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Bruckner's Third Symphony and the Creative Management of Influence

Abstract. The indebtedness of Bruckner's Third Symphony to Beethoven and Wagner is widely recognized. Yet this "Wagner-Symphonie" (as Bruckner called it) is also viewed as the "first symphonic work that represents the unmistakable, idiosyncratic style of the master." A review of passages in the original score of 1873 habitually identified as Wagner references reveals not an inventory of clear cases but a spectrum of resemblances from certain to tenuous. Their classification invites various approaches to intertextual analysis and raises the question of what priority is assigned to biographical information. While scholars differ on the aesthetic value of the Wagner resemblances, there can be no doubt that Bruckner's efforts to integrate them into a new context constitute a creative enterprise. Parallels to Beethoven's Ninth Symphony, for their part, can be taken as instances of "misreading" (Harold Bloom) that derive their significance from both similarities to, and differences from, the source. In all cases, an appreciation of intertextuality in the Third Symphony leads us to ask which characteristics are specifically Brucknerian, a process that verifies the composer's status as a creative visionary.

Keywords: creativity, intertextuality, quotation, anxiety of influence, Bruckner, Beethoven, Wagner, Ninth Symphony, Bruckner Problem.

1. Beethoven and Wagner

"…Perhaps a vision of how Beethoven's Ninth befriends Wagner's *Die Walküre* and ends by being trampled under her horses' hooves."[1] This was how Eduard Hanslick described Bruckner's Third Symphony after the 1877 premiere under the direction (by some accounts inexpert) of the composer.[2] Frequently cited in program notes, the excerpt from *Die Neue Freie Presse* is rightly taken as evidence of Hanslick's animus toward Bruckner and his characteristic failure as a critic to recognize a manifestly important work when he heard it. Yet embedded in the sarcasm is the identification of two sources of influence that no musically literate listener could fail to recognize: Beethoven and Wagner. The unmistakability of these influences is not easily reconciled with the traditional reputation of the Third Symphony as "so far the grandest and most individual Bruckner symphony" (Simpson 1968: 64) and the "first symphonic work that represents the unmistakable, idiosyncratic style of the master"[3] (Floros 2011: 113). This paper aims to examine a selection of the influences commentators have found in the score and discuss how these intersect with—and even embody—Bruckner's creative impulses.

2. Intertextuality: Basic concepts

2.1. Terminology

Of the many words used to denote the use of elements of one artwork in another, "intertextuality", the coinage attributed to the Bulgarian-French philosopher Julia Kristeva and her 1966 essay "Word, Dialogue and Novel" (Kristeva ed. Moi 1980: 66), is the most comprehensive. Intertextuality can be viewed as an enlargement of the notions of borrowing and influence, including as it does relations that are not necessarily known to the author, composer or artist. Most systematic discussions of intertextuality begin with the supposition that no text exists in isolation and that some degree of conscious or intuitive comparison with other texts (or indeed personal experiences by the listener, reader or spectator) is inevitable. If these principles are accepted as axiomatic, and the notion of purely original work is dismissed as a chimera, it stands to reason that influence and creativity coexist in a variable and dynamic relation. While an overabundance of references, or even a moderate quota of references that are not recontextualized, inevitably compromises the individual character of an artwork, references that are adapted with new aims and from a different perspective can be a fruitful source of creativity. Bruckner's Third Symphony evinces salient examples of this phenomenon.

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1 "…vielleicht eine Vision, wie Beethovens Neunte mit Wagners Walküre Freundschaft schließt und endlich unter die Hufe ihrer Pferde gerät."

2 Bruckner in the 20 May 1878 letter to Wagner attributed the failure to a lack of rehearsal time: "… leider liess man mir keine Zeit zu Proben" (Bruckner 2009 ed. Schneider: 177).

3 Floros is speaking about the viewpoint of others: "For many Bruckner fans, as well as for many conductors…"

2.2. Types of intertextuality

The search for (or haphazard discovery of) similarities between works of music, and the attempt to assess their significance, are endeavours of long-standing, no less in the study of music than in other disciplines. As J. Peter Burkholder points out, the resemblance of the main themes of Beethoven's *Eroica* Symphony and the Overture to Mozart's *Bastien und Bastienne* has been discussed for more than 150 years with no conclusive outcome (Burkholder 2018: 223–266).

Partly in response to the subjective character of such discussions, modern scholars have sought to analyze intertextuality and organize the phenomenon into types, such as quotation, allusion, parody and plagiarism. A fundamental distinction is made between *deliberate* and *latent* intertextuality—instances of the former being intended by the author or composer, and instances of the latter arising accidentally or from other sources, including the experience of the listener, reader or spectator. The distinction seems commonsensical but does not, in this rudimentary form, account for the possibility of compositional choices that are made unconsciously and are nevertheless related to (or even inspired by) prior examples. This shortcoming can be remedied by classifying resemblances as deliberate, *intuitive* or latent.

John Fitzsimmons, approaching the question from the perspective of perception rather than intention, proposes three levels of intertextual causality: obligatory, optional and accidental (Fitzsimmons 2013: 1). Instances of obligatory intertextuality comprise overt references that are supposed to be recognized and interpreted as citations. Optional intertextuality concerns similarities on which the essential meaning of the destination text does not depend. Accidental intertextuality is the result of the application to the text of irrelevant ideas and experiences by the reader, spectator or listener. These do not illuminate the artwork in a meaningful way and are likely to have an adverse effect on the appreciation.

