

# Heinrich Schenker's Identities as a German and a Jew

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## Abstract

During his lifetime the music theorist Heinrich Schenker (1868–1935) was confronted with a variety of different cultures. After attending a Polish school in the eastern province of Galicia, he moved to Vienna, where he faced a cultural environment dominated by Catholicism, opening up for him, as a Jew, different options of assimilation. After the First World War he stayed in Austria, the small remnant of the Habsburg Empire, while considering himself a German. In the cultural studies perspective, the constructive character of identity is essential: people adopt different identities and develop them contingent on public perception, professional aspirations, and private traditions. This essay focuses not so much on Schenker's discourse of Jewishness as on the traces and representations of identity in the practice of everyday life. Such an examination is now possible, as large parts of Schenker's diaries are available. Pointing out the ambivalences, tensions, and perhaps even contradictions in Schenker's construction of his self, I discuss diverse aspects of his identities—his Polish background, his denominational incognito, his political profession, and his practice of celebration—and how they relate to each other. As a reaction to Richard Wagner's anti-Semitism, Schenker sees himself as more German than the Germans; he, the Jew, wants to be the better German. His emphatic commitment to Germanness contrasts sharply with his quiet Jewish identity and underlines his clear decision to participate in German culture, his mission as a musician and music theorist to save German music, and his assimilation—all this, however, without abandoning his position as a self-imposed outsider and without allowing his Jewish identity in his remembrance and practice of celebration in everyday life to totally disappear.

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# Introduction

[1] The Austrian music theorist Heinrich Schenker moved to the capital of the Habsburg Empire from his birthplace, Galicia, on the eastern border of the Danube monarchy, as a youth in 1884. He studied law and music and worked as a pianist and a music journalist before deciding to earn his income principally as a private teacher around the turn of the century. He also edited piano music for the Viennese Universal Edition publishing house and wrote books about music theory. Many of his pupils were Jewish and were forced to flee from the Nazis. Many of them emigrated to the United States, where Schenker's analytical approach established itself as a popular cornerstone of academic education in colleges and universities. For a long time, this strong response in the United States stood in contrast to great skepticism in Europe, especially in the German-speaking countries, until lasting interest for Schenkerian analysis developed on this side of the Atlantic as well in the 1990s.

The following observations take a primarily cultural studies perspective. Choosing Schenker had less to do with the sophistication and strength of his theory than, above all, the readily available primary sources. Extensive diaries spanning several decades have been preserved, most of which have been published online recently. The [Schenker Documents Online](#) (SDO) platform also contains a vast collection of Schenker's correspondence.<sup>[1]</sup> Several years ago, a selection of English translations of Schenker's correspondence was published.<sup>[2]</sup> The following considerations take three studies from recent years as their point of departure. Lee Rothfarb recently presented a comprehensive study on Schenker's youth in Galicia, revealing surprising biographical details and offering rich information on nineteenth-century Jewish life in this Austrian province.<sup>[3]</sup> In his book *The Schenker Project* (2007), Nicholas Cook focuses on the complex relationship between music theory and social identity.<sup>[4]</sup> He melds Schenker's understanding of music and his theoretical ambitions with his worldview, his Jewish identity, and his conservative self-perception to form a complex he calls Schenker's "project" and contextualizes this project, drawing from a broad knowledge of sources and secondary literature, in Vienna at the turn of the century. This essay refers especially to chapter 4 of his book, "The Politics of Assimilation." Furthermore, Andrea Reiter published an essay about Schenker's Jewish identity in 2015 in which she investigates Schenker's reactions to literary works having to do with the social standing of Jews in various European countries.<sup>[5]</sup>

From the perspective of cultural studies, the constructive character of identity is essential: people adopt different identities and develop them contingent on public perception, professional aspirations, and private traditions: "No single identity acts as an overarching, organizing identity; rather, identities shift according to how subjects are addressed or represented. Thus we are constituted by fractured, multiple identities."<sup>[6]</sup> This essay attempts to further sharpen our understanding of Schenker's self-perception from the perspective of his multiple identities. Going beyond the studies mentioned above, this essay will focus not so much on Schenker's discourse of Jewishness as on the traces and representations of identity in the practice of everyday life.<sup>[7]</sup> Such an examination is now possible, as large parts of his diaries are available. Further, the following observations will underline the ambivalences, tensions, and perhaps even contradictions in Schenker's construction of his self.

# Pole or German

Schenker's childhood and youth, which, as Lee Rothfarb discusses in a thorough essay backed up by a wealth of source material, was shaped by the powerful Polonization of Galicia made possible through a change to the constitution of the Habsburg monarchy.<sup>[8]</sup> But the same law, the *Staatsgrundgesetz* of 1867, which guaranteed Jews and Christians the same rights, also formed the basis of Jewish emancipation. Newly established secondary schools, especially in Galicia and Bucovina, gave talented children from Jewish families previously unimaginable opportunities for advancement. The proportion of Jewish pupils was relatively high.<sup>[9]</sup> At the same time, the proportion of Polish speakers in Cisleithania grew from 14.9 percent in 1880 to 17.8 percent in 1910. It was becoming more common for German-speaking Jews in Galicia to report Polish as their native language. In 1880, 60.4 percent of Jews reported their native language as Polish, increasing sharply to 92.5 percent in 1910.<sup>[10]</sup> Schenker grew up in a multi-ethnic culture where Yiddish, German, Polish, and Ruthenian were spoken. He attended secondary school in Lemberg and Berezhany, schools taught in Polish; the languages taught at these schools included German, Russian, Latin, and Greek.<sup>[11]</sup>



**Figure 1: Lviv, Franz-Joseph-Gymnasium at Batoriya street. Schenker attended the school from 1876 until 1879 (By courtesy of: [Center for Urban History of East Central Europe](#), Collection Igor and Iryna Kotlobulatov)**

At all three schools, his name was listed as Henryk Schenker. The statistics from the schools' annual reports document the attraction of Polish culture. Of the 1047 pupils at Franz-Joseph-Gymnasium in Lemberg in 1879 (when Schenker was in the third grade), nearly 10 percent were Jewish; but according to the statistics, only eight pupils, that is, under 1 percent, had German as their native language.<sup>[12]</sup> At the German-speaking secondary school in Lemberg, the ratios were of course different. It is uncertain why Schenker did not attend this school, where a larger percentage of pupils was Jewish.<sup>[13]</sup> In 1883, in addition to twelve (Ruthenian-speaking) Greek-Catholic pupils, nine Roman-Catholic and eight Jewish pupils attended the seventh grade of the secondary school in Berezhany, one of whom was Henryk Schenker. According to the annual

report, Polish was the native language of all seventeen of these pupils and German was not the native language of any.<sup>[14]</sup>



**Figure 2: Lviv, Gymnasium IV. Schenker attended the school in the school year 1879-80 (By courtesy of: [Center for Urban History of East Central Europe](#), Collection Igor and Iryna Kotlobulatov)**

Upon enrolling in and registering at the University of Vienna, Schenker listed his native language as Polish for the first five semesters. In 1887/88, his listing varies between Polish and German.<sup>[15]</sup> This said, there is hardly a hint in his diary about Poland or the Polish language. His German is flawless and his diary hardly contains any indication that he spoke Polish at all. In autumn 1913, he received a petition from a former classmate for whom he had little sympathy. “Moreover,” he confides to his diary, “the letter is written in the Polish language which, even from the way in which it is written, sounds barbaric and unpleasant to my ears today.”<sup>[16]</sup> In this light, it is tempting to speculate that Schenker’s love for the music of Frédéric Chopin (1810–49) reflects his suppressed Polish background. In all seriousness, he transformed the composer’s national identity in 1921, presenting “Friedrich” Chopin “among the great German masters” (“in die Reihe der großen deutschen Meister”).<sup>[17]</sup>

[2] Presumably, the young Schenker, who was always an excellent pupil, could have become a Polish intellectual. Since all of the secondary schools he attended were Polish, it would seem reasonable that he would have attended a Polish-speaking university, such as the University of Lemberg or the University of Warsaw. The Social Democrat Hermann Diamand (1860–1931) and the author and critic Wilhelm Feldman (1868–1919), who were also raised in Galicia, consciously embraced, as Jews, the Polish culture and preferred to assimilate themselves into the Polish nation.<sup>[18]</sup> When Schenker called Germany his chosen homeland, there were other alternatives he could have chosen. His belonging to the German culture was the result of a conscious decision. It is uncertain when exactly this decision was made. Perhaps Schenker at first simply followed the example of Moriz Rosenthal (1862–1946) and moved to Vienna, primarily in order to pursue a career in music there. The celebrated pianist Rosenthal was only six years older than Schenker. He was born in Lemberg and moved to Vienna when he was only thirteen years old, taking up



studies with Rafael Joseffy (1852–1915) and later Franz Liszt (1811–86).

