

Schenker (not) in Scandinavia

When the debate about Schenker, racism, and the response of the Schenkerian community to Philip Ewell's plenary talk at the 2019 meeting of the Society for Music Theory¹ rolled in North America, it did not go unnoticed in Denmark. Matters of music theory rarely make the headlines, but when they did in the USA, they also found their way into Danish media. Mikkel Vad (2020) wrote a report explaining the ups and downs of the North American debate in the Danish music journal *Seismograf*; this initiated a series of articles debating the matter in the same journal. First, Anders Aktor Liljedahl (2020) wrote an article based both on Vad's report and the video "Music Theory is Racist" (later retitled "Music Theory and White Supremacy") by the popular youtuber Adam Neely (2020). Second, Daniel Torlop Norstrøm (2020), a Master's student of music theory at the Royal Academy of Music, criticized aspects of Vad's and Liljedahl's texts, which, third, prompted a response from both Vad and Liljedahl (Liljedahl and Vad 2020). Fourth, I chimed into the debate myself (Kirkegaard-Larsen 2020a), after which the conversation even made it to the Danish National Radio who brought an interview with Mikkel Vad and me about whiteness in music theory (P2 Morgenmusikken, October 26, 2020).

Given that the debate was such a hot potato at the time, it was not surprising that Danish media picked it up; but when considering that Schenker's influence in Scandinavia and Europe has been extremely limited, it remained an open question exactly how the Schenker-focused part of the debate—what I will henceforth simply refer to as *the Schenker debate*—could be "used" in a Danish, Scandinavian, and European context. After all, Ewell was explicit that "in this paper, 'music theory' refers to the field as practiced in the U.S." (Ewell 2020, footnote 0). It should be underlined that I and everyone who chimed into the Danish debate agreed that Ewell's general criticism of music theory, whiteness, and racism—in which Schenker served as just one example—was useful and thought-provoking. Nonetheless, Schenker ran with a lot of the attention. On what ground?

In this article, I wish to systematically assess the reception of Schenkerian theory in Scandinavia. This has not been done before, and it will therefore serve two purposes: First, it will fill a general gap in the current research on the dissemination and reception of Schenkerian theory. Second, it will provide an opportunity to discuss the ethics of Schenkerian analysis in a new, non-American context. The article makes it evident that, on the one hand, Scandinavian music theory has been skeptical towards Schenker precisely because of the offensive content of his writings which are at the center in

1 See Ewell (2019). The talk was later published in Ewell (2021). The central text has since become the longer version in Ewell (2020), and it is this version I shall refer to henceforth.

“the Schenker debate”; it has been skeptical towards the tradition of Anglo-American Schenkerian theory, too, because this tradition has been perceived as an esoteric sect with dogmatic beliefs. Such descriptions may sound harsh and ridiculing, but, as will be discussed, they are far from rare in Scandinavian assessments of Schenkerian theory. This widespread skepticism is discussed in the article’s Part I. On the other hand, the article also argues that certain aspects of Schenkerian theory, primarily the central idea of prolongation, has slowly, but increasingly, found its way into Scandinavian music theory; tracing the reception history of these ideas clearly shows that they emanate from a few Scandinavian authors’ readings of Schenker’s early followers, Adele T. Katz (1945) and Felix Salzer (1952). However, the ideas have been amended to fit into the prevailing discourse of function theory, creating an interesting, but possibly problematic, amalgam of analytical methods in which the lineage to Katz, Salzer, and Schenker is well hidden. These cases of more or less obvious Schenkerian analytical thinking in Scandinavia are discussed in Part II. Part III wraps up the article by turning to the ongoing debate around Schenker and the white racial frame of music theory. If Schenker’s ideology has been one of the main reasons for the Scandinavian rejection of his theory (as shown in Part I), but recent years’ music-theoretical developments nonetheless show a heightened interest in Schenkerian ideas, without any discussion of its roots (as shown in Part II), does this leave Scandinavia at risk for continuing the whitewashing that Ewell (2020, §4.1.3) pointed out? More specifically, when the concept of prolongation, so characteristic of Schenkerian thought, spills over into the function-theoretical hegemony of Scandinavian music theory, does the heavy baggage of Schenker’s politics spill over as well? And in the continued discussion of music theory and the white racial frame in a European and Scandinavian context, is there a risk that Schenker (who, notwithstanding the signs of an increased influence, remains an outsider in Scandinavia) is simply used as an easy scapegoat that prevents a confrontation with issues within Scandinavia’s own music-theoretical history, vis-à-vis the legacy of formative figures such as Hugo Riemann? In Part III, I will suggest three things we can learn from the Schenker debate in tackling these questions.

Throughout the paper, I refer to Scandinavia in the narrow sense “Denmark, Norway, and Sweden.” (The reader may notice an overweight of Danish and Swedish sources; the imbalance is unintentional, and it is simply a result of the relevant material that I have been able to find.) While “Scandinavia” may sometimes also include other countries such as Finland, the focus on Denmark, Norway, and Sweden is justified on the basis of their linguistic community: The three languages are very similar, and it is clear that theorists from the three countries have influenced each other in an entangled music-theoretical reception history (I discuss this in Kirkegaard-Larsen 2017, and in Kirkegaard forthcoming). It should be noted, however, that including Finland into the survey would create quite another picture: The internationally acknowledged work within Schenkerian theory by Lauri Suurpää and Olli Väisälä have put the Sibelius Academy and University of the Arts, Helsinki, on the Schenkerian world map in a way that has no counterpart in Denmark, Norway, or Sweden.

Part I: Schenker, not in Scandinavia

The earliest Scandinavian sources that I have been able to find which make any mention of Schenker are two Danish articles in *Dansk Musik Tidsskrift* [Danish Music Journal] from 1931 and 1934 by Jens Peter Larsen, best known for his work on Haydn. In both articles, he briefly praises Schenker's editorial work in his C.P.E Bach and Beethoven editions (Larsen 1931; 1934). Schenker *the editor* seems to make his entrance in Scandinavia first, but already in 1937, Schenker *the theorist* is briefly mentioned in *Dansk Musik Tidsskrift*: In a review article on Paul Hindemith's *Unterweisung im Tonsatz* (1937), Schenker's theory of the *Urlinie* is mentioned fleetingly in a parenthesis, albeit without any explanation of what the *Urlinie* is.² Apart from these small indications that Schenker's name was known to some degree in Scandinavia, or at least in Denmark (my survey is surely not complete, but I have not found such early mentions of Schenker in Swedish or Norwegian literature), there is really no sign of his influence in the next many years. It is not unthinkable that the Nazi ban on Schenker's and other Jewish theorists' writings halted the dissemination of the theory to Scandinavia (see Holtmeier 2004; Gerigk and Stengel 1940); this will be further discussed in Part III.