2.3. Harold Bloom and the "anxiety of influence"

Another crucial perspective on intertextuality which presupposes active engagement by the artist with prior examples is the "anxiety of influence," a concept developed by the late critic Harold Bloom, who viewed literary creation at the highest level as the result of a substantially adversarial struggle with past examples. A successful poet, in this theory, undertakes "strong misreadings" of his precursors, thus rebelling "against a dead man outrageously more alive than himself." A pillar of modern criticism, the theory has proved useful to music scholars, including Julian Horton, who invokes it in his 2008 examination of Bruckner's Third (Horton 2008: 170–192).

2.4. Validating intertextuality

The classification of intertextual relations into types operates in tandem with the assessment of grounds for or against the existence of an intertextual relation. Focusing on what he describes as borrowing, Burkholder proposes three principal categories of evidence: *analytical* evidence (concerning shared musical elements, including matches in melodic profile, harmony, rhythm and form); *biographical and historical* evidence (drawn from the composer's demonstrated knowledge of the source or an admission of borrowing); and evidence related to the *purpose* (structural or thematic functions, extramusical associations, emulation and humour).

An argument in favour of borrowing should, in Burkholder's view, address all three categories of evidence. By no means is a positive result guaranteed or even likely: through the application of probability theory the author assesses the shared melodic contour of Brahms's Intermezzo Op. 118 No. 3 and the *Dies irae* tune as likely to be accidental (Burkholder 2018: 223–266). He also reaches the tentative conclusion that the *Eroica*/*Bastien* resemblance is rooted in the independent borrowing by Beethoven and Mozart of a well-known German country dance (Burkholder 2018: 262).[4]

[4] Burkholder does not hesitate to use mathematical tools to gauge the probability of resemblances. He reckons the chance of generating the first 19 notes of the *Dies irae* through a random non-referential creative process to be less than 1 in 10 quadrillion, a ratio that leaves no doubt that its use by Berlioz, Liszt and Rachmaninoff was deliberate.

3. The "Bruckner Problem"

The Third is the most textually complicated of Bruckner symphonies, a situation that has bedeviled its viability as a work to be performed and made it the most salient example of the "Bruckner Problem."[5] An exhaustive inventory of variants would number more than a dozen. The fundamental texts are the Leopold Nowak editions identified with the years 1873, 1877 and 1889. All three carry Bruckner's imprimatur, although there are allegations of external interference with the last.[6] Most changes are in the direction of greater economy. The 2,056 bars of the first version are reduced to 1,644 by 1889, a difference that can be appreciated by the duration of Georg Tintner's recording of the 1873 version—more than 77 minutes—and that of Marek Janowski's recording of the 1889 version, less than 54. In this paper, the 1873 version will be treated as the fundamental text. Certain observations will derive from the revision of 1877 and an intermediate (1876) version of the Adagio.

4. The imprint of Wagner

4.1. "Wagner-Symphonie"

The case for an intertextual link between Bruckner's Third and Wagner is stronger. Evidence confronts us before a score is opened or a downbeat is given. In September 1873 Bruckner met Wagner in Bayreuth intending to ask "the Master" whether he would accept the dedication of the Second or Third Symphony. After spending the afternoon with the scores and presumably investigating both, Wagner chose the Third. Some commentators speculate that the elder composer was impressed by the initial trumpet motto, although he can hardly have failed to note the quotations if these indeed were present in the draft he saw.

The natural inference is that Bruckner added quotations after Wagner accepted the dedication. Constantin Floros, in his 2014 study, takes this view (Floros 2014: 118–119). Thomas Röder has examined the bibliographic evidence and concluded that it is not possible to determine whether the quotations were present in the incomplete autograph Bruckner presented to Wagner. At any rate, Bruckner verified the choice the following day by writing to Wagner and asking whether it was indeed the "Symphony in D minor, where the trumpet begins the theme." "Ja! Ja!" Wagner wrote on the same sheet of paper. "Best wishes." Bruckner in turn dedicated the completed work to "the unattainable, world-renowned, and exalted master of the arts of poetry and music" ("unerreichbaren, weltberühmten und erhabenen Meister der Dicht- und Tonkunst"). He also called the score the "Wagner-Symphonie," a subtitle that persisted in subsequent editions in which the quota of quotations was reduced.

4.2. Biographical considerations

While dedication and nicknaming are not in themselves instances of intertextuality, these examples of what Burkholder calls biographical evidence predispose the listener to be on the lookout for borrowings and hear significant resemblances that might otherwise go unnoticed or be disregarded as accidental. They constitute what might be called a hunting license. Further biographical evidence of Bruckner's reverence of Wagner is not lacking. While the composer in his letters is silent on specific resemblances, his mindset is clear from letters in which he addresses Wagner as "hochenhabener [lofty] Meister." His reverence of Beethoven can be gauged by the pride he took in the conductor Hermann Levi's description of his Seventh Symphony as "das bedeutendste sinfonische Werk seit Beethovens Tod" ("the most important symphonic work since Beethoven's death"—an opinion he reported in letters to the conductor Arthur Nikisch and the (friendly) critic Theodor Helm (Bruckner ed. Harrandt and Schneider 2009: 245, 261). Of particular interest is a conversation recounted by Bruckner's student Carl Hruby after the pair had attended a performance of Beethoven's *Eroica* Symphony:

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5 The "Bruckner Problem" was popularized by "The Bruckner Problem Simplified" in Deryck Cooke's *Vindications: Essays about Romantic Music* (1982). Cambridge.