There is some evidence that the border drawn between Catholic Polish and Jewish culture, which he, apparently similarly to Martin Buber (1878–1965), was inevitably confronted by in Galicia, played a role in Schenker's decision in favor of Germanness. Buber, who attended Franz-Joseph-Gymnasium in Lemberg ten years after Schenker, wrote about the decisive impact of his school years. He recalls an atmosphere of tolerating each other without understanding each other at the school, just as was the case among the people in the monarchy in general.<sup>[19]</sup> The coexistence without a relationship between the Polish majority and a Jewish minority could be seen in the daily practice of morning prayer. Every day the border was drawn between those who belonged and the rest, the others.

The bell rang at 8:00. One of the teachers entered and stepped up to the lectern, above which an enormous crucifix hung on the wall. At the same instant, all of the pupils stood up in their tables. The teacher and the Polish pupils crossed themselves, he invoked the trinity, and they repeated after him, then they all prayed out loud together. We Jews stood there motionless, our eyes down, until we were allowed to be seated.

I mentioned that there was no palatable hatred toward Jews in our school; I can't hardly recall a teacher who was intolerant or who did not at least want to be viewed as tolerant. For me, being forced to stand there every day in a space dominated by other people's prayers was worse than the effect an act of intolerance would have had. Guests by force; having to participate in a sacred ceremony as a thing, a ceremony which not an iota of my being was able to or wanted to participate in; and that morning for morning for eight years: that made an impression on the life substance of the boy.<sup>[20]</sup>

Schenker was also surely subjected to the ritualized drawing of boundaries described by Martin Buber. It is possible that the decision to move to Vienna and the German culture which dominated there embodied for him the promise of a cultural home in a tradition he adored, all the while without denouncing his Jewishness.

## Denominational Incognito

Heinrich Schenker believed in the Jewish faith but did not practice it publicly. He was certain that he would not give up his confession and regularly payed taxes to the Jewish Community of Vienna, even though he never attended the synagogue. In his daily life, he did not allow his Jewish identity to be recognized. His language and customs did not reveal his faith.<sup>[21]</sup> He and his partner, Jeanette Kornfeld (1874–1945), were able to maintain their "denominational incognito" ("confessionelle[s] Incognito")<sup>[22]</sup> so well that anti-Semitic comments made by a signalman in Altenmarkt to them as apparent fellow Germans, for example, merely amused him.<sup>[23]</sup> Against the backdrop of growing hatred against Jews after World War I, it is easy to understand why one would hide one's Jewish identity. It was important for Schenker to do nothing that might hinder his writings from earning recognition, which, from his perspective, was progressing too slowly and insufficiently as it was. He emphasized that it was his "duty to complete [his] work, but not to risk perhaps jeopardizing the work by an innately superfluous revelation" of his denomination.<sup>[24]</sup> There were certainly practical considerations behind this discretion as well, such as Schenker's desire to not limit his own ability to move about freely. Schenker loved the mountains and regularly took vacations in Tyrol with his wife. In the 1920s, anti-Semitic sentiments in the tourism industry were growing louder, and some people were clamoring for 'Jewish-free' summer holiday resorts. Several huts belonging to the German and Austrian Alpine Society refused Jewish guests. Schenker did not want to acknowledge any of that, and there is no mention of it in his

diaries.<sup>[25]</sup> He did not consider himself the target of anti-Semitic comments. On the contrary, he was sympathetic to them—a stance not uncommon among assimilated Jews when confronted with poor immigrants from Galicia, for example. “Nothing was more guaranteed to arouse their ire than the sight of a bearded, caftan Jew in the streets of Vienna with his ‘Yiddish singsong intonation,’ reminding them of their not so distant past in the pre-emancipation ghettos.”<sup>[26]</sup>

In order to understand the full spectrum of how Jewish individuals approached and assimilated to the dominant German Christian culture in the Habsburg Empire, it is not sufficient to measure assimilation by conversion figures or by changes in status to ‘non-denominational.’<sup>[27]</sup> Just as converted Jews and people who left the Jewish Community must of course be included in a panorama of Jewish identity, one can observe various degrees and strategies of assimilation among Jews who practice and believe in their faith to varying levels of intensity. If one wishes to create a differentiated portrayal of assimilation in the Austrian monarchy and the First Republic, Schenker’s idiosyncratic path offers an instructive case study.

## Political Profession

[3] Marsha L. Rozenblit wrote several studies on the political identity of Austrian Jews in the final phase of the Habsburg monarchy and the years that followed. Her studies often stress the loyalty of a large majority of Jews to the ruling house and the Austrian state: “almost all Jews proclaimed an Austrian political identity and vigorously asserted their loyalty to Austria and the Habsburgs.”<sup>[28]</sup> Influenced by the “old Habsburg tripartite identity,” they were situated in three ways: “Austrian by political loyalty, German by culture, and ethnically Jewish.”<sup>[29]</sup> The author maintains that Austrian Jews did not have a German nationalist identity. The collapse of the monarchy caused an identity crisis that nonetheless did not prevent the majority from transferring their former loyalty from the Austrian Empire to the very shrunken small country of Austria after 1918. Most Jews would have opposed annexation by Germany.<sup>[30]</sup> Against this background, Schenker’s pronounced German nationalist stance seems quite obvious and an expression of a special individualism. Seen from another angle, the question is whether a uniformly understood identity of Austrian Jews such as that sketched by Rozenblit reflects the reality of the time, or whether it is perhaps an oversimplification stemming from the selection of sources. The author bases her portrayal largely on articles in Jewish newspapers and magazines. Schenker, who did indeed voice his idiosyncratic opinion publicly, may represent a not so small group of assimilated Jews in Austria whose opinions were not represented in Jewish periodicals and who developed their Jewish identity, which they did not want to give up, in diverse and divergent ways.

In his biography of Heinrich Schenker based on Schenker’s diaries and letters, Hellmut Federhofer attempted to veil Schenker’s German nationalist stance. Schenker was against democracy and for a monarchical (or also authoritarian) form of government. He preferred the Habsburg monarchy to the modern democratic states which replaced it. Federhofer interprets a pertinent comment by Schenker as evidence that he was a monarchist loyal to the Habsburgs and that he felt connected with the Habsburg Empire his whole life and sincerely mourned its demise.<sup>[31]</sup> This interpretation is repeated to this day.<sup>[32]</sup> But Schenker’s comment has overtones that are, indeed, critical of the Habsburgs. He avails himself of the German nationalist topos criticizing the unjustifiable preference for non-German peoples in the Habsburg monarchy by emphasizing that “it was precisely the Habsburgs who take the most credit for those splinterings of peoples which

have now begun their self-determination in such a grotesque manner, with ingratitude and treason.”<sup>[33]</sup> The real target of Schenker’s enthusiasm was Prussian rulers such as Bismarck (1815–98) and Wilhelm II (1859–1941), more than the Habsburgs—before and during the war, as well as thereafter. He was highly critical of the Sixtus Affair after secret peace negotiations between Austria and France, initiated by Emperor Karl (1887–1922), had emerged. After World War I, he positioned himself politically close to the Pan-German Movement of the avowed anti-Semite Georg von Schönerer (1842–1921).<sup>[34]</sup> He saw Germany, not Austria, as his chosen homeland: “my loyalty to Germany as my fatherland of choice does not organically require a confession of the Jewish faith as well,” he wrote in 1925.<sup>[35]</sup>

World War I, which the nearly 50-year-old critical newspaper reader Schenker lived through in Vienna, triggered an immense surge of German nationalist sentiment in him. His diaries are full of invectives against the Slavs and the western peoples. Germany is portrayed as a victim of an international conspiracy. Schenker’s elucidatory edition of Beethoven’s (1770–1827) Sonata Op. 111 (1916) also has similar overtones. In the foreword, the author describes Germany as the most able nation on earth, richer in talents and capabilities than even the Greeks and Romans.<sup>[36]</sup> Schenker also writes that Germany is on the path toward freedom through this war, which was so “maliciously mounted” (“freventlich aufgezwungen”) against it: breaking free of centuries of being underestimated by nations that, impiously overestimating themselves, place “their foot, in presumption and arrogance, on the neck of Germany” (“sich frivol überschätzend in Dünkel und Übermut den Fuß auf den Nacken Deutschlands [setzen]”).<sup>[37]</sup> Immediately following the war, Schenker continued with these nationalist polemics in his subsequent publications. Following the model of Karl Kraus’s (1874–1936) *Die Fackel*,<sup>[38]</sup> he published only his own articles in the periodical *Der Tonwille*, launching coarse attacks against the western victors. The lead article of the magazine in 1921, “Von der Sendung des deutschen Genies,” is brimming with resentment against French, Britons, and Americans.<sup>[39]</sup>

To whom are these raving comments addressed? Consider first Schenker’s more or less influential correspondence and conversation partners, whose opinions he registered keenly and whose recognition he enjoyed during these years. Shortly before World War I, he started corresponding with the music author Walter Dahms (1887–1973), who wrote numerous biographies of composers, especially from the 19th century. In 1916, the composer and music theoretician August Halm (1869–1929) introduced himself by assuring Schenker that they shared a “common artistic volition” (“gemeinsamen Kunstwillen”) and “the same enemies” (“dieselben Feinde”).<sup>[40]</sup>





**Figure 3: Wilhelm Furtwängler, approximately 1920 (Photo: Trude Fleischmann; by courtesy of: Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, [Bildarchiv Austria](#))**

In addition to Dahms and Halm, the then 30-year-old Wilhelm Furtwängler (1886–1954), who was engaged as a conductor in Vienna for several years after the war, can also be considered as a recipient of Schenker's German nationalist polemics. Schenker met the conductor in May 1919 at an evening social event at the home of the banker Paul Hammerschlag (1860–1933). The conversation turned to Romain Rolland's (1866–1944) biography of Beethoven, which had been published in German in 1918. It is noteworthy that in the discussion, Schenker tried to make the pacifist Rolland, a strict opponent of nationalism, seem untrustworthy. It is also characteristic of Schenker that he positioned himself in opposition to all of the other people involved in the conversation. Schenker against everyone: that was his preferred *modus operandi*.