In any case, one has to look to the other side of World War II to find more traces of Schenker in Scandinavia. In 1954, a book by the Danish composer and theorist Otto Mortensen shows the first signs of Schenker-inspiration, and this will therefore be discussed in Part II. From the 1960s and onwards, Schenker's name begins to appear sporadically but more frequently in the Scandinavian literature. It is characteristic that Schenkerian theory is virtually always mentioned parenthetically and critically, and it is characteristic that the criticism aims at three things: Schenker's person (i.e., his ideology), the "dogmatism" or "esotericism" of the Schenkerian school, and what is perceived as the overly "systematic" nature of his theory. For instance, the Swedish scholar Ingmar Bengtsson mentions Schenker in two footnotes in his article "On Relationships between Tonal and Rhythmic Structures in Western Multipart Music" (Bengtsson 1961, 59, 66). The article is particularly interesting in the present context because Bengtsson circles around ideas which correspond well with basic concepts in Schenkerian theory. For instance, he writes:

The question as to whether proper attention has always been paid to what might be called the positional function of the chords may also be raised. If we notice, for example, the variability of chords in cadences of the type "S D T" ("IV V I"), it appears that this is determined to a large extent by the positions "ante-

2 The passage reads (all translations from Danish, Swedish, and Norwegian are mine): "With respect to Hindemith's theory of melody, this part of the book seems to bring the fewest new ideas (Heinrich Schenker's theory of the *Urlinie*, for example, is somewhat similar, though it is consciously limited to harmonic major/minor music, something Hindemith's theory is not" ["Hvad Hindemiths melodilære angår, så er den vist den del af bogen, der bringer de færreste nyheder. (Fx. er Heinrich Schenkers "urlinje"-teori noget af det samme, bare at den bevidst er begrænset til den harmoniske dur-moll-musik, hvad Hindemiths teori jo ikke er") (Sørensen 1937).

penultimate”, “penultimate”, and so on. In the case of the “antepenultima” the positional function often dominates so strongly that the symbol “S” becomes fictitious. (Bengtsson 1961, 53)

Bengtsson seems to approach the idea of the “predominant” or Schenker’s idea of “space-fillings” between I and V in the *Bassbrechung*, as shown in fig. 14 in *Free Composition* (Schenker 1979, §54). He later calls for a more thorough investigation of “harmonic-rhythmic formulae” and then adds in a footnote: “Of course taking proper account of (but preferably without dogmatic belief in) systems like that of Schenker” (Bengtsson 1961, 59). Bengtsson is aware, clearly, that Schenker would be a relevant source for his project, but it is apparently necessary to make it clear that a “dogmatic belief” in Schenker’s “system” is not on his mind. A very similar distancing from Schenkerian dogmatism is found in the Danish theorist Poul Nielsen’s writings. In a 1963 article on thematic analysis, he writes:

The clear tendency that the idea of structural unity becomes “ideology” is fatal. Often, the open empirical attitude towards the material steps in the background, and the works become objects of demonstration of an art-philosophical idea (cf. for example Schenker’s Urlinie theories ...).³ (Nielsen 1963)

Nielsen refers to the “Elucidations,” or “*Erläuterungen*” from the first volume of *Das Meisterwerk in der Musik* from 1925, in which Schenker presents the idea of the *Urlinie* (see Schenker 1994). A year later, in 1964, Poul Nielsen writes about Schenker again:

The entirety of Schenker’s analytical apparatus is big, extensively branched out and arduous. In spite of the renaissance that Schenker’s system—in a more modified form—seems to gain especially in the USA, the practice of the real Schenkerian Urlinie analysis seems largely to be reserved for one man: Schenker himself and his ingenious structural X-ray vision.⁴ (Nielsen 1971, 198)⁵

Poul Nielsen adds that Felix Salzer’s *Structural Hearing* (1952) is one evidence of Schenker’s American renaissance. Nielsen’s barely concealed criticism and sarcasm is further elaborated:

Finally, there is the philosophical and ideological aspect of Schenker’s theories: not only the chauvinistic favoring of Germanic music, but also the deterministic view of music history. For Schenker, only the music that could be derived from the *Urklang* was genius. For only the genius was gifted with the sensation of the

3 “Fatal er det strukturelle enheds-synspunkts klare tendens til at blive ‘ideologi’. Ofte træder den åbne empiriske holdning overfor stoffet i baggrunden, værkerne bliver demonstrationsobjekter for en kunstfilosofisk idé (jfr. f. eks. Schenkers urlinje-teorier ...).”

4 “Hele Schenkers analyseapparat er stort, vidtforgrenet og vanskelig tilgængeligt. Til trods for den renaissance, Schenkers system i mere modificeret form synes at skulle få især i USA, forekommer praktiseringen af den ægte Schenkerske urlinie-analyse i udpræget grad at være forbeholdt én mand: Schenker selv og hans geniale strukturelle røntgen-blik.”

5 The 1971 publication from which I cite is a facsimile of Poul Nielsen’s 1964 dissertation, for which he won Copenhagen University’s gold medal prize in 1965.

Urlinie. Not least the modern, post-Brahmsian music was therefore attacked by Schenker.⁶ (Nielsen 1971, 198)

In 1973, Ingmar Bengtsson published his formative book on the study of musicology, *Musikvetenskap*. Schenker is briefly mentioned as one of the most original theorists from the beginning of the twentieth century, and Bengtsson notes the revival of his theories in the USA through journals such as *Journal of Music Theory* and *The Music Forum*. Bengtsson even includes Schenker's graph of "Aus meinen Thränen spriessen" of Robert Schumann's *Dichterliebe* (see Schenker 1979, §88), but the most conspicuous part of his brief one-page outline of Schenkerian analysis is a footnote about David Beach's "Schenker Bibliography" in the 1969 issue of *Journal of Music Theory*—notice the exclamation mark:

The article's first sentence says: "Heinrich Schenker has emerged as one of the most significant individuals in the history of western music."(!) So speak a devout member of a sect.⁷ (Bengtsson 1973, 240)

The sectarian and dogmatic nature of the Schenkerian school is also emphasized in Morten Levy's 1975 article "The Naïve Structuralism of Heinrich Schenker." This seems to be the first full-length article in Scandinavia to focus primarily on Schenker. Levy refers to the by now wide dissemination and large influence of Schenkerian theory in the USA, and he directs a fervent critique at this emerging tradition and Schenker's ideology:

To the non Schenkerian, this school with its esoteric and seemingly speculative approach to musical understanding is at once attractive and frightening. Turning to Schenker's own work, one can easily be even more taken aback. His cocksure and arrogant style of writing, the viewpoints on arts and politics which lard his books—the worship of geniuses and 'heroes' among the composers, as well as his chauvinistic and semi-fascistic attitude to the 'nation' and to the 'masses', and, finally his ridiculous inability to see anything worthwhile in music outside the Austrian-German tradition from Seb. Bach to Brahms, - - all this makes the acquisition of the essential in his musical thought a somewhat burdensome undertaking. (Levy 1975, 20)

Levy argues that Schenker's theory is useful only insofar as he understood music much like structural linguistics understands language. Levy renounces the comparison with Noam Chomsky's transformational-generative grammar as superficial—which is ironic when viewed from the present where Lerdahl and Jackendoff's (1983) generative the-

6 "Hertil kommer endelig det filosofiske og ideologiske islæt i Schenkers teorier: ikke alene den chauvinistiske fremhævelse af germansk musik, men det deterministiske syn på musikhistorien. For Schenker var kun den musik, der kunne føres tilbage til urklangen, genial. Thi kun geniet var benådet med urlinie-fornemmelsen. Ikke mindst den moderne, efter-Brahms'ske musik måtte derfor stå for skud hos Schenker."

