Anything contrapuntal has to do with counterpoint, which is a type of music that has two melodic lines played at the same time. Many kinds of music (such as rock and country) are very simple, but others are more complex: such as contrapuntal tunes.

You can also call contrapuntal music polyphonic.

For Steinbeck, this took the form of short, lyrical chapters interspersed with longer, narrative chapters. These are known as intercalary (in TER kuh lare ee) chapters.