

# Changing Tonic Identity and Function in Max Reger's *Variations on a Theme of Mozart* (1914)



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# Theme, Contrasting Middle and Reprise

9 10 11 12

Theme

13 14-16 17 18

Theme

Detailed description: The image shows two staves of musical notation in treble clef with a key signature of three sharps (F#, C#, G#). The first staff, labeled 'Theme', contains measures 9 through 12. Measure 9 starts with a quarter rest followed by a dotted quarter note on G4, an eighth note on A4, and another eighth note on G4. Measure 10 begins with a half note on G4. Measure 11 contains two eighth notes on A4 and G4. Measure 12 consists of two eighth notes on G4 and F#4. The second staff, also labeled 'Theme', contains measures 13 through 18. Measure 13 is identical to measure 9. Measures 14-16 are represented by a dashed line, indicating a contrasting middle section. Measure 17 starts with a quarter note on G4, followed by eighth notes on A4 and G4. Measure 18 features a quarter note on G4, an eighth note on A4, and a quarter note on G4. The notes in measures 17 and 18 are highlighted with red dots.

**Theme**

9 10 11 12

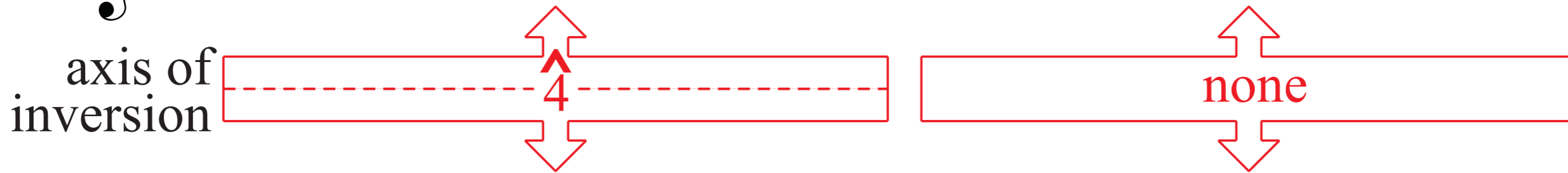
**Var. 2**

**Theme**

13 14-16 17 18

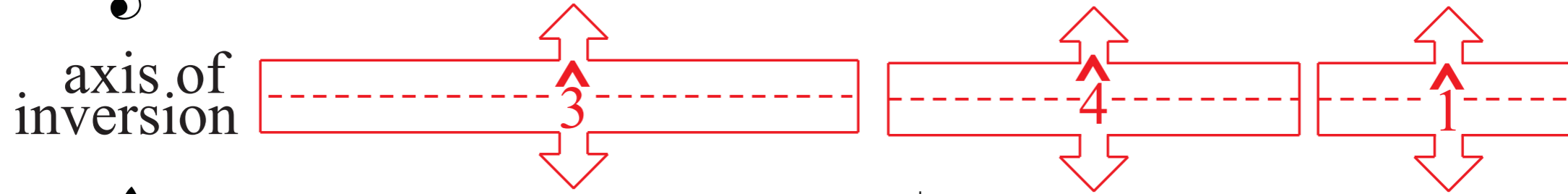
**Var. 2**

Theme



Var. 2

Theme



Var. 2

9 10 11 12

Theme

axis of inversion

4 none

Var. 2

13 14-16 17 18

Theme

axis of inversion

3 4 1

Var. 2

9 10 11 12

**Theme**

axis of inversion

4 none

**Var. 2**

Detailed description: This block shows measures 9 through 12 of a musical piece. The top staff is the 'Theme' in A major (three sharps). The bottom staff is 'Var. 2' in B minor (two flats). A yellow box highlights measures 11 and 12. Between the staves, red arrows and boxes indicate the 'axis of inversion'. For measures 9 and 10, the axis is 4. For measures 11 and 12, the axis is 'none'.

13 14-16 17 18

**Theme**

axis of inversion

3 4 1

**Var. 2**

Detailed description: This block shows measures 13 through 18. The top staff is the 'Theme' in A major. The bottom staff is 'Var. 2' in B minor. Measures 14-16 are indicated by dashed lines. Red dots highlight notes in measures 17 and 18. Red arrows and boxes indicate the 'axis of inversion': 3 for measure 13, 4 for measures 14-16, and 1 for measure 17.