The conversation again became guarded, since people may have been afraid of hurting or embarrassing one another, especially on matters of general interest. Among other things, there was talk about Rolland, whose novel had won the undivided admiration of all. In opposition to this, naturally not without indicating that I was acquainted only with the outline of its contents, as well as various articles and excerpts, I promptly formulated the most drastically opposing judgment possible, and opined that Rolland was something like a French Bahr, only on a larger scale. I immediately noticed that in this form my judgment had no chance of being accessible to those present. The man of the house produced, as evidence of his favourable opinion, a letter addressed to him from Rolland, in which the latter declares himself as owing a debt of gratitude toward Germany and with Michelet emphatically exclaims 'My Germany!'—This document made me all the more suspicious. For a start, the writing, adorned with all manner of delicate touches, arabesques, coquettish flourishes and initials, and then of course the content itself! By and by, however, I prevailed upon Rolland's admirers, one by one, to confess not to know exactly what Rolland's own judgment was of the Germans and German art, whether it was Beethoven or some imaginary musician who was embodied in the hero of his novel, and briefly bring up many other contradictions as well. This confusion again only served to confirm my own impression of Rolland.<sup>[41]</sup>

[4] Halm, Furtwängler, and at first also Dahms were more or less politically conservative. However, even they could not sympathize with Schenker's polemics without reservations. Halm, for example, regretted that Schenker was "striking out against the French" ("daß ich wider die Franzosen ziehe").<sup>[42]</sup> Even though Schenker hardly won friends with his nationalist stance, he at least created enemies effortlessly. In his attacks against various music scholars and theoreticians, the addressee of the polemic was clear. This is not the case for his rants about the western forces: it does not appear that the countries under attack are the actual target. Who in France, England, or the USA should even notice such polemics? In this case, it seems to have to do with positioning within a discourse among Jews, aggressively targeting a cosmopolitan and pacifist worldview that Schenker, as he says, associates with incorrectly understood Jewish values. According to his view, the Jews do not have their own homeland; he does not see it as an option to find a new homeland in Palestine: "Having altogether lost their own country, history, poetry, culture, they can never again recapture their own culture, because that is bound up with one's own homeland."<sup>[43]</sup> Without his or her own country, "the Jew, in order to be able to have an intellectual impact, must select a homeland and function in a culture of his choosing."<sup>[44]</sup> Jews are "eternal lodgers of the other nations" ("ewige Zimmerherren der übrigen Nationen").<sup>[45]</sup> As mentioned above, Schenker's chosen homeland was Germany. In his understanding, Jews who live here and "who belittle Germanness in favour of Internationalism" ("das Deutschtum ... zugunsten des Internationalen herabsetzt") are acting in contradiction.<sup>[46]</sup>

In Schenker's eyes, Emil Hertzka (1869–1932), the director of Universal Edition and Schenker's publisher, was an example of this contradiction, which led to many conflicts between both of them. Hertzka wanted to convince Schenker to stop publishing polemics—understandably, because he and the type of person he embodied, in Schenker's view, was the actual target of the attacks. Another adversary with whom Schenker shared the same conflict, even though less intensely, was the graphic artist and painter Viktor Hammer (1882–1967), who painted a portrait of Schenker. In one conversation, the two talked at length about Jewish identity: "Hammer professes an international viewpoint, I a national one and I even declaim against the Semites." Schenker argues with an anti-Semitic stereotype: that the international focus of the Jews damages German culture: "Through their incapacity for culture, they are insensitive towards true art altogether, seducing in particular a people that by nature tends to repudiate itself, to overemphasize non-national characteristics."<sup>[47]</sup>

# The Self-Imposed Outsider

In the self-image of central European Jews in the early 20th century, there were various possibilities, including Jewish nationalist (Zionism), cosmopolitan, and German nationalist positions. Schenker chose a German nationalist identity and thus belonged to a group that was growing quickly within the entire spectrum of political activists but which was certainly a minority among Jews. What drove him to make this choice and to publicly proclaim it? Schenker's adherence to Germanness is embedded in a deep sense of cultural pessimism that, alongside anti-Marxism and anti-modernism, was certainly more detrimental than supportive to the impact of his work.<sup>[48]</sup> That is to say, there are few rational reasons for his commitment to Germanness—in terms of reasonably strengthening his influence as a music theoretician. The authoritarian worldview with German values as the highest cultural form correlates with the German nationalism of many Wagnerians, from whom Schenker clearly distances himself, however, because of his skepticism toward Wagner and the 'New German School.' Schenker recognizes Wagner's important role in developing the musical avant-garde. As an opponent of the avant-garde, he reproached the composer for this progressiveness, naturally without denying his great artistic qualities. Schenker's vociferous commitment to Germanness contrasts sharply with this quiet Jewish identity. Another trace that can be followed to better understand the contradiction between the two approaches does lead to Schenker's study of Wagner. The reasons for his vociferous political positioning appear rooted in a reaction to Richard Wagner's anti-Semitism.

Nicholas Cook views Schenker's "project" essentially as an "act of reappropriating" German culture by Schenker as a Jew. He makes the direct link to Richard Wagner's essay "Was ist deutsch?" ("What is German?" written in 1865, published in 1878), where the composer and author contrasts German profundity with Romance superficiality, thereby introducing the central concepts that Schenker associates with Germanness: profundity, genius, spirit, and logic. According to Cook, Schenker shifts the focus somewhat and describes the merits of Germanness using a different repertoire: "Schenker redefines the German in music: he wrenches it away from the Wagnerians and relocates it back in time to the Viennese classics, back to a legacy that is common to Jew and gentile."<sup>[49]</sup> According to Cook, the anti-Semite Wagner provoked Schenker to appropriate his thoughts and in part—building on that—to develop competing conceptual models. Cook notes that Schenker borrowed from Wagner's influential essay "Das Judenthum in der Musik" ("Judaism in Music," 1850)<sup>[50]</sup> the strategy of defining oneself in terms being different from a disparaged other, while reversing the attribution of the qualities: Wagner's concept of innate superficiality among Jewish musicians is transformed into the concept of superficiality in the 'New German School' of composition by Schenker.<sup>[51]</sup> This is possibly nothing more than simple rhetoric, a play on words. However, Wagner, whose anti-Semitism was compatible with the decision to let Hermann Levi (1839–1900) conduct *Parsifal* (which premiered at Bayreuth in 1882), also attributed to Jews the special quality of understanding foreign cultures—a quality that Jews and Germans shared, in Wagner's opinion. The reversal of Wagner's anti-Semitic polemic was already established in his writing. In 1869, his essay on Judaism in music was republished. Cook quotes the epilogue, where Wagner concedes that quick-witted ("geistreiche") Jews had long since decided to "live not only with us but among us" ("nicht nur mit uns, sondern in uns zu leben") and propagated a type of assimilation that served the purposes of both sides, Germans and Jews: as a foreign element, Judaism should "become so assimilated with us as to render it possible for both, in common, to ripen toward the higher cultivation of the nobler human talents."<sup>[52]</sup>

[5] The special position of Jews and the mission of their best thinkers in German culture is sketched out in Wagner's essays. However, it is exaggerated to assert, as Cook did, that Wagner sees Jews as the redeemers of German music: "Put bluntly, the continuation of German music is in the hands of the Jews." Such an interpretation is not convincing with regard to the passages cited by Cook.<sup>[53]</sup> But Schenker saw himself in this role. He saw himself explicitly as a Jew, called to save German music. He understood himself as a type of prophet, as the Moses of music culture. This mission is expressed in his epitaph, for example, which he wrote for himself: "Here lies the body of one who perceived the soul of music and proclaimed its laws, as the great musicians understood them, and as no one before him had done."<sup>[54]</sup>



**Figure 4: Schenker's grave at the Zentralfriedhof, Vienna (Photo: Martin Eybl, private collection)**

In a letter to his pupil Oswald Jonas, Schenker wrote similarly about his "mission" and the



“musical revelation” (“musikalische Offenbarung”) which he brings to the world and the Germans: “the product of the German music-geniuses which, misunderstood, betrayed, defiled by the Germans, but long since having become an asset of all mankind, is now destined to become a new message to the world from the Jews for the coming eternities.”<sup>[55]</sup> That Schenker’s mission—his mission as a Jew!—should be derived from the collected thoughts of the anti-Semite Richard Wagner, of all people, whose works the mature Schenker was so critical of, is among the surprising points in Nicholas Cook’s book.

