

**‘AKCJA’ AND NARRATIVITY IN THE MUSIC OF
WITOLD LUTOSŁAWSKI**

Nicholas Reyland

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ABSTRACT

This thesis aims to contribute to the understanding of Witold Lutosławski's concept of *akcja* ('action' or 'plot'). After an Introduction outlining the study's motivations and presenting a critical survey of the Lutosławski literature on *akcja* and related topics, its investigation proceeds through three broad phases which seek to make independently valuable contributions to their respective areas while building towards an elucidation of *akcja*. First, unpublished Lutosławski lectures from the 1960s that reveal traces of his poetics of plot are examined against the backdrop of his polemical views and the influences on his creative approach. Second, theories of plot, narrative and musical narrativity are utilized to devise a strategy for the analysis of instances of *akcja*; as part of this process, ideas on musical narrativity are developed in relation to such issues as plot and emplotment, story and discourse, meaning and metaphor, and narrativity in twentieth-century music. Third, that strategy is applied in an analysis of Lutosławski's 1968 composition *Livre pour orchestre*, a piece – part symphony, part modernist 'Livre' – in which the issue of narrativity itself becomes an aspect of the musical narrative. The study's Afterword then presents a sketch for a new theory of musical narrativity, plus analyses of passages from Lutosławski pieces composed during different periods in his career, thereby demonstrating the centrality of *akcja* to his music and, in turn, to the development of an enhanced appreciation of Lutosławski's creative achievements.

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LIVRE POUR ORCHESTRE

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INTRODUCTION

By 'action' I understand a purely musical 'plot' – not what is described as programme music. A purely musical plot. That is to say, a chain of interrelated musical events. For the listener to follow. From beginning to end.¹

Witold Lutosławski (1913-94)

Witold Lutosławski's enigmatic and elusive concept of musical *akcja*, as Douglas Rust suggests, is 'probably the least understood' of all the ideas most closely associated with the Polish composer's music.² It may also be one of the most crucial concepts with respect to the development of a fuller understanding of the ways in which some of his most significant compositions were constructed and can be interpreted. The notion that many of Lutosławski's pieces convey an 'action' or 'plot' (both are acceptable English translations of the Polish word *akcja*)³ hints, for example, at the possibility of uniting discussion of the oft-divided mainstays of critical-analytical writing on his music: its form and its content. Analysing *akcja* may also carry the potential for sensitive hermeneutic interpretations exploring what Naomi Cumming calls 'a continuity between comments on the sensuous and the schematic',⁴ or which seek to consider the socio-political and cultural connotations of his music. In spite of the many achievements thus far in the field of Lutosławski studies, however, including valuable

¹ Irina Nikolska, *Conversations with Witold Lutosławski (1987-92)*, tr. Valeri Yerokhin (Stockholm: Melos, 1994), p. 97.

² Douglas Rust, 'A Theory of Form for Lutosławski's Late Symphonic Works' (Ph.D. thesis, Yale University, 1994), p. 56.

³ 'Plot', according to Polish literary theory expert Andrzej Karcz, author of *The Polish Formalist School and Russian Formalism* (Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 2003), is nonetheless the most appropriate English translation of *akcja* if one wishes to infer the narrative-related sense of the word (personal communication). To avoid confusion with the many other meanings that 'action' has in English, in the main text of this thesis only *akcja* and plot are used in relation to Lutosławski's concept.

⁴ Naomi Cumming, *The Sonic Self: Musical Subjectivity and Signification* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2000), p. 48.

work on the topic by Rust and one or two others, a robust and multifaceted investigation of *akcja* is yet to be completed.

The elusiveness of Lutosławski's concept of *akcja* is apparent in all of his published discussions of the topic. His final major interview (conducted by Rust in 1993) is no exception. Musical forms of significance, Lutosławski said,

should be composed of some musical events that together – one after another – may be compared to an action, to the plot of a drama, or a novel, or a short story, or something. Of course, I don't wish to suggest that in my music one should see the analogy with literature. No! It's purely musical, [and] the action – that means the plot – must consist of musical events that come one after another in a way that is somewhat similar to the logic in a drama. This [musical action] is important for all those who want to approach the large-scale closed form.⁵

At first glance the portrayal of *akcja* that emerges from such statements seems fairly unproblematic. An *akcja*, according to Lutosławski, is a chain of interrelated musical events; their relationship is akin to the narrative logic linking events in a story; and that is where an *akcja*'s 'extra-musical' associations end, the stories told by this music being 'purely musical'. On reflection, however, one might judge that the surface clarity of Lutosławski's descriptions of *akcja* relates to a lack of detail. Certainly, his comments raise a number of questions about *akcja* and its role in his music. What, for example, are the constituent materials of an *akcja*'s events? How do they imply a plot-like logic of succession? Was Lutosławski's personal understanding of *akcja* a fully-fledged theory, an evocative interpretative simile or a variety of knowledge more subtly tailored to his needs as a creative artist? When did he develop the idea? Was *akcja* an original concept or did it draw on other paradigms of musical or narrative structuring?

⁵ Douglas Rust, 'Conversation with Witold Lutosławski', *Musical Quarterly* 79/1 (Spring 1995), p. 209.

This thesis seeks to explore these issues and a range of connected topics. The remainder of this Introduction, after outlining the structure of the present study and a pair of motivations for its investigation, surveys the existing Lutosławski literature (henceforth referred to as the field of Lutosławski studies). This critical survey locates the thesis's main concerns within a wider musicological context while providing an overview of the field's central preoccupations to date. In particular, it considers the field's attempts thus far to understand *akcja* and closely related topics – attempts both encouraged and hampered by the field's strengths and limitations. Three chapters and an Afterword follow. These sections seek to address substantial issues in their own right, while cumulatively building towards a fuller appreciation of *akcja* and the critical issues with which this study's investigation intersects.

Chapter One, 'Lutosławski's Poetics of Musical Plot', outlines the genesis of Lutosławski's concept of *akcja* and, in response to the recoverable traces of his ideas, seeks to identify the fundamental tenets of that concept, the interrelationship between his polemical ideas and creative work, and the moment of Lutosławski's '*akcja* epiphany' – the point when he began to use the term *akcja* in the mid-to-late 1960s. To facilitate this process, it presents a critical examination of a number of vital but as yet unpublished and virtually unknown Lutosławski lectures written during the early-to-mid 1960s. These lectures are revelatory. By indicating the rudiments of Lutosławski's approach to the construction of musical plots, they suggest a number of ways in which existing ideas about the composer's music could be substantially revised. In scrutinizing these texts, this chapter aims to bring them to the wider attention of the field, in the hope that, on the one hand, the ideas they contain will be engaged with

more widely and, on the other, that the use to which this thesis subsequently puts those ideas will also be considered and critiqued.

