



**MTO 30.2 Examples: Donaldson, Kaleidoscopic Topics
in the Music of György Ligeti and Thomas Adès**

(Note: audio, video, and other interactive examples are only available online)
<https://mtosmt.org/issues/mto.24.30.2/mto.24.30.2.donaldson.html>

Example 1. Chorale at Actant Level, Ligeti, Violin Concerto, II mm. 180–187

Maestoso misterioso

180 Hrn., Trp., Tbn. con sord.

A single staff of music in treble clef, starting at measure 180. The music features complex rhythmic patterns with many beamed notes and rests. The dynamics are marked *pp* (pianissimo) at the beginning and *v* (forte) later in the passage. The key signature has two flats.

Example 2. Stravinsky, opening of *Le Tombeau de Claude Debussy* for piano solo (1920), a version of which appears at the end of *Symphonies of Wind Instruments*

Two staves of piano music, treble and bass clef. The music consists of complex harmonic structures with many chords and intervals. The key signature has two flats. The music is characterized by its dense, layered texture and unusual intervals.

Example 3. Chorale with Frequent-level characteristics, Ligeti, Violin Concerto, II, mm. 75–76

[♩ = 130, ♪ = 65]
 ocarinas

ff

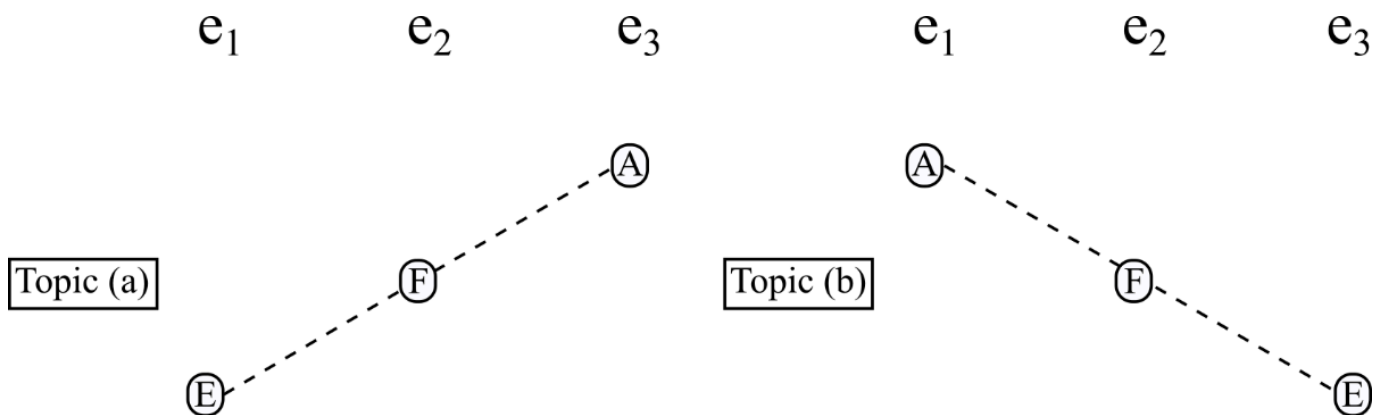
Example 4. Essential-level Chorale, Ligeti, Violin Concerto II, mm. 28–31

Solo Violin

p

p Separate bowing, *legato*
Strich für Strich

Example 5. Two abstract closed isotopies. Towards a realization of a topic (a) and a disintegration away from an initially clear appearance of topic (b)



Example 6. Opening aria theme of Ligeti, Violin Concerto, II. No E- or F-level Chorale characteristics

Andante con moto ♩ = 100

sul IV al segno *cantabile, semplice ma espressivo*

p
separate bowing *legato*
Strich für Strich

Example 7. A closed isotopy of the Chorale topic across Ligeti, Violin Concerto, II

