

The Americanization of Arnold Schoenberg?

Theory, Analysis, and Reception¹

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This article surveys the reception of Arnold Schoenberg's theoretical ideas in English-language music theory, with a primary (though not exclusive) focus on their reception in the United States. William Rothstein has chronicled how Heinrich Schenker's ideas were modified to conform to the American music-theoretical discourse ("Americanization"). The question then arises: Were Schoenberg's theoretical ideas also similarly modified? After a preliminary overview of the availability of Schoenberg's theoretical writing in English translation, four topics in Schoenberg's thought are traced, with a focus on the post-war era: 1) harmony; 2) form; 3) thematic and motivic transformation; and 4) aesthetics. The American reception of Schoenberg's theoretical ideas has tended to focus on the music-technical dimension of his theoretical texts and has, to a significant extent, ignored the more philosophical and aesthetic aspects of his thought. It has tended to place emphasis on how music is structured and how that structure is unified; there has been less concern with why such unity is important in a broader sense.

Dieser Aufsatz gibt einen Überblick über die Rezeption von Arnold Schönbergs theoretischem Denken in der englischsprachigen Musiktheorie, wobei der Fokus, wenn auch nicht ausschließlich, auf der Rezeption in den Vereinigten Staaten liegt. William Rothstein hat dargestellt, wie Heinrich Schenkers Theorie im Zuge einer Anpassung an den amerikanischen musiktheoretischen Diskurs modifiziert wurde ("Americanization"). Dies legt die Frage nahe, ob auch Schönbergs theoretisches Denken in ähnlicher Weise modifiziert worden ist. Nach einer einführenden Übersicht über die Verfügbarkeit von Schönbergs Schriften in englischen Übersetzungen werden vier Themenbereiche von Schönbergs Denken in der anglophonen Musiktheorie verfolgt, wobei der Schwerpunkt auf der Nachkriegszeit liegt: 1) Harmonik; 2) Form; 3) thematische und motivische Transformation; 4) Ästhetik. Die amerikanische Rezeption von Schönbergs Theorien tendierte dazu, die technischen Aspekte in seinen Schriften herauszustellen, und vernachlässigte dabei in einem signifikanten Ausmaß die stärker philosophischen und ästhetischen Aspekte seines Denkens. Die Schönberg-Rezeption in den USA hat also ein starkes Gewicht auf Fragen musikalischer Struktur und struktureller Einheit gelegt; weniger wurde hingegen danach gefragt, warum eine solche Einheit in einem umfassenderen Sinn erstrebenswert ist.

Schlagworte/Keywords: Arnold Schoenberg; developing variation; entwickelnde Variation; Grundgestalt; Harmonielehre; motivic analysis; motivische Analyse; musical form; musical idea; musikalischer Gedanke; reception; Rezeption; thematic analysis; thematische Analyse; theory of harmony; USA; Vereinigte Staaten

In his 1986 article entitled "The Americanization of Heinrich Schenker," William Rothstein explores the development of Schenkerian theory and analysis in North America in the decades following the Second World War. Reflecting on how Schenker's ideas had been absorbed, disseminated, and, to a certain extent, adapted by the English-speaking academic community in the United States, Rothstein remarks:

1 I would like to thank Severine Neff and Jonathan Dunsby for reading an earlier version of this article and offering useful comments. I would also like to thank the editors of the journal and the anonymous readers for their valuable feedback and suggestions.

I do not really imagine that there exists a secret room – somewhere at Mannes, for example, that being the Mecca of our movement – in which fanatical Schenkerians plot new conquests. Nor do I believe that there is a map in that room with pins stuck in it, each pin representing a music department or conservatory at which Schenkerianism is propagated. But it is at least not too difficult to imagine what such a map would look like; and, wherever it might be, it is certain that the number of pins in it is steadily increasing. Clearly, the Schenkerian empire is still in its expanding phase.²

The tone of Rothstein's evaluation is playful and tongue-in-cheek, but his characterization nevertheless captures a sense that at least some academics at the time were alarmed – and perhaps also threatened – by the spread of Schenkerian theory in music departments across the country.³ This conquering of intradisciplinary territory, however, did not occur without incurring significant casualties: even as Schenker's ideas were gaining acceptance among theorists, certain adjustments had to be made in the way American academics discussed and applied Schenker's ideas. Rothstein writes that "Schenker's voice is that of the prophet, pronouncing sacred mysteries from on high,"⁴ while the "American academic dialect" is "sober and dispassionate" and requires that "no tenet should be too fiercely held."⁵ Rothstein notes that such cultural adjustments, though they facilitate the American reception of Schenker's ideas, lead to subtle, but fundamental, changes in Schenkerian theory and the claims it may make.⁶ Extending and expanding Rothstein's observations, Robert Snarrenberg argues that even more was lost in the transatlantic journey of Schenker's thought. For Snarrenberg, the Americanization of Schenkerian thought abandons one of Schenker's central aesthetic ideals: the notion of organicism.⁷ Schenker's ideas are Americanized when they are adjusted to more closely conform to the values, practices, and priorities of American music theory discourse. Schenker's thought is thus not only Americanized, it seems, but also transformed.