The chapter begins, in ‘Lutosławski, Maliszewski, and the dichotomy of form and content’, by asking whether Lutosławski’s approach to plot adopted or adapted his teacher Witold Maliszewski’s idiosyncratic theory of musical form. In doing so it considers existing readings of Maliszewski’s influence on Lutosławski by Charles Bodman Rae and Rust. The evolution of *akcja* is then traced through an examination of the unpublished lectures. The first lecture discussed, ‘Problems of Musical Form’, is the most crucial. It outlines Lutosławski’s view of the building blocks of form (‘static’ and ‘dynamic’ events) and their primary content (harmonic and thematic musical thoughts that Lutosławski called ‘key ideas’). The interaction of these elements would appear to create the essence of what Lutosławski conceived as a musical plot. ‘Problems of Musical Form’ makes it clear that Lutosławski’s notion of harmonic ‘quality’ was central to the creation of ‘key ideas’. Lutosławski’s approach to pitch organisation is therefore also discussed in this chapter, with reference to another unpublished lecture, ‘Pitch, the Interval and Harmonic Aggregate’. A provisional examination of the ways in which ‘qualities’ are deployed in Lutosławski’s music, again drawing on Rae and Rust’s work, is then undertaken to develop some preliminary thoughts about the role of pitch in an *akcja*.

The third lecture examined is better known. Ideas and statements originating in ‘Notes on the Construction of Large-Scale Closed Forms’ have strongly influenced, and perhaps not always constructively so, the critical discourse on Lutosławski’s music. The perspective that is offered by this lecture nonetheless affords a glimpse of two further types of musical idea with which Lutosławski appears to have enriched his plots:

his utilisation of old, new and re-imagined formal conventions, and his use of what he considered to be extra-musical ‘borrowings’ – extra-musical not in the quotidian sense of music inspired by other artworks, narratives, or personal and political events, but rather in Lutosławski’s more specific sense of devices with conventional dramatic or expressive meanings that might be imported into a composition in order to colour a piece’s more unique signifiers with additional connotations. An analytical sketch of the String Quartet (1964), the composition Lutosławski discusses in most detail in this lecture, is presented to suggest ways in which one might begin to think about an *akcja* as the interaction of these different components: ‘key ideas’, ‘qualities’, ‘static’ and ‘dynamic’ events, various musical conventions and extra-musical ‘borrowings’.

While discussing Lutosławski’s ‘borrowings’, Chapter One broaches the issue of the influence of the theatre on Lutosławski’s concept of *akcja*. Other potential influences are examined in the final section of Chapter One, ‘Lutosławski’s *akcja* epiphany: from *Poesis* to *poiesis*’, including Aristotle’s writings on plot and Lutosławski’s friendship with the Swedish composer Ingvar Lidholm. The emergence of the term *akcja* in Lutosławski’s self-critical lexicon is then pinpointed as precisely as possible before the chapter concludes by assessing the nature of Lutosławski’s personal understanding of *akcja*. This conclusion proposes that Lutosławski’s concept of *akcja* was a poetics of musical plot: a set of principles enabling Lutosławski’s creation of musical plots, as opposed to a theory designed to explicate that process or explain the results. This leads, in turn, to a consideration of the ways in which the recoverable traces of Lutosławski’s poetics might be judiciously employed in the development of an approach to analysing and interpreting his musical plots.

Chapter Two, 'Plotting Musical Narrativity', turns to theories of plot, narrative and musical narrativity in order to theorize *akcja* more precisely and prepare a theoretically-grounded strategy for analysing Lutosławski's music, but also to consider ways in which his views and ideas might encourage new approaches to the controversial issue of musical narrativity. In doing so, the chapter initially acts as a dialectical challenge to Chapter One by engaging with the question of whether or not it is viable to talk of narrativity, and thus plot, in music. Rather than diving straight into the established musicological debate on this subject, however, a broader survey of theories of plot and narrative is presented first, providing a wider context which permits, in turn, a certain amount of tangled musicological thicket to be cleared en route to the formation of a new perspective on musical narrativity and, with it, Lutosławski's poetics of *akcja*. The ensuing critical examination of the literature also yields ideas on whether or not one might talk of narrativity in music after tonality. Conventional wisdom suggests no; Lutosławski's comments, yes. Is either view correct, or is there a wider range of narrativities of which one might speak in post-tonal music?

After an introduction outlining basic positions relating to the issue of musical narrativity, 'Narrative: story and discourse' considers various critical perspectives on the essential distinction of narrative theory – the dualistic view of narrative as a combination of story and discourse – in order to delineate basic definitions of terms like plot, narrativity and story, and to assess the conditions which must be met if a text is to evoke an experience of narrativity. 'Story, plot and emplotment' then examines Roland Barthes's principal theoretical writings on narrative. Barthes's theories suggest ways of refining Lutosławski's pragmatic concept of plot; they also begin to indicate the role of the perceiver in the creation of experiences of narrativity. This latter aspect of Barthes's

work leads to a discussion of reader-response theory and Wolfgang Iser's theories on the role of the reader in deriving both a plot and wider meanings from a narrative text.

Barthes and Iser's ideas both support aspects of Lutosławski's poetics of musical plot, but in order to consider whether the role of the literal signifiers of an explicitly narrative text can be supplanted by the more ambiguous signifiers of musical discourse, it is necessary to turn to the musicological debates on the topic. In 'Speaking of musical narrativity', the shape of that debate in recent years is outlined. Consideration is given to the framing hypotheses guiding the arguments of those in favour of or against the idea of musical narrativity. Due to the chapter's earlier discussions, however, a good deal of chaff can be separated from the grains of accepted wisdom shared by both sides of the argument, leading to a more cautiously optimistic hypothesis concerning the kind of narrativity one might reasonably speak of in music. Jean-Jacques Nattiez's ideas prove central to this argument. Ways of speaking of musical story and discourse are then considered, drawing on the work of scholars including Patrick McCreless and John Novak, whose theories of musical narrative adapt Barthes's ideas to the analysis of music.

Most of the approaches discussed in this context suggest ways of talking about narrative in instrumental western art music of the late-eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Whether or not one can talk of narrativity in post-tonal music (or, indeed, other musics) is questioned in 'Narrativity in twentieth-century music'. Consideration is given to the work of critics outlining a conventional view of this matter – and particularly the idea that modernist art is stylistically predisposed towards anti-narrativity – before the section asks whether elements of a modernist musical style might actually intensify music's potential to evoke narrativity. This possibility is

discussed with reference to recent theoretical work, and leads to a discussion which augments Jann Pasler's views on the range of narrativities possible in twentieth-century music with ideas from recent work by literary theorists of narrative. 'Analysing *akcja*' then outlines a strategy for the analysis of Lutosławski's music which seeks to ground the recoverable traces of his poetics of musical plot within the more established literary and musicological theories of plot and narrativity discussed in Chapter Two. The strategy is then put into practice in Chapter Three's analysis of *Livre pour orchestre* (1968), the first composition to be completed by Lutosławski after his *akcja* epiphany.

