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MTO 23.4 Examples: Johnson, Tonality as Topic

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

<http://www.mtosmt.org/issues/mto.17.23.4/mto.17.23.4.johnson.php>

Example 1. Full score of Schoenberg's Op. 19/4 with Almén's (2008) topically oriented section labels

A invokes a dance topic. B suggests a recitative topic. A' parodies each of these

The image displays a musical score for Schoenberg's Op. 19/4, divided into four systems. The first system, labeled 'A', begins with the tempo marking 'Rasch, aber leicht (♩)' and a dynamic of *p*. The second system, labeled 'B', starts at measure 4 with a *poco rit.* marking and a dynamic of *pp*, and includes a *ped.* instruction. The third system, labeled 'A'', begins at measure 7 with a *poco rit.* marking and a dynamic of *p*, featuring a triplet of eighth notes. The fourth system, also labeled 'A'', starts at measure 10 with a dynamic of *f martellato* and includes a triplet of eighth notes. The score concludes with a dynamic of *fff* and a final *sf* marking.

Example 2. Forte's (2003) analysis of Schoenberg Op. 19/4, A section, mm. 1–5

His tetrachords supply me with tonal *figurae* while his larger source sets might be profitably understood as pointing outward towards the octatonic and whole-tone collections

Example 3. A section of Schoenberg's Op. 19/4 with narrative-generating *figurae* shown

Though (013) is the most common trichord within a diatonic collection, the overlapping iterations obscure the tonal topic

Example 4. Stefan George's text for Schoenberg's Op. 14/1, tr. Bryan Simms (2000)

<p>Ich darf nicht dankend an dir niedersinken. Du bist vom geist der flur, aus der wir stiegen: Will Sich mein trost an deine wehmut schmiegen, So wird sie zucken, um ihm abzuwinken.</p> <p>Verharrst du bei dem quälenden beschlusse, Nie deines leides nähe zugestehen, Und nur mit ihm und mir dich zu ergehen Am eisigklaren tiefentschlafnen flusse?</p>	<p>I must not kneel in thanks before you. You came from the spirit of the fields, from which we rose: If I try to ease your melancholy, You turn away in rejection. Must you remain with your agonizing decision, Never to acknowledge the nearness of your sorrow. And only to walk with it and me Along the river trapped in icy sleep?</p>
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Example 5. Final /cadence/ and clear manifestation of the tonal topic in Schoenberg's Op. 14/1, mm. 29–30, with /V⁷/ and /tonic triad/ boxed

A /perfect fifth/ of G-D also alludes to tonality as topic in m. 29

Example 6. Schoenberg's Op. 14/1, mm. 6–8 with successive *figurae* contributing to a tonal topic

Du bist vom Geist der Flur, aus der wir stiegen:

pp

It⁺⁶

V

v

Example 7. Schoenberg's Op. 14/2, mm. 17–21 with successive potential tonal *figurae* locking together above the mostly /diatonic/ bass descent

was uns mit in - nerm Licht er - fullt.

