a blend of the pre-existing
and Zorn.

In the case of game pieces, Zorn’s control over the improvisers blends his designs
of musical form (or designs of ways of creating musical form) with the individual
performer’s idiosyncratic styles. Zorn is quoting, but instead of quoting and manipulating
pre-existing music, he quotes the improvisatory style of the performer. The rules that
control the work then blend and manipulate the “quotations” into the realization of the
piece. In both the case of the game pieces and in the composition “game,” Zorn’s musical
personality is blended with that of other performers, composers, or genres. This blending
represents an idiolect of the “musical game,” a concept that will provide a way to
interpret the musical structure of Naked City’s album Radio.⁶⁰

⁶⁰ An associated part of Zorn’s use of the term “game” in these situations relates
to his interest in relating to the performer and making the performance enjoyable for the
performer, whether it is an improviser in a game piece, or a musician reading from a
score. As Zorn states, “A very important thing all through my musical life is to make sure
that the musicians involved are having fun and like what they’re doing. If that means I
turn it into a game, then I turn it into a game. If it means I have to play compositional
games to excite the musicians, or include improvisational elements if think those
Radio, and the Album as a Collage

The album title Radio may imply the idea of the album as a sampling of available musical styles, an interpretation of what it is like to scan through a series of radio stations, taking in a song or two on each. Indeed, the songs of the album touch widely on jazz, fusion, country, rock, punk, and heavy metal, and run a gamut from stylistically homogenous songs to musical collages (including “Krazy Kat” and “American Psycho”). It is as if Zorn has assembled a theoretical “mix” of music from the radio airwaves, and plays with this idea of musical sampling both within the album as a whole and individually within some of the more discontinuous songs. While the wide array of styles that appear on Radio support the above perceptions, the concept of a musical “Radio” has other meanings when considered along with Zorn’s compositional history.

The rules that make up the game pieces provided a measure of control that Zorn, as composer and conductor, would have over the ensemble, while at the same time accepting the input of the performers in real time on a large number of musical details, including how the piece was to unfold. As mentioned earlier, Zorn’s careful selection of the performers for each work meant that he understood the kind of performance and style that they would contribute to the work. Game pieces were really processes designed to
autonomously produce performances that matched the conceptions of the piece that Zorn imagined. Much as Zorn “was using the studio as his instrument” (Anthony Coleman, liner notes to Godard/Spillane, 1999) in his later collages like Spillane, Zorn used the improvising performers as instruments, albeit ones that are less controlled, in the game pieces. The performers became like stations on a radio, which would play music of a known quality when selected.

Zorn’s compositions for Naked City represented a movement from the extremes of improvised compositions to completely notated works. This also involved moving away from the level of collaboration between composer and performer that existed in Zorn’s earlier works, including collages like Spillane and Godard. “If I have to be completely truthful, Naked City is about performing things that I hear—it is about sound. It’s about composition. Naked City is like a little machine. It’s a picture of my brain” (quoted in Gagne 1993, 528). The simile of the band as a machine agrees with the idea of the album as a radio. We can think of Radio as the playlist of music that is going on in Zorn’s head.

The liner notes of the album contain a list entitled “Inspiration/Refer,” which appears to correspond with the tracklist of the album. The list (see Appendix for a full description) contains references to various musicians, bands, composers, pieces, and non-musical elements. Zorn’s “inspirations” on Radio include examples from popular music (Bob Demmon and the Astronauts, Little Feat, Ruins, Booker T. and the MGs), jazz (Eric Dolphy, Tony Williams Lifetime), world music (Orchestra Baobab, E.M. Lanka), western

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61 Zorn’s conception of notation here includes written instructions and other non-standard representations (Gagne 1993, 518).
composers (Igor Stravinsky, Morton Feldman), and non-musical sources (*Yakuza Zankoku Hiroku*, Sam Fuller).

While the album has not received close scholarly attention, internet reviews and descriptions provide some interesting examples of popular conceptions of the work. In his website pertaining to Zorn’s music, Scott Maykrantz describes *Radio* as a work dedicated to compositions that features different types of musical combinations. “Radio is all about combining different styles of music. In 19 tracks, the band references the musical styles of over 60 musicians, paying tribute to each one by blending them together. . . . The combinations come in three forms. The first is *block form*, where the music shifts from one style to another throughout the song. . . . The second form is *the blend*: two or more styles played at the same time. . . . The third form is a single style for the entire song. In this case, the song is a block of music within the rest of the album” (2004). One popular conception of the work is that “*Radio* was conceived as a set for a college radio program, making it a kind of ‘Young Person's Guide to Naked City,’ beginning with accessible tunes, gradually building up listener tolerance to dissonance, and finally sandbagging the listener with evil blasts of dissonant metallic noise and convincing perpetrator-and-victim screaming” (Rickard 2011).

*Radio* can be interestingly conceptualized by comparing the album’s characteristics to the structure of Zorn’s episodic collages. In fact, *Radio* as a whole exhibits many of the attributes of collages such as *Cat O’Nine Tails* and “American Psycho.” Like his collages, the songs are stylistically diverse, are separated by a common musical device (silence), and are generally of similar length (between fifty-six seconds
and six minutes and ten seconds, with most songs between two and four minutes). *Radio* is the only one of Naked City’s albums that exhibits these characteristics. The albums *Naked City* (1990) and *Grand Guignol* (1992) are compilations of miniatures, interpretations, and longer works. *Torture Garden* is a stylistically consistent collation of miniatures. *Leng Tch’e* (1992) contains one long composition, *Heretic* (1992) is a film soundtrack, and *Absinthe* (1993) consists of ambient music.

The fundamental units that make up *Radio* are the individual songs. My exploration of the narrative in the album will begin by analyzing form in each song with the goal of categorizing the songs according to their formal arrangement. In the following descriptions, I present the unfolding of the sections of each piece in a paradigmatic display. In each display, repetitions of sections are made vertical, and series of divergent sections are presented horizontally. The numbered sections correspond respectively with the order in which material appears in the linear unfolding of the song.