Chapter Three, '“Livre” or Symphony? Lutosławski's *Livre pour orchestre*', is this study's attempt to identify and interpret the workings of a Lutosławski *akcja* while demonstrating an instance of musical narrativity in a post-tonal context. The analysis is necessarily detailed. *Livre pour orchestre* is a major Lutosławski work – more major, as this thesis reveals, than has hitherto been appreciated – and part of this chapter's purpose is to draw attention to the significance of the piece and encourage further readings of it. Analysing the *akcja* of *Livre pour orchestre*, however, is particularly involving because this is a composition in which the idea of musical narrativity itself is foregrounded. In a sense, *Livre pour orchestre* makes *akcja* a subject of its musical narrative. It is a composition in which an anti-narrative model with modernist connotations is challenged by the emergence of overarching tendencies towards symphonic narrativity. The piece's stylistic tensions therefore generate much of the music's expressive and structural power while evoking a diversity of interpretative resonances.

The chapter begins with an introduction which discusses a revelatory letter from Lutosławski concerning the piece's title. It then seeks to contextualize the ramifications of that letter with regards to Lutosławski's stated intentions for the piece. 'Livre' models, older and more recent, are considered in this context; Lutosławski's relationship to modernism, as theorized by Arnold Whittall, is also discussed. 'Livre pour orchestre's critical reception' then surveys initial and more general critical responses to the piece, before examining more substantial analytical commentaries by Andrzej Tuchowski, Philip Wilby and Lutosławski himself. These and other analyses – most notably by Martina Homma, Rae and Steven Stucky – then provide a backdrop to the chapter's detailed examination of the *1^{er} chapitre* of *Livre pour orchestre*.

Ostensibly a self-contained miniature, the piece's first movement provides an ideal testing ground for the approach to analysing *akcja* outlined at the end of Chapter Two, thereby addressing a range of issues previously advanced by this thesis. The analytical 'Interlude' which follows then considers the *intermèdes* separating *Livre pour orchestre's* *chapitres* (the piece has four main movements or *chapitres* separated by three linking *intermèdes*, forming the pattern C¹-i¹-C²-i²-C³-i³-C⁴ – although, as this analysis discusses, matters are in fact more complicated than this basic ground plan suggests). The ensuing analysis of the final *intermède* and *chapitre* then turns conjecture about earlier sections of the piece on its head. In the final *intermède* and *chapitre*, *Livre pour orchestre* turns away from being a 'Livre' (a collection of short and only loosely connected musical plots) and evolves into a piece with an overarching *akcja* as earlier plot concerns invade the *4^{me} chapitre*. The implications of this dramatic volte-face are interpreted in the conclusion to Chapter Three, 'Livre pour orchestre or Symphony No. 3?', which considers a range of aesthetic, political and other resonances

of the musical narrative formed by the totality of *Livre pour orchestre*. It also begins to consider the nature of the narrative and metaphoric mechanisms which permit those resonances to be experienced.

The Afterword to this study seeks to indicate ways in which the view of Lutosławski, *akcja* and musical narrativity emerging from this thesis might be extended and further developed. After summarizing several ways in which additional *akcja*-related archival and theoretical work on Lutosławski might proceed, consideration is given to ways in which the sketch for a new theory of musical narrativity initiated in Chapter Two might be developed. The Afterword then argues that, in order to demonstrate *akcja*'s centrality to Lutosławski's music, detailed analyses of pieces from throughout the composer's output need to be undertaken. To this end, it discusses works Lutosławski completed soon after *Livre pour orchestre* and presents analytical sketches of crucial moments in two major works from his earlier and later artistic periods, the Concerto for Orchestra (1950-4) and *Chain 2* (1984-5). The Afterword subsequently closes with a reconsideration of issues raised by the critical subtext of this thesis.

That subtext relates to the provocative arguments of a strand of Lutosławski criticism which a fuller understanding of *akcja* could productively seek to confront. A relatively recent example of this strand can be found in a review of Lutosławski's Symphony No. 4 (1988-92) by the critic Adrian Jack. Jack described the composer's final major composition as 'a hole' in the middle of a 2001 BBC Promenade Concert.⁶ The piece begins promisingly enough, his review allows, with 'quiet heartbeat music' and 'gutsy

⁶ Adrian Jack, 'Broken Promises', *The Independent* (16 August 2001), <http://enjoyment.independent.co.uk/music/reviews/article210302.ece> (accessed 7 July 2005).

contrasts', but 'once these [contrasts] precipitate a climax the work disintegrates in trivial scrappiness and glib, short-term effects'. Elsewhere in his review, he belittles the piece by proxy, stating that there was 'only one substantial symphonic work' in the concert: Sibelius's Symphony No. 2 (1901-2). Consequently, even the review's title, 'Broken Promises', derides Lutosławski's use – or rather misuse – of the appellation 'symphony'. A symphony, in Lutosławski's own definition, is a substantial piece for orchestra with a musical *akcja*.⁷ Attaining a fuller understanding of *akcja* could therefore enable one, at the very least, to assess whether Jack's review was a fair assessment of Lutosławski's intentions in this symphony.

Yet this review is not the first in which Jack has described Lutosławski's music as glib. Writing in *Music and Musicians* in 1973, he called *Preludes and Fugue* (1970-2) 'calculated to the point of being not only effective but glib', 'benumbing' and so easily comprehended as to be 'a mere toy'.⁸ His views, moreover, can in no way be dismissed as aberrant. The strain of Lutosławski reception questioning the depth of his artistic endeavours has received contributions from other significant voices since the late 1960s, including Stanley Sadie, Stephen Walsh and, more recently, Bernard Jacobson and James Harley.⁹ In essence, this strand of reception stresses the short-term sensual pleasures to be derived from Lutosławski's music while questioning whether it can stand its ground in terms of, in Walsh's phrase, 'solid musical content'.¹⁰ Some

⁷ See, for instance, Nikolska, *Conversations*, p. 97.

⁸ Adrian Jack, 'Composers', *Music and Musicians* 21 (April 1973), pp. 64 and 66. Cited in Steven Stucky, *Lutosławski and His Music* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981); see, for example, p. 106.

⁹ Stanley Sadie, 'Musical "Games" from Poland', *The Times* (24 July 1967), p. 7; Stephen Walsh, 'Witold Lutosławski', in Bruce Bohle, ed., *International Encyclopedia of Music and Musicians*, 10th edn (New York: Dodd, Mead, 1975), p. 1287; James Harley, 'Considerations of Symphonic Form in the Music of Witold Lutosławski', in Zbigniew Skowron, ed., *Lutosławski Studies* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), pp. 163-93. The Sadie and Walsh articles are also cited in Stucky, *Lutosławski*; see pp. 106 and 123.