pp

Ger⁺⁶

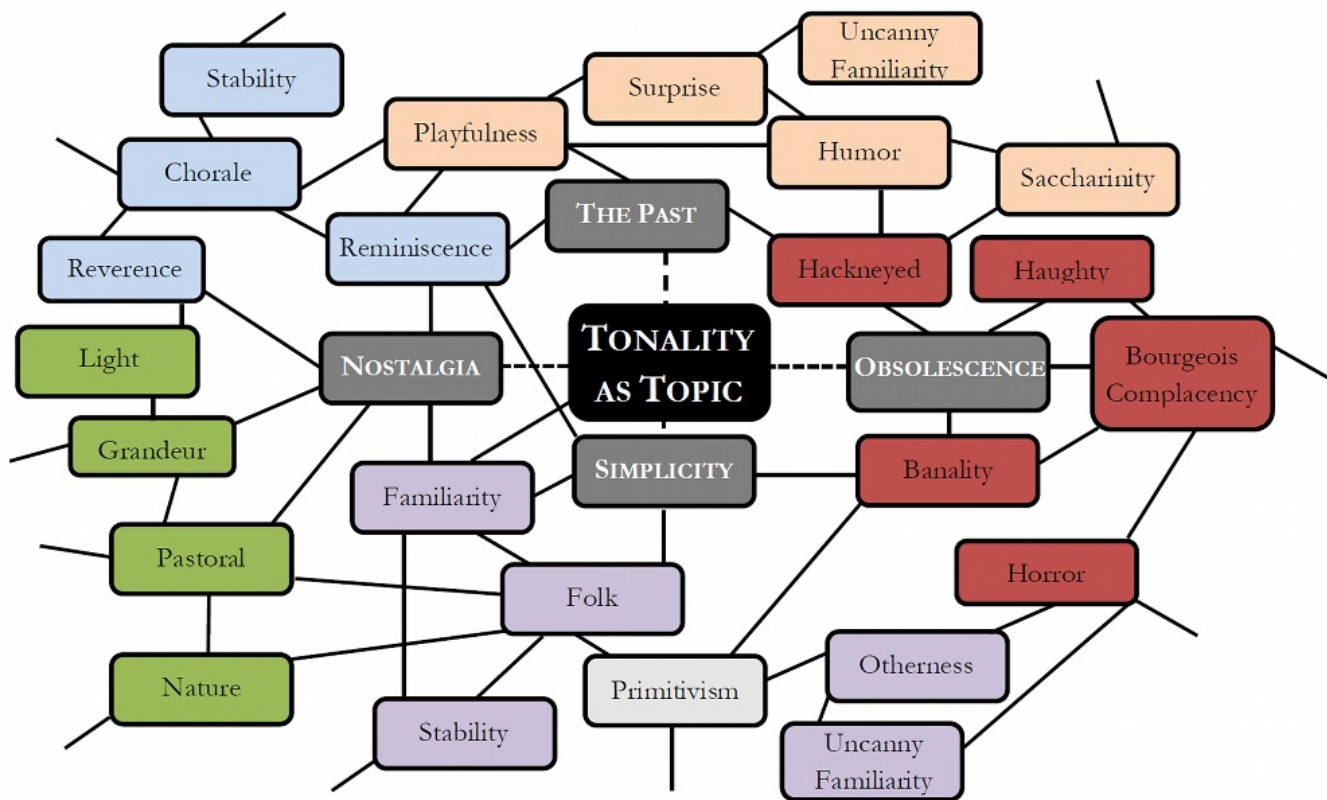
Fr^{+6?}

Fr^{+6?}

V⁷

Example 8. Central section of the tonal-topic's network of signifieds for early twentieth-century music

Some items appear multiple times displaying the complex, rhizomatic structure of this portion of the semiotic code