9 10 11 12

Theme

axis of inversion

4

none

Var. 2

13 14-16 17 18

Theme

axis of inversion

3

4

1

Var. 2

Theme

axis of inversion

Var. 2

Theme

axis of inversion

Var. 2



Theme

9 10 11 12

A: I<sub>3</sub><sup>5</sup> — 4 — 5 I V<sub>5</sub><sup>6</sup> I vii<sup>o6</sup> V<sub>4</sub><sup>6</sup> — 5

Var. 2

F: I<sup>b7</sup> 9 7 8 3 3 3 3

a: i<sup>6</sup> V<sub>5</sub><sup>6</sup> VI<sup>6</sup>? F: I<sup>6</sup>? V?

10 11 12

5/3 I V<sub>5</sub><sup>6</sup> I vii<sup>°6</sup> V<sub>4-5/3</sub><sup>6</sup>

a: *i*<sup>6</sup> V<sub>5</sub><sup>6</sup> VI<sup>6</sup>? F: I<sup>6</sup>? V?

Leading tones of F and A

$V_5^6$

$VI^6?$

F:  $I^6?$

Chordal 7ths of  $V^7$  in F and A

$V?$

**Theme**

A: I V<sub>3</sub><sup>4</sup> I<sup>6</sup> IV V<sub>4-3</sub><sup>6-7</sup> I

Authentic Cadence

**Var. 2**

F: I<sup>6</sup> ii<sup>06</sup> vii<sup>07</sup> V I IV<sup>add6</sup> I

Authentic Cadence?

Plagal Cadence?

Theme

17 18

A: I V<sub>3</sub> I<sup>6</sup> IV V<sub>4-3</sub> I

Authentic Cadence

Var. 2

F: I<sup>6</sup> ii<sup>06</sup> vii<sup>07</sup> V I IV<sup>add6</sup> I

Authentic Cadence?

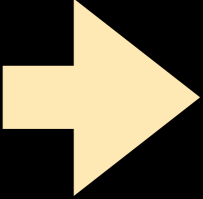
Plagal Cadence?

# Tonic

- (1) Tonic is a *pitch-class* identity.
- (2) Tonic is a *chord function*.
- (3) Tonic is a property of of a melodic theme.



# Tonic

- 
- (1) Tonic is a *pitch-class* identity.
  - (2) Tonic is a *chord function*.
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“(a) a focal pitch class  
(b) with respect to which all remaining pitch classes in some musical passage are hierarchically arranged and perceived  
(c) even in its acoustic absence.”

Rings 2019

# Tonic

- (1) Tonic is a *pitch-class* identity.
- ➔ (2) Tonic is a *chord function*.
- (3) Tonic is a property of of a melodic theme.

Property of single chords by which they create a sufficient effect of stability to at least temporarily remove the need for continuation and to extinguish expectation about what chord will occur next.

Doll 2017





# Tonic

(1) Tonic is a *pitch-class* identity.

(2) Tonic is a *chord function*.

→ (3) Tonic is a property of of a melodic theme.



“[T]hematic exposition and lengthy Tonics are closely associated in chromatic music; indeed, the presence of one often induces a sense of the other.”

Harrison 1994

# Unravelling the Tonic

- (1) Tonic is a *pitch-class* identity.
- (2) Tonic is a *chord function*.
- (3) Tonic is a property of of a melodic theme.



# Exposition of Mozart's Theme

1 Antecedent 2 3 4 HC Consequent 5 6 7 8 PAC

6 6 4 3 7 6 6 6—5 4—3 I ii V I 6 6 4 3 7 6 6 8—7 8<sup>vb</sup> 6—5 4—3 I

# Important motives

The image displays a musical score for a piece in D major (two sharps) and 6/8 time. The score is divided into two main sections: an Antecedent phrase (measures 1-4) and a Consequent phrase (measures 5-8). The Antecedent phrase concludes with a Half Cadence (HC), and the Consequent phrase concludes with a Perfect Authentic Cadence (PAC). Fingerings are indicated by numbers 1-7, and chord voicings are shown with Roman numerals (I, ii, V) and specific voicing numbers (e.g., 6-5, 4-3). A final measure (measure 8) contains a fermata and a final chord voicing (8-7, 6-5, 4-3).

**Antecedent** HC **Consequent** PAC

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8

6 6 4 7 6 6 6 8<sup>vb</sup>

I ————— ii V I ————— ii V<sup>4</sup> I

6—5 4—3

# Motives in Variation 4

*chiasm* *scalar 4th*

The image shows a single staff of music in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#). The melody consists of the following notes: D4, E4, F#4, G4, A4, B4, C5, B4, A4, G4, F#4, E4, D4. The notes are grouped into four measures. A red bracket labeled 'chiasm' spans the first two measures (D4-E4-F#4-G4 and A4-B4-C5-B4-A4-G4-F#4-E4-D4). A second red bracket labeled 'scalar 4th' spans the last two measures (G4-F#4-E4-D4 and C5-B4-A4-G4-F#4-E4-D4). The final note is a quarter note with a sharp sign below it.

