

## **Completion and Antithesis in Piano Sonata No. 6 by S.C. Eckhardt-Gramatté**

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### Article abstract

The Piano Sonata no. 6 by S.C. Eckhardt-Gramatté evolved as a composite work spanning two distinct phases of the composer's career. The first movement (1928), for left hand alone, is representative of the neo-romanticism of her early works, while the atonal second movement (1952), for right hand, typifies the composer's later style. As a synthesis of the first two movements, the finale re-interprets these conflicting tonal and stylistic paradigms, contextually transforming the preceding movements and imbuing each with new meaning. This process is closely analogous to a concept Harold Bloom describes in poetic terms as *tessera*, or "completion and antithesis."

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## COMPLETION AND ANTITHESIS IN PIANO SONATA NO. 6 BY S.C. ECKHARDT-GRAMATTÉ

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Glenn Colton

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The Piano Sonata no. 6 by Sophie-Carmen Eckhardt-Gramatté (1899–1974) evolved as a rather unlikely amalgam of two independent and highly disparate pieces.<sup>1</sup> Its three movements span four decades and two distinct phases of the composer's development. The first movement (Berlin, 1928), for left hand alone, is representative of the tonally-based neo-romanticism of her early works, while the second movement (Vienna, 1951), the companion piece for right hand alone, is a product of the atonal experiments of her late style period, a trend which emerged in her compositions during the late 1940s and 1950s.<sup>2</sup> The third movement (Vienna, 1952) represents not only a juxtaposition of right- and left-handed studies, but also of compositional techniques and stylistic idioms.<sup>3</sup> As such, it is a scene of struggle between styles (neo-romanticism vs. modernism) and means of pitch organization (tonality vs. atonality) in which material from both of the preceding movements is re-interpreted in an antithetical context. To address this phenomenon, I will appropriate aspects of current literary theory, specifically Harold Bloom's theories of intertextuality.<sup>4</sup>

Sonata no. 6, Eckhardt-Gramatté's final completed piano sonata,<sup>5</sup> may be grouped chronologically with Sonata no. 5 as belonging to the composer's atonal period.<sup>6</sup> The extensive juxtaposition of tonal and atonal elements from

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<sup>1</sup> I wish to thank Mary Cyr, William R. Bowen, Glen Carruthers, Joan Backus, William Kinderman, Harald Krebs, Gordana Lazarevich, and Erich Schwandt for their support of this project. The assistance of Paul von Wichert and the Eckhardt-Gramatté Foundation has likewise been invaluable. Versions of this paper were presented at the annual meeting of the Canadian University Music Society, University of Calgary (June 1994), and at the annual meeting of the American Musicological Society, Pacific Northwest Chapter, in Portland, Oregon (April 1995).

<sup>2</sup> See Glen B. Carruthers, "The Career and Compositions of S.C. Eckhardt-Gramatté" (M.Mus. thesis, Carleton University, 1981), 191.

<sup>3</sup> To emphasize the stylistic distinction between movements, Eckhardt-Gramatté applied the following designations: first movement, "mode ancien"; second movement, "mode moderne"; third movement, "mode néoclassique." The designation of the third movement as "néoclassique" refers primarily to the linear, contrapuntal texture of the finale, suggesting the influence of the Hindemith and Stravinsky piano sonatas.

<sup>4</sup> Bloom's ideas are well documented in the following works: *The Anxiety of Influence* (1974), *A Map of Misreading* (1975), *Poetry and Repression* (1976), and *Agon: Towards A Theory of Revisionism* (1982).

<sup>5</sup> Her unfinished seventh, the only sonata composed in Canada, was inexplicably abandoned after she had completed only two-thirds of the opening movement. See Michael Pisani, notes to "S.C. Eckhardt-Gramatté: The Six Piano Sonatas," Marc-André Hamelin, piano (Altarus AIR-CD-9052, 1991).