After all, Schenker did not support the idea of generally abolishing the boundaries between denominations. Just the opposite is true. In 1925, he saw John Galsworthy’s (1867–1933) play *Loyalties* (1921) at the Theater in der Josefstadt, which had been produced under the title *Gesellschaft* in a production by Max Reinhardt (1873–1943).<sup>[56]</sup> In a lengthy diary entry, Schenker discussed the problem of integration and separation on the basis of the character of De Levis. This young Jew attempts to join a group of well-situated people of his age, who hold him at bay with mockery of his extravagant apparel, for example. Schenker criticizes the ‘pushy’ nature of this character. The “wealthy Jew knows from the outset that he is only put up with in certain circles, but pushes his way into these circles anyway and—this is the violation—he is the first to hurl reproaches in the faces of the representatives of these circles, accusing them of only putting up with him.” He falls into conflict and insists on his special status, unjustifiably, according to Schenker: “There was only one way out for this Jew, to adapt to society, that is what any reasonable person would have done, whether Jew or Christian.”<sup>[57]</sup> In his discussion of the character in Galsworthy’s play, Schenker sketches out a maxim that he himself lives by. As Jew and as an individual in general, you have two choices: either you adapt to a society or you avoid the society if you do not fit in. You should not express your otherness if you want to belong at the same time. If you do not assimilate yourself, you have to keep your distance.

In my opinion, Andrea Reiter’s interpretation that Schenker was bothered by the character’s lack of assimilation does not go far enough.<sup>[58]</sup> After all, Schenker also criticizes the character for going too far to assimilate himself: De Levi pushes into a society where he knows he will only be tolerated. Both too much and not enough assimilation can be wrong. The point that Schenker stresses is not to assimilate at any cost; he emphasizes that the self-design that independently determines one’s own relationship with a group must be aligned with one’s behavior.





**Figure 5: Heinrich Schenker, Jeanette Schenker, and Anthony van Hoboken at Kurhaus Böckstein (Province of Salzburg), August 16, 1934 (Photo: Eva van Hoboken, private collection)**

Two years later, Schenker recalled the play when he found himself in a comparable situation. He had been invited by Guido Adler (1855–1941), the doyen of academic musicology, to hold a lecture at the congress being held to honor Beethoven’s centenary celebration in 1927. This was a chance to establish his reputation as a Beethoven expert. The situation meant a lot to Schenker; he had to justify his ultimate decision to refuse the invitation to men from his inner circle, such as Otto Erich Deutsch (1883–1967) and Anthony van Hoboken (1887–1983).<sup>[59]</sup> Schenker did not think highly of Adler and his “horde of greenhorns” (“Horde von Bubiköpfen”) parading “their historical wisdom” (“mit ihrer historischen Weisheit aufmarschieren”). He writes in his diary: “I did not want to make the mistake made by the Jew in Galsworthy’s *Loyalties*, by entering into the circle of musicologists and making fun of them, as I have been doing for thirty-five years.”<sup>[60]</sup> The wording of Schenker’s letter of refusal to Adler was noteworthy. One would expect that he turned down the invitation because he did not want to deviate from his usual manner of writing about Beethoven and because he thought that would be inappropriate at a congress. Instead, he talks about inner compulsion (“innerer Zwang”), as if he had no other choice but to distance himself and to not assimilate. In his diary, he summarizes his letter to Adler (which was not preserved) as follows: “To Prof. Adler (letter): I thank him for his invitation but turn it down as I am driven by inner compulsion to express myself about Beethoven in the way in which I have previously been accustomed, which would however not be suitable at a conference.”<sup>[61]</sup> This choice of words indicates that there is more behind his turning down the invitation than simply a mood; namely, the alternative between integration and exclusion, which Schenker himself ties into his Jewish identity through his reference to Galsworthy. In relation to Schenker’s Beethoven studies, the expression inner compulsion seems far-fetched; it is more likely linked to his Jewish identity, which forces him to draw certain boundaries. The components

that contributed to Schenker's choice of words can likely be broken down as follows: just as I am driven by inner compulsion to distance myself as a Jew because I would otherwise have to give up my existence, I must also distance myself from the congress because I do not, nor do I want to fit into that circle.

## The Practice of Celebration and Remembering

[6] The way you show yourself to others and want to be seen by them is one side of identity, and the way you live is another. Schenker shared his life with his wife in many ways. Their holidays and everyday life were only rarely marked by religious practices that the two likely learned in childhood. However, in the process of secularization that can be witnessed in the couple's life practices, the religious basis remains intact. The woman at Schenker's side, Jeanette Schiff, was an extraordinary person. Until his death, Schenker and she had a very intimate relationship. She was also born into a Jewish family, was raised in Aussig (Ústí nad Labem, Czech Republic) on the Elbe River in Bohemia, where she married the businessman Emil Kornfeld (1866–1937), with whom she had two sons. Kornfeld and Schenker were friends, which is how Jeanette and Heinrich met in 1903 at the latest. In 1910 she left her family and moved to Vienna, and a long fight for divorce ensued. It was not until 1919 that Jeanette Kornfeld and Heinrich Schenker were able to marry. Schenker always spoke of his wife with the utmost respect. After praising her cooking in a letter to August Halm, it was important for him to mention that she "also stands fully equipped at my side intellectually" ("überdies vollkommen gerüstet mir auch geistig zur Seite steht"), as Schenker says, "vollkommen gerüstet" also meaning "perfectly armed"—here again, as if a matter of course, a martial metaphor.<sup>[62]</sup> After 1935, Jeanette Schenker looked after her deceased husband's estate, which eventually was preserved in the United States. In 1936, she traveled to Chile for five months, but returned to Vienna. In 1942 she was deported to the concentration camp in Theresienstadt, where she died in January 1945 at age 70.<sup>[63]</sup>

Celebrations are realms of memory, *lieux de mémoire*. They mark events in the present that are worth remembering or keep the memory of such events alive after the fact. Schenker's diary provides detailed information about the daily life of the couple. In general, there were few celebrations in the Schenker home, and even then the celebrations were given little space. Their wedding anniversary passed without note. Presents they gave each other on their birthdays are not mentioned in the diary; a special dish at a meal or a small house concert that he gave her was enough.<sup>[64]</sup> There was always work done on such days. There was no day of rest on the Sabbath, nor on Sundays. The Jewish holidays were not celebrated.<sup>[65]</sup> On the important Christian holidays, the (Christian) house employees received gifts; the relatives were written to and perhaps invited to a meal.<sup>[66]</sup> Schenker the German (with an Austrian passport!<sup>[67]</sup>), resolutely refused to participate in Austrian national holiday events.<sup>[68]</sup> Heinrich and Jeanette Schenker did not participate in public celebrations, parades, or processions.

Jewish traditions are among Schenker's buried memories. They appear briefly in apparent minor details or almost accidentally; there are only a few places in the diary where such a memory flashes up. On occasion we learn that Jeanette baked a 'Christmas striez,' which is similar to the challah prepared on Jewish holidays. At Christmas in 1922, Schenker wrote to his closest friend Moriz Violin (1879–1956) even more clearly: "What is your wife up to? My Lie-Liechen [Jeanette] is taking a 'holiday' in the apartment, all sorts of counterpoint, inversion of the furniture, plaited bread ["Strieze"]—the Jew is singing: 'ma nischtanu?'"<sup>[69]</sup> That is a cheerful and fairly surprising

memory of—the wrong holiday. Schenker quotes the beginning of the dialogue that initiates Haggadah, the ceremony of the springtime Passover feast: “Why is this night different from all other nights?” At Easter in 1907, Schenker was still participating in such celebrations himself. He basked in childhood memories, and his acute stomach ache promptly let up: “In the evening, with mother at Uncle and Aunt Einschenk’s place, for the Passover feast. Old memories. The ritual meal unexpectedly clears up an upset stomach that has been going on already for several days!”<sup>[70]</sup> The tension between the present largely profane everyday world and his childhood influenced by religion led to ambivalence about the *lieux de mémoire* constituted by religious celebrations. They seem foreign and familiar at the same time. Individual elements of such celebrations that can be summoned up lead people back to their own past, but they no longer provide a viable basis for their own existence.