¹⁰ Walsh, 'Witold Lutosławski', p. 1287.

early contributions to this strand can perhaps be attributed to Anglophone scepticism about music associated with ‘The Polish School’ during the 1960s. Sadie and Walsh certainly tempered their criticism of Lutosławski in light of later works in which the composer’s individual concerns became more apparent.¹¹ However, their conversion to the more positive and perhaps dominant strand in the composer’s critical reception does not necessarily resolve the questions raised by their earlier views or, for that matter, by the writings of their more assiduously unconvinced colleagues.

Harley, for one, makes a case for Lutosławski’s music being artistically, intellectually and even morally weakened through its reliance on ‘statistical’ (i.e., sensuous or expressive) fireworks to carry what, in ‘syntactical’ (i.e., schematic or formal) terms, is an unsatisfying form of modernist musical discourse.¹² ‘Lutosławski’, Harley writes, ‘ended up relying to a great extent on... “statistical” climax – the use of non-discursive parameters such as dynamics, tempo, or orchestration to convey the effect of culmination’.¹³ This leads Harley to his assessment that ‘Lutosławski... struggled to find [syntactical] substitutes’ for the tonal tradition’s quasi-logic of harmonic and thematic development, glossing over these shortcomings to the extent that his music ‘risks ossifying... tradition, turning it into an “object” of consumption’.¹⁴ This makes possible Harley’s most devastating assessment: an association (influenced by Terry Eagleton’s *The Ideology of the Aesthetic*) of late capitalism’s ‘fetishism of

¹¹ Walsh, for example, praises all four Lutosławski symphonies in ‘Symphony III:9 “Eastern Europe”’, in Stanley Sadie and John Tyrrell, eds, *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, 2nd edn (London: Macmillan, 2001), vol. 24, pp. 846-7.

¹² The terminology, ‘schematic’ and ‘syntactical’, is Leonard B. Meyer’s from *Style and Music: Theory, History, and Ideology* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press 1989); see pp. 303-11.

¹³ Harley, ‘Considerations of Symphonic Form’, p. 192.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 192.

style and surface, its cult of hedonism and technique' with Lutosławski pieces 'meant to gratify, not provoke'.¹⁵

Jacobson makes a similar point when contrasting Lutosławski ('a synthesizer at heart') somewhat unfavourably with his Polish contemporary Andrzej Panufnik (whose works are 'impressively "all of a piece" ').¹⁶ In spite of the 'surface brilliance and atmospheric texturing of [Lutosławski's] music itself, as well as the impression it has made on general audiences and fellow-composers alike', Jacobson suggests,

the question does arise (and it is not a trivial one) whether the stylistically hybrid forms Lutosławski was for so long seeking to create can actually be achieved without inherent inconsistency.¹⁷

Jacobson thereby damns the sophistication and popularity of Lutosławski's music with faint praise. It might be impressive to 'general audiences' and some composers, he implies, but the music's short-term pleasures gloss over more substantial problems.

One finds similar concerns echoed in more measured terms elsewhere in the Lutosławski literature. Discussing Stucky's claim that Lutosławski's best works maintain a sense of directionality at the heart of the western art music tradition, Whittall has questioned whether or not satisfactory progress has been made in evaluating Lutosławski's success or failure in terms of this 'complex and vital area of technical discourse'.¹⁸ 'Not even Lutosławski', Whittall writes,

can always conceal the tension between the 'sense of directionality' that his post-Debussy procedures may establish and the relativistic formal plans and unsynchronized textural blocks inspired by hearing Cage and others in the 1950s... Lutosławski has not always resolved the tension between fixed and free elements.¹⁹

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 192. Harley quotes Terry Eagleton, *The Ideology of the Aesthetic* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1990), p. 373.

¹⁶ Bernard Jacobson, *A Polish Renaissance* (London: Phaidon Press, 1996), p. 107.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 113.

¹⁸ Arnold Whittall, review of Stucky, *Lutosławski*, in *The Music Review*, 43/3-4 (1982), p. 282.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 282. Jacobson also discusses this tension. See Jacobson, *A Polish Renaissance*, pp. 112-3.

Wondering, however, whether Lutosławski's later works (Whittall was writing in 1982) might demonstrate 'a stronger tendency to uniformly synchronized, truly goal-directed structures', he asks 'whether this tendency will come to be seen as implicit, after all, in the best of the earlier, limited-aleatory works'.²⁰

It is one of the contentions of this thesis that, while it may not ultimately be deemed capable of resolving all of the tensions that Whittall and other critics have identified in Lutosławski's music, *akcja* represented the composer's attempt to create 'truly goal-directed structures' in his pieces of the 1960s and thereafter. In this context, the quest to understand *akcja* could seem to take on a polemical motivation. If the workings of *akcja* can be deciphered from the composer's statements, theoretically justified with reference to wider literatures, and then analytically demonstrated in prominent examples of Lutosławski's music, a fuller understanding of his oeuvre could emerge to counterbalance claims that his pieces lack solid musical content or serious artistic intent. Alternatively, one might feel that studying *akcja* is a viable project merely because it appears to have been an essential but hitherto little documented aspect of the music of one of the twentieth century's most prominent and successful composers. Either way, the following survey of the existing Lutosławski literature and the field's limited discussions of *akcja* to date can be read to demonstrate the requirement for such an investigation.

***Akcja* in the Lutosławski literature**

In a 1962 discussion of the state of culture in Poland, Lutosławski made the following statement about critical approaches to contemporary music:

²⁰ Whittall, review of Stucky, *Lutosławski*, p. 282.

Interest in how a work was made, the description and analysis of its notation, bears no relation to that which constitutes the experience of a work of art. I think that this is our professional addiction: to look into the artist's kitchen at the same time as consuming the meal itself. It seems to me that an over-emphasis of interest in technology both on the side of the listener and on the side of the artist produces a rather unhealthy situation, where sometimes the value of a work of art is decided more through the way it was made and notated, rather than through what it is in its essence and the way it is perceived during the act of listening.²¹

His position seems clear. Attempts to define the overall structure or aesthetic impact of contemporary music are too often sidelined in the rush to codify the 'recipe' or 'ingredients' of the compositional act. Lutosławski was not talking specifically here about the reception of his own music. Nevertheless, it seems ironic that most scholarly work on his music to date has concerned itself primarily with 'the way it was made and notated' as opposed to 'the way it is perceived'. The tendency has been to seek to identify and categorize the building blocks of his musical language, as opposed to studying their interactions and the ways in which the resulting structures become meaningful.