6 "Your cuts and transitions, by the way, have been kept," Joseph Schalk wrote to his brother Franz on 10 June 1888 (Simpson 1978: 67). For an account of what is known about the preparation of the 1889 score, see "Master and disciple united: the 1889 Finale of the Third Symphony" in *Perspectives on Anton Bruckner*, ed. Howie, Hawkshaw, Jackson (2001). Ashgate.

> After [Bruckner] had spent a while sunk in thought he suddenly broke the silence: "I think, if Beethoven were still alive today, and I went to him, showed him my Seventh Symphony and said to him, 'Don't you think, Herr von [*sic*] Beethoven, that the Seventh isn't as bad as certain people make it out to be—those people who make an example of it and portray me as an idiot,—then, maybe, Beethoven might take me by the hand and say, 'My dear Bruckner, don't bother yourself about it. It was no better for me, and the same gentlemen who use me as a stick with which to beat you still don't really understand my last quartets, however much they may pretend to.' Then, I might go on and say, 'Please excuse me, Herr von [*sic*] Beethoven, if I've gone beyond you…'" (Bruckner was referring to his use of form!) "…but I've always said that a true artist can work out his own form and then stick to it" (Hruby 1901: 19 as translated in Johnson ed., 1998: 160).

As Horton observes, there is "strikingly Bloomian anxiety" in these remarks, which posit Beethoven as the "overarching authority" to whom a hypothetical appeal can be made but also a figure "to whom one must apologize when the limits of authority have been transgressed" (Horton 2008: 174). While it might seem counterintuitive to characterize the humble and reverential Bruckner as engaged in a struggle with Beethoven or Wagner, the engagement of influence entails some degree of competitive (and thus anxious) interaction. Perhaps it is helpful in Bruckner's case to propose an amalgam of the anxiety of influence with the less confrontational dynamic that T.S. Eliot called "influence as generosity."

4.3. Wagner's quotations and resemblances

The original version of 1873 includes passages that have been traced to *Tristan und Isolde*, the *Ring* operas, *Die Meistersinger* and *Lohengrin*. Commentators differ on the validity and significance of resemblances; not all are mentioned by all authors. Links are alleged also to Bruckner's works, notably the simple four-note turn that launches the main theme of the Second Symphony (see m. 469). Possible references to Bruckner's earlier choral music include a comparably simple four-note figure that appears at the end of the first-movement exposition (m. 258) and in the *Gloria* (m. 100) of the Mass in D Minor.[7]

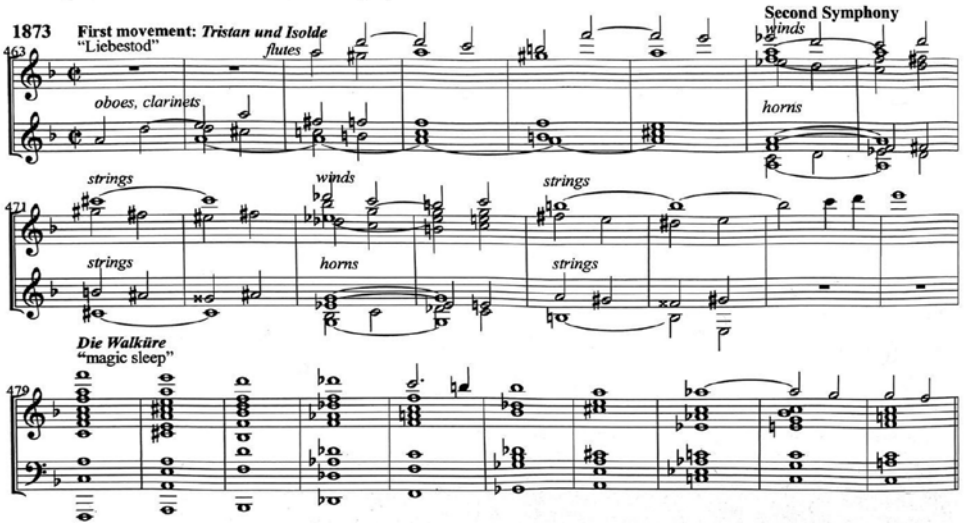
Whether "quotation" is an apt descriptor of all resemblances is an important question. The Wagner resemblances represent various degrees of encryption, from vivid to faint. "Quotation" implies recognition by the reader or listener and attribution of significance. Bruckner can hardly, at the outset of his public career as a symphonist, have expected audiences or score-readers to recognize a passage in his Third Symphony as borrowing from his Second, much less attribute significance to the link, especially if the "quotation" is integrated carefully into its new context. As Philip Barford observes, "[T]he various Mass-quotations may have had private meaning for himself; but one can enjoy Bruckner without knowing they are there" (Barford 1978: 34).

Discussions of intertextuality and the status of a "quotation" entail assumptions regarding the qualifications of the implied listener. Modern scholars have resources that make such connections perceptible, by the eye as well as the ear. A quotation for a knowledgeable listener is nothing of the kind for a novice. Bruckner possibly repurposed material with no intention of making a perceptible intertextual statement. Another possibility is that the reappearance of a simple four-note theme—unlike the 19-note *Dies irae* tune—is simply a coincidence.

4.4. Resemblances in the first movement

Nevertheless, certain resemblances in the Third are spoken of habitually as quotations. Three appear in succession at the end of the development of the first movement (mm. 460–500), over a suitably retransitional (though intermittent) dominant timpani roll. First comes the "Liebestod" from *Tristan* (mm. 463–68); then the aforementioned four-note turn that launches the main theme of Bruckner's own Second Symphony (mm. 469–76); and finally the Sleep Motive from *Die Walküre* (mm. 479–488) (E.g. 1).