7 "Första meningen lyder 'Heinrich Schenker has emerged as one of the most significant individuals in the history of western music.'(!) Så uttrycker sig en troende sektmedlem."

ory of tonal music, inspired by both Schenker and Chomsky, has had such a wide-ramified legacy (see Hansen 2011)—and compares it instead with the influential theories of the Danish linguist Louis Hjelmslev. Unfolding Levy's argument is a task too large to pursue in this article, but it is worth noticing that, compared to other Scandinavian sources from this time, Levy's article demonstrates an admirable deep reading of Schenker, from his earliest to his latest writings. This makes it all the more conspicuous that he is so fervent in his critique, and all the more striking that what he ultimately proposes is rather far removed from what we think of as Schenkerian theory.

Already from these few examples, it is clear that Scandinavian music theory seems to have had the opposite response to Schenker's reactionary ideology than did the early American reception: Whereas the American followers attempted to "look through" the most controversial aspects of Schenker's thinking, instead underlining the purely music-theoretical aspects in an effort to separate them from his politics—and, in consequence, censoring and concealing the chauvinistic bedrock of the theory—Scandinavian theorists seems to have put Schenker's ideology in the very foreground. This only became more pronounced in the wake of Joseph Kerman's famous article "How We Got into Analysis, and How to Get Out" (1980), a watershed event in the history of Western music analysis and in Scandinavian musicology, too, especially when followed up by Kerman's 1985 *Contemplating Music: Challenges to Musicology* (for a critique and discussion of the significance of Kerman's text, see Agawu 2004). Schenkerian analysis was the main example in Kerman's article, which called for a more reflective and critical hermeneutics than Kerman found in "analysis." Kerman directed his critique specifically towards trends in Anglo-American music theory, but despite the fact that Scandinavian music theory was certainly something completely different (it was not dominated by Schenkerian theory, and it was not a field of its own), the strand of *New Musicology* or *Critical Musicology* that Kerman's writings ultimately spurred became an influential part of a more general cultural turn in Scandinavian musicology. The place of music theory and so-called "structural" music analysis in this paradigm was debated and uncertain, and though the relevance of Kerman's Schenker example was not obvious in a Scandinavian context (as such, the parallel to the present reception of the Schenker debate is striking), its central points were transferred nonetheless (see, for instance, Dahlstedt 1986; Berglund and Østrem 2001).⁸ As such, Schenker came to embody all that was wrong with the kind of music analysis that musicology wished to move on from—the kind of theory which can be construed as a mechanical "system" bound up on the work-concept, the concept of genius, and a tyrannical organicism.

The perception that Schenkerian theory is indeed a "system" that always leads to the same results (the *Ursatz*) is expressed in the two brief footnotes that Danish Professor

8 As I have recently argued (Kirkegaard-Larsen 2021a), the "cultural turn" (for a concise overview and discussion of this, see Nielsen and Krogh [2014, 6–9]) was healthy and necessary—and it seems that the present American reckoning with Schenker can be understood as springing from a similar turn—but it arguably had some negative consequences for the continued development of music theory and analysis.

Emeritus Bo Marschner devotes to Schenker in his book on the study of musicology (Marschner 2015). In a discussion of the act of musical analysis, Marschner refers to Hans Keller's imperative to "never confuse analysis with mere description" (Keller 1956, 48–49) by paraphrasing the sentence as "no analysis without interpretation," after which a footnote adds: "With the possible exception of a 'Schenkerian analysis'"⁹ (Marschner 2015, 152). The point is clear: Schenkerian analysis is mechanical and requires no act of interpretation. This is elaborated in another footnote: "For this reason, too, [Marschner discusses the danger of understanding exceptions as deviations from a rule] I am inclined to completely dismiss Heinrich Schenker's analytical *system*, which believes to be able to treat almost all major/minor-tonal music according to the same reductive template"¹⁰ (Marschner 2015, 166; emphasis original). For a short introduction to Schenkerian analysis, Marschner recommends no other source than the above-quoted Ingmar Bengtsson (1973); hardly the best introduction available in 2015. Exactly how the rich analytical literature from the Schenkerian tradition fails to live up to Marschner's definition of "interpretation" is therefore unclear; and even though Marschner points to a worthwhile question—namely the question of what the function of the *Ursatz* is in actual analytical practice—it is a fallacy to conclude that Schenkerian thinking does not involve interpretation (in numerous senses of the word).

To this day, Schenkerian theory functions first of all as a "counterexample"—to appropriate the expression that Schenker used of Max Reger's music (Schenker 1996)—and it is clear that he takes no central role in Scandinavian music theory or music theory historiography. From the very outset of the Scandinavian reception, and especially following the cultural turn, Scandinavian musicology has been suspicious of the obviously problematic ideology behind his ideas, and even more suspicious towards the "disciples" (a word also used in Levy 1975, 30) who dogmatically and uncritically preaches his theory without sufficiently addressing the elephant in the room: Schenker himself, including his politics. To be fair, this impression of the Schenkerian school is not at all unwarranted. What other impression could one get when non-Schenkerians are referred to as "the uninitiated"?¹¹ Or when calls for Riemann-inspired alternatives to Schenkerian analysis are characterized as "ideas that would negate decades of progress and return us to the misconceptions about tonal syntax prevalent at the turn of the century, but apparently still alive today" (Beach 1987, 173)?¹² Or when one scholar's calling out of Schenker's racism can cause such an avalanche of responses?

9 "Med mulig undtagelse for en 'Schenker-analyse'."

10 "Også af denne grund er jeg tilbøjelig til stort set helt at afvise Heinrich Schenkers analysesystem, som mener at kunne behandle det meste af al dur/mol-tonal musik efter den samme reductive skabelon."

11 The Danish music researcher Thomas Holme Hansen writes that the Schenkerian tradition is, at times, characterized by "an almost religious fanaticism," and cites David Damschroder's and David Russell Williams's description of Schenker's *Der freie Satz*: "'accompanying the text is a volume filled with Schenker's characteristic graphic analyses, which even today inspire wonder among the uninitiated' (!)" (Damschroder and Williams 1990, 304; cited in Hansen 1998, 30; emphasis by Hansen).

12 Beach (1987) is a response to Smith, who proposed a reformulation of function theory (1986); see also Smith's rejoinder (1987). A very similar debate later arose between Eytan Agmon (1995; 1996) and John Rothgeb (1996).