2 Rothstein 1986, 5.

3 Eugene Narmour in 1977 offered an early extended critique of American Schenkerism, arguing that "despite its importance in our current wholesale revision of tonal theory, Schenkerism is fatally defective in several crucial ways" (1977, 2). In 1985, Joseph Kerman provided a broad overview of the development of American music theory, though his interpretation has proven to be somewhat controversial (1985, 60–112; see also Kerman 1980). The use of the term "Americanization" in what follows is admittedly imprecise. "American" or "North American" music theory here is meant to identify English-language scholarship that focuses on texts primarily from the United States. Writings originating in Canada and Britain also figure into this study, since work from these other Anglophone countries is often easily accessible to American scholars. It is clear, however, that an account of the Schoenberg theoretical legacy that focused on British music theory might differ in many ways from the one presented here.

4 Rothstein 1986, 10.

5 *Ibid.*, 9.

6 Rothstein discusses the debate over several passages that were initially excised from the 1979 English translation of Schenker's *Der freie Satz* (which ultimately appeared in Appendix Four), referring to at least some of these "peripheral ramblings" as "objectionable" and "reactionary," while arguing convincingly for their inclusion (*ibid.*, 8). He also illustrates his observations regarding writing style by comparing the writing of Schenker with that of Oswald Jonas ("the poet"), Felix Salzer ("kindly authority"), and Allen Forte ("cool taxonomist") (*ibid.*, 11–13).

7 Snarrenberg 1994. Snarrenberg focuses on Schenker's use of the metaphor of human procreation, ultimately contrasting this with Forte's "scientification of Schenkerian rhetoric," which Snarrenberg sees as "replacing Schenker the artist with Schenker the scientist" (*ibid.*, 52).

Discussions of Arnold Schoenberg's theoretical writing in English are often laced with comparisons to Schenker's work. Jonathan Dunsby, for instance, refers to Schenker in remarking that "one cannot speak of Schoenberg as the 'above all' in music theory without returning to Vienna and that other ascendant – but not, I believe, transcendent – theorist."⁸ In fact, according to Dunsby, the expansion of Schenkerianism in England and the United States has "distracted the attention of a large community of potential students of Schoenberg's theories."⁹ More than a decade earlier, Walter Frisch observed that "the Schoenberg critical tradition has been slow to establish itself in the United States" and that "one reason undoubtedly is the dominance of Schenkerian analysis and theory."¹⁰ Whatever role Schenkerianism may have played in the marginalization of Schoenberg's theoretical work in North America over the past several decades, the notion that Schenker's ideas were altered in their intercontinental translation raises questions about the American reception of Schoenberg's work. Have Schoenberg's ideas also been adapted to fit North American academic culture? And if so, have they too been transformed? In this sense, has there been an "Americanization" of Arnold Schoenberg?

In considering the reception of Schoenberg's theories in the American academy, it will be useful to make several distinctions about the focus of our investigation. While Schoenberg is most often celebrated primarily as a composer – indeed as one of the most consequential composers of the twentieth century – his compositions will be considered only peripherally in what follows. We will instead explore the impact of his theoretical writing, and most of the music Schoenberg considers in these texts is, in fact, music composed by others (or even music that might potentially be composed, either by himself or others). We will also not focus on the substantial body of theoretical and analytical scholarship concerning Schoenberg's music when that scholarship is not centrally based in Schoenberg's theoretical works. Certainly the logical unfolding of musical material plays a central role in Milton Babbitt's theories of twelve-tone music, just as the unity of musical time and space regarding pitch relationships is crucial to Allen Forte's (pitch-class sets) and George Perle's (intervallic cells) theories of atonal music.¹¹ Likewise, the importance of motivic unity can be observed in the work of David Lewin and Andrew Mead.¹² But while these writings ground themselves in important aspects of Schoenbergian musical values, they are developed more from Schoenberg's compositional practice than from his theoretical works. That is, they are grounded more on what he did as a com-

8 Dunsby 1997, 191. This comparison is still very much alive. Matthew Arndt's recent book (2018) provides an in-depth comparison between Schoenberg and Schenker.

9 Dunsby 1997, 192. Dunsby continues: "Schoenbergians may take some grim satisfaction in knowing that this has happened to Schenker too, who has been marginalized in the German-speaking countries by yet other cultural forces" (ibid.). The differences between German- and English-language receptions of Schoenberg's theoretical ideas will be discussed below.

10 Frisch 1984, 30. Frisch goes on to write: "Another is that [...] Schoenberg was not a systematic thinker; his concepts cannot easily be shaped into the kind of unified comprehensive theory of music favored by many American academics" (ibid., 30). Kofi Agawu (1988) takes issue with this second characterization of Schoenberg's thought and Dunsby (1997) highlights the differences between these two scholars' understanding of Schoenberg's analyses.

11 See especially Babbitt 1960; Babbitt 1961; Forte 1972; Forte 1973; Perle 1962.

12 See especially Lewin 1962; Mead 1985.

poser than on what he wrote as a theorist.¹³ Questions of Americanization in what follows are also not primarily concerned with possible changes or adjustments in Schoenberg's personal, intellectual, or professional life during his years in America, nor in the ways he may have adjusted his own theoretical writing to address contexts in his new homeland – his “self-Americanization.” These matters have been explored by Dika Newlin¹⁴ and most recently and comprehensively by Sabine Feisst,¹⁵ among others. Our primary concern will be to track how Schoenberg's theoretical ideas were adopted and developed in English by others (primarily in North America), as well as to determine how these ideas might have been adapted, adjusted, and even transformed in the process.

1. ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS OF SCHOENBERG'S WRITINGS

As we begin, let us briefly survey how much of Schoenberg's writing has been available in English over the decades, and even how Schoenberg's theoretical ideas might have been transmitted through others. While an English translation of Egon Wellesz's biography of Schoenberg was published in 1925, and Frederick Martens's brief biography had appeared in 1922, technical writing about Schoenberg's music and thought in English was less common in the period before the late 1940s.¹⁶ While we often think of Erwin Stein's 1924 essay “Neue Formprinzipien” as an important early description of Schoenberg's compositional practice leading up to the twelve-tone method (and as having a certain authority by virtue of coming from inside the Schoenberg circle), the English translation of this essay did not appear until 1953 when it was included in Stein's *Orpheus in New Guises*. Stein did, however, publish a substantial essay on Schoenberg's twelve-tone music in the New York-based periodical *Modern Music* in 1930. Other early treatments of Schoenberg's music can be found in texts by Hugo Leichtentritt, Richard S. Hill, Ernst Krenek, and Karl Eschman, among others.¹⁷ Dika Newlin's translation of René Leibowitz's *Schoenberg and His School* appeared in 1949, only two years after the original edition in

13 The analytical literature devoted to Schoenberg's music in English is vast and beyond the scope of this article. For representative book-length analytical studies, however, see Haimo 1990; Frisch 1993; Simms 2000; Haimo 2006; Boss 2014. See also Whittall 2001 for a survey of English-language scholarship on Schoenberg through the second half of the twentieth century, and Street 2015 for a survey that picks up about where Whittall leaves off. Bryan Simms (1998) offers a rich survey of Schoenberg's theoretical thought and its reception in a chapter that is cast more broadly and with different emphases than the present study. Simms includes European scholarship while also surveying analytical writing on Schoenberg's music that is not grounded primarily in Schoenberg's theoretical work, producing a valuable account of Schoenberg's theoretical legacy through the 1990s.

14 Newlin 1980.

15 Feisst 2011.

16 Biographical information and relatively non-technical descriptions of Schoenberg's compositions were common. Feisst reports that “from 1914 Schoenberg was much discussed in America in feature articles and, in the context of modernism, in national newspapers, professional journals, and books” (ibid., 31).

17 Leichtentritt 1928; Hill 1936; Krenek 1944; Eschman 1945. Krenek's brief treatment of Schoenberg's music appears in a special issue celebrating Schoenberg's seventieth birthday; other contributors are Lou Harrison and Kurt List. Krenek and others wrote on twelve-tone technique from a compositional perspective during this time as well, presenting approaches and techniques that differ from those of Schoenberg. For a fuller discussion of the history of twelve-tone theory in this broader context, see Covach 2002, 613–617. See also Feisst 2011, 235–251.

French and with Newlin remarking that it was “the book those of us who consider the Schoenberg tradition the most fruitful trend of today had been wanting for years.”¹⁸ Schoenberg himself had published only two essays in English before the publication of *Models for Beginners in Composition* in 1943: “Tonality and Form” in 1925 and “Problems of Harmony” in 1934.¹⁹ By 1950, however, there was more of Schoenberg’s theoretical and aesthetic writing in print: an abridged translation of *Theory of Harmony* was published in the US in 1948, the first version of *Style and Idea* in 1950 (published in 1951 in the UK),²⁰ and *Structural Functions of Harmony* appeared on both sides of the Atlantic in 1954.²¹

In the decades since 1950, more and more of Schoenberg’s theoretical writing became available. An expanded edition of *Style and Idea* was published in 1975 and included additional theoretical essays,²² while a full translation of the *Harmonielehre* (third edition) appeared in 1978.²³ Scholars now have two of Schoenberg’s previously unpublished theoretical works, *Coherence, Counterpoint, Instrumentation, Instruction in Form* (*Zusammenhang, Kontrapunkt, Instrumentation, Formenlehre*, or “ZKIF”)²⁴ and *The Musical Idea and the Logic, Technique, and Art of Its Presentation* (“*The Gedanke Manuscript*”),²⁵ both in authoritatively annotated editions.²⁶ In addition, J. Daniel Jenkins provides scholars with a comprehensive collection of additional texts by Schoenberg.²⁷ Much as with Schenkerian scholarship in English, which has also witnessed the publication of several authoritative English translations over the last two decades, Schoenberg scholarship today is well positioned in terms of source material.²⁸

2. THE RECEPTION OF SCHOENBERG’S THEORETICAL WRITINGS IN AMERICAN MUSIC THEORY

As we survey the range of Schoenberg’s theoretical writing, then, it is possible to organize it – provisionally and for the sake of discussion – into four categories: 1) tonal harmony and counterpoint; 2) form; 3) thematic and motivic analysis; and 4) aesthetics. While

18 Newlin in Leibowitz 1949, vii.

19 Feisst (2011, 33) lists two additional minor items by Schoenberg that appeared in the *Etude* in 1923.

20 Schoenberg 1948; Schoenberg 1950.

21 Schoenberg 1954. See Neff 1994 for a chronology of Schoenberg’s published and unpublished writing. Much of her article also appears as the Introduction to Schoenberg 1994.