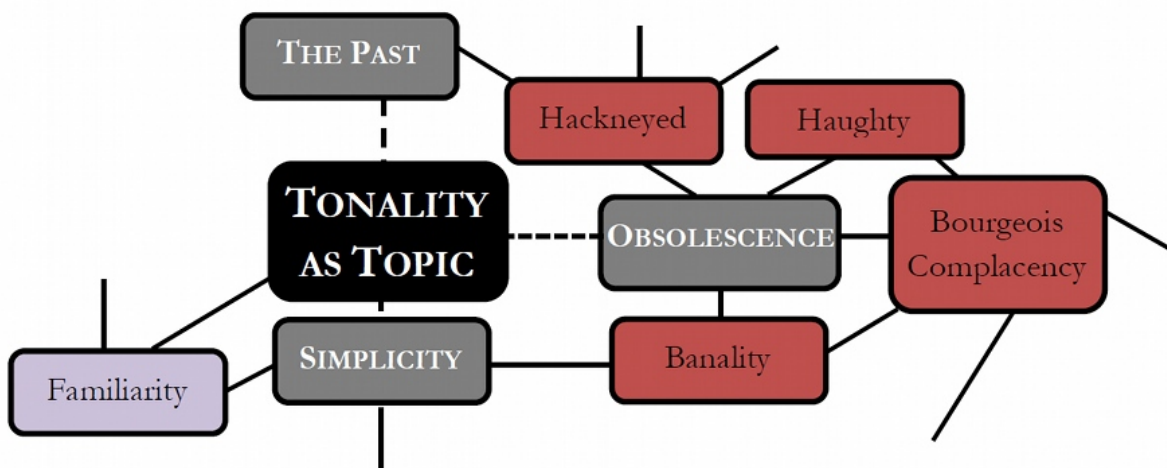


Example 9. *Wozzeck*, Act II, Scene 1, mm. 116– 119

This reduction shows the plain /C-major triad/ beneath Wozzeck's slightly more chromatic recitative

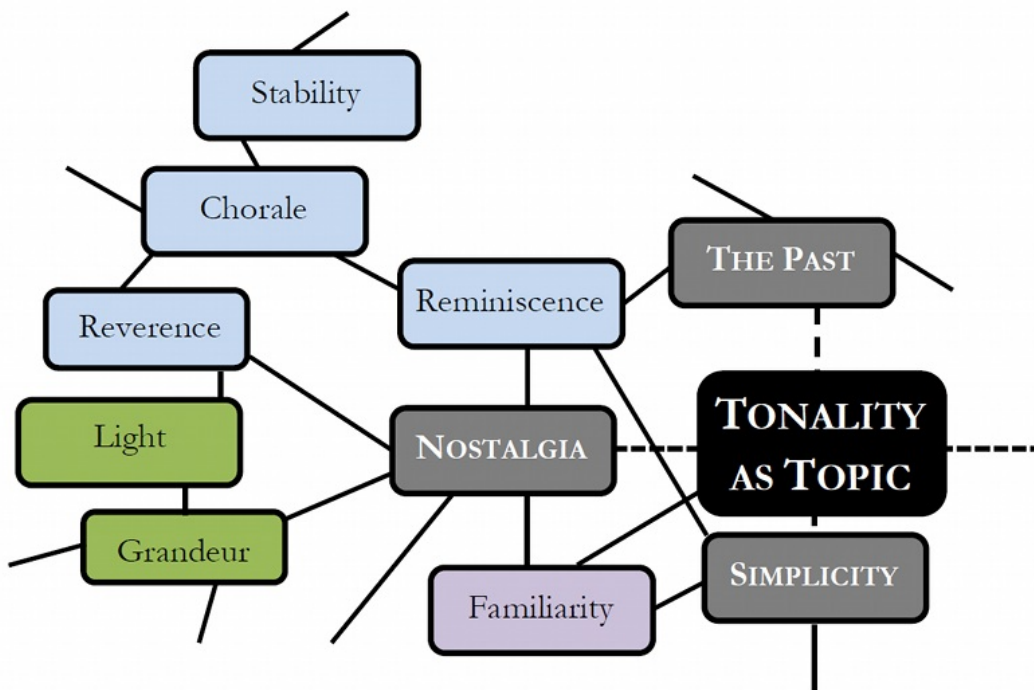
Da ist wie - der Geld, Ma - rie, die Löh - nung und was vom Haupt - mann

Example 10. Section of the tonal-topic code pointed towards in *Wozzeck* (Example 9)



Example 11. Ives's *Psalm 67*, beginning; The treble voices open with the /C-major triad/, helping to manifest the tonal topic within a "polytonal" framework of multiple /triads/

Example 12. Section of the tonal-topic code pointed towards in *Psalm 67* (Example 11)