two different style periods, however, makes the work a singular achievement in Eckhardt-Gramatté's oeuvre. The sonata was initially designated as *Drei Klavierstücke* and re-named Suite no. 6 before Eckhardt-Gramatté finally settled on the title Sonata no. 6.<sup>7</sup> Ironically, the first movement was originally conceived as the third movement of Sonata no. 4<sup>8</sup> (1928) and was given the title "La corrida de ratas del campo" (rats running in the field) by the composer, likely a reference to the aural and visual impression of the left hand "scurrying" from one extreme of the keyboard to the other. Eckhardt-Gramatté had written the work as a left-hand study with the hope that Paul Wittgenstein, the one-armed pianist who had been injured in World War I, would play it. It was also a work she frequently performed during her lengthy career as a concert pianist.<sup>9</sup> After World War II, the American pianist Robert Wallenborn suggested that she write a movement for the right hand, so that he could play the two together. As Ferdinand Eckhardt<sup>10</sup> has noted,

This was the sort of challenge Sonia liked and within a few days she had finished the second movement.<sup>11</sup> The obvious next step was to write a third movement for both hands. This turned out to be more difficult, since it was not easy to find a way to make the two themes match. But eventually inspiration struck and the third movement was written, combining the first two to produce her sixth piano sonata.<sup>12</sup>

The opening movement of Sonata no. 6 reveals a plethora of neo-romantic features.<sup>13</sup> One manifestation of this allegiance to tradition is the sonata form structure of the movement, the structural boundaries of which are clearly defined by tonal, thematic, and rhythmic elements. A case in point is the

<sup>6</sup>Sonata no. 5 (1950) represents Eckhardt-Gramatté's first exploration of serial music.

<sup>7</sup>Re-naming works was a recurring tendency in Eckhardt-Gramatté's compositions, as illustrated by the Suites for Violin Solo, nos. 1 and 2 (1923), originally titled Partitas, and the Piano Sonata no. 5 (1950), previously known as *Klavierstück*. In the case of Sonata no. 6, the change in title does not appear to be an arbitrary one, but rather a conscious effort on the part of the composer to reflect the work's large-scale structural unity. A description of existing manuscript copies of the sonata is contained in Ferdinand Eckhardt's catalogue of the composer's works (Winnipeg: Estate Eckhardt-Gramatté, 1980).

<sup>8</sup>Comparison of the final version of the movement with the original draft found in Sonata no. 4 reveals several discrepancies, including an increase in rhythmic complexity due to the presence of irregular and syncopated rhythms and a radically altered concept of dynamic nuance. In several instances, passages marked *p* in the original draft are changed to *f* in the latter version, while the number of crescendo and diminuendo markings is also greatly increased in the latter version.

<sup>9</sup>See Ferdinand Eckhardt, *Music from Within*, ed. Gerald Bowler (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 1985), 112.

<sup>10</sup>Ferdinand Eckhardt, a writer and art historian, married the composer in 1934 (Berlin). The couple subsequently moved to Vienna in 1939 before finally settling in Winnipeg in September of 1953. Her first husband, the painter Walter Gramatté, died in 1929.

<sup>11</sup>Until 1920, the composer was known professionally as Sonia Fridman. See Lorne Watson, Helmut Kallmann, and Kenneth Winters, "Sophie-Carmen Eckhardt-Gramatté," in *Encyclopedia of Music in Canada*, 2nd ed., ed. Helmut Kallmann, Gilles Potvin, and Kenneth Winters (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992), 399.

<sup>12</sup>Eckhardt, *Music from Within*, 112.

<sup>13</sup>Neo-romanticism was a dominant stylistic tendency in each of Eckhardt-Gramatté's first four piano sonatas (1923–31), as exemplified by the frequent use of chromaticism within a tonal framework, folk-like material, and program music.

transition section from the end of the development section to the onset of the recapitulation, an event signalled at mm. 87–88 through a sudden halting of the rhythmic motion from thirty-second notes to a series of eighth-note chords and additional emphasis on these chords via accentuation and arpeggiation. The anticipated reprise is confirmed at mm. 89–90 with a shift to the 4/8 meter in which the work began and an elided authentic cadence leading directly to the arrival of the first theme in the home key of F-sharp minor.<sup>14</sup> As a natural outgrowth of Eckhardt-Gramatté's parallel careers as composer and concert pianist, the movement features chromaticism, virtuosic pianism, sweeping themes (similar to those found in her *First Symphony*), and colourful sonorities in a dramatic idiom reminiscent of Scriabin. Notes of thematic significance are set in relief against virtuosic thirty-second note passagework by double stems, accents, and staccato markings,<sup>15</sup> while added brackets (in the composer's own hand) denote harmonic groupings and pitch direction. With respect to the style of Eckhardt-Gramatté's early works, the Berlin critic Hugo Leichtentritt once issued the following commentary:

She has the precious gift of melodic invention, freshness of ideas, outbursts of passionate energy which inflame the listeners. She is the exact counterpart of Krenek, and, in my opinion, incomparably stronger musically.<sup>16</sup>

The second movement, a set of atonal variations, may be viewed as antithetical to the first in terms of style, tonal language, and aesthetic principles. In place of the earlier neo-romantic tendency toward colourful harmonies, extended lyrical melodies, and Lisztian virtuosity, Eckhardt-Gramatté created a movement which is motivic in construction and objective in temperament, tendencies which may be partly attributed to a series of lectures by Webern which the composer attended in Vienna in the 1940s.<sup>17</sup> Although strict manipulation of pitch sets was never an element of Eckhardt-Gramatté's style, the movement bears many of the hallmarks of Webern's music, including its sparse texture, complex rhythms, and motivic construction. Examination of the main theme, in fact, reveals a carefully calculated plan of motivic organization. This theme comprises a series of motivic cells based upon the germinating opening motive [a]<sup>18</sup> (see Example 1). The second half of the theme, moreover, reveals a modified retrograde relationship to the first half.

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<sup>14</sup>The recapitulation consists of a condensed version of Theme A, followed by a virtuosic coda. Theme B is not restated.

<sup>15</sup>This type of thematic emphasis invites comparison with the music of Franz Liszt.

<sup>16</sup>Pisani, notes to "S.C. Eckhardt-Gramatté: The Six Piano Sonatas."

<sup>17</sup>This new-found objectivity is also evident in the *Triple Concerto* (1949) and *Bassoon Concerto* (1950).

<sup>18</sup>This motive is stated in inversion at m. 2 (motive [a<sup>1</sup>]), while the remaining motivic material is derived from intervallic relationships within and between motives [a] and [a<sup>1</sup>]. Motive [b] is built on the minor third between [a] and [a<sup>1</sup>] plus a semitone, while motive [c] consists of an ascending perfect fourth followed once more by a descending minor third. Successive statements of motive [c] are linked by the same semitone which occurs between the second and third notes of motive [b]. The initial statement of motive [c] and the note which follows, moreover, contain the precise pitch content of motive [b].

Vienna, 1952

Moderato (free improvised)  
(THEME)

The musical notation shows a single staff in treble clef. The notes are: G4, A4, B4, C5, B4, A4, G4, F4, E4, D4, C4, B3, A3, G3, F3, E3, D3, C3. Brackets above the notes group them into motifs: 'a' (G4-A4-B4), 'a¹' (C5-B4-A4-G4), 'b' (F4-E4-D4-C4), 'c' (B3-A3-G3-F3), and 'c' (E3-D3-C3). A double bar line and a fermata are placed over the final C3 note. The dynamic marking 'mf non legato' is written below the first five notes, and '> p' is written below the last three notes.

Example 1: Second movement, mm. 1–8.

The movement unfolds as a series of six variations based on various transformations of motives [a], [a<sup>1</sup>], [b], [c] of the main theme. Throughout the movement, these motives are manipulated in one or more of a variety of ways, including the following: (1) motives are presented in inversion, retrograde, and retrograde inversion; (2) motives are presented in different orders; and (3) individual motives are emphasized through changes in harmonic texture, rhythm, and meter. A prime example of the third type of motivic treatment may be observed in mm. 17–23 (Variation 2). At this point, the motivic sequence [a] [a<sup>1</sup>] [b] [c] is restated in its original form, but with each motive clearly differentiated by assigning it an individual rhythmic character and harmonic texture (see Example 2).<sup>19</sup>