Since the format and majority of styles exhibited on *Radio* derive from popular music, it is most appropriate to speak of formal relationships in the individual pieces in terms of popular song form. Even though these pieces are instrumentals and lack the textual elements that can be important in determining structure in popular songs, similar principles of formal organization can be seen to apply, and many of the pieces can be understood as variations of standardized musical forms. According to Brad Osborn, sections of rock songs can be characterized as autonomous (self-sufficient and memorable) or non-autonomous (connecting and transitional, less memorable). He views the autonomous sections in rock music to be the “verse” and “chorus,” and sees the most
fundamental structural design of as a popular song as the alternation of these two sections (2010, 63-7).

Other “non-autonomous” sections occur in rock songs as well, including introductions, closing sections (“outros” or “codas”), and internal transitions (such as the “pre-chorus”) (69-70). It is also common to have a previously unheard section, normally termed the “bridge,” occur in the latter half of the piece. The most common iteration in popular music of a form containing a bridge is identified by John Covach as “compound AABA” form, where A sections are pairs of verses and choruses, and the B section is the bridge (2005, 74-75). Osborn writes that “the vast majority of modern rock music, including nearly every conventional pop/rock song,” uses this structure as a basic form (2010, 12-13). In addition to being a common section in popular music, the bridge typically “provides the greatest contrast” to the other components of the work (Everett 2009, 147).

Zorn’s use of standard song forms has been discussed by John Brackett. He notes that Zorn employs known musical structures to provide established principles against which his avant-garde musical processes contrast. Brackett describes the characteristics of Zorn’s music in terms of “homogeneous” (stable and rational) and “heterogeneous” (non-stable and irrational) realms (2008, 21-2).

Zorn’s music does not aim to simply represent heterogeneous or transgressive acts per se. It attempts to wreak violence on homogeneous musical structures, designs, and forms as well as any notion of what may

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constitute musical ‘logic.’ Zorn’s music, in other words, attempts to transgress the boundaries that exist between what is typically understood as discursively acceptable, rational, and logical (homogeneous) and that which is considered irrational, unacceptable, and outside of such formations. Such an act requires an acknowledgement of homogenous musical structures whose logic is ultimately pushed to the breaking point (23-4).

Brackett sees this occurring in “Speedfreaks,” and views the piece as a thirty-two-bar song form that has been subverted through the application of the collage texture. Similarly, the appearance of standard song forms on Radio is significant in that it reflects Zorn’s use of common, rational structures. This also indicates that these kinds of standard musical forms could be subject to the similar kinds of boundary stretching techniques as Brackett uncovered in his analyses.

**Paradigmatic Analyses of the Individual Songs of Radio**

Unit 1: “Asylum,” 1.56

Inspiration/Refer: Charles Mingus on Candid, Eric Dolphy, Paul Bley

As Zorn’s liner-notes “inspirations” for this piece indicate, “Asylum” is a jazz composition, a fast tune that features a standard organization of alternating head (a) and solos (b). The brief head appears three times in the piece. The solo section is not merely underpinned by a repetition of the harmonic changes from the head, but is a separate composed section. Each of the two solo sections is divided into three separate solos. The second solo in each section continues through a short unaccompanied section, and the
third of each trades with the drums. The paradigmatic display clearly displays this alternation of units.

\[ \begin{array}{cc}
a & b^{63} \\
1 & 2 \\
3 & 4 \\
5 & \\
\end{array} \]

Figure 19: Paradigmatic Display of “Asylum”

![Timeline of “Asylum”]

\[ \begin{array}{ccc}
1 \text{(a)} & 2 \text{(b)} & 3 \text{(a)} \\
0 & 0.09 & 0.51 \\
\end{array} \]

\[ \begin{array}{cc}
4 \text{(b)} & 5 \text{(a)} \\
0.57 & 1.39 \\
\end{array} \]

Figure 20: Timeline of “Asylum”

\[ ^{63} \text{In addition to using letters to represent formal sections I refer to sections that have clear dependent functions as “intro,” “transition,” or “outro.” Detailed description of the particular segments of each song and my reasoning is contained within each song’s discussion.} \]
This is a melodic song in the style of surf rock, built around an alternating pattern of sections. The (a) melody is introduced in a short introduction of unaccompanied guitar. The band enters on a vamp. The body of song features alternations of (a) and (b) sections; the guitar plays the first melody over the (a) sections, and the saxophone presents an answering melody in the (b) sections. A guitar solo occurs during the (a) section that is before the second (b). The song ends on another vamp. “Sunset Surfer” is made up of alternating (a) and (b) sections, each with distinctive melodic and harmonic components. Although the piece is an instrumental and lacks the textual elements that are often used to support these characterizations, we could at least say that the basic idea of a/b alternation is present in both standard rock songs and “Sunset Surfer,” and the piece at hand is not a departure from the common song form. Again, this is reflected in the paradigmatic display. This song’s only departure from the structure of “Asylum” is the fact that the (a) section is repeated before each (b). The basic alternating two-part form, however, is intact.

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64 The first instance of the (a) section is fulfilling an introductory function, and does not appear in the complete form that occurs later in the piece. “Vamp” refers to the use of a repeated chord progression. Often, vamps appear as time-filling transitions or accompany solos. In this case, the vamp is used as an introduction and outro.
Figure 21: Paradigmatic Display of “Sunset Surfer”

Figure 22: Timeline of “Sunset Surfer”

Unit 3: “Party Girl,” 2.35

Inspiration/Refer: Little Feat
This is a southern-rock, country-shuffle song, appropriate given that the band Little Feat is cited as its inspiration. The song begins with an (a) and (b) that introduces a pattern of three different sections (a b c a b). After the contrasting (d) section, a transition (e) leads back to another iteration of the (a b c a b) group. The sections of the song are consistent to this style except for (d), which is a screeching interjection of noise, creating a sense of discontinuity before the piece regains its southern rock footing.

The discontinuity contained in the (d) section of “Party Girl” is mollified in part by its placement within the song; it appears where the bridge, the most contrasting section in a rock song, would normally take place. Thus, although the (d) section in “Party Girl” is a stark discontinuity from the surrounding material, it is in the conventional position for such a contrasting section, minimizing its impact.

\[
\begin{array}{cccccc}
\text{a} & \text{b} & \text{c} & \text{d} & \text{e} \\
1 & 2 \\
3 & 4 & 5 \\
6 & 7 & 8 & 9 \\
10 & 11 & 12 \\
13 & 14 \\
\end{array}
\]

Figure 23: Paradigmatic Display of “Party Girl”
Figure 24: Timeline of “Party Girl”

Unit 4: “The Outsider,” 2.28

Inspiration/Refer: Ruins, Booker T. and the M.G.’s, Colin Wilson

This song, in rock/fusion style, is built around two riffs (a and b). Solos occur over the (a) riff, while the (b) riff provides a contrast. The repetitions of the (b) riff are organized around a progressive rhythmic change, where the point in the riff where note attacks shift from occurring on downbeats to occurring on upbeats becomes
incrementally closer to the beginning of the measure (see Figure 25). The style of the piece is consistent until it reaches the outro (c), a short, fast, screeching, and metrically dissonant section.