A similar ambivalence between distance and closeness, between lack of interest and commitment, can also be seen when Schenker’s mother died in December 1917. Heinrich and Jeanette did not make the effort to travel the approximately two hours to Waidhofen on the Thaya to attend his mother’s funeral. Six years would pass before they would take that short trip for the first time. One should not conclude that Schenker’s mother was not important to him. It appears that he had a very close relationship with her; after all, Schenker wrote a six-page obituary to his mother in his diary.<sup>[71]</sup> His mother’s grave also meant a great deal to him. He considered having her remains transported to Vienna so that he could be buried next to her and his wife.<sup>[72]</sup> When the couple finally visited her grave, Schenker liked the plainness of the gravestone and likely also the denominational incognito, since there was no indication of religious affiliation. He also liked the idea of modifying the grave so that it even more closely resembled a profane bourgeois model: “since the marble slab and the engraving break with orthodoxy, Lie-Liechen is right in wishing for a frame and ivy decoration.”<sup>[73]</sup>

[7] While Heinrich and Jeanette Schenker placed rather little importance on the culture of remembering in their everyday lives, it was especially clear on one occasion. *One* celebration was held regularly and with special emphasis. It was a totally private celebration, but it was given a religious twist nonetheless (or for that very reason). The couple celebrated the day Jeanette arrived in Vienna, September 30, 1910, after having left her family. The anniversary of this day was celebrated by both with great relish. Festive garments were donned.<sup>[74]</sup> They repeatedly visited the Hôtel de France, where Jeanette had first stayed temporarily.<sup>[75]</sup> In 1930 they tried out a motorized taxi for the first time, and Jeanette seized the opportunity: “Lie-Liechen buys up half of Vienna; she gets out at the clockmaker, at Pirringer [where chocolate and candies were sold], buys the festive apple, gets out at Waldstein’s, at Fritz’s, at the Post Office, at Sima’s, at the florist’s.”<sup>[76]</sup> Every year they bought one or two apples and called the anniversary the Apple Celebration. Rosh Hashanah, the Jewish new year celebration, falls between September 5 and October 5. Jeanette and Heinrich tied their personal anniversary to this celebration. Their Apple Celebration recalls the tradition of eating an apple dipped in honey at Rosh Hashanah. Schenker once called this day of the year “Lie-Liechen’s Haggadah,” once again bringing the Passover feast into play.<sup>[77]</sup> In choosing this term, he interprets their celebration of love as a celebration of liberation (Jeanette’s liberation from the bonds of a marriage that had restricted her), thus, in an act of radical secularization, mirroring the history of the people of Israel in the story of her own life.

The day after the Apple Celebration, October 1, was always the beginning of a new year of teaching, and private pupils once again came to the house. And with the new teaching cycle, another rare practice of remembering started: writing his diary. Writing a diary is working on

memories. The text gets mulled over, intensively performed, written three times and dictated once. Both were involved: Heinrich took notes and dictated them later—up to a year later!—to his wife, who wrote down everything in shorthand and then in clean copy.<sup>[78]</sup> It is *his* diary; the I in the diary is Heinrich, and Jeanette is referred to by her nickname, Lie-Liechen. Only at the end of the diary does her own voice emerge. She describes the final days and hours of her husband's life in a stylistically highly confident and moving manner, now referring to him with his nickname, Heinelein. She ended the diary nine days after his death: "These 3970 pages were never intended to be made public, only for us as a memory crutch."<sup>[79]</sup> It is conceivable that the text stuck in their minds, if only due to frequent repetition. And even though it was not meant to be made public, Jeanette appears to have thought it worth preserving. She gave Moriz Violin the last notes for a diary entry written by her husband.<sup>[80]</sup> Furthermore, she entrusted the clean copy of the diary to Schenker's pupil Oswald Jonas before he fled to the United States, which is how the text survived.

Schenker died as a German. In his last days, Jewish rituals and memories of religious practices from his childhood did not play a role. The day Schenker died, January 13, 1935, was the day of the popular referendum in the Saar territory in which an overwhelming majority of the population cast their vote for reincorporating the territory into Germany. In 1921, Schenker had publicly insisted on the right of the population of the Saar territory to self-determination.<sup>[81]</sup> Just hours before his death, he was interested in the results of the referendum. "I only want to know how things have turned out with the Saarland," he asked his wife. And the last thing that occurred to him was German through and through, Christian through and through: "I then hear him say, in a light state of drowsiness: '...over...'; 'what do you mean by 'over'? I ask, 'we shall yet be dancing together'—and with an angry gesture, because I had not understood, he continues, '...in...in the St. Matthew Passion an idea has occurred to me...'—these were the last words of my dearly beloved."<sup>[82]</sup>

Schenker's diary is a *lieu de mémoire* on various levels, first of all as a 'memory crutch' to keep tabs on their activities: it supports memories. In addition, it is a site where his childhood memories are recorded: it records memories. Finally, it is a site that serves to remember Schenker and his wife, in that, in addition to Schenker's writings, further traces of him remain: a memorial. Just as her husband would have preferred, Jeanette Schenker closed the diary with a quotation from Johann Wolfgang von Goethe's (1749–1832) *Faust*: "The period of time that is yet granted to my life shall be devoted only to his work: what else there may be within me, what else may yet happen around me—without him!—is not worth reporting. And so I close with the comforting thought: 'Es kann die Spur von unsern Erdentagen nicht in Aeonen untergeh'n [the trace of our earthly days cannot perish in all eternity].'"<sup>[83]</sup>

## Conclusion

How are the diverse aspects of Schenker's identities discussed in this paper—Polish background, denominational incognito, political profession, and the practice of celebration—related to each other? The secularization of realms of memory introduced above and motifs of religious celebration translated into personal life are easily paired with denominational incognito: the parts of Schenker that were Jewish remained private. However, his vociferous commitment to Germanness contrasts sharply with that quiet practice. Schenker sees himself as more German than the Germans; he, the Jew, wants to be the better German.<sup>[84]</sup> And this sense of superiority

enables him to express his Germanness so exaggeratedly clearly. Against the backdrop of his Polish socialization, the decision to be a German takes on a new dimension. It shows Schenker's willingness, his 'inner compulsion,' to set limits, to follow a unique path, to be different. For an Arian German nationalist, Germanness is an inheritance that must be defended; for Henryk Schenker, however, it indicates the Promised Land, a parting from the culture of his childhood, and the terrain where he can fulfill his mission as a Jew. His emphatic commitment to Germanness underlines his clear decision to participate in German culture, his mission as a musician and music theorist to save German music, and his assimilation—all this, however, without abandoning his position as a self-imposed outsider, and without allowing his Jewish identity in his remembrance and practice of celebration to totally disappear.<sup>[85]</sup>

## References

1. All quotations from the diary were drawn from this data collection and will be referenced with 'Diary' and the date. This also applies to letters. Unless otherwise noted, the text was transcribed by Marko Deisinger. The Austrian Science Fund (FWF) financed the publication of Schenker's diaries from 1918–25 (2007–11) and from 1912–14 and 1931–35 (2014–18). The publication of his diaries from 1926–30 was supported by the [Arts & Humanities Research Council](#), Great Britain (2011–14). ↑
2. Heinrich Schenker, *Selected Correspondence*, ed. Ian Bent, David Bretherton, and William Drabkin (Woodbridge, Suffolk: Boydell Press, 2014). ↑
3. Lee Rothfarb, "Henryk Szenker, Galitzianer: The Making of a Man and a Nation," *Journal of Schenkerian Studies* 11 (2018): 1–50. My thanks to Lee Rothfarb for making his article available to me before print. ↑
4. Nicholas Cook, *The Schenker Project: Culture, Race, and Music Theory in Fin-de-siècle Vienna* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007). ↑
5. Andrea Reiter, "A Literary Perspective on Schenker's Jewishness," *Music Analysis* 34, no. 2 (2015): 280–303. ↑
6. Chris Barker, ed., *The SAGE Dictionary of Cultural Studies* (London: Sage, 2004), 94. Cf.: Jürgen Straub, "Identität," in *Handbuch der Kulturwissenschaften*, vol. 1, *Grundlagen und Schlüsselbegriffe*, ed. Friedrich Jaeger and Burkhard Liebsch (Stuttgart: Metzler, 2011), 277–303. ↑
7. For Schenker's comments on Jews and Jewishness, see: Hellmut Federhofer, *Heinrich Schenker: Nach Tagebüchern und Briefen in der Oswald Jonas Memorial Collection* (Hildesheim: Olms, 1985), 310–20; Reiter, "Literary Perspective," 281–86. ↑
8. Rothfarb, "Henryk Szenker." For further information about Jewish life in Galicia, see: Piotr Wróbel, "The Jews of Galicia under Austrian Polish Rule, 1869–1918," *Austrian History Yearbook* 25 (1994): 97–138; Emil Brix, "Assimilation in the Late Habsburg Monarchy," in *Österreich-Konzeptionen und jüdisches Selbstverständnis: Identitäts-Transfigurationen im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert*, ed. Hanni Mittelman and Armin A. Wallas, *Conditio Judaica* 35 (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 2001), 37. ↑
9. Gerald Stourzh, "The Age of Emancipation and Assimilation: Liberalism and its Heritage," in Mittelman, Wallas, *Österreich-Konzeptionen*, 17–18; with reference to Hannelore Burger, *Sprachenrecht und Sprachgerechtigkeit im österreichischen Unterrichtswesen, 1867–1918*, *Studien zur Geschichte der österreichisch-ungarischen Monarchie* 26 (Vienna: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1995); and Gary B. Cohen, *Education and Middle Class Society in Imperial Austria, 1848–1918* (West Lafayette, IN: Purdue University Press, 1996). ↑
10. Brix, "Assimilation," 32 and 37. ↑