22 Schoenberg 1975.

23 Schoenberg 1978.

24 Schoenberg 1994.

25 Schoenberg 1995.

26 See also Cross 2007; Cross 2012.

27 Jenkins 2016.

28 Jenkins 2016 is part of the series *Schoenberg in Words* published by Oxford University Press and edited by Severine Neff and Sabine Feisst that to date also includes two volumes of Schoenberg correspondence and a new edition of *Models for Beginners in Composition* (see Ulrich Krämer’s review in *ZGMTH* 15/1, <https://doi.org/10.31751/959>, 20 Oct 2018). New editions of *Preliminary Exercises in Counterpoint* and *Fundamentals of Musical Composition* are in preparation, along with additional volumes devoted to correspondence as well as performance issues and musical form.

these categories exist together in Schoenberg's thought, they have tended to develop along separate paths in American scholarship in the period since 1950.²⁹

2.1. Harmony and Counterpoint

Schoenberg's *Theory of Harmony* has the longest history in American music theoretical writing.³⁰ Among the first engagements with Schoenberg's theoretical thought in English is the 1915 review by Edward Kilenyi of the original 1911 German-language edition of the *Harmonielehre*.³¹ Kilenyi's description of Schoenberg's ideas gave rise to published critical responses, including one from composer and theorist Percy Goetschius.³² More recently, Graham Phipps,³³ Murray Dineen,³⁴ Howard Cinnamon,³⁵ and Patricia Carpenter³⁶ have employed Schoenberg's ideas, drawn both from *Theory of Harmony* as well as *Structural Functions of Harmony*, to produce Schoenbergian analyses of pieces by Schoenberg, Webern, and others. While Dineen and Carpenter restrict their application of Schoenberg's ideas to tonal music, Phipps also applies Schoenberg's harmonic theories to twelve-tone works (Schoenberg's Variations for Orchestra op. 31 and Webern's Variations for Orchestra op. 30),³⁷ while Cinnamon employs these ideas to analyze atonal music (Schoenberg's Three Piano Pieces op. 11). Dineen engages Schoenberg's ideas on counterpoint, employing examples by J. S. Bach to illustrate his points.³⁸ Schoenberg's harmonic theory has also been studied in a historical context, with Robert Wason providing the authoritative English-language interpretation of Schoenberg's theories in terms of the history of theory.³⁹ While Schoenberg's harmonic theories are powerful – especially so in grappling with chromatic harmony and with passages where tonal centers become ambiguous – his ideas in this area have remained at the margins of American music theory, especially in comparison with those of Schenker.

29 For an early overview of Schoenberg's theoretical writing, see Goehr 1974. The division employed here does not reflect Schoenberg's division of these topics and is employed only to facilitate the present discussion.

30 Bryan Simms (1982) provides a detailed historical account of how the *Harmonielehre* came to be translated into English – a story filled with many twists and turns that resulted in two English versions and numerous false starts.

31 Kilenyi 1915.

32 Goetschius 1915.

33 Phipps 1976; Phipps 1986; Phipps 1993.

34 Dineen 1989; Dineen 1993.

35 Cinnamon 1993.

36 Carpenter 1997.

37 Phipps 1976; Phipps 1993.

38 Dineen 1993.

39 Wason 1985. See also Wason 1981 for a review of the 1978 translation of the *Harmonielehre* that also places Schoenberg's theorizing in a historical context with regard to that particular work.

2.2. Form

If Schoenberg's ideas on harmony are more often acknowledged than adopted, his ideas on form are a different matter. Published posthumously in 1967, Schoenberg's *Fundamentals of Musical Composition* arises from materials he used in teaching university courses in Southern California. As Severine Neff has detailed, however, Schoenberg had planned such a book as early as 1911, intending it as a project that would follow up on the publication of *Harmonielehre*.⁴⁰ Schoenberg's European student Erwin Ratz extended and expanded Schoenberg's theories,⁴¹ and in 1998 William Caplin gave these concepts their fullest and most extended treatment in English. Over the last two decades, Caplin's *Classical Form* has become required reading for most graduate students in music theory in North America. Along with James Hepokoski's and Warren Darcy's *Elements of Sonata Theory* from 2006 (a work that is not particularly Schoenbergian), it has propelled the study of form to the center of the discipline. Caplin writes that his book "is intended to revive the *Formenlehre* tradition by establishing it on more secure and sophisticated foundations" and that "this study strives to realize ideals implicit in the writings of Schoenberg and Ratz by formulating a comprehensive theory of formal functions."⁴² While Caplin's book has its detractors – Hepokoski and Darcy, for instance, declare that "in the end, what was provided was an elaborate taxonomy of different kinds of phrase-and-section juxtapositions"⁴³ – it has probably impacted current American music theory at least as strongly as any other aspect of the Schoenbergian theoretical legacy.⁴⁴

2.3. Thematic and Motivic Analysis

Of the various aspects of Schoenberg's theoretical thought, his thoughts on thematic and motivic analysis have probably been the most often engaged, while also being the most controversial among English-language scholars.⁴⁵ The notions of "developing variation" (*entwickelnde Variation*), "basic shape" (*Grundgestalt*), and "musical idea" (*musikalischer Gedanke*) have been used individually and in combination by a wide range of scholars since the early 1950s.⁴⁶ The first book committed to the topic of thematic unity and organi-

40 Neff 1994.

41 Ratz 1973.

42 Caplin 1998, 3.

43 Hepokoski/Darcy 2006, 6.

44 In their survey of previous scholarship on form, Hepokoski and Darcy (2006, 3–6) identify four approaches and consider one key work to represent each. Caplin's book is chosen for the Schoenberg tradition, while Leonard Ratner's *Classic Music: Expression, Form, and Style* (1980), Charles Rosen's *Sonata Forms* (1980), and Schenker's *Der freie Satz* (1935) are taken to represent the other three approaches. It is perhaps noteworthy that the first example is based on Schoenberg's theories, the second is written by a student of Schoenberg, the third is written by an author who also wrote a book on Schoenberg, and the fourth is Schenker.