One welcome result of this process has been a profusion of Lutosławski-specific terminology concerning those building blocks and, through this, the construction of a critical lexicon with which one can begin to describe Lutosławski's music. Many of these terms appear in Figure I.1, which brings together chapter and section headings

²¹ 'Interesowanie się tym, jak dzieło zostało zrobione, opisywanie i badanie zapisu nie pozostaje w żadnym stosunku do tego, czym jest przeżycie dzieła sztuki. Sądę, że jest to nasz nałóg profesjonalny: zagłębienie do kuchni artystycznej jednocześnie ze spożywaniem samego zdania. Wydaje mi się, że przerost zainteresowania technologią zarówno u odbiorcy, jak i u twórcy, stwarza sytuację dosyć niezdrową, w której o wartości dzieła sztuki stanowi nieraz bardziej to, jak zostało stworzone i zapisane, niż to, jakie ono jest w istocie i jak przebiega jego percepcja w trakcie audycji.' Witold Lutosławski, 'Stan i potrzeby kultury w Polsce', in Stefan Jarociński, ed., *Witold Lutosławski: materiały do monografii* (Warsaw: Polskie Wydawnictwo Muzyczne, 1967), p. 62. Excerpted from Lutosławski's contributions to the panel discussion 'Brahms czy Penderecki? Stan i potrzeby kultury w Polsce', *Nowa Kultura* 13/51-52 (23-30 December 1962), pp. 2-3, 13. Translated by Martina Homma (personal communication).

Fig. I.1: Elements of Lutosławski's 'mature' musical language

General topics	Subheadings
<i>Form and macrorhythmic organization</i>	Chains, form, form as drama, form as psychological phenomenon, macrorhythm, two-part end-accented form
<i>Limited aleatory procedures and microrhythmic organization</i>	Aleatory counterpoint, chance, limited aleatorism, microrhythmic organization
<i>Pitch organization</i>	Harmonic organization, harmony, pitch organization, sound language, twelve-note chords, twelve-note rows
<i>Texture and orchestration</i>	Texture, polyphony, register, sound language

from Homma, Rae and Stucky's important studies of Lutosławski²² and thereby indicates the profitable concentration of the field's focus on codifying the elements of the composer's musical language. These elements mainly relate to Lutosławski's output during the period from 1956 in which he developed his most characterful and individualistic modernist style. Stucky has recently proposed a no-nonsense chronological tripartitioning of Lutosławski's output into early (up to 1955), middle (1956-79) and late (1979-94) periods.²³ The differences between Lutosławski's modernist middle style and his previous period of post-impressionism and neo-classicism are more substantial, however, than the refinements which marked the late

²² Stucky, *Lutosławski*; Martina Homma, *Witold Lutosławski: Zwölfton-Harmonik, Formbildung, 'aleatorischer Kontrapunkt'; Studien zum Gesamtwerk unter Einbeziehung der Skizzen* (Köln: Bela Verlag, 1996); and Charles Bodman Rae, *The Music of Lutosławski*, 3rd edn (London: Omnibus Press, 1999 [1994]). Further Lutosławski monographs include Stefan Jarociński, ed., *Witold Lutosławski: materiały do monografii* (Kraków: PWN, 1967); Ove Nordwall, ed., *Lutosławski* (Stockholm: Wilhelm Hansen, 1968); Bohdan Pocij, *Lutosławski i wartość muzyki* (Kraków: PWM, 1976); Lidiya Rappoport, *Vitol'd Liutoslavskii* (Moscow: Muzyka, 1976); Tadeusz Kaczyński, *Lutosławski: Życie i muzyka* (Warsaw: Sutkowski Edition, 1994); and Jadwiga Paja-Stach, *Lutosławski i jego styl muzyczny* (Kraków: Musica Iagellonica, 1997).

²³ Steven Stucky, 'Change and Constancy: The Essential Lutosławski', in Skowron, ed., *Lutosławski Studies*, pp. 149-162.

style. Accordingly, one can generally talk of a mature period beginning in 1956 and to which the traits illustrated in Fig. I.1 are related.

Introductions to the stylistic elements of Lutosławski's artistic maturity are widely available and, while it would be redundant to repeat their findings in the present context, an indication of the coverage of significant themes may nonetheless be constructive, not least in preparation for the more detailed discussions of certain of these elements to follow in this thesis. Stucky and Rae's overviews of form, for example, may be consulted alongside Homma's lengthier exploration of 'two-part end-accented form' and the chain principle.²⁴ Their summaries of Lutosławski's aleatory procedures (Rae's is perhaps slightly clearer) can also productively be read alongside Homma's account of the evolution of Lutosławski's use of chance in his music.²⁵ Detailed surveys of his approach to pitch organization can also be found in Stucky and Rae's books, the latter including a useful discussion of the refinements Lutosławski made to his approach during the late period.²⁶ A useful summary of Homma's work, which focuses on Lutosławski's deployment of twelve-note procedures, can be found in her book's introduction.²⁷ Stucky makes a concerted attempt to characterize different

²⁴ Stucky, *Lutosławski*, pp. 126-32; Rae, *The Music of Lutosławski*, pp. 117-8; and Homma, *Witold Lutosławski*, pp. 19-24, 35-117. Harley's essay 'Considerations of Symphonic Form', in Skowron, ed., *Lutosławski Studies*, is a useful initial survey of Lutosławski's approach to form touching on all of the major pieces.

²⁵ Stucky, *Lutosławski*, pp. 109-13; Rae, *The Music of Lutosławski*, pp. 75-9; Homma, *Witold Lutosławski*, pp. 34-7, 345-68, and pp. 345, 352. Additional discussions include Lutosławski's essay on the topic, 'About the Element of Chance in Music', in Ingvar Lidholm, György Ligeti and Witold Lutosławski, *Three Aspects of New Music* (Stockholm: Nordiska Musikförlaget, 1968), pp. 45-54; Edward Cowie, 'Mobiles of Sound', *Music and Musicians* 20/2 (October 1971), pp. 24-26, 38-40; and Adrian Thomas's sustained investigation of limited-aleatory in the studies 'Rhythmic Articulation in the Music of Lutosławski 1956-65' (M.A. diss., Cardiff University, 1971), 'Jeux vénitiens: Lutosławski at the Crossroads', *Contact* 24 (Spring 1982), pp. 4-7, and 'Jeux vénitiens: Working Methods at the Start of Lutosławski's Mature Period', in Skowron, ed., *Lutosławski Studies*, pp. 211-43.

²⁶ Stucky, *Lutosławski*, pp. 113-23; Rae, *The Music of Lutosławski*, pp. 49-57. See also Rae's thesis, 'Pitch Organization in the Music of Witold Lutosławski since 1979' (Ph.D. thesis, University of Leeds, 1992).