“The Outsider” basically uses the same two-part structure seen in “Asylum” and “Sunset Surfer,” but manipulates it through progressive variations in the (b) sections and by adding a discontinuous outro.

Figure 25: “The Outsider,” guitar, mm. 9-12.

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<thead>
<tr>
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Figure 26: Paradigmatic Display of “The Outsider”
“Triggerfingers” is focused on a long, arching melody played in unison by the guitar and saxophone. After an extended intro of drums and guitar solo, the bass and keyboard enter playing a riff (a). Over the first (a), the guitar solo continues; the melody enters upon the repetition. (b) is another riff, featuring improvisation in the keyboard. A transition (c) leads to another riff (d), this time supporting simultaneous saxophone and guitar solos. The (a) riff enters again, once more supporting a guitar solo, and then repeats below the melody. The piece ends after this second iteration. The piece is the first example of a form that appears several times in *Radio*—a kind of rock ternary form, with a theme that appears both before and after a contrasting middle section (in this case, the b transc group). This is clearly shown by the paradigmatic display.
This piece is a series of different styles sandwiched between a repeated head. Although similar to Zorn’s completely collage pieces, the long nature of the segments and the smoothness of transitions deemphasizes juxtapositions and discontinuity. In
addition, the return of the (a) section at the end of the song provides a sense of formal closure. To this point in the album, the song is the least traditionally grounded in terms of form, as the body of the piece is not built around repeated alternations of sections. Like “Triggerfingers,” “Terkmani Teepee” is a ternary form, though the extreme shortness of the (a) sections and the complexity of the middle section group push the boundaries of the form. The return of the (a) section at the end of the piece is not hinted at during the montage of segments that make up the bulk of the song, nor does the (a) section feel established enough after its initial appearance to suggest that it will be a returning point of reference in the piece. Rather, it is only its appearance closing the piece that retrospectively causes the form to make sense as a ternary structure. “Terkmani Teepee,” then, while using the same basic form as “Triggerfingers,” is a more experimental version of that same form.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>intro</th>
<th>a</th>
<th>b</th>
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<th>d</th>
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Figure 30: Paradigmatic Display of “Terkmani Teepee”
This funky jazz-fusion song consists of a series of vamps (a, b, c) supporting solos in various instruments. The intro is a set of hits on dissonant chords. There is no real sense of melody or progression in the song, other than that the return of previously heard material at the end has the effect of rounding off the form. Again, it is a kind of ternary form, with a two-part first section, followed by a contrasting section, and then a return of the first section to round out the form.
Unit 8: “Razorwire,” 5.31

Inspiration/Refer: Tony Williams Lifetime, Old

This is a free-jazz song. The (a) section is a head, and the (b) that follows is a set of screeching interjections or hits. As in “Triggerfingers,” “Terkmani Teepee,” and “Sex Fiend,” an opening section or group of sections is returned to after a digression. In “Razorwire,” the internal material (the group of c sections) is a series of up-tempo jazz solos, but with a spacey break at the beginning of the first and last (c). A lone (b) section
intercuts the solos. Although there are three different segments in “Razorwire,” it presents itself more as an expansion of a two-part alternating form (like “Asylum”), where the initial part is formed of two segments. In the second alternation, only the second of the two segments appears.

\[
\begin{array}{ccc}
a & b & c \\
1 & 2 & 3 \\
4 & 5 & \\
6 & \\
7 & 8 & \\
\end{array}
\]

**Figure 33: Paradigmatic Display of “Razorwire”**

**Figure 34: Timeline of “Razorwire”**
Unit 9: “The Bitter and the Sweet,” 4.53

Inspiration/Refer: Anthony Braxton, Anton Webern’s Six Bagatelles, Sammy Cahn’s “Guess I’ll hang my tears out to dry,” Frank Sinatra, Morton Feldman

This is a soft, slow, meandering song, in which the various instruments of the ensemble enter and depart from the texture. It is ambient and through-composed, sounding as if it is formed of improvisations or quotations. The overall mood of the song is quiet and slow. The piece begins with only bass and keyboard. Guitar and saxophone enter in succession about one minute into the piece. The drums are first heard clearly after about two and a half minutes. For almost the entirety, there is no strong sense of meter or even pulse. The work contrasts strongly with the previous pieces, as to this point in the album every song incorporated strong rhythmic elements and used repetition as part of its formal structure. The amorphous nature of change in “The Bitter and the Sweet” resists the labeling of points in the piece with section numbers. In addition, the consistent texture and affect effects a sense of continuity throughout.

Figure 35: Timeline of “The Bitter and the Sweet”
Unit 10: “Krazy Kat,” 2.03

Inspiration/Refer: Carl Stalling, Igor Stravinsky

“Krazy Kat” is described in detail in chapter three. It is the first complete collage texture on the album, and therefore contrasts with the previous songs.

Unit 11: “The Vault,” 4.44

Inspiration/Refer: The Melvins, Beatmasters, Septic Death, Hellfire, Leather Folk (the book)

“The Vault” features the distorted thrash and heavy metal derived sounds that are hinted at in earlier songs. In addition, Yamatsuka Eye’s vocals are employed for the first time on Radio, entering as a solo scream in the first (d) section. The song is built from five different musical ideas, and is based around repetitions of the (a) section (a series of distorted guitar arpeggios) and changing sequences of the following sections; (b), digital and mechanical sounding noises leading to thrash-style hits; (c), a bass and drums vamp; (d), a scream, either accompanied by the band or solo; and (e), a spacey section featuring mainly sustained guitar. Each section is distinct, and while the song is stylistically consistent, there is no musical implication tying sections to each other, a factor that emphasizes a collage aspect to the song. Subsequent arrivals of the (a) section seem like new beginnings, where the material that follows is placed in different sequences, highlighting different combinations of elements. In the last (a) section, the guitar
underlies the screaming vocal improvisations of Eye. One explanation of the piece’s narrative could be that the piece culminates towards the combination of the guitar arpeggios and the screaming vocals in the final (a) section. Because of the sense of autonomy of each section and the lack of a traditional scheme of repetition, the song’s relationship to rock music lies only in the fact that the elements in each section are derived from rock music, and not because the song uses a form in common with that style.