45 Nicole Grimes (2012) provides a useful study of possible sources of Schoenberg's ideas on thematic/motivic development, placing a special emphasis on the music of Brahms and complementing Frisch 1984.

46 For historical surveys of thematic and motivic analysis, see Dunsby 2002, Dudeque 2005, and Wörner 2009. As Neff 1999 explains, developing variation is only one of three modes of presentation outlined

cism to make a significant impact on English-language readers was Rudolph Réti's *The Thematic Process in Music*.⁴⁷ Though it does not claim Schoenberg's ideas as a foundation, Réti's book is, according to Hans Keller, "unthinkable" without Schoenberg.⁴⁸ Réti's volume focuses on tonal music, with Beethoven as the central figure. Keller's own analyses, which were certainly more influential in England than in America, depend heavily on thematic and motivic elements. Keller, like Réti, fully embraces the organic aesthetic, writing in a chapter devoted to Mozart's chamber music that "in a great piece there are always the elements of unity, not diversity, because a great piece grows from an all-embracing idea".⁴⁹ Alan Walker continues this focus on unity amid contrast, placing an emphasis on the perception of thematic relationships and the workings of the musical unconscious.⁵⁰

In 1954, Schoenberg's close student Josef Rufer published *Composition with Twelve Notes* in English translation, providing not only a detailed study of twelve-tone composition, but also an extended thematic analysis of Beethoven's op. 10/1 piano sonata.⁵¹ Erwin Stein describes the book as "authentic," and writes that Rufer's "ingenious" Beethoven analysis "proves that certain features of formal unity, thought to be characteristic for compositions with twelve notes, have similarly occurred in classical compositions with seven notes. A basic shape (*Grundgestalt*) is operative throughout the four movements – and this sonata is by no means an isolated case".⁵² The 1960s saw the posthumous publication of Réti's third book, *Thematic Patterns in Sonatas of Beethoven* (1967), assembled from a manuscript left unfinished at the time of his death in 1957.⁵³ Keller remained an important figure in England and Schoenberg's *Fundamentals of Musical Composition* (1967) appeared, as did a translation of his 1932 radio lecture, "Analysis of Four Songs, Op. 22" – an essay that Jack Boss would later expand upon to produce a more in-depth analysis of op. 22, extending Schoenberg's own application of developing variation in an atonal context.⁵⁴

by Schoenberg. The other two are envelopment (*Abwicklung*) and juxtaposition (*Juxtaposition*). See Di-
neen 1993 for an application of envelopment to Bach's counterpoint, and Neff 2009 and Heneghan
2009 for analytical discussions of juxtaposition in the context of Schoenberg's music.

47 Réti 1951.

48 Keller 1956, 93. Cited also by Frisch 1984, 22. As a pianist, Réti had been in contact with Schoenberg and his circle in Vienna, performing the premiere of Schoenberg's Three Piano Pieces op. 11 and also performing works by Josef Matthias Hauer and Egon Wellesz for the Society for Private Musical Performances in Vienna. See Smith 1986, 256–257. Réti immigrated to the United States in 1938.

49 Keller 1956, 90–91.

50 Walker 1962. For an extended discussion of Réti's analyses, see Cook 1987, 89–115. See also Dunsby/Whittall 1988, 88–94, and Bent 1987, 85–87.

51 Rufer 1954.

52 Stein 1955, 29. Stein's review of Rufer's book is immediately followed on the same page by a second review devoted to Schoenberg's *Structural Functions of Harmony*, which Stein also endorses.

53 Réti's second book, *Tonality, Atonality, Pantonality* (1958), had been finished at the time of the author's death, though it was also published posthumously. Interestingly, Schoenberg's twelve-tone method is the subject of some fairly harsh criticism in this volume.

54 Boss 1992. Schoenberg's radio lecture was subsequently reprinted in a collection of articles drawn from the journal *Perspectives of New Music* (Boretz/Cone 1972) devoted to writing on Schoenberg and Stravinsky. The contents of this volume provide a sense of the character of much American music-theoretical writing on Schoenberg during the 1960s and 70s. *Perspectives of New Music* (headquartered at Princeton University) first appeared in 1962; the *Journal for Music Theory* had been founded at Yale

The publication of two books grounded in Schoenberg's thematic and motivic theories, David Epstein's *Beyond Orpheus*⁵⁵ and Walter Frisch's *Brahms and the Principle of Developing Variation*,⁵⁶ stimulated new interest in Schoenberg's theories among American musical scholars. Both authors carefully distance themselves from Réti, with Epstein building especially on Rufer's book and placing much more emphasis on the basic shape (*Grundgestalt*) than Frisch does. Frisch understands developing variation primarily as a melodic technique, with less emphasis on larger-scale aspects of the idea, and as a consequence his analyses tend to trace thematic and motivic development.⁵⁷ Epstein, who blends Schoenberg's thinking with that of Schenker, traces thematic development but is also concerned – in a way that follows Rufer but also echoes Réti, Keller, and Walker – with issues of overall unity and coherence. Epstein's analysis of Beethoven's Third Symphony provides an excellent example of how effective his particular blend of Schoenberg and Schenker can be. Appearing at about the same time as the Epstein and Frisch books, Patricia Carpenter's article "Grundgestalt as Tonal Function"⁵⁸ provides a comprehensive analysis of Beethoven's "Appassionata" Sonata, completing a trio of publications that positioned Schoenberg's theoretical writing more centrally in the field of American musical scholarship than ever before. Other important work based on Schoenberg's thematic and motivic theories from these years came from Martha Hyde,⁵⁹ who focused on Schoenberg's twelve-tone music, and Severine Neff,⁶⁰ who provides an analysis of Schoenberg's First String Quartet op. 7. Together, they reinforced the rekindling of American interest in Schoenberg's theoretical thought fueled by Frisch, Epstein, and Carpenter.