# Motives in Variation 4

The image displays two staves of musical notation in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#). The notation is divided into nine measures, each labeled with a number from 1 to 9. Motives 1 and 5 are highlighted with pink arrows pointing to them.

Motives 1-4 (top staff):  
1: F#4, G4, A4, B4, C5, B4, A4, G4, F#4  
2: F#4, G4, A4, B4, C5, B4, A4, G4, F#4  
3: F#4, G4, A4, B4, C5, B4, A4, G4, F#4  
4: F#4, G4, A4, B4, C5, B4, A4, G4, F#4

Motives 5-9 (bottom staff):  
5: F#4, G4, A4, B4, C5, B4, A4, G4, F#4  
6: F#4, G4, A4, B4, C5, B4, A4, G4, F#4  
7: F#4, G4, A4, B4, C5, B4, A4, G4, F#4  
8: F#4, G4, A4, B4, C5, B4, A4, G4, F#4  
9: F#4, G4, A4, B4, C5, B4, A4, G4, F#4

# Harmonization in Variation 4

1 2 3 4

Ab: V<sup>+</sup> I      Bb: V<sup>+</sup> I      C: V<sup>+</sup> e: bII<sup>6</sup> [bVII<sup>07</sup> i] VII<sup>07</sup> V  
 IV<sup>6</sup>

# Harmonization in Variation 4

5 6 7 8

Bo7 C7 F#7 FFr6 C#o7 Bo7 *sc.3rd*

“3rd”

D: V V<sup>+6</sup> I<sup>6</sup> C: vii<sup>o4</sup><sub>2</sub> 7 I

C: V<sup>+6</sup> I<sup>6</sup> E: V

*harmonic chiasm*



# Harmonization in Variation 4

“3rd”  
 C: V<sup>+6</sup> I<sup>6</sup>    D: V<sup>+</sup> I<sup>6</sup>    Bb: V<sup>+</sup> I<sup>6</sup>    C: VII<sup>04</sup>    C: V<sup>+</sup>    e: ♭II<sup>6</sup> [♭vii<sup>07</sup> i]    vii<sup>07</sup> V  
 C: V<sup>+6</sup> I<sup>6</sup>    E: V    C: VII<sup>04</sup>    C: V<sup>+</sup>    ♭IV<sup>6</sup>    ♭vii<sup>07</sup> i    vii<sup>07</sup> V  
*doll neighbors*

# Harmonization in Variation 4

5 6 7 8

Bo7 C7 F#7 FFr6 C#o7 Bo7 *sc.3rd*

D: V V<sup>+6</sup> I<sup>6</sup> C: vii<sup>o4</sup><sub>2</sub> 7 I

C: V<sup>+6</sup> I<sup>6</sup> E: V

*harmonic chiasm*

Bo7 C7 F#7 FFr6 C#o7 Bo7

D [N] [N] D

# Harmonization in Variation 4

5 6 7 8

Bo7 C7 F#7 FFr6 C#o7 Bo7 sc.3rd

“3rd”

D: V V<sup>+6</sup> I<sup>6</sup>

C: V<sup>+6</sup> I<sup>6</sup> E: V

C: vii<sup>o4</sup> 7 I

*harmonic chiasm*

16

Altered ending in written-out repeat

A: bvii<sup>o4</sup> vii<sup>o7</sup> I

# Variation 4, contrasting middle and beginning of reprise

Musical score for Variation 4, measures 10-14. The score is written for treble and bass staves. Measure 10 is marked with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). The first staff contains a melodic line with a slur and the instruction *arp*. The second staff contains a bass line with a slur and the instruction *arp*. Red annotations include a red '5' with a caret (^) above it, a red '6' with a caret (^) above it, a red '3' with a caret (^) above it, and a red '2' with a caret (^) above it. The word *etc.* is written to the right of the first staff. The score continues with measures 11, 12, 13, and 14, showing a progression of chords and melodic fragments.

Musical score for Variation 4, measures 15-19. The score is written for treble and bass staves. Measures 15, 16, 17, 18, and 19 are indicated above the staves. The score continues with measures 15, 16, 17, 18, and 19, showing a progression of chords and melodic fragments. The bass line in measure 17 includes a fermata over a whole note. The treble line in measure 17 includes a fermata over a whole note. The score concludes with measure 19.