[7] For an inventory of possible references in the Third Symphony to Bruckner's choral music, and other instances of "religious semantics," see Floros 2011: 113–116.



Example 1. Bruckner. Symphony No. 3 (1873), first movement, mm. 463–68 ("Liebestod"), mm. 469–76 (Symphony No. 2), mm. 479–88 ("Sleep Motive"). Examples used with the kind permission of William Carragan

Horton is sharply critical of all three resemblances as "decisively extroversive" episodes that "disrupt, rather than … contribute to, the preparatory function of the retransition" and are at all events unrelated to the thematic material of the movement (Horton 2008: 186). Bruckner possibly agreed, for he cut the two Wagner references in the 1877 reworking while retaining the self-citation (which, as I have suggested, not even a well-informed general listener would be expected to recognize).

Simpson, an early champion of the 1873 score when it became available in Leopold Nowak's edition, takes a different view. He praises the "beautiful" Sleep Motive quotation (and "quotation" is surely the appropriate word in this case) as a means of effecting "a gradual, spaciously dignified descent, correctly proportioned, to the mysterious recapitulation proper" (Simpson 1978: 72). The reference to the Second Symphony that Simpson found "scarcely explicable" in his unfavourable initial analysis of the 1877 revision is redeemed in the 1873 score by a sequence of prior references in the violins starting at m. 453. Simpson makes no mention of the alleged "Liebestod" reference. The implication is that he did not recognize it as such. And indeed, the case is not quite closed: a contrarian might argue that a rising fourth and falling second offer less than conclusive evidence for borrowing—unless, of course, we are forearmed with the hunting license Bruckner gives us with his title page and reverential dedication.

Dermot Gault does not dispute the "Liebestod" reference but notes how Bruckner adapts the quotation by avoiding Wagner's "distinctive modulation to the supertonic" and "instead assimilating [Wagner's] melodic incipit to Bruckner's harmonic language" to create a "rather ecclesiastical" recollection (Gault 2011: 49). As for the Sleep Motive quotation, Bruckner's deletes "Wagner's diminished harmony" (i.e. in the fourth chord of the sequence) and opts for "a chain of root position triads" that follow each other in a manner that his instructor, Simon Sechter, would have understood. Gault does not adopt a critical tone but concludes that the Wagner quotations (and this is the word he uses) do not "advance the musical argument" and that their omission in later versions "leaves no sensible gap."

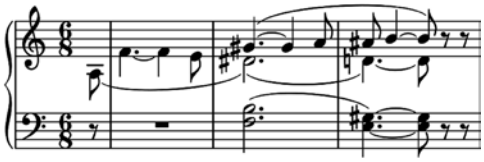
4.5. De-Wagnerization

While Bruckner did delete the Wagner quotations at the end of the development of the first movement, for reasons that resist elucidation on biographical grounds,[8] his de-Wagnerization campaign was less thorough than is commonly assumed. Clear references remained in the 1877 revision. The Sleep Motive excised from the retransition of the first movement appears no less openly in the coda of the Adagio (m. 266 in 1873, m. 236 in 1877), where Carragan (drawing on Wagner scholar Robert Donington) considers that it repre-

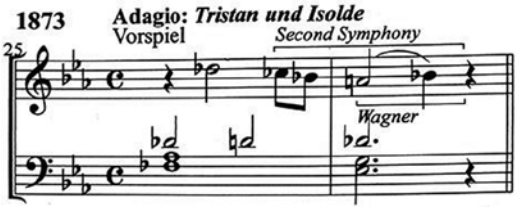
[8] It is possible that Bruckner acted in part owing to the "well-meaning but often disastrous attentions" (Simpson 1978: 64) of his advisors. Many more recent scholars, however, believe that the composer's susceptibility to advice has been exaggerated. It is clear nevertheless that by advertising his Wagnerian sympathies Bruckner left himself open to attack in the polemically charged musical environment of Vienna.

sents "a regression to the unconscious" (Carragan 2020: 84). It is interesting that in an intermediate version of the Adagio (published separately by Nowak as the 1876 edition), Bruckner replaced the lengthy cantilena accompaniment for violins in part 5 (1873 m. 225) with a pulsing figuration that can be heard as a derivation from *Tannhäuser* (1876 m. 230), thus making this movement *more* Wagnerian. (The accompaniment was rewritten again in the 1877 score.)

Another Wagnerism in the Adagio demands consideration—a dominant seventh in root position with appoggiatura that reproduces the "longing" figure that partly resolves the "Tristan chord" in Wagner's opera, here scored by Bruckner with an appropriately mimetic oboe in the soprano line (m. 26) (E.g. 2 and 3).



Example 2. Wagner. *Tristan und Isolde*, mm. 1–4



Example 3. Bruckner. Symphony No. 3, Adagio, mm. 25–26

The figure survived in subsequent versions. In all cases, it functions as a natural (if quizzical) extension of a quiet interlude for strings.[9] Carragan detects the main theme of Bruckner's Second Symphony (Carragan 2020: 76) in this *Tristan* reference—a marriage the composer surely felt was made in heaven, assuming such encryption was what he had in mind. The central point is that however unmistakable this Wagnerism might be, it works admirably in its context. Bruckner takes care to contextualize the reference with "yearning" rising minor seconds before and after. These simple figures can in turn be heard as inverted echoes of the pathos-laden falling seconds of mm. 4–8. Simpson also proposes a connection with mm. 35–38 in the first movement (Simpson 1978: 74). While it is reasonable to infer that Bruckner's rationale for threading the Wagner quotations into the 1873 score—before or after the meeting in Bayreuth—was to honour "the Master", his less than thorough de-Wagnerization of this version suggests a good-faith desire to repurpose existing material in ways that serve new and individual expressive objectives.