²⁷ Homma, *Witold Lutosławski*, pp. 25-33 and pp. 379-646. For a useful introduction to her position in English see 'Lutosławski's Studies in Twelve-Tone Rows', in Skowron, ed., *Lutosławski Studies*, pp.

texture types in Lutosławski's music and Homma briefly considers register at the end of her study.²⁸ Rae's book contains discussions of more traditional (i.e., non-aleatory) polyphonic textures in the late period (particularly in relation to their echoes of procedures in the early period), and elsewhere he has presented an insightful discussion of orchestration in Lutosławski's music.²⁹

Such work, as Lutosławski implied, can nonetheless only provide the beginnings of a critical understanding of the ways in which these elements work together in his pieces. Thinking back to Lutosławski's basic definition of *akcja*, for example, it is undoubtedly a necessary step to study the individual events in a composition. If one eventually hopes to understand the ways in which those events interrelate to form some kind of plot, however, a critical telephoto lens must in due course be swapped for a wider-angled perspective. It therefore seems notable that some recent work on Lutosławski is beginning to widen the field's focus. The weighting of the 2001 collection *Lutosławski Studies* (edited by Zbigniew Skowron) – five essays on 'Aesthetics' (Part One), nine on 'Style and Compositional Technique' (Part Two) – tells an interesting story in this regard.³⁰ The book collects a diversity of perspectives on Lutosławski, thereby providing a useful summary of the field's concerns and

194-210. See also Peter Petersen's 'Microtones in the Music of Lutosławski', in Skowron, ed., *Lutosławski Studies*, pp. 324-355; and Michael Klein's 'A Theoretical Study of the Late Music of Witold Lutosławski: New Interactions of Pitch, Rhythm, and Form' (Ph.D. thesis, State University of New York, Buffalo, NY, 1995). Petersen's earlier work includes discussions of interacting pitch procedures in 'Über die Wirkung Bartóks auf den Schaffen Lutosławskis', in *Musik-Konzepte* 22 (1981), pp. 84-117 and his placement of Lutosławski's approach within a wider twentieth-century context in 'Bartók, Lutosławski, Ligeti: Einige Bemerkung zu ihren Kompositions-technik unter dem Aspekt der Tonhöhe', *Hamburger Jahrbuch für Musikwissenschaft* 11 (1991), pp. 289-309.

²⁸ See Stucky, *Lutosławski*, pp. 123-6, and Homma, *Witold Lutosławski*, pp. 647-52. Homma discusses texture and register in 'Przestrzeń muzyczna w harmonice dwunastotonowej Witolda Lutosławskiego', *Muzyka* 40/1-2 (1995), pp. 85-110. Klein has produced an interesting discussion of texture forming a useful adjunct to his thesis's findings in 'Texture, Register, and Their Formal Roles in the Music of Witold Lutosławski', *Indiana Theory Review* 20/1 (Spring 1999), pp. 37-70.

²⁹ See Charles Bodman Rae, 'Lutosławski's Sound-World: A World of Contrasts', in Skowron, ed., *Lutosławski Studies*, pp. 16-35.

³⁰ Zbigniew Skowron, ed., *Lutosławski Studies* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001).

approaches during the decade immediately following the composer's death. Part Two is about twice the size of Part One, the various theoretical and analytical approaches deployed testifying to an enduring fascination with codifying the diversity of elements in Lutosławski's post-1956 style. With focuses on twelve-note rows, quasi-Schenkerian prolongation, chain technique, motivic organization, aleatory procedures and microtonal pitch organization, one impression evoked is of the wealth of appliances and ingredients in Lutosławski's 'kitchen'; another is of the resourcefulness of the field's response to those elements.

Yet that diversity also hints at the difficulty the field has encountered in developing methodological approaches capable of discussing different elements of Lutosławski's music under unifying critical-analytical roofs. Studies utilizing existing theoretical models are few and far between, although those that do employ such models (like Andrzej Tuchowski's adaptation of Schenkerian techniques or Jadwiga Paja-Stach's application of General Systems Theory)³¹ suggest the potential value of undertaking rigorous, theoretically-grounded investigations in search of wider-ranging applications. More commonly, however, ideas are adapted from a range of existing theories to serve pragmatic and localised analytical purposes. Such an approach has the attraction of mirroring Lutosławski's protean range of responses to the solution of small-scale compositional problems. It may also indicate, however, one reason why the field has yet to deal adequately with the question of *akcja*, as Lutosławski's musical plots potentially involve the cumulative interaction of many elements over the span of entire compositions. One might also suggest that this deficiency is another reason why

³¹ See Andrzej Tuchowski, 'The Integrative Role of Motion Patterns in Lutosławski's Mature Symphonic Works: A Comparison of *Livre pour orchestre* and the Symphony No. 4', in Skowron, ed., *Lutosławski Studies*; and Paja-Stach, *Lutosławski*.

some of the more provocative criticisms of Lutosławski by Harley, Jacobson, Jack and others have yet to be adequately countered.

It is therefore timely that the essays in Part One of *Lutosławski Studies* seek to move beyond classification and towards 'aesthetic' interpretations. These five essays are dwarfed (at least in terms of word count) by the remainder of the book, but their results often feel more substantial.³² Not least, this is because most of the scholars concerned are building on decades of close analysis of Lutosławski's style and music. John Casken's contribution provides a telling example. In a significant earlier Lutosławski paper, for example, which was primarily focussed on matters of compositional technique, Casken asserts that Lutosławski's music 'is above all dramatic'³³ – a claim which provisionally links that paper's concerns to his *Lutosławski Studies* essay on 'The Visionary and the Dramatic'. Casken's later text, though, is somewhat different in tone and includes the observation that scholars 'often prefer analysis as a substitute for what we want to say, but cannot express, about a work of art'.³⁴ It therefore represents a welcome attempt to begin searching for a means of expression regarding such matters and thus a hermeneutic companion to the significant formalist inroads already achieved.

Both approaches are useful, and the most valuable Lutosławski scholarship of the future – like the essays in Part One of *Lutosławski Studies* by Benoît Aubigny, Casken, Rae, Skowron and Maja Trochimczyk – may well be located at various points of contact between a range of formalist, hermeneutic and for that matter historical and

³² To be fair, Stucky's chapter is more fairly conceived as an introduction to Part Two, while Whittall's contribution (discussed in Chapter Three) and the more provocative assessments of Harley's essay would not be out of place in Part One.

³³ John Casken, 'Transition and Transformation in the Music of Witold Lutosławski', *Contact* 12 (Autumn 1975), pp. 3-12.

³⁴ John Casken, 'The Visionary and the Dramatic in the Music of Lutosławski', in Skowron, ed., *Lutosławski Studies*, p. 36. This essay is discussed further in Chapter Three.

socio-cultural methodologies.³⁵ Such studies could usefully seek to acknowledge, as Anthony Pople and Ian Bent argue, ‘that structures are now understood to be asserted rather than discovered’ by critically-engaged analysis, and that ‘the analyst is more inclined than ever to see his or her work as the writing down of interpretations from a personal perspective’.³⁶ Making work on Lutosławski ‘a focus on self-awareness’³⁷ may, in turn, help to answer Lutosławski’s call for a concentration on the essence of his music in relation to the way it is perceived. Intriguingly, however, in this regard, the small but significant existing body of work on *akcja* and related issues can be argued to have already begun such a process.