The paradigmatic display of “The Vault,” is especially illuminating. After presenting segments in an initial order, the segments appear in the reverse of this order throughout the remainder of the songs. This retrograde segment order counteracts perceptual attempts to hear the segments with any sense of adumbration or flow. Thus, we are left with the perception that each (a) is a new beginning, without any intimation as to what will come next.
Figure 36: Paradigmatic Display of “The Vault”

Figure 37: Timeline of “The Vault”
Unit 12: “Metaltov,” 2.08

Inspiration/Refer: Abe Schwarz, Ivo Papasov, Naftule Brandwein

“Metaltov,” as its title suggests, blends heavy metal and klezmer music. A long (one minute) introduction leads to a short (ten second) transition section of unison hits, which is then followed by a long non-repetitive unison melody (again, about one minute in length). The scalar material and rhythm of the melody suggest klezmer music, while the timbre, including the use of distorted electric guitar, suggests heavy metal.

The piece employs a three-part form that is unique to *Radio*, as the piece is stylistically consistent but includes no recapitulation. Even without recapitulating any sections, however, the introductory nature of the beginning sections (a and b) and the piece’s short length support the through-composed form.

```
 a    b    c
 1 2 3
```

Figure 38: Paradigmatic Display of “Metaltov”

Figure 40: Timeline of “Metaltov”
This short song is noisy and chaotic, and includes voice samples of speech in the (b) sections. (a) sections are pure instrumental noise, with hits and rolls on the drums and cymbals, grinding guitar sounds, and screeching saxophone and vocals. In the second instance of the (a) section, noise alternates with thrash metal interjections. Unison hits (c), a guitar solo (d), and a transition (e) form an interior group of sections.

While the component sections of “Poisonhead” do not display the kind of thematic connections we would expect in most popular music, the large scale form of the piece follows the standard rock layout of alternating verses and choruses (a and b), a contrasting section group (hits-solo-transition), and a return to the chorus. This middle contrasting section could be considered what Osborn calls a “bridge group,” a multipartite section that stands in for the typical bridge (2010, 127).

\[
\begin{array}{cccccc}
a & b & c & d & e \\
1 & 2 \\
3 & 4 & 5 & 6 & 7 \\
8 \\
\end{array}
\]

Figure 41: Paradigmatic Display of ‘Poisonhead’
“Bone Orchard” is a heavy metal piece. The song begins with hits and long, sustained, distorted chords, feedback and noise (a). (b) sections feature a slow, heavy, bluesy groove. (c) is the most melodic section. In it, a legato melody in the guitar is accompanied by a heavy metal background and screeching saxophone. The (d) section is a spacey break of sustained keyboard and guitar, and concludes with a brief drum solo. The (a) section returns at the end of the song.

The overall form of “Bone Orchard,” can be compared with that of the standard rock song. As in “Poisonhead,” the initial alternations of (a) and (b) are contrasted by the
bridge group (c and d). The song ends with a return to the initial (a). The song is arranged very similarly to the previous song.

\[
\begin{array}{cccc}
a & b & c & d \\
1 & 2 \\
3 & 4 & 5 & 6 \\
7
\end{array}
\]

Figure 43: Paradigmatic Display of “Bone Orchard”

Figure 44: Timeline of “Bone Orchard”
This song is a short linear collage reflective of the influences in its “inspiration” list. A piano chord introduces screams and noise (a) that are joined by thrash guitars and drums. The (a) section is followed a series of stylistic quotations including Naked City’s noisy free jazz/thrash texture (b), Latin jazz (c) and country shuffle (e). A section of intermittent noise injections (d) appears amongst the stylistic quotations. The return to the screaming section at the end, and its appearance between other the quotations, makes this song a discontinuous piece that nonetheless involves recapitulatory elements. The nature of the returning section, however, destabilizes the form more than if a more traditional style was employed in the (a). As opposed to “Terkmani Teepee,” where the (a) section of the ternary form is the most stable melody in the piece, the (a) in this song is the most jolting and unstable moment. “I Die Screaming” could be seen as a discontinuous and twisted ABA form, as was seen in “Razorwire.”
Unit 16: “Pistol Whipping,” 0.57

Inspiration/Refer: Agnostic Front, Siege

This is a very short song in a punk-rock style. Its style and length are reminiscent of the miniatures on Naked City’s Torture Garden. Although it contains many sections,
the overall style and affect does not change, resulting in a relatively smooth flow between parts. The strongest discontinuities occur at the (b) sections, where meter and rhythm changes create stark sectional departures from surrounding segments of the song. The piece returns to the initial idea (a) after a bridge group (including the e section, unaccompanied screams), and concludes with two sections of new material (f and g).

Even though stylistic change is not a part of the song, the fast tempo, short length of the sections, and number of different musical ideas make this song confounding for the listener. Section changes seem to pour forth from the song. The only period of rest is the longer section of unaccompanied screaming (e) that forms part of the songs middle. Even still, following that section the piece introduces new music. Osborn terms this kind of section a “climactic group” (2010, 113), consisting of memorable new material appearing at the end of the song.

Although the (a) section is strongly established at the beginning of the piece and returns towards the end, the large number of other sections and their irregular reoccurrence makes it difficult to hear “Pistol Whipping” as a modification of a standard form. While its popular music connections suggest that it would be an outgrowth of the AABA form, this is not supported because of the lack of a clear verse-chorus alternation. AABA form may be the best fit for “Pistol Whipping,” however, as the song also resists being heard in ABA form because of the sporadic reappearance of the (a) section, and the appearance of new material at the conclusion of the piece. “Pistol Whipping” while not stylistically discontinuous, presents a form that is perceptually baffling.
Figure 41: Paradigmatic Display of “Pistol Whipping”

Figure 42: Timeline of “Pistol Whipping”
Another short song, this piece juxtaposes thrash-metal sections with jazz, fusion, and funk. The main alternation is between thrash (a) and jazz (b). A funk section (d) and extended thrash elements (e) form a bridge group. The piece returns to the initial material at its conclusion.