A 2016 example substantiates the impression that the Schenkerian school is unwilling to tackle its problematic origin:

One example [of the establishment of music analysis as an independent discipline in the 20th century] is Heinrich Schenker's ideas on a musical *Urlinie*, which is formalized into the more standardized so-called "Schenkerian analysis," which the analyst may then use without knowing anything about Schenker's aesthetics or conception of music.¹³ (Vandsø 2016, 14)

Vandsø refers to the lack of a broader discussion of Schenker's viewpoints in Nicholas Cook's *A Guide to Musical Analysis* (1987). On the one hand, Vandsø makes an important point about the problematic detachment of Schenker from "textbook" Schenkerian theory, Americanized as it is (Rothstein 1986); it is a point that corresponds well with Ewell's point that "one of music theory's greatest feats is its ability to sever its own past from the present" (Ewell 2020, §4.1.3). On the other hand, no credit is paid to Nicholas Cook's attempts in non-textbook settings to understand Schenker in context (1989a; 1989b; 2007). After all, Schenker's politics *have* been discussed in the Anglo-American tradition, though often in a much more euphemistic and, at times, apologetic way than Ewell's direct calling out of Schenker's racism did. These parts of Schenker scholarship seems not to have been discussed in Scandinavia (other central texts in this area are Blasius 1996 and Clark 2007, to name but a few).

A final example of a downright anti-Schenkerian attitude in Scandinavia is Bengt Edlund's 2015 monograph *Questioning Schenkerism*. Presumably purposefully invoking the title of Eugene Narmour's *Beyond Schenkerism* (1977), this 500-page book is among the harshest rants against Schenkerian thinking I have come across. Following up on some previous Schenker-critical sentiments from Edlund (see Broman 1997; Edlund 2002), this book is full of polemical satires on Schenkerian theory. In a discussion of Schenker's analysis of Beethoven Op. 31, No. 2, third movement, Edlund has the following to say about an implied neighbor note, marked in the analytical graph with a G in parentheses:

According to his [Schenker's] theory, there simply must be a g² in m. 9, and the parenthesis [...] duly signifying that this note is not actually present, works as a fig-leaf—everyone thinks that there is something behind it. This fig-leaf is transparent, and the dummy behind it is endowed with a huge stem that certainly looks more impressive than the dwarfed one granted the actual top note bb². (Edlund 2015, 399)

Now, whether one agrees with Edlund's critique or not—for of course one can discuss the normative claims in much Schenkerian analysis in interesting ways (see, for instance, Cook 1989a; Dubiel 1990)—Schenkerian theory is almost unrecognizable when viewed through Edlund's distorting sarcasm. While his book may be critical in

13 "Et eksempel er Heinrich Schenkers idéer om en musikalsk *urlinje*, som formaliseres til den mere standardiserede såkaldte 'Schenker-analyse', som analytikerer herefter kan anvende uden i øvrigt at vide noget om Schenkers æstetik eller musikbegreb."

the sense of “expressing disapproval,” one can certainly discuss whether it is critical in the sense of “involving serious analysis and careful judgment.” Edlund is entitled to criticize Schenkerian thinking as much as he wants, however he wants, of course, but it is a pity that the first book-length study of Schenkerian theory from a Scandinavian author is so ripe with ridiculing comments that it frustrates the possibility of adequately understanding what is criticized in the first place. If nothing else, the book firmly underlines the widespread attitude towards Schenkerian theory in Scandinavia: It is not to be taken too seriously.

Part II: Schenker in Scandinavia

Despite the very clear picture that the above section paints—one in which Schenker only appears in footnotes, parentheses, critical comments about his ideology and more ridiculing comments about sects, disciples, esotericism and dogmatic beliefs—there have, in fact, been several cases of Schenkerian thought in the history of Scandinavian harmonic theory. And, as I will argue, the tendency has been growing in the past many years (presumably, Bengt Edlund’s anti-Schenkerism began precisely because he saw the theory “about to be re-introduced in Europe” [Edlund 2002, 156]). This begs the question of how to handle all the problematical baggage that has been so fervently discussed in an American context in the past few years. Part II of this article therefore traces the history of Scandinavian Schenker-inspired music theory and investigates exactly what parts of his theory has had at least *some* reception before Part III tackles this question.

The Scandinavian history of 20th and 21st century harmonic theories of tonal music is a history of function theory in different guises. They all spring, but also diverge significantly, from Hugo Riemann. This has been clearly documented, especially in recent years (see Nielsen 2018–19, Kirkegaard-Larsen 2019, 2020b, and Kirkegaard forthcoming). Less well documented are the periodical formulations of alternative tonal theories. None of these have been particularly influential, but many draw to some degree on Schenkerian theory. As mentioned in Part I, the first textbook to include a whiff of Schenker in a positive sense is Otto Mortensen’s *Harmonisk Analyse efter Grundbas-Metoden* (Mortensen 1954). The title translates to *Harmonic Analysis According to the Fundamental Bass Method* and is, as this suggests, a book on fundamental bass, not Schenkerian analysis; but, notably, also not function theory which was already by then relatively firmly established in Denmark. In the book, Mortensen opposes the chord-to-chord labeling characteristic of many function analyses and aims instead to model broader spans of chord progressions. The book’s subtitle translates to *Harmonic structure in outline* and in the preface, Mortensen refers to Adele T. Katz’ book *Challenge to Musical Tradition* (Katz 1945): “Adele T. Katz speaks of I–V–I as ‘the fundamental harmonic progression,’ while she calls I–II–V–I, I–III–V–I and I–IV–V–I ‘basic harmonic progressions’”¹⁴ (Mortensen 1954, XIII–XIV).

14 “Adele T. Katz taler om I-V-I som ‘the fundamental harmonic progression,’ medens hun kalder I-II-V-I, I-III-V-I og I-IV-V-I for ‘basic harmonic progressions.’”

Katz' book was the first English-language book to propagate Schenker's theory (although, already here, and later with Salzer [1952], the theory looked quite different from Schenker's own; for an appraisal of Katz' significance to the early history of Schenkerian theory in the USA, see Berry 2002). The idea of basic harmonic progressions—a sort of bird's eye view on longer spans of harmonic movement—clearly inspired Mortensen: Without taking a fully Schenkerian approach, Mortensen structures his book as a series of exercises exemplifying certain common and "basic" progressions. It seems, however, that his understanding of Katz' book is imperfect. He remarks that I–III–V–I is no basic *harmonic* progression, but that it may represent "important harmonic positions in minor-key sonata forms: The principal theme (I), the secondary theme (III), the last harmonic position in the development section (V), and the recapitulation (I)"¹⁵ (Mortensen 1954, XIV). In short, Mortensen seems to conflate pitch-based and key-based hierarchical structures, Katz and Schenkerian theory being primarily interested in the former.¹⁶ Nowhere does Mortensen mention the idea of prolonged *Stufen*, and, more interestingly, nowhere does he mention Schenker. All Katz' ideas are ascribed to Katz alone.