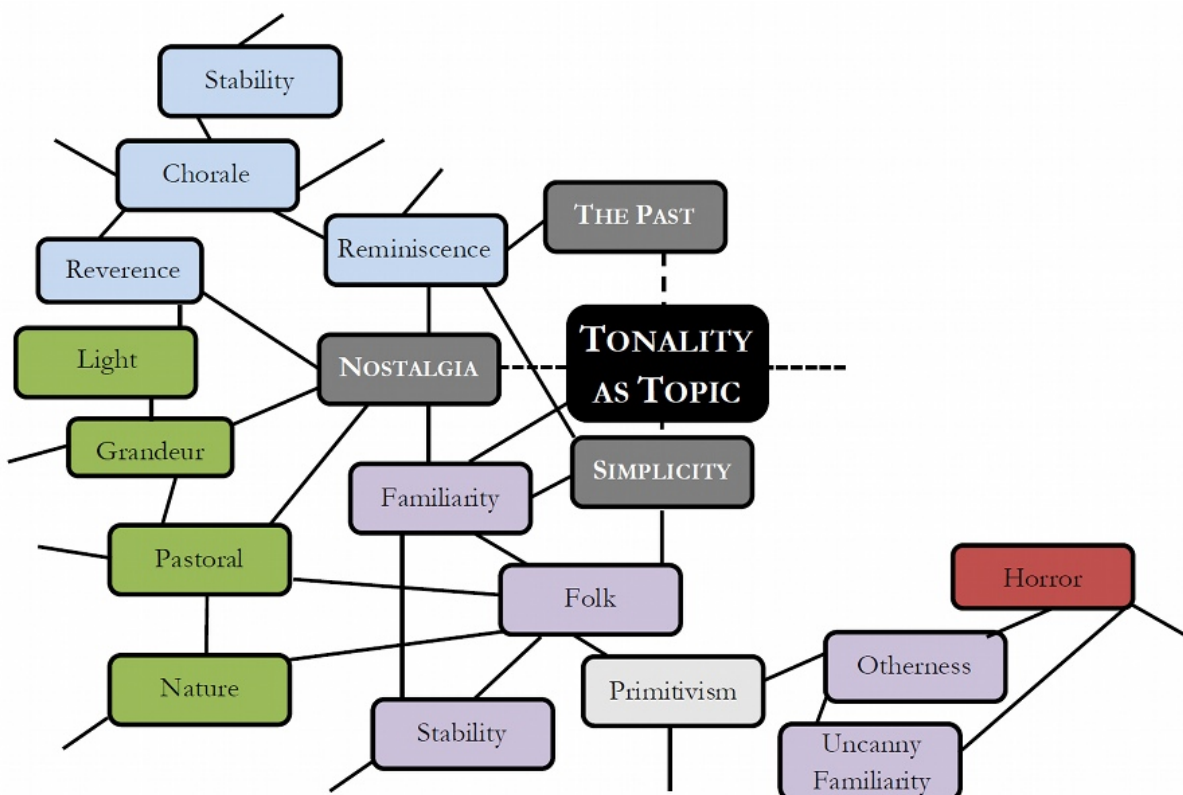


Example 13. *Bluebeard's Castle*, “Fifth Door” Scene, Rehearsal 73, reduction

In this case, /C-major triad/ combines with /homophony/, /pentatonicism/, and /wind instruments/ to give a huge pastorally inflected tonal topic

The musical score shows a vocal line for Judith in 4/4 time, with a whole note rest. Below it is a piano accompaniment in 4/4 time, marked *fff* and *8va*. The piano part features a C-major triad (C-E-G) in the right hand and a similar triad in the left hand, with various chromatic alterations and octaves. The vocal line has the word "Ah!" written above it.