4.6. Levels of resemblance

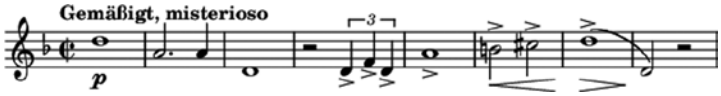
A review of the passages in the 1873 score habitually identified as Wagner quotations reveals not an inventory of clear cases but a spectrum of resemblances ranging from certain to tenuous. The latter rely for their status on the authorization of the title page, biographical knowledge and the corroboration provided by the quotations about which there can be no doubt. All function with more or less internal coherence. The recognition of the Wagnerian genesis of the passages by the listener is not a prerequisite to their acceptance in the new context, and it is worth asking whether failure to recognize the similarities results in incomplete comprehension. Can it be argued rather that their ignorance of Wagner results in a purer and less vexed appreciation of Bruckner's achievement? The viability of either approach reflects the creative integration of the references into their new element. The perception of the Third as a Kristevan "mosaic of quotations" (Kristeva ed. Moi 1980: 35) invites a reciprocal interpretation of the score as a complex of creativity.

[9] Carragan finds "Liebestod" references in all four movements of the 1877 version (Carragan 2020: 76–77). He also notes a passage in the 1848 (or 1849) motet *Tantum ergo* WAB 43 that "sounds eerily like the 'Liebestod' even though it was written at least 16 years before the premiere of Tristan." Not all listeners will regard the resemblance as pronounced. In any case, with no hunting license, we must regard this similarity as accidental—except insofar as Bruckner might have been thinking compositionally along the same lines as Wagner in 1849, before he became acquainted with his music.

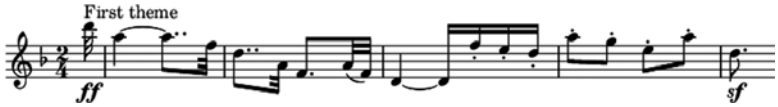
5. The imprint of Beethoven

5.1. Beethoven's Ninth Symphony

The process of creative adaptation is more grandly undertaken with what Simpson characterizes as "a far stronger" source of influence, Beethoven's Ninth Symphony (Simpson 1978: 67). Analytical evidence is not lacking, especially in the exposition of the first movement. It is hard not to hear the *misterioso* beginning in strings as an emulation of the corresponding passage in Beethoven's score. The first few bars of the ensuing principal theme in each case define a tonic triad in D Minor. This characteristic is shared by the first few bars of the principal theme of Wagner's *Der fliegende Holländer*; but Bruckner's theme descends, as does Beethoven's, before climbing the upper rungs of the melodic minor scale and dropping an octave (E.g. 4 and 5).



Example 4. Bruckner. Symphony No. 3, first movement, mm. 5–12

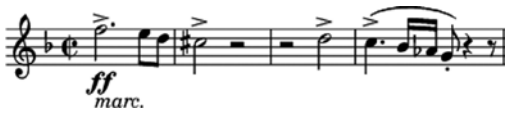


Example 5. Beethoven. Symphony No. 9, first movement, mm. 16–21

5.2. Similarity as difference

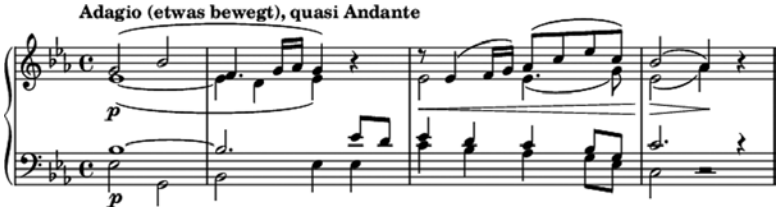
Patent as the similarities are, the differences are almost as remarkable. Beethoven begins with a sustained perfect fifth that is established as the dominant retroactively in bar 15 by the sudden (and dissonant) appearance of the tonic, D, in two horns and a bassoon, followed by the crashing unison theme at *fortissimo*. Bruckner creates a comparably uneasy atmosphere with four bars of restlessly pulsing strings in D minor before a trumpet confirms the key with a motto played *piano*. To adopt Biblical imagery: Beethoven says "Let there be light," defining the moment of creation with the tonic. Bruckner starts his symphony after the moment of creation while the rudimentary particles (in what Simpson memorably describes as a "nebula") are busily seeking a definite form.

After a prolonged and suspenseful crescendo, Bruckner unleashes a powerful statement in unison followed by a harmonization that confirms D minor and adds materiality to the nebulous beginning (E.g. 6).



Example 6. Bruckner. Symphony No. 3, mm. 37–40

Can the stepwise descent of a dotted half note followed by a pair of eighth notes (promptly given more "snap" in a diminution) be heard as an allusion to the descending triad in the third measure of the main theme of Beethoven's Ninth? Of course, this rhythm is far from uncommon in Western music. As Burkholder says, "[t]he case for borrowing is stronger when the traits shared between the older and newer piece are relatively distinctive" (Burkholder 2018: 234). As with the less overt Wagner quotations, the intertextual status of this shared trait depends on our awareness of the parallels with Beethoven's Ninth that Bruckner established straightaway with the pianissimo beginning in strings and triadic trumpet motto. We are then free also to hear this rhythm as deployed in the second bar of Bruckner's Adagio as a relative not only of the first movement figure but the Beethoven antecedent to which it alludes (E.g. 7).