# Variation 4, contrasting middle and beginning of reprise

The image displays a musical score for Variation 4, illustrating the contrast between the middle and the beginning of the reprise. The score is presented in two systems, each with a treble and bass clef staff.

**Top System:**

- Measures 10 and 11 are shown.
- The treble clef staff has a key signature of three sharps (F#, C#, G#).
- Measure 10 contains a melodic line with a dotted quarter note on G4, followed by eighth notes on A4 and B4. A red oval highlights these notes, with a red <sup>^</sup>5 above the first note.
- Measure 11 contains a melodic line with a quarter note on C5, followed by eighth notes on B4 and A4. A red <sup>^</sup>6 above the first note indicates the sixth scale degree.
- The bass clef staff shows an arpeggiated accompaniment for measures 10 and 11, with the word *arp* written below.
- Measure 11 ends with a dashed line, indicating the end of the section.

**Bottom System:**

- Measures 10 and 11 are shown.
- The treble clef staff has a key signature of one sharp (F#).
- Measure 10 contains a melodic line with a dotted quarter note on G4, followed by eighth notes on A4 and B4. A red oval highlights these notes, with a red <sup>^</sup>5 above the first note.
- Measure 11 contains a melodic line with a quarter note on C5, followed by eighth notes on B4 and A4. A red <sup>^</sup>6 above the first note indicates the sixth scale degree.
- The bass clef staff shows an arpeggiated accompaniment for measures 10 and 11, with the word *arp* written below.
- Measure 11 ends with the word *etc.*

# Variation 4, contrasting middle and beginning of reprise

The image displays a musical score for Variation 4, illustrating two contrasting versions of the middle section and the beginning of the reprise. The score is written in treble clef with a key signature of three sharps (F#, C#, G#).

**Top System:** Shows measures 10 and 11. Measure 10 contains a dotted quarter note followed by two eighth notes. Measure 11 contains a quarter note followed by two eighth notes. A red oval highlights the first two notes of measure 10, with the word *arp* written below them. Above measure 10 is a red <sup>5</sup> and above measure 11 is a red <sup>6</sup>. The staff continues with a dashed line, indicating a continuation of the piece.

**Middle System:** Shows measures 10 and 11. Measure 10 contains a dotted quarter note followed by two eighth notes. Measure 11 contains a quarter note followed by two eighth notes. A red oval highlights the first two notes of measure 10, with the word *arp* written above them. The word *etc.* is written to the right of measure 11.

**Bottom System:** Shows measures 10 and 11. Measure 10 contains a dotted quarter note followed by two eighth notes. Measure 11 contains a quarter note followed by two eighth notes. A red oval highlights the first two notes of measure 10, with the word *arp* written below them. Above measure 10 is a red <sup>5</sup> and above measure 11 is a red <sup>6</sup>.

# Variation 4, contrasting middle and beginning of reprise

11 13 14

^3 ^2

This block shows the first system of musical notation. It consists of two staves. The first staff is mostly dashed, with a few notes at the beginning and end. The second staff contains the main melody and accompaniment. Measures 13 and 14 are circled in red. Above measure 13 is a red '3' with a caret (^), and above measure 14 is a red '2' with a caret (^).

*etc.*

^3 ^2

This block shows the second system of musical notation. It consists of two staves. The first staff has a bracketed section on the left with the word "etc." written next to it. The rest of the system contains the main melody and accompaniment. Measures 13 and 14 are circled in red. Below measure 13 is a red '3' with a caret (^), and below measure 14 is a red '2' with a caret (^).

# Variation 4, tonic identities from first two phrases

10 *arp*  
*etc.*  
*arp* <sup>^5</sup> <sup>^6</sup>  
<sup>^3</sup> <sup>^2</sup>

c: i

*bvi*

*#III<sup>6</sup>*

*vii<sup>o7</sup>/V*

a: *vii<sup>o6</sup><sub>5</sub>/V*

*bII<sup>6</sup><sub>4</sub>*

*V<sup>6-5</sup><sub>3</sub><sup>7</sup>*





# Variation 4, tonic identities from first two phrases

10 *arp*  
*etc.*  
*arp* <sup>^5</sup> <sup>^6</sup>  
<sup>^3</sup> <sup>^2</sup>