2.4. Aesthetics

As Schoenberg's theoretical ideas moved from the specifics of harmony, form, and thematic/motivic development to address issues of compositional unity – especially on a large scale – his concerns tended toward the aesthetic and philosophical. Perhaps one of the most problematic elements of Schoenberg's writing is his use of the term "musical idea" (*musikalischer Gedanke*). It seems clear that Schoenberg meant to refer to something beyond – or behind – the motives, themes, harmonies, and forms in the music with

University in 1957. A survey of those two journals during the 1960s and 70s produces a representative picture of American music theory in the years leading up to the founding of the *Society for Music Theory* in 1978. Details and discussion of the founding of *SMT* and the establishment of its journal may be found in *Music Theory Spectrum* 1 (1979). *Music Theory Spectrum* 11/1 (1989) is a special issue devoted to the first ten years of *SMT* and features a series of overviews of the various topic areas (with bibliographies) within the discipline. Of eleven such overviews, Schenker is the only theorist to have one devoted solely to his work. Schoenberg as a theorist is barely mentioned – when he is, it is in the Schenker overview (along with Réti and Rufer).

55 Epstein 1979.

56 Frisch 1984.

57 Frisch's follow-up book on Schoenberg (1993) does not engage the Schoenberg theoretical tradition. Frisch writes that "however illuminating and stimulating, Schoenberg's theoretical writings should not – and by their nature cannot – be applied like a template or key to his own compositions" (*ibid.*, xv).

58 Carpenter 1983.

59 Hyde 1980; Hyde 1982.

60 Neff 1984.

this concept, but precisely what that something is remains open to interpretation. Patricia Carpenter,⁶¹ Severine Neff,⁶² and Charlotte Cross⁶³ have offered interpretations of the musical idea and its role in Schoenberg's thinking, and the publication of the *Gedanke* Manuscript has made even more of Schoenberg's remarks on this subject available to scholars.⁶⁴ Neff has offered convincing analyses⁶⁵ that – like Carpenter's from 1983⁶⁶ – build more comprehensively and thoroughly on Schoenberg's theories than those of Epstein or Frisch.

Carl Dahlhaus's interpretations of the musical idea, developing variation, and other aspects of Schoenberg's thought appeared in English translation in 1987 and offered perhaps the most convincing insight into Schoenberg's poetics and aesthetics. Dahlhaus especially takes account of the more philosophical and even spiritual aspects of Schoenberg's approach to music and composition, referred to by Dahlhaus as Schoenberg's "aesthetic theology" in one of these essays.⁶⁷ While Dahlhaus's work marks a somewhat rare appearance of German-language scholarship on Schoenberg's theories in the American music theory discourse (a topic to be discussed in more detail below), his writing has found only limited resonance among American Schoenberg scholars. Recalling Rothstein's observations about the "sober and dispassionate" character of American academic discourse, it is possible that many of Schoenberg's remarks on the musical idea are considered too "prophetic" for many American scholars. Whatever the reason, these philosophical and aesthetic aspects of Schoenberg's theoretical writing have mostly been ignored in favor of the more technical-analytic aspects.⁶⁸

3. AMERICANIZATION?

Having surveyed the four categories of Schoenberg's theoretical thought, we may now return to one of the principal questions that launched this discussion: Has Schoenberg's theoretical thought been Americanized? Has its reception been shaped by the same forces in academic culture that Rothstein identifies in regard to Schenker? The answer lies, at least in part, more in the "why" than in the "how" of Schoenbergian theory and analysis. In what proved to be a controversial essay entitled "How We Got into Analysis and How to Get Out," musicologist Joseph Kerman writes that "in his relatively limited body of writings on music, Schoenberg showed himself to be a brilliant theorist and

61 Carpenter 1967; Carpenter 1998.

62 Neff 1993; Carpenter/Neff 1997.

63 Cross 1980.

64 Schoenberg 1995. Alexander Goehr (1977) provided the first detailed study of the *Gedanke* Manuscript, ultimately concluding that it contained valuable new information but also expressing some reservations about the usefulness of producing a critical edition of the entire work.