Mortensen influenced another Danish theory of harmony, once again one that stood in opposition to the dominating function theory—or, more precisely, one that took function theory as a starting point, but went its own ways from there. The book in question is Jørgen Jersild's *De funktionelle principper i romantikkens harmonik belyst med udgangspunkt i César Francks harmoniske stil* (The Functional Principles of Romantic Harmony Illustrated on the Basis of César Franck's Harmonic Style; Jersild 1970). Jersild calls Otto Mortensen's 1954 book a main inspiration because it "contemplates the phenomena of chord successions as contingent on certain synthesizing patterns, unlike classic function analysis, where one rather considers how chords are joined in pairs"¹⁷ (Jersild 1970, 5). Jersild also mentions Adele T. Katz, but in a more critical tone as he finds that her reductive method misses important harmonic details. Once again, Jersild makes no mention of Schenker or any other Schenkerian. What he ends up with is a completely novel theory of romantic harmony called *position theory* which bears a vague resemblance with certain Schenkerian principles: Functions are grouped into positions, and the fundamental tenet is that tonal music moves from higher positions and stepwise back to the first position (the tonic). Positions 3–2–1, then, is equivalent to the progression of predominant, dominant, and tonic *Stufen*; in contrast to conventional function theory, the "antepenultima" may take different forms and does not have to be a subdominant (the resemblance with Ingmar Bengtsson's [1961] ideas referred to above is noteworthy). Position theory has not been very influential in

15 "hvis den [I-III-V-I] forstaas som harmonisk Storform karakteriserer den vigtige harmoniske Positioner i Sonate-Formen i Moll, nemlig følgende: Hoved-Themaet (I), Side-Themaet (III), sidste harmoniske Position i Gennemførings-Delen (V), og Reprisen (I)."

16 The difference between these kinds of hierarchies have perhaps been best explained by Schachter (1987).

17 "betragter akkordfølgefænomenerne som betinget af bestemte sammenfattende mønstre, til forskel fra den klassiske funktionsanalyse, hvor det i højere grad kun er akkordernes parvise sammenføjning der iagttages."

Scandinavia—until the last decade or so, that is, where it has gained renewed (but still highly contested) interest in Denmark (Nielsen 2012) and Sweden.

Before returning to this, another publication is worth discussing in some depth. In 1968, one of the most interesting cases in this textbook corpus can be found; a book in which the influence of Schenker—or rather, of his student Felix Salzer—is obvious. The book in question is *Det musikaliska hantverket* (The Musical Craft) by Lars Edlund and Arne Mellnäs (1968), the former of which is internationally renowned for his books on sight-singing and ear-training, *Modus Novus* (Edlund 1968) and *Modus Vetus* (1967). A much more Schenker-positive “Edlund” than Bengt Edlund, it seems, Lars Edlund and Arne Mellnäs make heavy reference to Felix Salzer’s *Structural Hearing* (1952). First of all, the very idea of *strukturlyssning*, that is, structural hearing or structural listening, is pivotal for their book. In fact, they do not speak of “analyses” of works, but of “structural hearings” in which auditory and visual impressions are combined in a spirit that continues Edlund’s focus on ear-training from his previous books. Their chapter entitled “Harmonic analysis” stands out from all other Scandinavian writings on harmonic analysis of the time. They begin by criticizing function theory:

One must accentuate that a harmonic analysis which only consists of a more or less mechanical labeling of function symbols underneath every chord is very dubious [...] All chords with identical functional designations may have different effects in different contexts.¹⁸ (Edlund and Mellnäs 1968, 50)

After an elaboration on the difference of chord appearance and chord function, they write:

There is a way of analyzing harmony and tonal coherence in music which amounts to more than an analysis of each chord on its own. An author who has dedicated considerable attention to these questions is Felix Salzer, music theorist of Austrian descent, currently active in the USA. His book *Strukturelles Hören* (Wilhelmshafen 1960) commences with an analysis of the first measures of J. S. Bach’s Prelude in Bb major from *Das wohltemperierte Klavier I*. We reproduce here, in strongly concentrated form, his reasoning.¹⁹ (Edlund and Mellnäs 1968, 51)

What follows is, indeed, a concentrated but nonetheless quite accurate rendering of large portions of the first chapter of *Structural Hearing* (or *Strukturelles Hören*, for as the quote indicates, they take the German version as their reference point). In fact, some of it amounts to a near translation of Salzer.

18 “Nu måste man emellertid framhålla, att den harmoniska analys, som endast består i ett mer eller mindre mekaniskt utsättande av funktionssymboler under varje ackord, är mycket tvivelaktig. [...] Alla ackord med samma funktionsbeteckning kan ha olika effekt i olika sammanhang.”

19 “Det finns ett sätt att analysera harmonik och tonala sammanhang i musiken som går längre än till en analys av vart ackord för sig. En författare som ägnat frågan stort intresse är Felix Salzer, musikteoretiker av österriksk börd, numera verksam i USA. Hans bok *Strukturelles Hören* (Wilhelmshafen 1960) inleds med en analys av de första takterna i J S Bachs Preludium B-dur ur *Das wohltemperierte Klavier I*. Vi återger här i starkt koncentrerad form hans resonemang.”

Where does the motion begin? What is its goal? And how does the composer reach that goal? (Salzer 1952, I:11)

Edlund and Mellnäs continue to reproduce, at times nearly translate Salzer's argument. Like Salzer, they contend that the important points in this excerpt are the initial tonic, the C minor chord of m. 2 that breaks the sequence, and the dominant which leads back to the final structural point, the tonic of m. 3. Along the way, Edlund and Mellnäs introduce Schenkerian concepts such as prolongation; the hierarchical difference between structurally deep harmonies and contrapuntal chords; different means of prolongation such as passing chords and neighboring chords, composing out, horizontalization through the filling of tonal space; and so on. Eventually, they even present the graph shown in Example 3. Once again, they use function symbols instead of *Stufen*; compare with Salzer's graph in Example 4.

The image shows a musical score for the first three measures of J. S. Bach's Prelude No. 21 in B-flat major. The score is written for piano in a grand staff. A Schenkerian graph is overlaid on the score, consisting of a horizontal line with four points labeled T, Sp, D, and T from left to right. Dashed lines connect these points to specific notes in the score, indicating their structural functions. The first T is at the beginning of the first measure, Sp is at the end of the first measure, D is at the end of the second measure, and the final T is at the end of the third measure.

Example 3: Edlund and Mellnäs' analysis of J. S. Bach's Prelude No. 21 in B-flat major, WTC I, mm. 1–3 (Edlund and Mellnäs 1968, 53).

The image shows a musical score for the first three measures of J. S. Bach's Prelude No. 21 in B-flat major, similar to Example 3. A Schenkerian graph is overlaid on the score, consisting of a horizontal line with three points labeled I, II, and VI from left to right. Dashed lines connect these points to specific notes in the score, indicating their structural functions. The I is at the beginning of the first measure, II is at the end of the first measure, and VI is at the end of the second measure.

Example 4: Salzer's middleground analysis of Bach's Prelude No. 21 in B \flat major, WTC I (Salzer 1952, II:2).

Having already reproduced large parts of Salzer's Part I, Chapter II, the authors continue to do so. Compare, again, their analysis of Bach's chorale (no. 294) "Herr Jesu Christ, du höchstes Gut". The music is shown in Example 5; Edlund and Mellnäs' analysis is shown in Example 6, and Salzer's in Example 7.



Example 5: J. S. Bach's chorale (no. 294) "Herr Jesu Christ, du höchstes Gut," mm. 1-2.