It is in the finale, however, that the most striking compositional achievements occur. As an amalgam of disparate styles (neo-romanticism vs. modernism) and tonal languages (tonality vs. atonality), the movement functions as a vehicle of self-criticism, undermining the tonal harmony of the first movement and re-interpreting the thematic material of the preceding movements in an antithetical context. To better understand this evolutionary process, I now turn my attention to the poetic theories of Harold Bloom. The principle underlying Bloom's approach to poetry is the concept of intertextuality, whereby poems are not regarded as closed entities but rather as relational events. According to Bloom, every poem is a deliberate misreading of a precursor poem and, hence, an attempt by the later poet to clear imaginative space for him- or herself: "Poetic history ... is indistinguishable from poetic influence, since strong poets make that history by misreading one another, so as to clear imaginative space for themselves."<sup>20</sup>

Bloom is by no means the only scholar to postulate an intertextual approach to literary theory. One of the earliest and most influential writers on this subject was Mikhail Bakhtin, whose concept of dialogism has inspired a number of

<sup>19</sup>The identity of motive [c], thoroughly disguised in this context, is affirmed through accentuation and the insertion of arrows (in the composer's own hand) to indicate the intended contour of the melodic line. Motive [c] also appears in diminution in m. 22 (first three slurred notes: F-sharp-B-G-sharp).

<sup>20</sup>Harold Bloom, *The Anxiety of Influence* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1974), 5.

**Example 2:** Second movement, mm. 16–25 (my labelling of motives). Reproduced with permission of The Eckhardt-Gramatté Foundation.

recent literary critics. Writing in the Soviet Union of the 1920s and 1930s, Bakhtin developed a theory by which an author, in using a particular word, engages in “a dialogue with the text in which he or she first encountered this word.”<sup>21</sup> Julia Kristeva, conversely, has defined intertextuality as a phenome-

<sup>21</sup>Jeremy Hawthorn, *A Glossary of Contemporary Literary Theory* (London: Edward Arnold, 1992), 58. See also Mikhail Bakhtin, *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays*, ed. Michael Holquist, trans. Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981); Tzvetan Todorov, *Mikhail Bakhtin: The Dialogical Principle*, trans. Wlad Godzich (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota

non which occurs when “in the space of a given text, several utterances taken from other texts intersect and neutralize one another.”<sup>22</sup> Bloom’s theories, however, offer the most comprehensive discussion of intertextuality by distinguishing between various types of relational events, enabling us to assess the precise nature of each writer’s “misreading” of prior texts.

According to Bloom’s theories, each intertextual “misreading” comprises a series of defence mechanisms called “revisionary ratios,”<sup>23</sup> which map the later work’s critical stance toward the precursor work (see Figure 1). As techniques of misreading, each revisionary ratio performs a distinctive critical function. Each ratio, moreover, is co-ordinated with a specific rhetorical trope and Freudian defence. This seemingly odd coupling of psychic defences with rhetorical tropes is justified by the unique context in which Bloom applies the terms. The Freudian defences are invoked to show the various ways in which each poet “defends” him- or herself against anteriority. These psychic defences, in turn, create the necessary conditions for the evocation of analogous rhetorical tropes.<sup>24</sup> The extent to which each ratio applies to specific poems is, of course, variable. Some poems contain all six while others are governed by a single ratio.

In appropriating these revisionary ratios for musical works, one must first acknowledge that the poet and composer are engaged in the act of artistic creation in highly disparate ways. Bloom’s mapping of specific sets of ratios to correspond with certain stanzas of text, for example, is a technique idiosyncratic to poetry and not easily transferable to other artistic media. Moreover, by focusing on intertextual phenomena, Bloom’s theories are inherently resistant to systematic verification and are by nature qualitative rather than quantitative concepts. As models of intertextuality, however, Bloom’s ratios may provide a basis for the conceptualization of musical works as relational events, thereby complementing existing musical methodologies through the integration of musicology, theory, and criticism.<sup>25</sup> By applying these ratios to music, it may be possible to formulate a conceptual framework for approaching many of the oft-mentioned relationships which exist between works by different composers. Bach’s borrowings from Vivaldi, for example, represent just one

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Press, 1984); Gary Saul Morson, ed., *Bakhtin: Essays and Dialogues on His Work* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986).

<sup>22</sup>Julia Kristeva, *La révolution du langage poétique* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1984), 15.