Unlike “Pistol Whipping,” “Skatekey” presents a clear modification of the AABA form, in which the initial alternation of two ideas (abab) is contrasted by a bridge group before returning at the end. Within the sections, however, changes in the amount of repetitions within the b section, the inversion of the (a) and (b) at the songs conclusion, and the short section length, all highlight discontinuity in the overall form in the piece.

```
a  b  c  d  e 
1  2
3  4  5  6  7  8
9
10
```

Figure 43: Paradigmatic Display of “Skatekey”
Figure 50: Timeline of “Skatekey”

Unit 18: “Shock Corridor,” 1.08

Inspiration/Refer: Sam Fuller, Funkadelic, Carcass

While “Shock Corridor” contains many sections, the song’s flow is remarkably consistent. The thrash textures blend together even though the piece presents changing meter and rhythm. The (a) section is an introduction to what becomes a repeated group of segments (b, d, e, the first time intercut with c). The (b) section presents asymmetrical meter. This repeated group leads to (e), a section of half-time quadruple meter that seems to be a focal point in the song. Section (f) is a bridge of sustained organ chords, hits, and a quieter impression that contrasts with the heavy thrash and punk music of the other sections. The recapitulation of several of the sections in their original order after the bridge gives a rounded feel to “Shock Corridor,” especially since (e) seems to be a focal
point. This encourages the piece to be heard as a modification of the ABA form. Seven seconds of silence are left at the end of the track.

\[
a \quad b \quad c \quad d \quad e \quad f \\
1 \quad 2 \quad 3 \quad 4 \quad 5 \quad 6 \\
7 \quad 8 \quad 9
\]

Figure 51: Paradigmatic Display of “Shock Corridor”

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Figure 52: Timeline of “Shock Corridor”
“American Psycho” is described in detail in chapter three.

**The Unfolding of Radio and the Musical Game**

The close study of each song on *Radio* reveals several basic structures that seem to reappear in various guises over the course of the album. Fourteen of the songs display one of three basic formal structures; an AB (two-section) alternating form, an ABA ternary form, and a compound AABA verse/chorus/bridge form. The remaining five songs display very different structures.

Songs in AB form: “Asylum,” “Sunset Surfer,” “The Outsider,” “Razorwire.”

“Asylum” displays the simplest AB structure, with only two parts and no variance in section length. In “Sunset Surfer,” the first and last (a) sections are expanded by vamps, the first fulfilling an introductory function, the last a closing function. In addition, the (a) section is repeated at the beginning and in the middle portion of the piece. In “The Outsider,” (b) sections are subject to a progressive rhythmic variation, tying together the sections across the work. The central (b) is also shortened, and a contrasting section is added as an outro. “Razorwire” stretches the form in another direction, as the first section
is in two-parts. Its appearance in the central portion of the song features only the second part. The (c) section in “Razorwire” also repeats in its second appearance.

Songs in (compound) AABA form: “Party Girl,” “Poisonhead,” “Bone Orchard,” “Pistol Whipping,” “Skatekey.”

“Party Girl” is somewhat of a complicated compound AABA form, as its (A) sections are three-part, and the initial (A) consists of only (ab). The song also includes a final (ab) tacked to the end of the form. The bridge section is clearly discontinuous and contrasting. “Poisonhead” is again not a straight-forward example of the form, as the final instance of the (A) consists only of the (b) section. As in “Party Girl,” the central contrasting section contains multiple parts. In “Bone Orchard,” the (B) is again a section group, and the final appearance of the (A) is only of its first section. “Pistol Whipping” again stretches the form with discontinuous portions of its (A) sections, a reappearance of part of the (A) within the bridge-group, and a terminal section of new material. “Skatekey” is again an irregular version of the form. The number of repeats in the (b) sections change, and the order of parts in the (A) section change in its final appearance.

“Triggerfingers,” like many of the tunes on Radio, begins with an introduction, but afterwards follows a clear and stylistically consistent ternary form. The long melody appearing in the second of each (a) section is contrasted by a section group. “Terkmani Teepee,” appearing directly after “Triggerfingers,” is already a sonic departure from a standard ABA, as the short melodic (A) sections are dominated by the middle section. The middle section group consists of seven different and stylistically contrasting parts, making it nearly a collage that concludes with an unlikely return to an initial section.

“Sex Fiend” is built from a series of vamps, and features a two-part initial section that appears on either side of a contrasting middle. “I Die Screaming” sandwiches several stylistic changes between the screaming outbursts of its (A) sections, and stretches the form by returning to the (A) briefly during the middle section. Form in “Shock Corridor” is twisted nearly to the point of obscuring any connection to the ternary form, but the piece does feature a recapitulation of three of the five initial sections following its most discontinuous portion.


“The Bitter and the Sweet” is a meandering, atmospheric through-composed piece. “Krazy Kat” and “American Psycho” consist completely of collage texture. “The Vault” has repetition, but there is no network of repetition that is similar to any of the
other songs. “Metaltov” is through-composed, but in a different sense than “The Bitter and the Sweet.”

The paradigmatic display of the album can be constructed by placing each song according to its formal archetype.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AB</th>
<th>AABA</th>
<th>ABA</th>
<th>Through-Composed</th>
<th>Collage</th>
<th>“The Vault”</th>
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Figure 53: Paradigmatic Display of Naked City, Radio
The paradigmatic display shows how the formal types are varied across the album. In the three main categories, the initial appearance of a song in each form features the purest presentation of that form. As the album continues, the main song forms are developed and varied. In many cases songs of the same form appear consecutively. In general the album first presents a song using a clear or near archetypal version of the form, and then explores various ways of stretching, disrupting, and experimenting with the form. A clear division in the album occurs around the central tracks (nine through twelve), where four songs in non-standard forms appear in succession. Following this, AB form no longer appears, and all songs until “American Psycho,” feature either AABA or ABA form. Section groups appear more frequently throughout the second half of the album. Not only does Radio feature an increase in harsh timbres (the use of punk, metal, and thrash references, and human screams) as the album progresses, but the formal plots of the songs on the album become more stretched, complex, and less predictable as it unfolds. The central collage of the album, “Krazy Kat,” marks a clear division, with the following song, “The Vault,” which introduces Yamatsuka Eye’s vocals, also playing a role in changing the mood and accessibility of the album. The later songs on Radio are not only more challenging to listen to because of their timbral content, but because the unpredictable quality of the collage principle is injected into the album more and more as it progresses.