Example 6: Edlund and Mellnäs' analysis of J. S. Bach's chorale (no. 294) "Herr Jesu Christ, du höchstes Gut," mm. 1-2 (Edlund and Mellnäs 1968, 54).



Example 7: Salzer's analysis of J. S. Bach's chorale (no. 294) "Herr Jesu Christ, du höchstes Gut," mm. 1-2 (Salzer 1952, II:2).

Edlund and Mellnäs' complete conversion to Schenkerian (or Salzerian) theory is truly remarkable in a Scandinavian context where function theory was and is incredibly hegemonic. Edlund and Mellnäs' chapter 7 amounts not to a full translation but to a very close reproduction of Salzer's Part I, Chapter 2—amended, however, to fit into the prevailing discourse of function theory. In his dissertation on Felix Salzer, John Koslovsky has noted how *Structural Hearing* appeared not only in English and German, but also Spanish and, according to Carl Schachter, even in a version in

Mandarin Chinese (Koslovsky 2009, 303; Schachter 2006, 108). To this dissemination history, we might add Edlund and Mellnäs' peculiar chapter, singular in the history of Scandinavian music theory.

Edlund and Mellnäs' devotion to Salzer had no immediately traceable influence on Scandinavian music theory. It does appear, surprisingly, in the reference list of a Danish textbook from 1974, as well as in its second, revised edition from 1990, but these books contain no Salzerian aspects (Brincker 1974; Brincker and Bruland 1990). *Det musikalske hantverket* seems to have been more or less forgotten, drowned in the ocean of function-theoretical textbooks.

Until more recent years, that is. It appears in the list of references in the Swedish harmony textbook *Traditionell harmonilära* (Traditional theory of harmony) from 1995 by Roine Jansson and Ulla-Britt Åkerberg. And even though there is no explicit mention of Salzer, Schenker, or even Edlund and Mellnäs in the prose text of the book (the list of references simply appears as a strangely uncommented appendix, which is unfortunately not uncommon for Scandinavian music-theoretical textbooks), there is an unmistakable influence from very basic Schenkerian ideas: first and foremost, the idea of prolongation and, in effect, a hierarchy of structurally deeper and shallower chords. For reasons of space, this book shall not be discussed further here: I have already demonstrated their surprisingly Schenkerian account of a fundamental structure underlying music in Kirkegaard-Larsen (2019, 154–157), where I also discuss Steen Ingelf's multileveled and prolongational function analysis, his revival of Jersildian *position theory* (see Ingelf 1980; 2008; 2010), and his very brief two-page appendix with an introduction to Schenkerian analysis (Ingelf 2008; Ingelf refers to both Edlund and Mellnäs 1968, Jersild 1970, and Jansson and Åkerberg 1995, confirming that there is indeed a line of influence from these theorists).

The last Scandinavian source that must be mentioned in this context is the book *Elementær harmonilære* from 2004 by Norwegian author Petter Stigar. Norway has not been a large part of the discussion so far, and that is because their history of harmonic theories looks a bit different; they largely stuck to Norwegian adaptations of Ernst Richter's *Lehrbuch der Harmonie* (1853) for much of the twentieth century, until they switched to function theory in the version that the Danish musicologist Povl Hamburger had developed (Hamburger 1951; see more in Kirkegaard, forthcoming). Stigar breaks with the Norwegian tradition of "post-Hamburgerian" function theory as represented through Øien (1971; 1975), Tveit (1984), Bekkevold (1976; 1988), and Bjerkestrand and Nesheim (1995); indeed, he breaks with function analysis as such, and turns towards two different aspects of American music theory pedagogy: Roman numeral analysis and Schenkerian analysis. Without ever announcing it directly, he also seems to draw heavily on Lerdahl and Jackendoff's *A Generative Theory of Tonal Music* (1983; Lerdahl and Jackendoff is not to be found in Stigar's list of references, but he does refer to Norwegian musicologist Hroar Klempe's introduction to generative theory of tonal music, Klempe 1999).

Stigar especially refers to Robert Gauldin's *Harmonic Practice in Tonal Music* (1997), but also Edward Aldwell and Carl Schachter's *Harmony and Voice Leading* (1979) as

well as Felix Salzer and Carl Schachter's *Counterpoint in Composition* (1969). All of these, especially the two latter, are clearly products of the Schenkerian tradition, even if none of them are textbooks in Schenkerian analysis *per se*. Stigar also notes that in his position as "first amanuensis" (associate professor) at the University of Bergen's Grieg Academy, he had been using Gauldin (1997) as the standard textbook for years (at the time of publication). This questions, of course, whether it is adequate at all to write a history of Schenker's Scandinavian reception in a world where teachers readily use English-language textbooks. In the present context, however, Stigar's linear analysis is worth highlighting. Stigar presents a graph of Beethoven's "Waldstein" sonata, second movement, mm. 1–9. The analysis is clearly adapted from Gauldin's Schenker-inspired, but far from Schenker-orthodox analysis (Gauldin is, in turn, inspired by the Schenkerian analysis by David Beach 1987, 177—in itself a response to Smith 1986, as mentioned above). See Stigar's reproduction of the score in Example 8 and his analysis in Example 9.

Introduzione
Adagio molto

pp

pp

5

cresc. sf > p <> decresc. pp

Example 8: Beethoven's "Waldstein" sonata, II, mm. 1–9 (Stigar 2004, 243).

3 7

i v7

Example 9: Stigar's linear analysis of Beethoven's "Waldstein" sonata, II, mm. 1–6 (Stigar 2004, 247).

Stigar's use of Schenker-inspired methods is noteworthy when viewed in the context of the extreme Schenker-skepticism of Scandinavian music theory—but it hardly amounts to a Schenkerian analysis as such. Most conspicuous is not the divergence in graphic notation, but rather the fact that Stigar seems to suggest that the linear motion reaches a dominant goal already in m. 6, instead of in m. 8.

The list of texts discussed above is not exhaustive, of course—one might hastily add Ingrid Geuen's Schenkerian analysis of Grieg published in *Studia Musicologica Norvegica* (2007). But there seems to be a faint tendency to view harmony in a slightly more Schenkerian way, or at least a way more compatible with Anglo-American music theory writ large. In Norway, the individual writings of Stigar and Geuen hardly amount to a tendency, while in Sweden, the continued development from Edlund and Mellnäs (1968) to Jansson and Åkerberg (1995) and Ingelf (2008; 2010) is more clear. The increased use of Jersild's (1970) position theory is also noteworthy in that it has vague resemblances with basic Schenkerian premises that have indeed been carried over from Mortensen's (1954) reading of Katz (1945). In Denmark, Svend Hvidtfelt Nielsen has also argued in favor of a revised position theory (2012), but Schenkerian theory as such only plays a significant role in the PhD dissertations of Jesper Juellund Jensen (2001) and myself (Kirkegaard-Larsen 2020b); apart from these texts, written almost two decades apart, there are virtually no traces of Schenker in the Danish literature (except for all the footnotes discussed in Part II!).