<sup>23</sup>Bloom’s utilization of the term “ratio” is derived from a number of diverse sources, including mathematics (as the relation between two similar quantities), monetary science (as the quantitative relation in which one metal stands to another with respect to monetary value), and literature (as “thought”).

<sup>24</sup>The concept of trope, a word or phrase that departs from literal meaning, was extended by Bloom to encompass relationships between texts; see Harold Bloom, *A Map of Misreading* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1975), 93–94. The interdependence of these various tropes and defences will become more apparent as specific ratios are discussed.

<sup>25</sup>Appropriation of Bloom’s theories for musical purposes is entirely consistent with the interdisciplinary approach underlying his methodology. Sources as diverse as Kierkegaard, Nietzsche, and Freud, for example, have been assimilated by Bloom through a process of transposition, whereby their texts are interpreted as though they deal with poetry rather than people.

Revisionary Ratio	Synopsis
1. Clinamen	Initial swerve from the precursor, implying that the parent-poem was valid to a certain point but then should have swerved in the direction that the new poem moves.
2. Tessera	Completion and Antithesis, whereby a poem antithetically completes its parent-poem by retaining the terms of the parent-poem but embodying them with a different meaning, as if the precursor had failed to go far enough.
3. Kenosis	Movement of discontinuity with the precursor, denoting the phenomenon which occurs when the later poet re-creates images from a predecessor by emptying them of all excesses.
4. Daemonization	Movement towards a personalized Counter-Sublime, in reaction to the precursor's Sublime. The later poet develops the latent power in the parent-poem.
5. Askesis	Movement of separation from the precursor. Unlike the process of <b>kenosis</b> , the later poet does not undergo a movement of emptying, but rather of curtailing.
6. Apophrades	The Return of The Dead. The new poem's achievement makes it seem as though the later poet had written the precursor's characteristic work. The effect is that the historical continuum is temporarily distorted, giving the impression that the later poets are being imitated by their ancestors.

Figure 1: Harold Bloom's Six Revisionary Ratios\*

\*Bloom, *The Anxiety of Influence*, 14–16.

of many examples for which an intertextual theory could provide fresh insight. Such a theory could also address more subtle relationships between works, such as the apparent affinity between Brahms's Scherzo, op. 4 and Chopin's Scherzo, op. 31.<sup>26</sup> Since Bloom also uses these ratios to map a poet's revisionary stance to his or her own poetry, the concept of self-revisionism in music may also be explored. The manner in which a work re-interprets its own thematic and tonal context could be re-examined, as well as a composer's revisionary stance toward his or her earlier styles. Liszt's self-revisions and

<sup>26</sup>A Bloomian analysis of these two works has been undertaken by Kevin Korsyn in "Towards a New Poetics of Musical Influence," *Music Analysis* 10, nos. 1–2 (1991): 3–72. Other authors to apply intertextual theories to music include Joseph Straus, *Remaking the Past: Musical Modernism and the Influence of the Tonal Tradition* (1990); John Hollander, *The Figure of Echo: A Mode of Allusion in Milton and After* (1981); David Lewin, "Music Theory, Phenomonology, and Modes of Perception," *Music Perception* 3, no. 4 (1986): 381–82; and Jeremy Yudkin, "Beethoven's 'Mozart' Quartet," *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 45, no. 1 (Spring 1992): 30–74. See also Richard Taruskin's review of the Korsyn and Straus works: "Revising Revision," *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 46, no. 1 (1993): 114–38.



Mahler's self-quotations, for example, could be re-evaluated intertextually. In a stylistic and tonal synthesis such as the finale of Eckhardt-Gramatté's Sonata no. 6, questions of intertextuality are not only useful and pertinent, but unavoidable.