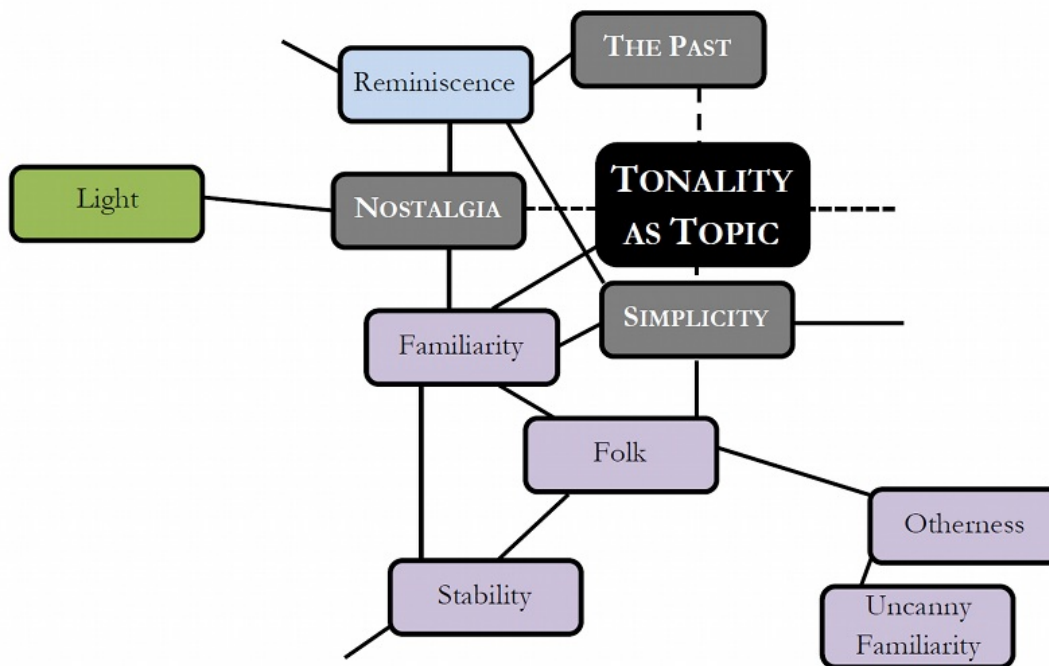
Example 14. Section of the tonal-topic code pointed towards in *Bluebeard's Castle* (Example 13)



Example 15. Bartók's String Quartet no. 5, II, mm. 45–47

The /C-major triad/ is boxed. Note the stratification in texture, with the first violin as a solo instrument, much like the *Wozzeck* example

Example 16. Section of the tonal-topic code pointed towards in Bartók's fifth String Quartet (example 15)



Example 17. Polymorphia, Ending, mm. 63–67

The indeterminate clusters and graphic score notation give way to a *fortissimo* /C major/ cluster in the final measure, closing the piece on a humorous and uncanny note

The musical score is arranged in five staves, labeled Vn (Violin I), Vn (Violin II), VI (Viola), Vc (Violoncello), and Vb (Violone). The measures are numbered 63, 64, 65, 66, and 67 at the top. Measure 63 shows the beginning of indeterminate clusters for all instruments, with dynamic markings of *ff* and *ord. nv*. Measure 64 continues these clusters, with some instruments having specific rhythmic patterns indicated by numbers (e.g., 1-12, 13-24, 1-8, 1-4, 5-8). Measure 65 shows further development of the clusters, with some instruments having specific rhythmic patterns indicated by numbers (e.g., 1-4, 5-8, 1-4, 5-8). Measure 66 shows the clusters continuing, with some instruments having specific rhythmic patterns indicated by numbers (e.g., 1-4, 5-8, 1-4, 5-8). Measure 67 is highlighted with a purple box and shows a *fortissimo* /C major/ cluster for all instruments, with dynamic markings of *ff* and *ord. nv*. The score includes various musical notations such as stems, beams, and dynamic markings.

Example 18. Section of the tonal-topic code pointed towards in *Polymorphia* (Example 17)

The dotted orange box suggests the signifieds I analyze in Schoenberg's Op. 19/4