If there is a tendency of opening up to Schenkerian ideas, it is not overwhelming, then, especially not since it is counterbalanced by continued skepticism, as shown in Part I. But as English has become the *lingua franca* of modern-day musicology, the small signs of an opening up to Anglo-American music-theoretical traditions are not surprising. With recent developments in Schenkerian scholarship in mind, this puts Scandinavian music theory in a dilemma.

Part III: To Schenker or not to Schenker?

This article has argued that there has been no serious reception of Heinrich Schenker's writings, nor of the subsequent strand of Anglo-American Schenkerian theory, in Scandinavia. Generally, Schenkerian theory has been frowned upon; sometimes to a degree that one must wonder at the sweeping denigration with which it has been treated. Whether one finds Schenkerian theory useful or not, its historical and historiographical importance in (other, non-Scandinavian parts of) 20th and 21st century Western music theory is undeniable. It is strange, to say the least, that there has been almost no in-depth critical engagement with the theory and legacy of the *one* person who receives his very own chapter in the groundbreaking *Cambridge History of Western Music Theory* (Drabkin 2002).

However, I have also pointed out that music-theoretical ideas with more or less direct connections to Schenkerian theory have not been completely absent in Scandinavia; indeed, Schenker-like ideas seem to be slowly spreading. The timing of this

development is odd seeing as it coincides with a moment in which Anglo-American academia is having a serious reckoning with its Schenkerian legacy. If Scandinavian music theory is slowly opening up to Schenkerian ideas—or, at least, opening up to a critical engagement with these ideas—this raises the issue of what consequences “the Schenker debate” can have or should have in this process. I would like to suggest three ways that the debate can be of use. The first is rather hypothetical and unrealistic, but worth considering nonetheless: *If* Schenkerian theory suddenly, and very unexpectedly, came to form a substantial or even marginal part of university curricula, then Scandinavia (and the rest of Europe) would have the golden opportunity to do right what Schenker’s follower’s in America did wrong: The opportunity to confront his world view up front, and to show how it was, in Schenker’s own mind, an integrated part of his music theory; an opportunity to examine this world view in its cultural context without apologizing it, and without naming with euphemisms what is more accurately labeled as racism and misogyny; the opportunity, as well, to confront from the beginning how the subsequent Anglo-American tradition of Schenkerian theory went through great troubles to conceal this part of his theory (one need only to think of the twisted publication history of *Free Composition*²¹), only to still be haunted by these unresolved issues so many years later; and, finally, an opportunity to teach an important lesson about the migration of ideas: It remains an interesting fact that in the process of the “Americanization” of Heinrich Schenker, as William Rothstein famously dubbed it (Rothstein 1986), a series of new theoretical concepts arose. Many of these concepts are central to Schenkerian theory, but foreign to Schenker himself. Concepts such as “structure” and “function” were very much part of the theoretical “streamlining” that also concealed Schenker’s ideology. Although a more detailed study about these concepts in the history of Schenkerian theory remains to be undertaken, I have previously pointed out that they only arose as central, technical terms with Felix Salzer (1952), while they (or their German translations) did not appear in Schenker’s writings (Kirkegaard-Larsen 2020b, 141–143, 151–154; Schachter 2006, 107 speculates that the concept of Schenkerian “structure” originates with Adele T. Katz’ and Felix Salzer’s teacher Hans Weisse, who had moved from Vienna to New York in 1931). If Schenker and Schenkerian theory is put into context without hiding and explaining away, its useful aspects can better be understood for what they are: non-universal, particularistic, debatable ideas about a very small portion of this world’s musics which acquire meaning and importance through their use within specific communities of interpretative practices.

The second way in which the debate can be useful is a more realistic scenario. The examples of Schenkerian analytical thinking in Scandinavia shown in Part II of this article are small and sporadic. Furthermore, they all function within the context of function theory, and the link to Schenker and Schenkerian theory as such is weak. Here, too, Scandinavian music theory, unburdened with the heavy baggage of Schenker’s direct influence, has the golden opportunity to develop this line of thought in a way

21 See Cook (2007, 250). Ewell (2020) mentions this publication history itself as an example of the white racial frame.

that is not contingent on Schenker and Schenkerian theory. Christopher Segall has interestingly proposed “renaming, but also reconceiving, Schenkerian analysis as prolongational analysis” (Segall 2019, 188). Segall provides examples from the Russian music theorist Yuri Kholopov showing harmonic prolongations without Schenkerian notation. Although Schenkerian notation is certainly a fine-grained tool for communicating one’s analysis, it is only effective for those who can read it, and Segall is right to point out that it can be very exclusionary, or even “esoteric” as Levy (1975) dubbed it (see Part I of this article). Developing a system of prolongational analysis (within a function-theoretical or Roman-numeral framework) is not only an interesting music-theoretical idea that could hold promising analytical potentials, it would also, ideally, improve the general understanding of Schenkerian analyses within Scandinavian academia, and thus make way for an actual critical engagement with them—a much more desirable scenario than the brief brushing off by, for instance, Bengtsson (1973) and Marschner (2015), or the overenthusiastic degradation by Edlund (2015).

Incorporating the idea of prolongation can only enrich the hegemonic status of function analysis in Scandinavia. Taking a similar approach as demonstrated in Kirkegaard-Larsen (2021b), consider the song by Tekla Griebel shown in Example 10. A conventional function analysis of this music would struggle to make sense of the linear movements in this music. The example proposes a modified form of conventional function analysis, one that highlights the prolongation of the tonic, and later dominant, function by explicating the obvious linear movement of the voices.

Appassionato

Dra- ges du ung fra det fæd- re-ne Tag, fra Hjem- mets den ry- gen-de Gry- de, mær- ker du Blo- det i hi- gen-de Jag dig kækt gen- nem Aa- rer- ne sy- de.

T 8 — 7 — 6 — 5 — 4 — 3 — 2 — 1 — 7 — #6 — DD 7 — D 5 — 4 — 3 — 2 — 1
 = (8/8) 9----- (8) D

Example 10: Tekla Griebel’s “Drages du ung fra det fædrene Tag” from *Fem Sange af Oscar Madsens “Den Flyvende Hollænder”*, mm. 3–10 (Griebel 1894, 10).

Sometimes, functional relations may arise from such linear movements, but nothing prevents the analyst from highlighting these along with the voice leading, as exemplified by the two-layered analysis of the chord in m. 8 in Example 10.

Another song by Tekla Griebel, “Sang af ‘Mester Dubitans’” provides a good example. The full song is shown in Example 11. Notice the chords in m. 2 alone. What is the function of the chord on beats 2 and 4? In conventional function analysis, this chord would be interpreted as the doubly altered incomplete double dominant (that is, C# major with seventh, flat ninth, flattened fifth, and root omitted), but instead of leading to the dominant, it pivots back to the tonic. Clearly, it makes sense to under-

stand this chord as a prolongation of the tonic through chromatic voice leading (see Example 12): E# resolves up to F#, and G resolves down to F#, but there is no sense of having fundamentally moved away from the tonic. The sequence in mm. 7–8 can also productively be understood as a means of prolongation. The prolongational motion begins with the first chord of the sequence, G major, and this motion terminates with the last chord of the sequence, B minor. These two outer points thus produce a prolongational 5–6–5 voice leading motion, and the internal functional relations (S–T in relation to D major, and then B minor), can still be communicated (see Example 13).