An intertextual reading of the finale reveals that the movement is governed by the revisionary ratio *tessera*, or "Completion and Antithesis." The term *tessera* was extracted by Bloom from the early mystery religions, where it originally connoted the fitting together of two halves of a broken piece of pottery as a means of mutual recognition of initiates.<sup>27</sup> As a movement of antithetical completion, this ratio retains the terms of the parent-poem, but embodies them with a different meaning, as if the parent-poem had failed to go far enough. *Tessera* subsumes the Freudian defence of reversal into the opposite and the rhetorical trope of synecdoche, defined by Quintilian as a means of "letting us understand the plural from the singular, the whole from a part, something following from something preceding; and vice versa."<sup>28</sup> Bloom's remarks on this phenomenon are as follows:

As the part yields to an antithetical whole, influence comes to mean a kind of belated completion, which I have called *tessera* – In effect influence becomes a part, of which self-revisionism and self-rebetting is the whole.<sup>29</sup>

How then, does the finale of Sonata no. 6 function as a *tessera*? How does Eckhardt-Gramatté's intertextual encounter with her own earlier music represent both a reversal into the opposite and a relationship of "part and whole"?<sup>30</sup> Upon closer examination, the finale embodies the principles of antithetical completion as two highly dissimilar parts (in this instance, the first and second movements) are subsumed into an antithetical whole (the third movement), a process which radically transforms the musical context of the prior movements and imbues each with new meaning. The movement thus functions as a vehicle of self-revisionism in which the tonal harmony of the opening movement is subverted, the latent potential of themes is developed and contextually transformed, and the monophonic/homophonic textures of the preceding movements are synthesized into two-part linear counterpoint.<sup>31</sup>

As a synthesis of tonal and atonal elements, the finale negates the tonic-dominant polarization of the first movement by obscuring cadential references and denying tonal closure. The most decisive gesture of tonal resolution in the first movement occurs at the beginning of the recapitulation, an event signalled unequivocally by an elided authentic cadence in the tonic key (F-sharp minor)

<sup>27</sup> See Bloom, *The Anxiety of Influence*, 67.

<sup>28</sup> Quintilian, *The Institutes of Oratory*, trans. H.E. Butler (London: Loeb Classics, 1953), 19.

<sup>29</sup> Bloom, *A Map of Misreading*, 72.

<sup>30</sup> Consistent with the Freudian and rhetorical principles of *tessera*.

<sup>31</sup> Aside from the antithetical tonal and thematic contexts discussed in the present study, *tessera* may also comprise a reversal of the tempo, rhythm, character, dynamics, or formal process of the precursor work, such as the substitution of formal openness for formal closure. One earlier work embodying the principles of *tessera* is Brahms's *Romanze*, op. 118, no. 5. One particular section of this work may be interpreted intertextually as an antithetical completion of Chopin's *Berceuse*, op. 57. For a Bloomian interpretation of this piece, see Korsyn, "Towards a New Poetics of Musical Influence," 3–67.

and a literal reprise of the opening theme. At m. 118 of the finale, however, a sense of tonal closure is undermined by superimposing a C major triad upon the original V<sup>7</sup> chord, obscuring any references to dominant function. Tonic affirmation is likewise neutralized by superimposing a G-sharp over the reprise of the opening F-sharp. This tonally unstable music reverses the structural process of the opening movement, as if rejecting the tonal simplicity of the earlier music and identifying with a new tonal future.<sup>32</sup> In literary terms, Eckhardt-Gramatté's subversion of the first movement's tonal hierarchy invokes striking parallels to the philosophical precepts of deconstruction: "Deconstruction aims to undermine Western metaphysics by undoing or deconstructing hierarchical oppositions and by showing their logocentric reliance upon a centre or presence."<sup>33</sup>

Nevertheless the passage evokes a strong sense of closure. The opening themes of the preceding movements, juxtaposed at the beginning of the finale and developed throughout the course of the movement, are restated here in condensed form, thus elevating the thematic element to the status of primary structural determinate<sup>34</sup> while at the same time marginalizing the tonal polarity inherent in the opening movement.<sup>35</sup> Consistent with the Freudian foundations of *tessera*, the finale "reverses" the structural process of the opening movement, embodying a diametric shift from tonal stability to tonal instability, from tonal resolution to thematic resolution as the principal means of large-scale closure.