Studies of dramaturgy, ‘musical action’ and narrative

Dedicated discussions of *akcja* are few and far between in the Lutosławski literature. Homma, Rae and Stucky’s monographs, for example, do not directly examine *akcja* at all, although each study deploys either the word ‘action’ or ‘plot’ at certain points. Stucky, for instance, discusses climactic passages in Lutosławski pieces that consummate ‘the musical action’;³⁸ Rae talks of ‘the abstract “plot” ’ of the Cello Concerto (1969-70);³⁹ and Homma refers to rates of harmonic change through her coinage ‘harmonischen Aktionstempo’.⁴⁰ It would be wrong, though, to suggest that

³⁵ Biographical, socio-political and historical studies of Lutosławski, while not evident in *Lutosławski Studies*, are beginning to flourish. Stanisław Będkowski’s forthcoming publications will draw on archival work relating to Lutosławski’s massive correspondence; Danuta Gwizdalanka and Krzysztof Meyer’s recently completed two-volume biography of the composer, *Lutosławski*, 2 vols (Kraków: PWM, 2003; 2004), marks a significant milestone in the literature; and Thomas’s work situating Lutosławski within the socialist-realist period in *Polish Music since Szymanowski* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005) represents one attempt to discuss Lutosławski’s music within a wider cultural framework.

³⁶ Anthony Pople and Ian Bent, ‘Analysis II:6 “Since 1970”’, in Sadie and Tyrrell, eds, *The New Grove*, vol. 1, p. 570.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 570.

³⁸ Stucky, *Lutosławski*, p. 131.

³⁹ Rae, *The Music of Lutosławski*, p. 121.

⁴⁰ Homma, *Witold Lutosławski*, p. 432.

these writers have not reflexively contributed to the understanding of *akcja* by discussing related matters. Rae and Stucky, in particular, have made insightful observations which raise a number of important issues; their comments may also suggest reasons why *akcja* has yet to be more closely examined.

Stucky notes 'Lutosławski's tendency to shape his music in dramatic ways' in pieces from the mid-1960s that might best be understood 'in terms of dramatic scenarios', with instruments or groups treated 'almost theatrically, as if they were the *dramatis personae* in a scenario of unfolding actions and emotions'.⁴¹ He also notes Lutosławski's own discussion of his music in similar terms and suggests a wider repertoire context (including works by Elliott Carter)⁴² for this style of theatrically-inclined modernism. There is an interesting potential parallel here to Yuri Butsko's reading of the role of the oboe and cor anglais refrains in 'Hésitant', the first movement of Symphony No. 2 (1965-7), as 'negative characters in the action, acting under the mask of "sceptical moralists"'.⁴³ Stucky's framing of his own suggestions, however, is more cautious. His talk of 'dramatic ways' and 'almost theatrically' alludes but does not commit to the issue at hand. One upshot of this is that the conclusion to Stucky's discussion, which cites Lutosławski's music's 'profound humanity' as the basis of the ease with which his 'musical concepts can be translated into dramatic language',⁴⁴ feels like an elegant evasion of more complex issues.

For Stucky, however, 'translated' is the operative word. As a result, although in one breath he likens Lutosławski's works to the 'textless operas' of classical sonata forms, he swiftly backs away from the risks of 'anthropomorphic programmatic

⁴¹ Stucky, *Lutosławski*, p. 131.

⁴² *Ibid.*, pp. 132-3.

⁴³ See Yuri Butsko, 'Vitold Liutoslavski. Zametki o tekhnike instrumentalnoi kompozitsii', *Sovetskaia Muzyka* 36/8 (1972), p. 117. Translated by Martina Homma (personal communication).

⁴⁴ Stucky, *Lutosławski*, p. 132.

interpretation', taking refuge (as Lutosławski encouraged scholars of his music to do) in Debussy's claim that 'music takes over where words fail'.⁴⁵ For example, in response to an extra-musical reading of the climax of the Cello Concerto proposed by Tadeusz Kaczyński, who likened its lashing orchestral chords to the sound of someone being whipped, Lutosławski responded with the following exaggerated but not atypical parry:

I'm horrified to see how one can be carried away by my careless mention of the dramatic conflict between the solo part and the orchestra. I must immediately use the reins of this galloping imagination which prompts you to interpret the work as an illustration to some macabre spectacle. This was never my intention.⁴⁶

Rae creates similarly muddled waters through his desire to discuss abstract plots while protecting Lutosławski's music's purely musical autonomy (i.e., by only discussing what the composer called 'purely musical "plot" – not what is described as programme music', as in the quote at the start of this Introduction). The discussion of 'dramaturgy' which precedes Rae's Cello Concerto analysis and opens his book's chapter 'Mastery of a Mature Language' nevertheless accords the issue a privileged status in Lutosławski's mature style. Like Stucky, Rae connects Lutosławski's dramatic tendency to the Viennese classics and his passion for Haydn and Beethoven,⁴⁷ plus his studies with Maliszewski, who emphasized the listener's role in perceiving the unfolding of a work. Rae also suggests that

Lutosławski may also have learned a great deal from the theatre, through observing dramatic conventions, treatments of plot and sub-

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 132. Stucky adopts the phrase 'textless operas' from Schlegel.

⁴⁶ Tadeusz Kaczyński, *Conversations with Witold Lutosławski*, 2nd edn, trans. Yolanta May and Charles Bodman Rae (London: Chester Music, 1995 [1984]), p. 83.

⁴⁷ Two articles drawn from doctoral theses have explored similarities between Lutosławski's approach to formal structuring and Haydn or Beethoven. These, respectively, are Phillipe Ganchoula, 'La 3ème Symphonie de Lutosławski: Synthèse d'un itinéraire créateur', *Analyse musicale* 10 (January 1988), pp. 68-74; and Giovanni Bietti, 'La comunicazione nella musica di Lutosławski [sic]', *Nuova Rivista*, 29/1 (1995), pp. 31-48.

plot... functional principles governing relationships between characters... [and] the underlying structure of dramatic works.⁴⁸

In this light Rae mentions Lutosławski's experience of composing incidental music for the theatre and for radio plays during the post-war years, arguing that 'one should not overlook or undervalue' the significance of these matters. One might feel, however, that Rae himself comes close to overlooking such matters in his ensuing analysis.

Like Stucky, Rae notes the 'almost irresistible' temptation to draw analogies between Lutosławski's musical plots and extra-musical events or narratives, but he steels his readers 'lest misleading notions of "meaning" are introduced and applied'.⁴⁹ At the close of his Cello Concerto analysis he therefore backs away from the more allegorical extra-musical analogies to which he has alluded, arguing (persuasively) that 'the strength and potentially universal appeal of this music lies in its independence from such specific interpretations' and (perhaps less convincingly) that its 'powerful drama can be perceived and understood in abstract, purely musical terms'.⁵⁰ Lutosławski may essentially have been a musical dramatist, Rae concludes elsewhere, due to his 'underlying concern for pacing events through real performance time',⁵¹ as well as a composer whose tendency to treat 'music as abstract drama developed as a combination of inclination, influence and experience'.⁵² Yet, as in Stucky's book, a detailed account of the ways in which perceivers might experience those skilfully paced events as abstract yet dramatic is not explicitly articulated within Rae's in many other ways admirably lucid portrayal of Lutosławski's music.