Using Brackett’s terms, this progressive disruption of the forms of the songs on Radio is an increase of heterogeneous and decrease of homogeneous structures. This process is directly related to the concept of the musical game. Zorn’s “game of
“composition” involves the blending of the works of other composers and of standard
genres with his own musical style, material, and persona. On *Radio*, not only are the
various influences blended together in the songs, but Zorn’s own music, musical style,
and compositional approach is blended with them. Over the course of the album, Zorn’s
style, particularly the aesthetic of discontinuity that is present in so many of his works
from this period, is combined in various ways, and asserts itself more and more into the
music. On *Radio*, Zorn’s voice emerges as the album unfolds, particularly when the
album transitions from its first to second half, and settles into the harsh textures and
boundary stretched forms of the later pieces.

Zorn’s musical games involve the manipulation of something exterior to
himself—improvised music, a quotation, a musical technique—into a musical work that
embodies his musical conceptions. As he says, his pieces employ the work of others as “a
point of departure” (quoted in Gagne 1993, 530), where then his musical manipulations
transform the music into his own. Brackett notes the importance of the traditions, musical
and otherwise, as a homogeneous structure in Zorn’s music (2008, 23-4), and indeed,
Zorn’s manipulation of previously existing material in these compositional games is a
part of giving the music “a strange kind of resonance—a relation to the past” (quoted in
Gagne 1993, 527). In addition, his use of this material is also involved as one of many
means of unifying his compositions. In *Radio*, the idiolect of the music game, this
blending of Zorn’s persona with that of others, is not only employed in the composition
of the pieces, but also appears as a structural element of the album, wherein the form and
narrative of the overall work is governed by the increasing dominance of this musical
property. The musical game is a novel way of enacting a musical narrative in the work, one where the listener is drawn closer and closer to Zorn’s musical persona as *Radio* unfolds.
CONCLUSIONS

The arrangement of a collage’s segments creates an impression based on readily perceptible elements, and it is this impression that makes “finding the proper sequence to keep the interest and flow” (Zorn, quoted in Brackett 2008, xvi) such an important compositional aspect of Zorn’s music. A close listening to his collages reveals that the disorder presented by the juxtapositions that form the musical surface is only one aspect of the drama and narrative within. Indeed, drama and narrative in Zorn’s collage music is of a non-standard type, and a different kind of musical attention is necessarily involved when listening to these pieces. This music presents an energetic and powerful experience to the listener, but nevertheless one that, as with so much unconventional music, is also dependent on the listener’s preconceptions.

It seemed especially appropriate to explore Zorn’s collages as the collage principle appears both to have been the most idiosyncratic part of his compositions and to have guided his approach to music in the 1980s and 1990s. The idea of unexpected jarring contrast and juxtapositions of genre, timbre, and quotations characterizes both his game pieces and collages, and has become an integral characteristic of Zorn’s music. Discontinuous elements, however, are always placed within a context where they are

65 A collage piece’s unpredictability may arise from its circumvention of the schematic listening strategies invoked by the various styles and genres from which it draws. While a listener may approach a collage piece with an expectation that it will contain juxtaposition (i.e., through a schema of the collage genre), works such as Zorn’s do not telegraph forthcoming changes or contain thematic repetition, thus maintaining a sense of unpredictability upon initial hearings. See Huron 2006 for a discussion of schematic and other forms of musical expectations.
guided, controlled, and can be understood; they are always part of a musical process. The
difference between Zorn’s game pieces and his collage works is the attempt to
choreograph the holistic impression created by the unfolding of the piece, a necessarily
linear procedure.

My goals in this work were to explore the linear nature of Zorn’s collage music.
This exploration was motivated by the importance that Zorn placed on the pieces’
progression from moment to moment. This inspired the idea that postmodern collages
could show linear organization, and not only the kind of cumulative organization found in
analyses by Losada and Service.

This study illustrates the relationship of hierarchical organizational structure and
the musical surface in Zorn’s pieces. The close analyses of “Speedfreaks,” “Krazy Kat,”
and “American Psycho” reveal a fundamental characteristic of Zorn’s works: the
presence of recurring segments that perceptually stand out, engendering a sense that one
musical unit has ended and a new one begun. It is important that these delineations lay on
the musical surface, and not within some kind of background structure. I designated these
segments as musical topics that communicate a division within Zorn’s music and separate
the streams of discontinuous segments into higher-level units. In addition, the structure of
*Cat O’Nine Tails* reveals how the units of the collage are organized into larger
proportional structures that I called episodes. This kind of organization shows a concern
with the musical surface and the linear unfolding of the piece. I defined this kind of
structure as episodic collage form, a type of musical organization related to Zorn’s
conception of cartoon music.
Linear form appears to operate progressively in Zorn’s works. Often, a characteristic (such as discontinuity in *Cat O’Nine Tails*, or the techniques associated with the “musical game” in *Radio*) becomes more prevalent as the piece unfolds. This does not appear to support the clear distribution of moment types implied by Zorn’s description of *Cat O’Nine Tails*, or any kind of sequential or recurring ordering of segments in any piece. In addition, my exploration was based on the idea that the constituent units of Zorn’s pieces were often formed by groups of segments. Examination of the pieces at the level of the segment could find alternate unifying mechanisms.

This exploration shows how these episodic collages contain linear progressions that can be interpreted through idiolects, thus establishing a narrative explanation for their unfolding. Zorn’s conception of the structure of cartoon music, which I describe as the visual idiolect, involved the idea that the disconnected segments of the college can project a musical narrative through their linear positioning. In my analysis of *Cat O’Nine Tails*, I incorporated the idea of “music as montage” as a way to analyze this musical unfolding, and developed an interpretation of the work that thus specifically connected visual ideas with musical properties. In the final analysis, I extend this idea of episodic collage to the genre of the album, a form that is important to Zorn’s music. The characteristics of the songs on *Radio*, its chronological position in Zorn’s compositional output, and the idea of silence as an icon of collage separation presented by the form of the episodic collage make it appropriate to view *Radio* as a musical whole. Building on the ideas of organization presented in the first two chapters, I used the idiolect of the musical game as a means to approach the structural unfolding of the album and explain
its presentation. This analysis specifically connected compositional practices with musical structure.