Sang af „Mester Dubitans“.

(V. Røse.)

Tekla Griebel.

Moderato. *mp*

Sang. *mp*

Sov sødt, sov sødt, mit Hjer-tes Lyst! Din
Sov sødt, sov sødt, mit Hjer-tes Lyst! ved

Piano. *mp*

Vug-ge er din Mo-der's Bryst, paa Gæn ger ej den gyn-ger; men
tu-sind Fug-les Kvid-der-røst og Vin dens dy-be San-ge. Og

al-drig dog den stil-le staar, ved Graad og Suk din Vug-ge gaar og
stand-ser Vin-dens Aan-de-dræt, din Mo-der bli-ver al-drig træt, nej,

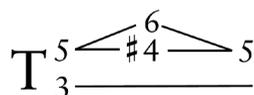
rø-res, naar jeg syn-ger, naar jeg syn-ger.
al-drig træt af Sang i Da-ge man-ge.

cresc. *dim.* *dim.* *p*

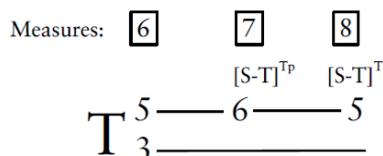
espress. *pp*

K. H. M. 2856

Example 11: Tekla Griebel's "Sang af 'Mester Dubitans'" from *To Sange* (Griebel 1893, 2).

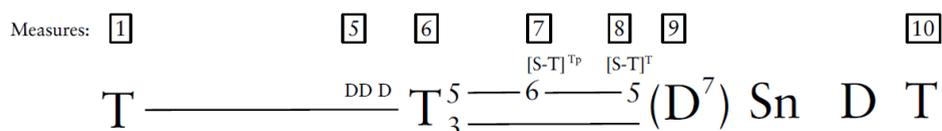


Example 12: The author's analysis of Griebel's "Sang af 'Mester Dubitans'," m. 2.



Example 13: The author's analysis of Griebel's "Sang af 'Mester Dubitans'," mm. 6–8.

A salient feature of this song is the role of the tritone in relation to the tonic, B: The tritone appears distinctively in melody and piano as a leading tone to the fifth of the tonic, E# (mm. 2 and 5), but in m. 9, it appears as F, the seventh of a G major chord leading to the Neapolitan, C major. Applying a prolongational analysis suggests that the tonic prolongation reaches its limit exactly as E# is reinterpreted as F in m. 9. This is communicated in Example 14 (the previous tonal motions from B minor in m. 1 to the dominant in m. 5 is seen as subordinate to this larger motion).



Example 14: The author's prolongational analysis of Griebel's "Sang af 'Mester Dubitans'."

It is striking that Griebel seems to "resolve" this problem of the tritone, and consequently terminate the tonic prolongation, just as the lyrics underline its point by repeating that the mother's lullaby to her child shall never stop.

Clearly, it should be possible to develop this line of analytical thinking centered around prolongation without having to buy the entire Schenker package, with *Ursatz*, ideology, warts and all. It should be possible, too, to develop this line of thought in ways that can at least broaden the "white male" frame of classical music theory, as exemplified in these analyses of the forgotten Danish woman composer Tekla Griebel Wandall (1866–1940; see Kirkegaard 2022). It is clear, however, that it will not fundamentally change this frame.

The third way to make use of this debate is to take the consequence of the fact that Schenker was only an example—albeit a very central one—in Ewell's paper. Ewell focused on the white racial frame of the entire American music theory enterprise, and in this, the predominance of Schenkerian theory is only one symptom. As is clear from this article, it can hardly be called a symptom in Scandinavia. Instead, a critical look at the legacy from Riemann is due. As Alexander Rehding has shown in his monograph

on Hugo Riemann (2003), Riemann's music-theoretical project was, much like Schenker's, one that served to prove the superiority of music from Germanic culture; his theory-historical project, likewise, served to prove the superiority of his own theory (Burnham 1992). Ludwig Holtmeier has argued (2004) that the subsequent German reception of Riemann's function theory also carries a heavy historical and political baggage: Its enormous dissemination is at least partly due to its being heralded as the only permissible harmonic theory in Nazi Germany. Function theorist Hermann Grabner was commissioned to write "a theory of harmony to point the (new) way for all of the conservatoires in the Reich,"²² while alternative theories—particularly those of the Jewish Ernst Kurth and Heinrich Schenker—were banned (see Gerigk and Stengel 1940, 239) and the competition from the incredibly influential *Harmonielehre* by Rudolf Louis and Ludwig Thuille (1910) vanished. In the sudden hegemony of function theory, politics and ideology played a central role. It is not clear, however, to what extent Scandinavian function theory also carries this German baggage, for the Scandinavian reception and development of function theory is a twisted and tangled story (see Nielsen 2018–19; Kirkegaard, forthcoming).

Here lies, then, a large and important task for future research. What is blatantly obvious in any case is that the white and male frame of music theory is just as powerful in Scandinavia as it is in the American context Ewell addressed; one need only to look at the list of references of this article to confirm this.

When "the Schenker debate" entered Danish media, following the responses to Ewell in *Journal of Schenkerian Studies*, it functioned as a clear confirmation of the Scandinavian picture of Schenkerism: an esoteric sect with dogmatic beliefs, who would do anything to protect its leader from criticism. But the easiest thing to do is to point fingers at others—we knew Schenker was a problematical figure all along!—and the hardest thing to do is to point the finger at oneself. In this article, I have tried to assess the relevance of the Schenker example in a Scandinavian context. The superficial rejection of Schenker in footnotes and the equally superficial incorporation of a few aspects from his theory without adequate awareness of its roots and historical development are both problematic. The first strategy prevents a truly critical engagement with central parts of Anglo-American music theory and Western music theory history; the second strategy prevents deeper reflections on the history and possible ramifications of what is incorporated. Both strategies uphold status quo and are, probably, signs of music theory's low rank within Scandinavian musicology post-Kerman. But if one wants music theory to become more inclusive, one must conceive of it as more than just a pedagogical helping discipline within musicology—in which it is, apparently, a sufficient measure of scholarly rigor to denigrate a widely branched-out theoretical tradi-

22 I quote from Holtmeier's translation (2004, 256). The original reads: "Ich habe [...] von einem führenden Verlag den Auftrag erhalten, eine Harmonielehre zu schreiben, die für die Hochschulen des Reiches richtunggebend sein soll" (Grabner in Holtmeier 2003, 29). Holtmeier quotes from a letter of June 2, 1942, at the *Nachlass von Hermann Grabner am musikwissenschaftlichen Institut der Universität Bochum*. For more on Grabner and his relation to Nazism, see Pelster (2015).

tion in a parenthesis. Music theory should ideally be conceived of as an integral part of the critical study of music in all its forms and all its cultures. If anything, “the Schenker debate” is useful in a Scandinavian context because it shows that music theories are never innocent, self-reliant, and objective systems, but rather historical constructions entangled in political and other contexts—and they should be studied as such.

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