Example 7. Bruckner. Symphony No. 3, second movement, mm. 1–4

After the first wave of each first group, the continuations are again both alike and unalike. Beethoven restarts the process in the tonic and states the main theme in B flat, establishing the credentials of a key that haunts the entire symphony. Bruckner relaunches in the dominant and, after a much suspenseful delay over a pulsing pedal in the double basses, states Example 6 in B flat. This scheme constitutes a reversal of Beethoven's: Bruckner approaches the same destination from the opposite direction, maintaining an intriguing balance of similarity and difference. Unlike Beethoven, who remains in the nonconformist key of B flat for the second group, Bruckner ends his exposition—after many changes of key[10]—peaceably in the relative major, F. The departure from Beethoven's example in the direction of conventional classical procedure can be taken, paradoxically, as a Bloomian misreading.

There is no first-movement exposition repeat in either score—understandably, given the gigantic scale and the expression of first-group elements in two waves. Arguably the fortissimo restatement of the trumpet motto in the tonic that is heard in Bruckner's development—long a source of interest to analysts—can be compared to Beethoven's fortissimo recapitulation (m. 301), the vehemence of which prompted the controversial observations of Susan McClary in her 1991 book *Feminine Endings*.

5.3. The case of the coda

One widely-agreed-on parallel—"the closest Bruckner comes to the specific quotation of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony" (Horton 2008: 188)—is between the chromatic ostinato figures in each coda, which lead with growing tension to a fortissimo terminal statement of the motto theme. Horton, in his exhaustive analysis, is again critical of Bruckner's intertextual initiative. By superimposing three elements of the opening thematic group over the ostinato, the composer "[exacerbates] the teleological drive of Beethoven's model to the point where it destabilizes the coda's structural integrity" (Horton 2008: 192). Simpson regards the ostinato as an "impressive and by no means plagiaristic homage" that is more "inevitable and stable" in 1873 than in either of the revisions (Simpson 1978: 73). These words confirm a perception of the borrowing as aesthetically justified and organic in its context. "The mood and atmosphere are identical," observes Barford in a neutral tone that implies approval (Barford 1978: 34).

5.4. Finale: A catalogue of themes

In Bruckner's 1873 finale, there is a catalogue of themes (m. 675–688) from prior movements that is understood by analysts as an allusion to Beethoven's famous series of self-quotations in the finale of the Ninth, even though in Bruckner's case the passage is positioned late rather than early in the movement, a contrast that Simpson takes as indicative of their opposite purpose.[11] Bruckner suppressed two of the references in 1877, retaining only a reminiscence of the flowing second theme of the first movement.

Did he have an aesthetic change of heart or did he wish to avoid inviting a comparison with Beethoven's Ninth? However sincere the tribute, it could be taken by unsympathetic observers (of whom there were many) as evidence of hubris. Horton views the reminiscences as performing "a kind of structural catharsis" that allows a discontinuous movement to come to an end (Horton 2008: 43). Whatever the cause of their deletion, the catalogue in the 1873 score functions coherently as a backward glance at what has been a long journey. It also stands as early evidence of Bruckner's powerful urge to restore earlier thematic material in a peroration, a process he undertook with outstanding success in the final pages of the Eighth Symphony.

5.5. Conditional intertextual relations

Other features of the Third Symphony can be identified as intertextually significant if we accept the fundamental kinship with Beethoven's Ninth. Among the candidates is Bruckner's unusual choice of key, E flat, for the Adagio (Beethoven opts for B flat) and his toggling of 4/4 and 3/4 time signatures in this movement. Differences as well as similarities can be interpreted referentially. Bruckner does *not* swap the second and third positions of the slow movement and Scherzo. Even the absence of a choral finale can be perceived as a meaningful evasion because Bruckner's Third "embodies other elements that seem to accept the precedent of

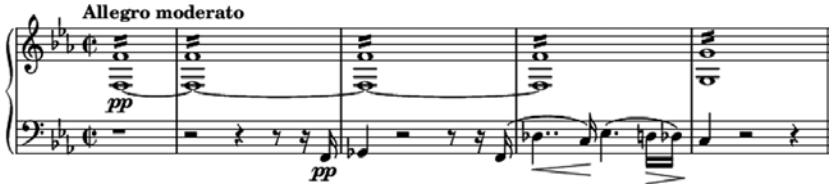
[10] Simpson writes of "a full *tutti* which the revisions turn into an unintegrated chorale, more Wagnerian than the celebrated but unimportant and less obtrusive 'quotations' elsewhere in the symphony" (Simpson 1978: 71).

[11] Derek Watson links this procedure to the tradition of concluding a mass with reference to thematic material of the Kyrie, a practice Bruckner himself followed in his masses (Watson p. 66–67).

Beethoven's Ninth" (Horton 2008: 172). As in the case of Wagner, comparisons materialize that would not be apparent or relevant without the hunting license furnished by the basic similarities. Nor is the procedure confined to Bruckner. The unique prestige of Beethoven's example is such that his models created a "historical stasis" in the 19th century that suspended linear evolution and rendered "symphonists from Mendelssohn to Mahler" comparable in principle to Beethoven. As Horton observes, "[t]he analytical consequence of this argument is that formal and material procedures will always reveal a Beethovenian model at some level of structure, no matter how radically original they appear to be" (Horton 2008: 165).