Most important, these analyses illustrate how Zorn employs discontinuity as an organizing device in his music. Discontinuity works to structure these pieces in two ways. First, the delineating topics identified in chapter three serve to mark the beginnings and endings of musical units, hierarchically organizing the juxtaposed fragments that make up the collage. These topics, with the exception of those that signal conventional endings, are distinguished by the greater disjunctions that they create in the collage texture. To paraphrase Losada, Zorn has converted discontinuity into an aspect of musical organization.

Second, discontinuity is a progressive element that creates a sense of drama and narrative in the works. In *Cat O’Nine Tails*, the progressive element is embodied by the increase of discontinuous material and the permeation of discontinuity into the vertical aspect of the music as the piece unfolds. The idiolect of the musical game is also based on the presence of discontinuity; in this case, discontinuity created by the blending of Zorn’s compositional persona and the collage principle with external material. Discontinuity in Zorn’s music thus has a dual function as both an organizing and progressive mechanism in these works.

My defining of topics in Zorn’s music in part singled out particular devices as being more discontinuous then others, and thus creating a greater sense of delineation. This sense that certain transitions present greater or lesser discontinuity suggests the question of whether the strength of this property of different moments in a collage piece
can be quantified. An attempt to quantify discontinuity would have to establish the musical factors involved, measure and weigh their contributions, and determine whether these measurements reflected meaningfully on the understanding of the piece. Such a study goes beyond the scope of this exploration, but would be an interesting place to begin the further examination of musical collage.

I chose to use paradigmatic analysis in this study because its procedure of segmentation and focus on the relationship of the part to the whole made it the most appropriate way to search for the types of linear organization that Zorn hinted at in his comments. As noted in the introduction, these linear explanations are meant to exist alongside other (non-linear) views of the pieces. Richard Cohn and Douglas Dempster make the point that an interest in hierarchical unity does not need to come at the cost of what they call a “richness” in the music that results from the existence of other non-hierarchical structures that generate “plural unities” (1992, 178). This dissertation is intended to contribute a similar “richness” to the understanding of Zorn’s music. Here, however, non-linear interpretations of Zorn’s music have already been offered. I aimed instead to show that even given the discontinuity of the musical surface and the non-linear interpretations that the pieces may engender, Zorn’s works could still possess hierarchical organization and linear structure related to idiolectical concepts.

The linear structure of texture presented by my analysis of “Speedfreaks,” for instance, exists alongside Brackett’s interpretation of the piece. To Brackett, the contrast of the standard thirty-two-bar form against Zorn’s collage texture embodies the transgressive practices he sees in Zorn’s music. The process of “Speedfreaks” was to
Brackett not a linear development of this practice, but instead the product of the cumulative entirety of the piece, i.e., a holistic effect. This idea of transgression in Zorn’s music proffered by Brackett contributes greatly to the understanding of these works. My explanation of structure in the piece, however, also enriches our understanding of the music. For example, while I find the explanation of “Speedfreaks” as a modified thirty-two-bar song to be intriguing, I find it impossible to experience the song in that way; the musical surface resists such a hearing. The segmentation I describe, however, gives us a way to immediately experience the unfolding of the work and demonstrates how Zorn’s music simultaneously employs unifying methodologies that are focused on completely different aspects of the music. The segments in “Speedfreaks” play two roles in the unfolding of the piece; from one perspective, they take part in the thirty-two-bar structure through their harmonic content. From another, their texture and style contributes to linear organization and narrative in the piece. The fact that the piece’s segments can embody both of these ideas shows the depth of meaning in Zorn’s music.

As Agawu notes, paradigmatic analysis allows the work to be interpreted “as both a logical form and a chronological form” (2009, 167). His analysis of Symphonies saw several sections functioning as “anchors” in the movement due to their recurrence in relatively unchanged form (2009, 310). Similarly, he finds the main theme of the first movement of Mahler’s ninth symphony as functioning as “a kind of fulcrum” which

Transformation networks also possess this property. In them, arrows may connect objects that are not necessarily chronologically adjacent. David Lewin discusses this specifically in his sample analysis of Beethoven’s first symphony (1987, 169-174). See also Julian Hook’s discussion of Lewin for a comparison of Lewin’s original diagram with a chronological rearrangement (2007, 160-165).
grounds the movement throughout, particularly due to its reappearance in the tonic key during the development section. Both of these descriptions could indicate a kind of circularity in the structure of the music, a nonlinear unfolding that revolves around a continued return. Zorn’s characterizations of the units that make up his pieces also seem to indicate this kind of organization. Specifically, *Cat O’Nine Tails* could be seen to contain such a recurring section in its interludes. While not literal repetitions, the interludes present music quite unlike the other sections of the collage; they are longer, slow and melodic. They are a brief return to conventional music, giving the listener long enough not only to clearly identify the particular style or genre of the section, but to begin to develop a sense of expectation as to how the segment will unfold. The regular return to these sections in *Cat O’Nine Tails* also embodies a sense of circularity in the music that is accompanied by a linear narrative constructed by the musical content of the units within the episodes themselves. Here, the different sections of the piece contribute to ideas of both linear and non-linear organization.

Service hints at a similar coexistence of linear and non-linear narrative in his analysis of *Spillane*. He views *Spillane* in total as presenting non-linear narrative, part of which is the “creation of a character though the accumulation of information” (2004, 77). To Service, the narration sections of *Spillane* are disconnected, unrelated to a single storyline, and only exist as part of a non-linear construction. In addition, he sees the stylistic quotations present in the piece as presenting a “temporality” that is “discontinuous. . . . The piece flaunts its instability, eschewing both the stability and
continuity associated with generic, lyric time and the momentum normally associated with structural development (2004, 81).

Service, however, sees the final section as playing a linear role. He refers to it as an “epilogue,” and notes that it “exists outside [of Spillane], in a different kind of temporality” (82). To Service, this section is more strongly identified with Zorn than with Hammer or Spillane, and he assesses the final section to function as a capstone of the piece. As with other works, our understanding of Spillane grows throughout with the identification of various ways to view the work.