65 Neff 2006; Neff 2009.

66 Carpenter 1983.

67 Dahlhaus 1987, 81–93.

68 Covach 2000 attempts to combine Dahlhaus's ideas with those of American music theory and twelve-tone analysis. See also Covach 1996 and Kurth 1995.

critic".⁶⁹ Kerman considers Schoenberg's ideas in a discussion of organic unity, and after asserting that "from the standpoint of the ruling ideology, analysis exists for the purpose of demonstrating organicism and organicism exists for the purposes of validating a certain body of works of art,"⁷⁰ he goes on to remark that "Schoenberg's really decisive insight [...] was to conceive of a way of continuing the great tradition while negating what everyone else felt to be at its very core, namely, tonality. He grasped the fact that what was central to the ideology was not the triad and tonality, as Schenker and Tovey believed, but organicism."⁷¹ According to Robert Morgan, Kerman's formulation regarding analysis, organicism, and ideology has been employed to condemn organicism's "stranglehold on analytical practice"⁷² – a stranglehold that has prompted several theorists to question the dominance of unity as a primary value in musical analysis.⁷³ Kerman's interpretation of Schoenberg's theoretical thought is insightful, but flawed. He is quite correct to identify organic unity as a value that is separable from tonality in Schoenberg's thought; it is, in fact, separable from atonality and the twelve-tone method as well. An important aspect of developing variation, basic shape, and the musical idea is that they are modes of construal and presentation that are not bound to specific musical vocabularies or even styles. Yet Kerman's notion that organicism, as demonstrated in analysis, serves only to validate certain works of art (and thus reinforce the ideology he identifies) is too limited and worldly, too grounded in the everyday. For Schoenberg, engagement with the musical idea is a kind of spiritual, or at least moral, experience. Ultimately, analysis is a means and not an end: it lifts us up so that we may catch a glimpse of something that transcends our usual experience. To borrow a term from 1960s popular culture, music has the power to "raise our consciousness."⁷⁴

The American reception of Schoenberg's theoretical writing has tended to avoid its most philosophical elements. There are indeed scholars such as Charlotte Cross,⁷⁵ Patricia White,⁷⁶ Alexander Ringer,⁷⁷ Michael Cherlin,⁷⁸ and Matthew Arndt,⁷⁹ who have engaged the more aesthetic, spiritual, and moral aspects of Schoenberg's thought. Most often, however, American scholars have directed Schoenberg's theories toward how a piece is structured and not so much marshalled his ideas to address why that structure might be meaningful. In this sense, and very much in parallel with the reception of Schenker's work, Schoenberg has been Americanized. It is not that these writers abandon Schoenberg's organicism, it is rather that they tend not to engage with Schoenberg's concept of how organicism might reach for something beyond masterful musical designs.

69 Kerman 1980, 318.

70 *Ibid.*, 315.

71 *Ibid.*, 318.

72 Morgan 2003, 9.

73 See Wörner 2009 for a discussion of this debate in the context of thematicism.

74 For a more thorough exploration of this issue, as well as the role of organicism in Schoenberg's thought, see Covach 2017. See also Neff 1993.

75 Cross 1980; Cross/Berman 2000.

76 White 1985.

77 Ringer 1990.

78 Cherlin 2007.

79 Arndt 2018.

One difference with the reception of Schoenberg's theories compared to Schenker's, however, is that the most "prophetic" of Schoenberg's utterances have been available to English readers since the publication of the first version of *Style and Idea* in 1950.⁸⁰ That volume, for instance, contains the essay "Composition with Twelve Tones" – one of the first essays, one might expect, that readers would have turned to considering the composer's stature and reputation in 1950. The first words of that essay set the tone for what follows. Schoenberg tells readers that "[t]o understand the very nature of creation one must acknowledge that there was no light before the Lord said: 'Let there be Light.'"⁸¹ After a technical discussion including more than two dozen musical examples, during which Emanuel Swedenborg's description of Heaven and Schoenberg's understanding of the unity of musical space also arise, Schoenberg ends the essay by asserting that "in music there is no form without logic, no logic without unity. I believe that when Richard Wagner introduced his *Leitmotiv* – for the same purpose as that for which I introduced my Basic Set – he may have said: 'Let there be unity'."⁸² The reference to Wagner at the end conveys a certain friendly humor, but the framing of the essay, with references to the Bible and the centrality of the unity of musical space in Schoenberg's technical discussion, make it clear that more is at stake in these matters than an understanding of his twelve-tone method.⁸³

On the contrary, a similar argument about Americanization cannot be made as regards the American research on Schoenbergian harmony and form. This research – which is by its nature already fairly technical – has not been subject to the same kinds of Americanization as the work on thematicism and aesthetics. In fact, it is probably fair to say that – whatever one may believe its shortcomings to be – the writing of Réti, Rufer, and Keller on thematicism and aesthetics, fervent as it is in its faith to the organicist ideal, is closer to the original spirit of Schoenberg's thought than most of the American work on these topics has been.

As stated at the outset, this study has focused on the reception of Schoenberg's theoretical ideas in English-language musical scholarship. The term "Americanization" is used here only loosely and primarily as a way of gauging how Schoenberg's ideas have changed in the journey from pre-World-War II Germany and Austria to the post-war United States. As mentioned above, it could also be argued – since Schoenberg himself was forced to make this journey to America, first to Boston and then ultimately to California – that the composer reshaped his theoretical thinking to better address a new cultural environment (or at least a new teaching situation). Yet a third account would trace the reception of Schoenberg's theoretical ideas primarily in England (and only secondarily in

80 See note 6 above regarding the controversy surrounding the prophetic tone in passages of Schenker's *Der freie Satz* among American theorists in the late 1970s. Some English-language scholars, accustomed to the contents of the 1975 edition of Schoenberg's *Style and Idea* and later reprints, might be surprised at how many of the essays routinely cited in Schoenberg scholarship were in fact included in the shorter 1950 edition.