By undermining the tonal orientation of the opening movement, the finale also exemplifies Eckhardt-Gramatté's self-critical stance toward anterior stylistic idioms, specifically the tonally-based neo-romanticism of the composer's early period works. Bloom accounts for this process in poetry as "The Anxiety of Style," a term which refers to the sense of belated "anxiety" many poets feel toward the stylistic achievements of a past era. Musically, this feeling is manifested by the defensive avoidance or subversion of previous practices and an assertion of modern compositional techniques. A similar sense of "stylistic anxiety" has been fundamental to the creative process of many twentieth-century composers, most notably Igor Stravinsky and Arnold Schoenberg. In the case of both Stravinsky and Schoenberg, the apparent need to overcome this

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<sup>32</sup>The tonic affirmation of the opening movement, conversely, identifies temporally with the past, invoking a sense of closure by drawing an explicit connection to the germinal tonal material of the entire work.

<sup>33</sup>Hawthorn, *A Glossary of Contemporary Literary Theory*, 40.

<sup>34</sup>This dual thematic reprise imparts a ternary structure upon the finale. The formal plan of the movement, a hybrid of variation and sonata form elements, may be summarized as follows: Section A (mm. 1–85): exposition material (first movement)/ Variations 1, 2, 3 (second movement); Section B (mm. 86–117): developmental material (first movement)/ Variations 4, 5, 6 (second movement); Section A<sup>1</sup> (mm. 118–63): abbreviated restatement of Section A, followed by an extended coda.

<sup>35</sup>Joseph Straus identifies "marginalization" as one of eight "musical revisionary ratios," modelled closely after Bloom's theories. According to Straus, marginalization occurs when "musical elements that are central to the structure of the earlier work (such as dominant-tonic cadences and linear progressions that span triadic intervals) are relegated to the periphery of the new one." Joseph N. Straus, *Remaking the Past: Musical Modernism and the Influence of the Tonal Tradition* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1990), 17.

“anxiety” manifested itself both in the recomposition of great masterworks from the past and in radical transformations of their own styles.

Thematically, the principles of antithetical completion are revealed in the finale through the development of material from prior movements, as if the earlier thematic statements had “failed to go far enough.” This thematic development, moreover, coincides with a radical reconstruction of the textural context in which themes from both movements were initially heard. At mm. 37–57 of the finale, for example, the opening theme of the first movement is superimposed upon Variation 3 of the second movement. The first movement theme, in comparison with its initial entry, is expanded by means of phrase extensions and newly-composed interpolations, while the motivic configuration of the second movement theme is likewise extended by expanding the original succession of motives ([a] [a<sup>1</sup>] [c]) via modified inversion of motive [c] (motive [c<sup>1</sup>]) and repetition of motives [a], [a<sup>1</sup>], and [c], resulting in the following motivic configuration: [a] [a<sup>1</sup>] [c<sup>1</sup>] [a] [a<sup>1</sup>] [c<sup>1</sup>] [c] [c]. Superimposition of thematic material from both movements, moreover, reverses the context in which these themes were initially heard by replacing the autonomous monophonic/homophonic textures of the preceding movements with two-part linear writing in which interdependent lines partake in a contrapuntal dialogue. Note, for example, the modified inversional relationship between the motivic cells [a], [a<sup>1</sup>] of the second movement theme and the melodic contour of the first movement theme at mm. 47–48 (see Example 3).<sup>36</sup> By exposing latent inter-movement relationships in this way, the finale embodies the principles of *tessera* by making the new discourse appear more complete, more whole, than the truncated discourse of the preceding movements. Consistent with the rhetorical foundations of *tessera*, the trope of synecdoche is evoked by emphasizing the correspondence of “part and whole.”

Within the movement’s large-scale revisionary function as an antithetical completion, the finale also exhibits tendencies of the hyperbolic ratio daemonization, defined by Bloom as “a movement towards a personalized Counter-Sublime, in reaction to the precursor’s Sublime.”<sup>37</sup> Founded upon the ancient notion of the daemonic as an intervening stage between the human and the divine,<sup>38</sup> daemonization develops the latent power in the parent-poem, creating an intensified climax. Bloom links this ratio to the rhetorical trope of hyperbole and the Freudian defence of repression, an assimilation based on the dialectical relationship between hyperbole and repression. Kevin Korsyn has described this relationship as follows:

Hyperbole exaggerates, and so produces a climax through intensification; repression makes this climax possible, through an “unconsciously purposeful forgetting” of prior texts. In applying this ratio Bloom asks “What is being freshly repressed?” What has been forgotten, on purpose, in the depths, so as to make possible this sudden elevation to new heights?<sup>39</sup>

<sup>36</sup>Notes of thematic significance are emphasized through durational emphasis and accentuation.