6. Beethoven and Bruckner: Another example

The Third is unusual in the Bruckner canon for its multiplicity of intertextual relations, which makes its individuality so difficult to assert except on subjective grounds. Certainly, his other symphonies are less laden with quotation, except of his own works, a special breed of influence discussed above. Yet there is another case of intertextuality that has not led to consensus: the identical rhythm of the first four bars of the main theme of Bruckner's Eighth Symphony and the corresponding four bars of the main theme of Beethoven's Ninth (E.g. 8).



Example 8. Bruckner. Symphony No. 8 (beginning)

In this case, the melodies bear no relation in contour, Bruckner's tune moving sinuously and chromatically at pianissimo within the ambitus of a minor sixth, Beethoven's diving diatonically at fortissimo down two octaves. The harmonic character is the opposite: Beethoven's figure establishes the key unambiguously and Bruckner's leaves the matter in doubt. Yet it is difficult to dismiss this instance of intertextuality as merely accidental. Bruckner knew Beethoven's Ninth intimately and was by no means reluctant to "accept so mighty an influence" (Simpson 1968: 66). Whether the borrowing was deliberate or intuitive, to harness Beethoven's taut and muscular rhythm in the interests of creating suspense rather than affirmation counts as a prime example of Bruckner's adeptness at the creative management of influence.

7. Destruction as creativity

There is no simple solution to the Bruckner Problem as it manifests itself in the Third Symphony. Carragan, who documents the variants thoroughly, cautions against submitting to the urge to find an ideal version. "All the scores have something to offer," he writes of the various Thirds, "and as Leopold Nowak said, they are all original versions" (Carragan 2022: 69). Yet it is well known that Bruckner undertook his revisions at least partly at the recommendation of others, and, it is assumed, with the objective of rendering the symphony more likely to be performed. Opinions will differ on whether these motives can be reconciled with the attribution of artistic validity. But they do not preclude the possibility that Bruckner viewed the shortening of the 1873 score—in effect, the destruction of some of its constituent parts—as a function of the creative process.

Drawing on the work of James Hepokoski and Warren Darcy, the Costa Rica-based scholar Gabriel Ignacio Venegas-Carro argues that the Bruckner Problem should be recast as the Bruckner Potential. "Since … the gradually reinforced sonata-failure trajectory of WAB 103/II [i.e. the 1877 version of the Third Symphony] is contingent upon compositional reworking," he writes, "we may as well take Bruckner's penchant for revision (often cast in a negative light as his 'weakness') and construe it as one of his foremost acts of self-determination" (Venegas-Carro 2017: 205). It is an interesting perspective, however directly it swims against the trend among conductors in favour of the capacious 1873 score.

8. Locating the Bucknerian

Success in identifying the sources of influence in Bruckner's Third Symphony entails the recognition and isolation of those elements that are characteristically and uniquely Bucknerian. To follow Hanslick's lead and hear the score as a fusion of influences denies Bruckner the individuality that all informed listeners (including those who do not respond positively to his music) are willing to grant him. The history of Bruckner's reception is substantially the history of an astonished public confronting his individuality and otherness, his vast architecture and stark contrasts, and reacting with either fascination or dismay. And the Third Symphony, especially in the first version of 1873, is viewed by orchestral conductors as the first full expression of Bruckner's maturity. To describe a composer's style as a complex of borrowings and ingeniously contrarian gestures leaves the fundamental question—in what does his originality consist?—less than fully answered.

It is not possible here (or perhaps anywhere) to offer a comprehensive inventory of essential characteristics, even if we confine ourselves to the Third Symphony. Simpson stresses the scale of Bruckner's conception—"a new conception of the large-scale form" (Simpson 1978: 64)—which, in his view, dooms to failure any attempt to analyze Bruckner's symphonic movements according to the "athletic treatment of tonality and innate dramatic fluidity of the classical sonata-symphony" (Simpson 1968: 22). Horton implicitly offers support for this viewpoint by pointing out that Bruckner's first group in the Third spans 134 bars as opposed to 79 for Beethoven's in the Ninth and 41 for Schubert's in the "Unfinished" Symphony[12] (Horton 2008: 177). Yet here also the composer's adoption of "a new sense of slow movement" had a precedent in "the majestic deliberation of Wagner's invention and its growth into vast forms" (Simpson 1968: 23)—an impulse other commentators (inaccurately, in Simpson's view) source in the "comparatively static" church music of the 16th century or what Horton calls "atavistic, pre-classical or sacred motivations" (Horton 2008: 164).

Barford recognizes the formal innovation and Bruckner's "elliptical" treatment of harmonies that orbit "different harmonic polarities," but contends that the unique sound of a Bruckner symphony "arises from his very individual sense of orchestral colouring," which derives somewhat from Wagner's example but more relevantly from Bruckner's training as an organist (Barford 1978: 11). Horton agrees that Bruckner's concept of orchestration was "predicated on the soundworld of the organ and its technical possibilities" (Williamson 2004: 138). Donald J. Grout, in his supposedly outmoded but still impressive survey of Western music, speaks of "the combination of mystic ecstasy and tonal splendor"—words that remain better suited to Bruckner than any other composer (Grout 1973: 402). Derek Scott invokes "the dialectic of darkness and light" (Scott 2004: 92) while Floros perceives in Bruckner the meaningful opposition of many contradictory elements, including the sacred and profane. The American conductor Kent Nagano, whose preference is for the "more modern, more visionary and more monumental" original versions of the symphonies, hears in Bruckner "the dissolution of our earthly dimensions"—an elusive and hard-to-explain characteristic, to be sure, but one that can be located in specific practices, including the duplet-triplet "Bruckner rhythm" (which materializes in a lyrical form in the second group of the first movement of the Third) and its tendency to obviate the measuring line; the illusion of spaciousness and mass that results from the juxtaposition of solo instruments or small groups against the whole orchestra; and a propensity for chromaticism that "throws his listeners into abeyance" (Nagano 2019: 186). All of these characteristics can be found in the Third Symphony, regardless of the version.