81 Schoenberg 1950, 102.

82 *Ibid.*, 143.

83 See also Ringer 1990, 73–76, for a discussion of Swedenborg's ideas in the context of Schoenberg's unfinished oratorio *Die Jakobsleiter*. For a discussion of Schoenberg's conception of the unity of musical time and space and its relationship to Webern's music and thought, see Busch 1985; Busch 1986a; Busch 1986b. For a consideration of the impact of these ideas on Berg's music, see Covach 1998.

the United States). Of course, one could also trace the reception of Schoenberg's theoretical ideas in continental Europe during the post-war years, especially in German-language scholarship. Though a comparison of the English- and German-language receptions lies beyond the scope of this study, some preliminary observations arise from comparing two relatively recent works that chronicle Schoenberg's writing and its legacy. Norton Dudeque's *Music Theory and Analysis in the Writings of Arnold Schoenberg* and Andreas Jacob's *Grundbegriffe der Musiktheorie Arnold Schönbergs*.⁸⁴ While these two books both focus on Schoenberg's theoretical writing, they diverge when it comes to the secondary literature.⁸⁵ As one might expect, Dudeque relies primarily on English-language scholarship while Jacob cites mostly German sources. This difference does not suggest any shortcomings in the excellent work of these scholars. Rather, it indicates a bifurcation of Schoenberg scholarship into two discourses, each directed to a distinct professional community. Of course, there can be – and always has been – important interaction between the German- and English-language communities in Schoenberg scholarship. The recent (and significant) volume dedicated to Schoenberg's writing edited by Hartmut Krones,⁸⁶ for instance, includes a chapter by Severine Neff, and the *Journal of the Arnold Schönberg Center* regularly includes English-language contributions. Perhaps (and hopefully) the exchange between these two communities will continue to grow. Nevertheless, the English-language reception of Schoenberg's theories in the post-war years has not been significantly impacted by German-language scholarship from the same period.

In a recent review of Carl Schachter's *The Art of Tonal Analysis* (2016), Kofi Agawu writes that "Schachter is described on the dust jacket of his new book as 'the world's leading practitioner of Schenkerian theory and analysis,' a description that prompts reflection on why Schenker (still) matters."⁸⁷ Agawu quickly affirms that Schenker does (still) matter, but by posing the question he gives some sense of how American music theory has changed since Rothstein's article in 1986. In a discipline that now employs a wide range of approaches to theory and analysis, and that routinely investigates musical styles and practices well outside of the eighteenth-, nineteenth-, and twentieth-century classical masterworks, Schenker and Schoenberg might be perceived as less relevant than they once were. Perhaps they may even be regarded more as figures in the history of theory than as models for current theoretical and analytical practice. Alan Street remarks that his survey of articles in leading music theory journals over a recent ten-year period found only 3–5 % of these were devoted to Schoenberg, prompting him to conclude that theo-

84 Dudeque 2005; Jacob 2005.

85 In her review of Dudeque's book, Áine Heneghan writes, "In the current renaissance of Schoenberg scholarship, Norton Dudeque's *Music Theory and Analysis in the Writings of Arnold Schoenberg* represents one of the few studies focusing on the composer's theoretical writings. Indeed it is the sole English-language monograph on the topic, and, in that respect, is the counterpart of Andreas Jacob's *Grundbegriffe der Musiktheorie Arnold Schönbergs*, published in the same year" (2008, 159).

86 Krones 2011.

87 Agawu 2018, 145.

rists “have [...] more pressing research priorities to attend to.”⁸⁸ Yet, recent work by Matthew Arndt,⁸⁹ Áine Heneghan,⁹⁰ Severine Neff,⁹¹ Gordon Root,⁹² and others suggests that Schoenberg’s theoretical legacy remains strong. In his review of Jack Boss’s *Schoenberg’s Twelve-Tone Music: Symmetry and Idea* (2014), for instance, Zachary Bernstein remarks that “the world of music theory seems to be experiencing something of a Schoenberg moment,” with a new recognition of “Schoenberg as a theorist.”⁹³ He continues: “Long overlooked, marginalized by the Schenkerian revolution of the 1970s and 1980s, Schoenberg’s writings now provide the groundwork for a number of modern theoretical preoccupations”.⁹⁴ Indeed, Boss’s book, which approaches Schoenberg’s twelve-tone music from the perspective of Schoenberg’s own theories, received the Wallace Berry Award from the *Society for Music Theory* in 2015, while Schachter’s volume was awarded the Citation of Special Merit from *SMT* in 2017. Schenker and Schoenberg, it would seem, do still matter in American music theory – though perhaps not in the ways they have in the past nor in complete conformance with their original articulations. It is possible, in fact, that they still matter not in spite of certain adaptations, but precisely because they have been transformed.

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88 Street 2015, 367.

89 Arndt 2011; Arndt 2018.

90 Heneghan 2009; Heneghan 2018.

91 Neff 2010; Neff 2011; Neff 2017.

92 Root 2011.

93 Bernstein 2016, 263.

94 *Ibid.* Referencing Rothstein’s essay, Bernstein also remarks that “Boss presents an ‘Americanization’ (or perhaps a modernization) of Schoenbergian theory – a recasting of Schoenbergian theory in light of modern American theoretical conventions. This is, to be sure, no criticism. [...] To some degree, Americanization is surely necessary for the theory of the musical idea’s acceptance as a contemporary analytical model” (2016, 277).

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