In addition to expanding the understanding of Zorn’s music, this dissertation demonstrates that paradigmatic analysis can be successfully adapted to become a useful tool for the analysis of postmodern music, and especially postmodern collage. The “strategic naïveté” (Agawu 2009, 166) that the methodology encourages is a crucial perspective for the analyst to take when encountering postmodern music. The assumptions of paradigmatic analysis also make intuitive sense; most music is made up of structural units of some sort and is experienced as a linear string of those units. Zorn’s collages are no exception. Their structure of distinct contrasting blocks matches perfectly with the process of segmentation that takes place in paradigmatic analysis. My analysis of Radio also shows how this method can be used to explore further ideas of what constitutes the musical work. This dissertation could lead to the use of paradigmatic analysis to explore not only other postmodern collages, but albums and collections of songs that can be reasonably thought of as singular works. As I found in my study of
Zorn, a process of segmentation for the work at hand may need to be developed if there is not a consensus manner on which to base the parsing of the piece.

One of the limitations of this methodology arises from the necessity of making definitive decisions at various points in the process. Agawu specifies a need for the establishment of clear criteria for segmentation and categorization, and notes that each unit of the piece must be placed in one and only one category (2009, 222). Because of this, it is difficult for a single analysis to consider various possible meanings without undermining the strengths of the particular viewpoint taken at the outset of the exploration. As in many methodologies, early decisions in the process in part determine later outcomes. The subjectivity of the process also means that the analyst’s decisions play a large role in the outcome of the method. For example, in my adaptation of paradigmatic analysis, I intended to thoroughly ground the early stages of segmentation in a consistent and logical way based on the musical material. While providing overarching consistency and logic to the analysis of various pieces, this necessarily limited the options of segmentation in the analyses. Even given this kind of restriction, plural meanings could be explored within such an analysis by expanding the idiolectical portion of the examination. Analysis of a single piece could be interpreted through several idiolects, each revealing different details about the work and bringing to light various points. The approach though a single idiolect does not exclude the possibility that examining the same analysis through different idiolects would yield different and even contradictory results. The idiolects developed in this study could be a starting point for further examination of Zorn’s music, and could inspire new ways of looking at the pieces.
With this in mind, the methodology developed here can be usefully applied to other postmodern works. In fact, given the heterogeneity of postmodern music, my adaptation of this methodology could be one effective means to work towards the understanding of the musical dialect of postmodernism. Idiolects defined from exploration of the composer and music provide a way to understand the structures that are displayed in individual pieces. This understanding leads to a further sense of the tendencies that define the oeuvre of specific composers. Over time, the accumulation of studies on multiple composers and pieces from the postmodern period through this and other methodologies could begin to collectively give us an understanding of postmodern music in general. This bottom-up approach could provide the means to establish the tendencies of the period as a whole and clarify the tendencies that are idiosyncratic, expanding and refining our understanding of musical postmodernism.
APPENDIX: RADIO INSPIRATION/REFER

The following list is not intended to provide comprehensive biographies, but rather to provide a quick reference to the basic characteristics and point of origin of each of the influences cited in the liner notes to Radio. When important to my analysis, further details about these references are included in the body of this dissertation. Although I have done my best to find high-quality sources for the information below, the obscure nature of some of the references has meant that the only available sources were less than ideal.

For the musical groups listed below, the dates provided are those of the original incarnation or most active period of the band, and do not include later reunions or reformations.

Akemi and Jagatara – This may refer to a Japanese punk rock band, 1979-1990, whose vocalist was Edo Akemi. I was unable to find a reliable reference.
Bley, Paul – Canadian jazz musician, b. 1932 (Kernfeld and Kennedy 2012).
Bob Demmon + the Astronauts – American surf band, 1961-1968 (Fenson 2006).
Braxton, Anthony – American jazz and experimental musician, b. 1945 (Kernfeld 2012a).


Brown, Chuck – American funk musician, b. 1932 (Larkin 1995, 571).

Sammy Cahn’s “Guess I’ll hang my tears out to dry” – American Tin Pan Alley song 1945, with music by Jule Styne and lyrics by Cahn (1913-1993) (Jasen 2003, 60-2).


Coleman, Ornette – American jazz musician, b. 1930 (Schuller 2012).


Dolphy, Eric – American jazz musician, 1928-1964 (Kernfeld 2012b).


Fuller, Sam – American screenwriter and film director, 1911-1997 (Gallagher 2004).


Haden, Charlie – American jazz musician, b. 1937 (Kernfeld 2012c).

Hammer, Jan – Czech jazz/fusion musician, b. 1948 (Greene 2012).

Harris, Mick – British grindcore drummer, b. 1967 (Horsley 2012).
Hellfire - This may refer to an American thrash band. I was unable to find a reliable reference.

Herrmann, Bernard – American composer, 1911-1975 (Cooper 2012).


King, Carole – American songwriter, b. 1942 (Larkin 1995, 2311).

Jones, Quincy – American music producer, b. 1933 (Larkin 1995, 2213).

Leather Folk (the Book) – Collection of essays about the gay leather underground, compiled by Mark Thompson, first published 1991 (Thompson 2005).


Charles Mingus on Candid – American jazz musician, 1922-1979, who released two albums on the Candid record label in 1960 (Jazz Workshop 2011).

Morricone, Ennio – Italian soundtrack composer, b. 1928 (Miceli 2012).


Papasov, Ivo – Bulgarian jazz clarinetist, b. 1952 (Elen Music 2012).
Reed, Jerry – American country musician, songwriter, and actor, 1937-2008 (Larkin 1995, 3441).


Stalling, Carl – American cartoon soundtrack composer, 1891-1972 (Goldmark 2005, 10).


Anton Webern’s “Six Bagatells” – set of atonal string quartet pieces (1913) by Webern, 1883-1945 (Bailey 2012).


Yakuza Zankoku Hiroku – This may refer to a 1976 Japanese gangster movie. I was unable to find a reliable reference.
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Leng Tch’e. 1992. Toy’s Factory. CD

Heretic. 1992. Avant AVAN 001. CD.


Absinthe. 1993. Avant AVAN 004. CD.

Radio. 1993. Avant AVAN 003. CD.

Torture Garden. 1993. Shimmy-Disc 039. CD.


_______, 1999. Godard/Spillane. Tzadik 7324. CD.

Directed by Claudia Heuermann. 82 min. TZADIK 3001. DVD.