Ⓢ c:

i

*bvi*

*#III*<sup>6</sup>

*vii*<sup>o7</sup>/V

Ⓢ a: *vii*<sup>o6</sup><sub>5</sub>/V

*bII*<sup>6</sup><sub>4</sub>

V <sup>6</sup><sub>3</sub>—<sup>7</sup><sub>5</sub>



# Variation 4, tonic identities from first two phrases

10 arp etc. arp ^5 ^6 ^3 ^2

c: i      *bvi*      *#III<sup>6</sup>*      *vii<sup>o7</sup>/V*  
a: *vii<sup>o6</sup>/V*      *bII<sup>6</sup>*      *V<sup>6-5</sup>*  
Ab: *Ger<sup>6</sup>*      *V<sup>+</sup>*      I





# Thematic Structure of Theme & Variation 4

**A:** antecedent consequent

Intervallic analysis for Theme A:  $\hat{3} \hat{5}$  (antecedent),  $\hat{3} \hat{2} \hat{3} \hat{5}$  (consequent),  $\hat{3} \hat{2} \hat{1}$  (ending).

The musical notation for Theme A is in treble clef, key of D major (two sharps), and 6/8 time. It consists of two phrases: an antecedent phrase (measures 1-4) and a consequent phrase (measures 5-8). A dashed blue line connects the first and last notes of the antecedent phrase to the first and last notes of the consequent phrase, respectively. The intervallic analysis above the staff shows the pitch contours: the antecedent phrase starts on a third and moves to a fifth; the consequent phrase starts on a third, moves to a second, then a third, and finally a fifth; the phrase concludes with a descending line from a third to a second to a first.

**e:** antecedent consequent

Intervallic analysis for Theme e:  $\hat{3}$  (antecedent),  $\hat{5} \hat{3} \hat{2} \hat{3}$  (consequent),  $\hat{5} \hat{3} \hat{2} \hat{1}$  (ending).

The musical notation for Theme e is in treble clef, key of D major (one sharp), and 2/4 time. It consists of two phrases: an antecedent phrase (measures 1-4) and a consequent phrase (measures 5-8). A dashed blue line connects the first and last notes of the antecedent phrase to the first and last notes of the consequent phrase, respectively. The intervallic analysis above the staff shows the pitch contours: the antecedent phrase starts on a third; the consequent phrase starts on a fifth, moves to a third, then a second, and finally a third; the phrase concludes with a descending line from a fifth to a third to a second to a first.

# Opening of Variation 8

E:  $\hat{3}$   $\hat{4}$   $\hat{3}$   $\hat{5}$        $\hat{2}$   $\hat{b3}$   $\hat{2}$   $\hat{4}$

The image displays a musical score for the opening of Variation 8. It consists of two measures, each with a treble and bass staff. The key signature is E major (three sharps) for the first measure and B minor (two flats) for the second. The time signature is 6/4. Above the first measure, a blue box contains the letter 'E' with a colon, followed by four red notes with carets: 3, 4, 3, 5. Above the second measure, there are four red notes with carets: 2, b3, 2, 4. A small '2' is written above the first note of the second measure. The bass staff contains a complex accompaniment with many beamed notes and slurs. Below the staves, the chord symbols are given as c#: V<sub>4</sub><sup>6</sup> 4/2 and b: V<sub>4</sub><sup>6</sup> 4/2.

c#: V<sub>4</sub><sup>6</sup> 4/2      b: V<sub>4</sub><sup>6</sup> 4/2

# Opening of Variation 8

E:  $\overset{\wedge}{3}$   $\overset{\wedge}{4}$   $\overset{\wedge}{3}$   $\overset{\wedge}{5}$   $\overset{\wedge}{2}$   $\overset{\wedge}{b3}$   $\overset{\wedge}{2}$   $\overset{\wedge}{4}$

2

c#:  $V_4^6$   $\frac{4}{2}$       b:  $V_4^6$   $\frac{4}{2}$

# Opening of Variation 8

c#: V<sub>4</sub><sup>6</sup> 4/2

b: V<sub>4</sub><sup>6</sup> 4/2

**B#o7** **F#7** **G#7** **C7** **FFr6** **G#7 [P<sub>4</sub><sup>6</sup>]** **B#o7** **B7**  
 3 **A#o7** **D<sub>4</sub>Fr6** **B#o7** **Eo<sub>4</sub><sup>7</sup>** **B#o7**

c#: vii<sup>o7</sup>

o7 arpeggiation

vii<sup>o7</sup>

E: vii<sub>2</sub><sup>o4</sup> V<sup>7</sup>

# Conclusions

- (1) Tonic is a *pitch-class* identity.
- (2) Tonic is a *chord function*.
- (3) Tonic is a property of of a melodic theme.





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