11. Schenker was a pupil at the Franz-Joseph-Gymnasium in Lemberg from 1876 until 1879. After that he attended Gymnasium IV in Lemberg and continued his upper levels starting in 1880 at the secondary school in Berezhany (Brzeżany), where he graduated at the top of his class in 1884. These facts were drawn from a series of annual reports: *Sprawozdanie dyrektora c. k. Lwowskiego Gimnazjum Im. Franciszka Józefa za rok szkolny, 1878* [and 1879], Lviv: Związkowa drukarnia, 1878–79; *Sprawozdanie Dyrekcyi c. k. Gimnazjum IV. we Lwowie za rok szkolny, 1880*, Lviv: Nakładem funduszu szkolnego, 1880; and *Sprawozdanie Dyrektora c. kr. wyższego gimnazjum w Brzeżanach za rok szkolny, 1881* [–84], Sambir: J. Czaiński, 1881–82 / Berezhany: A. Cichocki, 1883–84. The author used some of these reports many years ago in Martin Eybl, “Texttreue und Expressivität: Sieben Beobachtungen zu Heinrich Schenkers Vortragshinweisen,” in *Die Lehre von der musikalischen Aufführung in der Wiener Schule: Verhandlungen des Internationalen Colloquiums Wien 1995*, ed. Markus Grassl and Reinhard Kapp (Vienna: Böhlau, 2002), 412. The whole series of reports was extensively utilized in Rothfarb, “Henryk Szenker,” 15–16 and 24–28. [↑](#)
12. *Lwowskiego Gimnazjum*, 1879, 53. [↑](#)
13. Rothfarb, “Henryk Szenker,” 15–16. Nicholas Cook’s assumption that Schenker visited German schools stands corrected: Cook, *Schenker Project*, 17 and 202. [↑](#)
14. *Gimnazjum w Brzeżanach*, 1883, 115. [↑](#)
15. Yu-ring Chiang, “Heinrich Schenkers Wiener Gedenkstätten: Gedanken zu seinem sechzigsten Todesjahr,” *Mitteilungen der Österreichischen Gesellschaft für Musikwissenschaft* 30 (1996), 41–51. [↑](#)
16. Diary [November 8, 1913](#), trans. William Drabkin. Original wording: “Ueberdies ist der Brief in polnischer Sprache gehalten, die mir schon den Buchstaben nach heute ganz barbarisch ins Ohr klingt.” My thanks to Marko Deisinger for pointing this out. Unless otherwise indicated, links to *Schenker Documents Online* were accessed on June 10, 2018. [↑](#)
17. Heinrich Schenker, “Von der Sendung des deutschen Genies,” *Der Tonwille* 1 (1921): 21. Cf.: Ian Bent, “Heinrich Schenker, Chopin and Domenico Scarlatti,” *Music Analysis* 5, no. 2/3 (1986), 131–49. [↑](#)
18. Ezra Mendelsohn, “Jewish Assimilation in Lvov: The Case of Wilhelm Feldman,” *Slavic Review* 28, no. 4 (1969): 577–90; newly edited in: *Nationbuilding and the Politics of Nationalism: Essays on Austrian Galicia*, ed. Andrei S. Markovits and Frank E. Sysyn (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1982), 94–110. [↑](#)
19. Martin Buber, *Begegnung: Autobiographische Fragmente* (Heidelberg: Schneider, 1978), 20. [↑](#)
20. Original wording: “Vor 8 Uhr morgens mußten alle Schüler versammelt sein. Um 8 Uhr ertönte das Klingelzeichen; einer der Lehrer trat ein und bestieg das Katheder, über dem an der Wand sich ein großes Kruzifix erhob. Im selben Augenblick standen alle Schüler in ihren Bänken auf. Der Lehrer und die polnischen Schüler bekreuzigten sich, er sprach die Dreifaltigkeitsformel und sie sprachen sie ihm nach, dann beteten sie laut mitsammen. Bis man sich wieder setzen durfte, standen wir Juden unbeweglich da, die Augen gesenkt. Ich habe schon angedeutet, daß es in unserer Schule keinen spürbaren Judenhaß gab; ich kann mich kaum an einen Lehrer erinnern, der nicht tolerant war oder doch als tolerant gelten wollte. Aber auf mich wirkte das pflichtgemäße tägliche Stehen im tönenden Raum der Fremdandacht schlimmer, als ein Akt der Unduldsamkeit hätte wirken können. Gezwungene Gäste; als Ding teilnehmen müssen an einem sakralen Vorgang, an dem kein Quentchen meiner Person teilnehmen konnte und wollte; und dies acht Jahre lang Morgen um Morgen: das hat sich der Lebenssubstanz des Knaben eingeprägt.” *Ibid.*, 20–21, trans. Scott Witmer. [↑](#)
21. Cook’s assumption (based on facts provided by Hedi Siegel) that Schenker spoke with a Yiddish accent is based on a misunderstanding. In an unpublished text, Schenker refers to a thoroughbass manual by Johann Sebastian Bach (1685–1750). The musical examples provided were introduced with the sentence: “Mehrere Erleuchtung zu geben sind folgende Exempel ausgesetzt.” (“As a facilitation some elaborated examples will follow.”) Schenker modernized ‘Erleuchtung’ as ‘Erleichterung’ (facilitation). ‘Erleichterung’ is a normal high-German word and not, as Cook proposed, an irregular Yiddish form (such

as 'heite' for 'heute,' that is, 'today'): Cook, *Schenker Project*, 232. If Schenker had spoken with an accent, he hardly would have been able to hide his Jewish identity so successfully. For further details on his reluctance to reveal his Jewish identity, see: Ibid., 223–29. ↑

22. Diary [June 19, 1928](#); transl. William Drabkin. ↑
23. Diary [September 7, 1919](#). Cf.: Martin Eybl, "'Schnadahüpfeln an Floriz': Heinrich Schenker als Sommergast in Salzburg und Tirol, 1919–1924," in *Musikalien des Übergangs: Festschrift für Gerlinde Haid anlässlich ihrer Emeritierung 2011*, ed. Ursula Hemetek, Evelyn Fink-Mennel, and Rudolf Pietsch, Schriften zur Volksmusik 24 (Vienna: Böhlau, 2011), 245. ↑
24. Diary [September 30, 1925](#); trans. Scott Witmer; translation modified. Original wording: "ist es meine Pflicht, das Werk zur Ausführung zu bringen, nicht aber erst zu riskieren, daß eine an sich überflüssige Bekanntgabe das Werk vielleicht in Frage stellt." In a letter to Oswald Jonas (1897–1978), Schenker asks his pupil to share an enthusiastic essay by Israel Citkowitz (1909–74), who portrayed Schenker in the magazine *Modern Music*, only with a select circle of friends, "but always with discretion: two Jews at once would be too much for antipathetic minds" ("doch immer unter Discretion: Zwei Juden auf einmal wären für feindlich gestimmte Seelen zu viel"). Letter from Schenker to Jonas, [December 21, 1933](#); transcr. and trans. John Rothgeb and Heribert Esser. ↑
25. Eybl, "Schnadahüpfeln," 244–45. ↑
26. Robert S. Wistrich, *The Jews of Vienna in the Age of Franz Joseph* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), 51, quoted by Cook, *Schenker Project*, 227. ↑
27. For more information about the "non-denominational" status, see: Stourzh, "The Age of Emancipation," 18–22. ↑
28. Marsha L. Rozenblit, "The Dilemma of Identity: The Impact of the First World War on Habsburg Jewry," in *The Habsburg Legacy: National Identity in Historical Perspective*, ed. Ritchie Robertson and Edward Timms, Austrian Studies 5 (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1994), 144. ↑
29. Marsha L. Rozenblit, *Reconstructing a National Identity: The Jews of Habsburg Austria during World War I* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 155. ↑
30. Ibid., 155–58. The author Arthur Schnitzler (1862–1931), who, as an "Austrian citizen of Jewish race," committed himself to "German culture" ("[bekenne mich] als oesterr. Staatsbürger jüdischer Race zur deutschen Kultur," diary November 1, 1918) represents a prominent example of the Habsburg tripartite identity. Cf.: Bettina Riedmann, "*Ich bin Jude, Österreicher, Deutscher*": Judentum in Arthur Schnitzlers Tagebüchern und Briefen, *Conditio Judaica* 36 (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 2002), 421. ↑
31. Federhofer, *Heinrich Schenker*, 326. ↑
32. See, for example: Cook, *Schenker Project*, 150–51; Rothfarb, "Henry Skenker," 20–22. ↑
33. Diary [November 3, 1918](#); trans. Stephen Ferguson. Original wording: "Daß gerade die Habsburger um die Völkerschergen, die heute ihre Selbstbestimmung in so grotesker Weise mit Undank u. Verrat beginnen, die größten Verdienste hat [sic], kann nur ein hemmungsloser sozialdemokratischer Lump leugnen." ↑
34. For more information about Schenker's political stance after 1918, see: Martin Eybl, *Ideologie und Methode: Zum ideengeschichtlichen Kontext von Schenkers Musiktheorie*, Wiener Veröffentlichungen zur Musikwissenschaft 32 (Tutzing: Schneider, 1995), 21–23. ↑
35. Diary [September 30, 1925](#); trans. Scott Witmer. Original wording: "daß mein Bekenntnis zu Deutschland als meiner Wahlheimat durchaus nicht organisch ein Bekenntnis auch zum Judentum erfordert." ↑
36. Heinrich Schenker, *Beethoven's Last Piano Sonatas: An Edition with Elucidation*, vol. 3, Piano Sonata in C Minor, Op. 111, trans., ed., and annotated by John Rothgeb (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 2. ↑
37. Ibid., 1. For the original wording, see: Heinrich Schenker, *Die letzten fünf Sonaten von Beethoven*:

*Kritische Ausgabe mit Einführung und Erläuterung; Sonate C moll Op. 111* (Vienna: Universal Edition, 1916), 3. ↑

38. The diaries prove that Schenker loved to read the *Fackel*, even loudly at private parties, such as with Sofie Deutsch: “The cudgels taken up for Karl Kraus, several extracts read from his most recent volume.” Diary [November 22, 1913](#); trans. William Drabkin; accessed June 23, 2018. Original wording: “Eine Lanze für Karl Kraus gebrochen u. mehreres aus seinem letzten Hefte vorgelesen.” ↑
39. Schenker, “Von der Sendung des deutschen Genies,” 3–21. For analyses of this text, see: Martin Eybl, *Ideologie und Methode*, 11–29; Andrea Reiter, “‘Von der Sendung des deutschen Genies’: The Music Theorist Heinrich Schenker (1868–1935) and Cultural Conservatism,” in *Resounding Concerns*, ed. Rüdiger Görner, Publications of the Institute of Germanic Studies 79, London German Studies 8 (Munich: Iudicium, 2003), 135–59; Cook, *Schenker Project*, 143–55. The English edition of the text has been annotated at length by Ian Bent: Heinrich Schenker, *Der Tonwille: Pamphlets in Witness of the Immutable Laws of Music; Issues 1–5 (1921–1923)*, ed. William Drabkin, trans. Ian Bent et al. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 3–20. Schenker’s German nationalist sentiment is also clearly articulated in the elucidatory edition of Beethoven’s Op. 101 (1921): Heinrich Schenker, *Beethoven’s Last Piano Sonatas: An Edition with Elucidation*, vol. 4, Piano Sonata in A Major, Op. 101, trans., ed., and annotated by John Rothgeb (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 17: “Whether it be called national or whatever, the German soul must finally wrest itself from the poison and dirt of the West.” Original wording: “Nenne man es national oder wie immer, die deutsche Seele muß sich endlich dem Gift und Schmutz des Westens entwinden.” Heinrich Schenker, *Die letzten fünf Sonaten von Beethoven: Kritische Ausgabe mit Einführung und Erläuterung; Sonate A-dur Op. 101* (Vienna: Universal Edition, 1921), 26. This is similarly true of the introduction to the second volume of *Kontrapunkt* (1922): Heinrich Schenker, *Counterpoint: A Translation of “Kontrapunkt” by Heinrich Schenker*, vol. 2, *Counterpoint in Three and More Voices: Bridges to Free Composition*, trans. John Rothgeb and Jürgen Thym (New York: Schirmer Books, 1987). ↑
40. [Letter from Halm to Schenker](#), not dated, presumably November or December 1916; transcr. and trans. Lee Rothfarb. ↑
41. Diary [May 4, 1919](#); trans. Scott Witmer. Original wording: “das Gespräch bewegte sich wieder in vorsichtigen Bahnen, da man befürchten mochte, gerade auf dem Gebiete der allgemein interessierenden Fragen einander wehe zu tun oder nahezutreten. Unter anderem wurde auch von Rolland gesprochen, dessen Roman bei allen ungeteilten Bewunderung gefunden. Demgegenüber habe ich, freilich nicht ohne vorauszuschicken, daß ich nur eine Inhaltsangabe kenne u. im übrigen verschiedene Aufsätze u. Zitate, sofort das möglich drastischste Gegenurteil formuliert u. gemeint, Rolland wäre so etwas wie ein französischer Bahr, nur in größerer [sic] Aufmachung. Sofort bemerkte ich, daß das Urteil in dieser Form den Anwesenden nicht zugänglich sein konnte; der Hausherr produzierte zum Beweis seiner hohen Meinung seinen an ihn gerichteten Brief von Rolland, worin sich dieser zu einer Dankesschuld an Deutschland bekennt u. mit Michelet emphatisch ausruft ‘Mein Deutschland’—Dieses Dokument hat mich im [recte: nun] erst recht stutzig gemacht; schon die Schrift, mit allerlei Zierlichkeiten versehen, Arabesken, kokettierenden Schnörkeln u. Initialen u. hernach nun erst der Inhalt! Allmähig habe ich es aber doch dahin gebracht, daß die Bewunderer Rollands, einer nach dem andern, zu dem Geständnis schritten, nicht recht zu wissen, wie R. selbst über die Deutschen u. deutsche Kunst urteile, ob er im Helden seines Romanes Beethoven oder irgendeinen imaginierten Musiker verkörpere, kurz zu vielen Widersprüchen auch sonst noch Anlaß gebe. Diese Verwirrung hat wieder nur meinen eigenen Eindruck von Rolland bestätigt.” ↑
42. Diary [August 25, 1922](#); trans. Scott Witmer. ↑
43. Diary [June 26, 1924](#); trans. Stephen Ferguson. Original wording: “Sie, die schon ihr eigenes Land, Geschichte, Poesie, Kultur überhaupt verloren haben, können nie mehr eine eigene Kultur zurückerobern, weil diese an eine eigene Heimat gebunden ist.” ↑
44. Diary [November 1, 1925](#); trans. William Drabkin; translation slightly altered. Original wording: “muß der Jude, um geistig wirken zu können, eine Heimat optiren u. in einer Kultur wirken, die er wählt.” ↑