e_1	e_2	e_3
Bar: 28	75	180

p Separate bowing, *legato*
Strich für Strich

ff

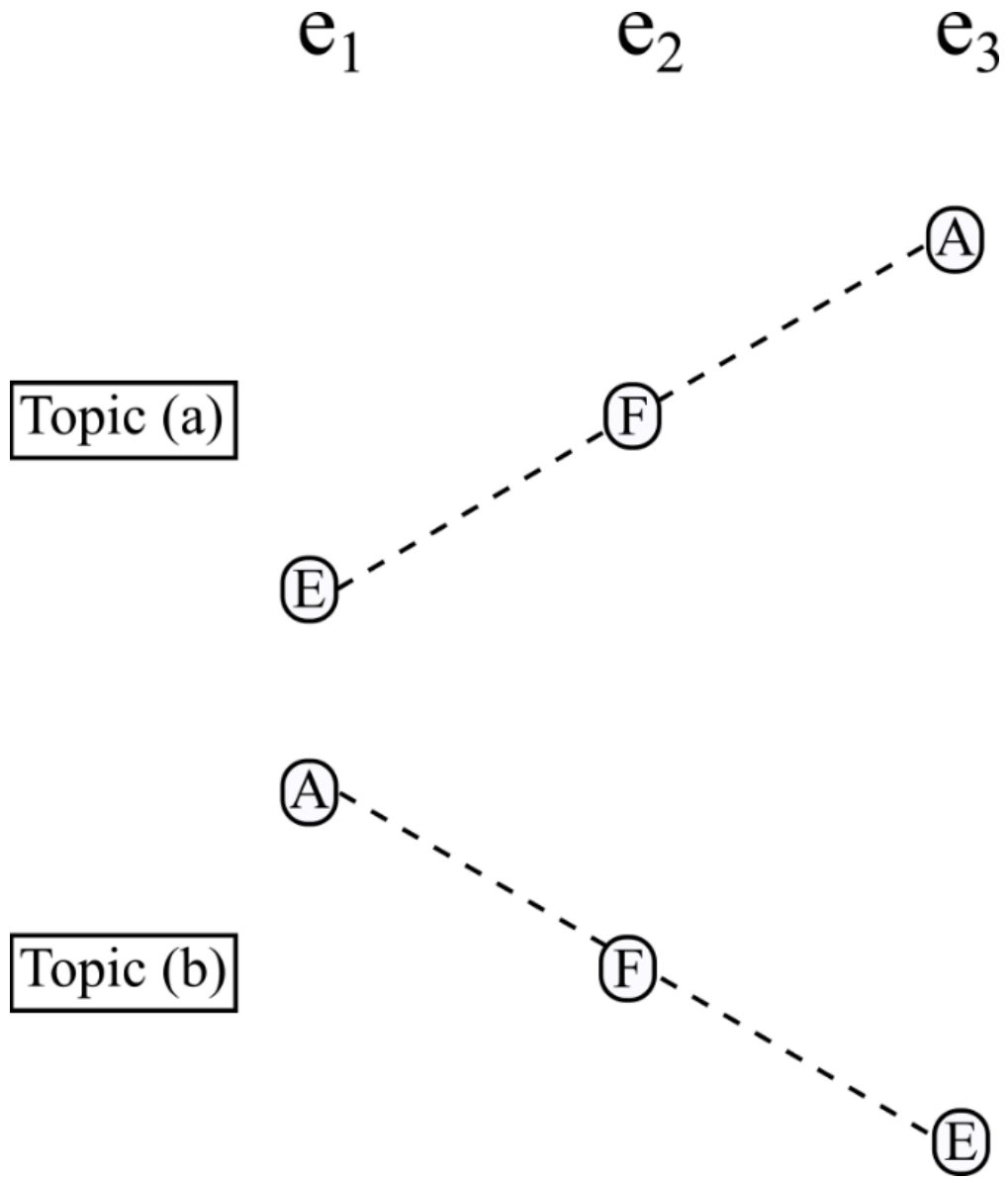
pp

Hrn., Trp., Tbn. con sord.

Chorale


(E) ——— (F) ——— (A)

Example 8. Two isotopies in a more open relationship




Example 9. The interaction between the Sound Mass and Chorale topics across movements in Ligeti, Hamburg Concerto

Event: e_1 Location (mvt./m.): 1/4



Event: e_2 Location (mvt./m.): 1/9




Sound Mass

Chorale

Event: e_3 Location (mvt./m.): II/16


Meno mosso, calmo



Event: e_4 Location (mvt./m.): V/I

Corno Solo (Fa/Sis) in Sib

senza sord.



Event: e_5 Location (mvt./m.): VII/1

Strings

Natural Horns




Diagram showing topic interaction across events e_1 to e_5 with key markers A and F.

Example 10. The Exposition of Adès, Piano Quintet, showing two interacting isotopies of the Horn Call and Chorale (the lowest line maps the topics onto key markers of a Sonata Exposition)

[Download PDF of Example 10]