<sup>37</sup>Bloom, *The Anxiety of Influence*, 15.

<sup>38</sup>See Bloom, *Poetry and Repression* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1976), 18.

<sup>39</sup>Korsyn, “Towards A New Poetics of Musical Influence,” 50.

1st. mvt. theme (bracketed segments related inversionally to a, a1)

2nd mvt. theme

cl

**Example 3:** Third movement, mm. 47–48. Reproduced with permission of The Eckhardt-Gramatté Foundation.

Eckhardt-Gramatté's daemonization is dramatically depicted in mm. 19–20 of the finale, a passage which intensifies material from the exposition of the opening movement to a hyperbolic climax. In its original context (first movement, m. 17), the passage functioned as a descending scalar progression alluding to the tonal centre of G major. In the finale, however, the corresponding passage is "daemonized" through the juxtaposition of a newly added E-flat major scale which ascends in contrary motion to the original progression. The effect is one of negation, as the bitonal clash between E-flat and G represses the tonal orientation of the original passage, making possible a hyperbolic climax.<sup>40</sup> The intensity of this climax is heightened through the following

<sup>40</sup>One earlier work embodying the principles of daemonization is Liszt's piano transcription of the

factors: (1) the cumulative momentum of juxtaposing two different scales in contrary motion; (2) insertion of a lengthy crescendo marking not found in the original passage; and (3) extension of the original passage by one octave, making possible a simultaneous movement towards the upper and lower extremes of the keyboard. The latter technique is closely analogous to Bloom's own use of the term for poetic texts, whereby daemonization is identified with images of high and low.<sup>41</sup>

Eckhardt-Gramatté's compositional process in Sonata no. 6 may be considered an act of self-revisionism in which the music evolves as a series of relational events within the context of the composer's revisionary stance toward her own music. By subsuming the two prior movements into an antithetical whole, the third movement functions as a vehicle of large-scale completion, a phenomenon accounted for in Bloomian terms by the revisionary ratio *tessera*. Throughout the finale, music from previous movements is developed, contextually transformed, and intensified (through the ratio of daemonization), such that the listener is made aware of the "completeness" of the final movement in relation to the incomplete discourse of the preceding movements. Perception of the sonata as a series of relational events, moreover, reveals Eckhardt-Gramatté's self-critical stance towards the tonally-based neo-romanticism of the opening movement, a process Bloom describes in terms of poetic texts as "The Anxiety of Style." As a dynamic interplay of continuity and change, tradition and innovation, Sonata no. 6 thus embodies one of the underlying challenges facing twentieth-century composers: the quest to define one's own creative identity amidst the ever present echoes of the past.

### Abstract

The Piano Sonata no. 6 by S.C. Eckhardt-Gramatté evolved as a composite work spanning two distinct phases of the composer's career. The first movement (1928), for left hand alone, is representative of the neo-romanticism of her early works, while the atonal second movement (1952), for right hand, typifies the composer's later style. As a synthesis of the first two movements, the finale re-interprets these conflicting tonal and stylistic paradigms, contextually transforming the preceding movements and imbuing each with new meaning. This process is closely analogous to a concept Harold Bloom describes in poetic terms as *tessera*, or "completion and antithesis."

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song "Moja pieszotka," from Chopin's *Chants polonais*, op. 74 (1837). The climax of the original song, supported by a gradual crescendo and a chromatic melodic ascent, culminates with a dominant chord which disintegrates the accumulated tonal tension of the preceding measures by re-affirming the G-flat tonal orientation of the work. The remaining measures of the song, in fact, are characterized by tonal stability and consist primarily of dominant-tonic references. Liszt's transcription, completed twenty-three years after the original song, "daemonizes" the corresponding passage by taking the original climax of Chopin's song as a point of departure for an extended, tonally ambiguous coda, repressing the tonal stasis of the concluding measures of the original song and creating an intensified climax.

<sup>41</sup> See Bloom, *A Map of Misreading*, 84.