9. Conclusion

Despite the rigour of Burkholder's methodology, a certain degree of subjectivity will play a role in the assessment of many (perhaps even most) alleged instances of intertextuality in music. Bruckner's Third Symphony, as I hope I have shown, is populated with significant deliberate borrowings that have been integrated into their new context with enough individuality to constitute creative initiatives. Horton judges that the "dense network of influential voices" and "divergent strands" of the score most frequently "compete for attention without resolution into a higher, organic totality" (Horton 173). It is not possible to prove him wrong, although the widespread popularity of the Third, its reputation as the first fully idiomatic Bruckner symphony, and the steady migration of conductors from the shorter 1877 and 1889 versions to the fuller and more allusive 1873 original suggests at least a plurality of contrary opinion.

[12] Horton links Bruckner's developmental procedures in the first movement to Schubert's "Unfinished" Symphony (Horton 2008: 174–185).

The main theme of Bruckner's Eighth Symphony is more difficult to situate as a case of influence. Although it is reasonable to argue that by duplicating the rhythm of its counterpart in Beethoven's Ninth, the main theme of Eighth effectively engages its intrinsic tensile energy, it is not possible to say with certainty that Bruckner was aware of the connection, much less that it should be perceived by the listener as a deliberate tribute. The differences between the themes, in short, are as salient as the similarities, leaving the listener unconditionally satisfied with the originality and power of Bruckner's inspiration and the analyst seeking to establish a link in something of a stalemate.

Relevant considerations in assessing intertextual relations include not only the exactness of musical match and biographical/historical elements but the prestige of the source material. Bruckner in his Third Symphony was drawing on two of the most revered and influential composers of the canon. It was difficult in the 1870s to write music for a central European audience and not be compared, implicitly or explicitly, with Beethoven and Wagner. How their footsteps continued to resound can be judged by the modern efforts of Richard Taruskin in the Oxford History of Music to hear *Tristan* in the rising chromatic line of the opening measures of Brahms's First Symphony (Taruskin 2005: 3 695, 698) and Jan Swafford's parsing of the finale of this work as a successful attempt to emulate the finale of Beethoven's Ninth (Swafford 1997: 407–408) in weight and intensity. The resemblance of a segment of Brahms's finale theme to the *Ode To Joy* theme has been referred to so frequently that it has become common (despite Brahms's dismissal of anyone who noted such a connection as a "jackass") to accept the resemblance as an instance of deliberate intertextuality. Although Bruckner is silent in his letters on the extent and purpose of the Beethoven and Wagner resemblances in the Third Symphony, his dedication of the score to Wagner and authorization (in manuscript) of the nickname "Wagner-Symphonie" invites (or compels) us to hear resemblances even where these are tenuous.

While it can be argued that the listener who is familiar with the Wagner and Beethoven antecedents is better armed to appreciate the score, the ingenuity with which Bruckner marshals them and their propriety in context gives the uninformed listener a full experience. Regardless of the degree of knowledge with which Bruckner's Third Symphony is approached—and it is a fair guess that the majority of listeners are stationed midway between full awareness of the inventory of resemblances and perfect ignorance—it makes a powerful effect. As Gault says of the first movement, "Bruckner has produced a movement that is sufficiently distinctive not to be afraid of comparisons with Beethoven, Wagner or anyone else" (Gault 2011: 50). The same can be said of the score as a whole. While opinions may differ on the nature and extent of Bruckner's borrowing, the Third stands as a monument to the potential of influence to generate not a sterile imitation but a creative art.

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Antono Brucknerio Trečioji simfonija ir kūrybiškas įtakų valdymas

Santrauka

Beethoveno ir Wagnerio įtaka Brucknerio Trečiajai simfonijai – plačiai žinoma. Vis dėlto ši „Wagner-simfonija" (kaip ją vadino pats Bruckneris) įvardijama kaip „pirmasis simfoninis kūrinys, atspindintis su niekuo nesupainiojamą, idiosinkretišką meistro stilių" (Floros 2011: 113). Analizuodami 1873 m. pirminės partitūros ištraukas, kurios įprastai įvardijamos kaip nuorodos į Wagnerio kūrybą, aptinkame ne aiškių atvejų kolekciją, bet panašumų spektrą, kuriame yra tiek itin ryškių, tiek menkai atpažįstamų nuorodų. Jų klasifikacija suponuoja įvairias intertekstinės analizės perspektyvas ir kelia klausimą, koks prioritetas turėtų būti teikiamas biografiniams faktams. Nepaisant to, kad tyrėjų nuomonės dėl nuorodų į Wagnerį estetinės vertės išsiskiria, abejonių dėl to, kad Brucknerio pastangos jas integruoti į naują kontekstą yra ypatinga kūrybiškumo apraiška, nekyla. Paraleles su Beethoveno Devintąja galima būtų traktuoti kaip „klaidingo perskaitymo" (Haroldas Bloomas) atvejus, kurių svarba priklauso tiek nuo panašumų, tiek nuo skirtumų, lyginant su originalu. Visais atvejais Brucknerio Trečiosios simfonijos intertekstualumo vertinimas verčia mus klausti, kurie kūrinio bruožai yra būtent brukneriški – tai procesas, patvirtinantis kompozitoriaus, kaip kūrybingo vizionieriaus, statusą.