45. Diary April 13, 1910; see Federhofer, *Heinrich Schenker*, 311, quoted by Reiter, "Literary Perspective," 290. ↑
46. Diary [September 30, 1925](#); trans. Scott Witmer. ↑
47. Diary [June 26, 1924](#); trans. Stephen Ferguson; translation modified. Original wording: "Hammer bekennt sich zu einer internationalen Gesinnung, ich zur nationalen u. ich ziehe sogar wider die Semiten los. ... Aus ihrem Unvermögen zur Kultur sind sie unempfindlich gegen wahre Kultur überhaupt u. verführen zumal ein Volk, das von Haus aus sich wegzuerwerfen geneigt ist, zur Ueberbetonung von nationalen Momenten." ↑
48. The success Schenker purports to have had on the right at the end of his life is difficult to comprehend: "Up to now I have maintained the repute of a blond Germanic type and have therefore long since been *persona gratissima* among all Catholic, antisemitic and such news media (even in Vienna)." Letter from Schenker to Jonas, [December 21, 1933](#); transcr. and trans. John Rothgeb and Heribert Esser. Original wording: "Bis heute stehe ich im Geruche eines blonden Germanen u. war seit jeher deshalb persona gratissima bei sämtlichen katholischen, antisemitischen u. ä. Blättern (auch in Wien) gewesen." ↑
49. Cook, *Schenker Project*, 86–88. ↑
50. For a critical edition of Wagner's pamphlet, see: Jens Malte Fischer, *Richard Wagners "Das Judentum in der Musik": Eine kritische Dokumentation als Beitrag zur Geschichte des Antisemitismus* (Frankfurt: Insel, 2000). ↑
51. Cook, *Schenker Project*, 229: "Wagner, the Anti-Semite in relation to whom ... Schenker forged much of his thinking through opposition or appropriation." Ibid., 235: "Schenker admits Wagner's strategy of defining the self in opposition to a vilified other, but reverses the polarity." ↑
52. Original wording: "dieses Element uns in der Weise assimiliert werden, daß es mit uns gemeinschaftlich der höheren Ausbildung unsrer edleren menschlichen Anlagen zureife." Richard Wagner, *Das Judentum in der Musik* (Leipzig: Weber, 1869), 55 and 57, in (somewhat altered) translation cited in Cook, *Schenker Project*, 236. For an English rendition available online, see: [Richard Wagner, Judaism in Music](#), trans. Edwin Evans (London: Reeves, 1910). ↑
53. Cook, *Schenker Project*, 236–38. It is also not stated in Schenker's texts that Chopin, Bedřich Smetana (1824–84), and Domenico Scarlatti (1685–1757), because they were outsiders, also embody the essence of German music. This must have been put into Schenker's mouth by Cook. Cf.: Ibid., 238–42. ↑
54. Addendum to Schenker's will from [May 20, 1934](#); transcr. and trans. Ian Bent; translation slightly altered. Original wording: "Hier ruht, der die Seele der Musik vernommen, ihre Gesetze im Sinne der Großen verkündet wie Keiner vor ihm." The text can be seen on Schenker's gravestone in the Viennese Main Cemetery. ↑
55. Letter from Schenker to Jonas, [December 21, 1933](#); transcr. and trans. John Rothgeb and Heribert Esser, also quoted in Cook, *Schenker Project*, 208. Original wording: "im Interesse der Sache der deutschen Musikgenies die, von den Deutschen unverstanden, verraten, geschändet, seit Langem aber Menschheitsgut ist geworden, nun eine neue Weltbotschaft des Judentums für die nächsten Ewigkeiten zu sein bestimmt ist." ↑
56. Compare the extensive analysis in Reiter, "Literary Perspective," 289–91. ↑
57. Diary [May 7, 1925](#), trans. Scott Witmer. Original wording: "der reiche Jude weiß von Anbeginn, daß er in gewissen Kreisen nur geduldet ist, drängt sich dennoch in diese ein u.—das der Bruch—ist er der erste, der den Vertretern jener Kreise den Vorwurf ins Gesicht schleudert, daß sie ihn nur dulden. ... Für diesen Juden gab es nur einen Ausweg, sich in die Gesellschaft zu fügen, das hätte jeder vernünftige Mensch, ob Jude oder Christ, getan." ↑
58. "Schenker criticizes De Levi's behavior ... because the character makes no attempt to fit in." Reiter, "Literary Perspective," 290. ↑

59. Diary [February 2, 1927](#); [February 9, 1927](#); and [February 11, 1927](#). ↑
60. Diary [February 11, 1927](#); trans. William Drabkin; translation slightly altered. Original wording: “daß ich nicht den Fehler des Juden in Galsworthys ‘Gesellschaft’ machen will, in den Kreis der Musikhistoriker zu treten, und mich über sie lustig zu machen, wie ich es seit 35 Jahren tue.” ↑
61. Diary [February 7, 1927](#); trans. William Drabkin; translation slightly altered. Original wording: “An Prof. Adler (Br.): danke für die Einladung, lehne aber ab, weil ich unter dem innern Zwange stehe, mich in der bisher geübten Weise zu Beethoven zu äußern, die aber zu einem Kongreß nicht passe.” ↑
62. Letter from Schenker to Halm, [November 2, 1922](#); transcr. Ian Bent and Lee Rothfarb, trans. Lee Rothfarb. ↑
63. See [profile of Jeanette Schenker in SDO](#); accessed March 22, 2016. ↑
64. Diary [June 19, 1924](#); [August 30, 1919](#); and [August 30, 1923](#). ↑
65. Cook, *Schenker Project*, 216. Cook points out that lessons are not to be held on Sundays and Christian holidays. However, Schenker does not let that stop him from engaging in his music theoretical work. ↑
66. Diary [December 24, 1926](#); [December 24, 1927](#); and [April 7, 1928](#) (Easter). ↑
67. Diary [March 2, 1920](#) and [March 8, 1920](#). ↑
68. Diary [November 12, 1921](#); trans. Stephen Ferguson; translation modified: “National holiday, I receive students nonetheless” (“Staatsfeiertag, empfangen aber Schüler”). Diary [November 12, 1924](#); trans. Scott Witmer; translation modified: “National holiday!—I do not observe it” (“Staatsfeiertag!—ich halte ihn nicht”). His skepticism about the Austrian Republic does not, however, prevent him from participating in the National Council election, which is also a type of ritual; see: Diary [October 17, 1920](#); [October 21, 1923](#); [April 24, 1927](#); and [November 9, 1930](#). ↑
69. Letter from Schenker to Violin, [December 21, 1922](#); transcr. and trans. William Drabkin; translation slightly altered. Original wording: “Was macht deine Frau? Mein Lie-Liechen macht ‘Feiertag’ im Hause, allerlei Kp, Umkehrungen der Möbel, Strieze—der Jude singt: ‘ma nischtanu?’” Cf.: Diary [December 22, 1918](#). The ‘Striez’ or ‘Strieze’ is derived from ‘Strutz’ or ‘Strutzen,’ a word used in Austria for a bread in oblong format. Cf.: [Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm, \*Deutsches Wörterbuch\*](#); accessed January 29, 2017. ↑
70. Diary [March 30, 1907](#); transcr. and trans. Ian Bent. Original wording: “Abends mit Mutter bei Onkel u. Tante Einschenk, zum Passahfest. Alte Erinnerungen. Das Rituelle Essen behebt unerwartet ein schon mehrere Tage anhaltendes Uebelbefinden des Magens!” The same group met for the Passover feast six years later. Cf.: Diary [April 21, 1913](#). ↑
71. Diary [December 22, 1917](#) and [December 23, 1917](#). ↑
72. Letter from Heinrich Schenker and Jeanette Kornfeld to Wilhelm Schenker, [January 24, 1918](#). ↑
73. Diary [September 13, 1923](#); trans. Scott Witmer. Original wording: “da schon die Marmortafel u. die Gravierung das Orthodoxe überschreiten, so hat Lie-Liechen Recht, daß sie noch eine Einfassung u. Epheuschmuck wünscht.” ↑
74. Diary [September 30, 1930](#). My thanks to Marko Deisinger for pointing out the great importance placed on celebrating this anniversary regularly. ↑
75. Diary [September 30, 1923](#) and [September 30, 1925](#). In 1924, there were celebrations throughout September and the couple dined at Hôtel de France several times: Diary [September 6, 1924](#) and [September 12, 1924](#). ↑
76. Diary [September 30, 1930](#); trans. William Drabkin. Original wording: “Lie-Liechen kauft halb Wien zusammen, sie steigt ab beim Uhrmacher, bei Pirringer, kauft den Festapfel, steigt ab bei Waldstein, bei Fritz, bei der Post, bei Sima, bei der Blumenhändlerin.” ↑



77. Diary [\[September 30\]](#), 1929. [↑](#)
78. Eybl, "Schnadahüpfeln," 240–41. [↑](#)
79. Diary [January 22, 1935](#); trans. William Drabkin; translation modified. Original wording: "Diese 3970 Blätter waren nie für die Öffentlichkeit bestimmt, nur für uns als Gedächtniskrücke." [↑](#)
80. [Ibid.](#) [↑](#)
81. Schenker, "Von der Sendung des deutschen Genies," 12–13. [↑](#)
82. Diary [January 22, 1935](#); trans. William Drabkin. Original wording: "'Ich will nur wissen, wie das mit der Saar ausgegangen ist.' ... Aus einer leichten Benommenheit höre ich ihn dann sagen '...aus...' was denn, aus, sage ich, wir werden noch miteinander tanzen—u. mit einer ärgerlichen Geste, weil ich nicht verstanden habe, setzt er fort: '...aus, ... aus der Matthäuspassion ist mir etwas eingefallen...' das waren die letzten Worte meines Heißgeliebten." See note [5](#): "*Aus* [the first word of the last sentence]: hearing the word pronounced on its own, Jeanette interprets it as short for *Es ist alles aus*, 'It is all over.' But Schenker, continuing to speak, uses the word in its conventional sense as a preposition." [↑](#)
83. [Ibid.](#); trans. William Drabkin; translation slightly altered. Original wording: "Die Spanne Zeit, die zu leben mir noch bestimmt ist, werde ich nur dem Werke widmen—was sonst in mir u. um mich herum noch vorgehen mag ist—ohne ihn!—nicht wert, festgehalten zu werden, u. so schließe ich ab mit dem zuversichtlichen Gedanken: Es kann die Spur von unsern Erdentagen nicht in Aeonen untergeh'n." [↑](#)
84. In this respect Schenker's position resembles that of the writer Jakob Wassermann (1873–1934), the author of *Mein Weg als Deutscher und Jude* ("My Life as German and as Jew," 1921). Cf.: George L. Mosse, *German Jews beyond Judaism* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1985), 38–40. [↑](#)
85. This text was translated from the German original by Scott Witmer. Cover picture: Heinrich Schenker at Kurhaus Böckstein (Province of Salzburg), August 16, 1934 (Photo: Eva van Hoboken, private collection). [↑](#)