⁴⁸ Rae, *The Music of Lutosławski*, p. 117.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 117.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 123.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, p. 261.

⁵² *Ibid.*, p. 261.

Stucky and Rae's equivocations undoubtedly stem partly from the difficulty of discussing, in the understandable absence from their monographs of a theoretical examination of the issue of musical narrative, how non-programmatic music might signify a plot or a drama. Their positions may also reflect a desire not to exceed the boundaries for discussing the meaning of Lutosławski's music as laid down by the composer himself. In terms of seeking better to understand *akcja*, however, such deference could represent a problematic 'rhetoric of autonomy' affecting scholarship on Lutosławski. Charles Wilson deploys this phrase in an essay on the reception of György Ligeti's statements about his own music. Wilson notes the 'uniquely authoritative status' accorded to Ligeti's public comments by some scholars and argues that the assimilation of such statements as 'straightforward claims to truth often bespeaks a fundamental categorical mistake'.⁵³ Wilson warns of the potential results:

It is often noted how writing on late twentieth-century music has slipped all too often into a kind of ghost-writing, in which critics effectively replicate composers' own accounts of their music... a tendency to treat composer's self-interpretations and their characteristic vocabulary more as a tool in the work's analysis – the 'key' that unlocks its secrets – than as part of the material requiring analysis. All this testifies to the survival of an almost fetishistic belief in the authenticity and privileged status of composers' commentaries, and a failure on the part of criticism to find alternative sites of engagement.⁵⁴

Not all Lutosławski scholars have felt quite so beholden to the composer's strictures, however, and there is a significant pariah strand of Lutosławski scholarship dedicated to the search for extra-musical subtexts to his musical narratives.

The writings of two Poles, Bohdan Pocij and Krystyna Tarnawska-Kaczorowska, provide examples of work on Lutosławski's music that is primarily

⁵³ Charles Wilson, 'György Ligeti and the Rhetoric of Autonomy', *Twentieth-Century Music* 1/1 (2004), p. 6.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 17.

concerned with hermeneutic interpretation and wider cultural resonance. After the prevailing air of caution regarding such matters in Rae and Stucky, one might feel a sense of release in such writings, as if finally someone is looking for the extra-musical fire at the source of all that smoke. Pociąg, for instance, wrote in 1972 that all of Lutosławski's mature output constitutes 'a reflection on the drama of existence' from a composer alert 'to the world, its dynamism, to its utterly dramatic flux'.⁵⁵ In this unrestrained tone he speaks of 'the best cello concerto ever written' reaching 'out beyond the bounds of pure music and penetrat[ing] the sphere of conflict and struggle', and stresses the centrality to Lutosławski's music of 'conflict and drama, or in other words, the concept of a music of intensive action'.⁵⁶

The question of what those dramas of existence might have been comes to the fore in Tarnawska-Kaczorowska's writings. Her two most notorious texts on Lutosławski, dating from 1985 and 1996, take into account the Polish socio-political environment within which he worked and interrogate his music for proof of connections to politicized issues of the kind that Pociąg, writing in 1972, could perhaps only dare to insinuate. Hence her reading of *Musique funèbre* (1954-8), which interprets the pitches B and F, the first two notes of the piece and the P-0 version of the work's twelve-note row, as being symbolic of rather more than the work's dedication 'à la mémoire de Béla Bartók' (e.g., *B-artók*, *F-unèbre*). To this end, she posits clandestine subtitles for the piece (permitted by the fact that the pitch B is named H in Polish) such as '*H-ungaria F-unèbre*', and argues that, after the Hungarian revolution in 1956, the work became

⁵⁵ Bohdan Pociąg, 'The Music of Witold Lutosławski', *Polish Perspectives* 15/7-8 (1972), p. 29.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 24-5, 28.

Lutosławski's lament for all Hungarians.⁵⁷ Yet if her hermeneutically convenient reading of B as H is something of a leap of critical faith, her highly selective pitch analysis of passages in Symphony No. 3 (1981-3) to reveal the 'quotation-signature' *Solidarność*, and her readings of rhythms demonstrating number symbolism relating to important dates (e.g., 1980, the year of Solidarity's founding), sets an even more precipitous challenge to the reader.⁵⁸ When standing on the outside of her hermeneutic circle, it can be difficult to find the individual musical ideas that are crucial to her interpretations particularly clear-cut or prominent.

Consequently, while Tarnawska-Kaczorowska echoes Pocij (to whom her Symphony No. 3 essay was dedicated) in her view of Lutosławski as 'a sensitive (though not always conscious) seismograph, alert to tremors from the world, life and his environment',⁵⁹ the insights of Pocij's broader brush feel oddly more acute than her quasi-forensic discoveries. Her work might therefore be read as another illustration of the need for a more rigorous theorizing of the broader processes through which Lutosławski's music can be read to signify a plot of events and, with it, something other than purely musical pattern-making. It may also demonstrate the requirement for a telephoto lens to be swapped for more distant or, better still, mobile perspectives at a certain point when analysing and interpreting his music. One wonders, for example, about the *akcja* of Symphony No. 3 and what its sequence of events might suggest regarding the heady hermeneutic scent with which she douses the music. Is this a work

⁵⁷ Krystyna Tarnawska-Kaczorowska, 'Muzyka żałobna na orkiestrę smyczkową Witolda Lutosławskiego', in Krystyna Tarnawska-Kaczorowska, ed., *Witold Lutosławski: Prezentacje, interpretacje, konfrontacje* (Związek Kompozytorów Polskich: Warsaw, 1985), pp. 68-117.

⁵⁸ Krystyna Tarnawska-Kaczorowska, 'Witold Lutosławski's Third Symphony (1983): A Hermeneutic Interpretation', *Irish Musical Studies* 5 (1996), pp. 375-82.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 382-3.

in which the search for a melodic voice with which the previously diversified orchestral forces can sing as one creates a more potent symbolic resonance?

Given the fact that Irina Nikolska's published discussions with Lutosławski regularly broached the topic of *akcja* – the quote at the start of this Introduction comes from her book of conversations with him – it is unsurprising to find that her scholarly writings on the composer reveal a fascination with the matter. Even when writing about Lutosławski's construction of melodic lines, for example, she argues that his horizontal methods of pitch organization were related to his structuring 'not only of form but also of a lively "dramaturgic" plot'.⁶⁰ In an essay on Lutosławski's symphonism, moreover, she echoes Pociąg by talking of the composer's creation of developmental chains of musical events which allude to external matters without revealing the specific emotions or events that gave rise to a particular *akcja*.⁶¹

Nikolska argues that she is thereby tackling issues that have 'incomprehensibly' escaped the attention of most 'Western' musicologists, a comment most useful for its indication of the theoretical underpinning of her own ideas on *akcja*, which appear to be inspired by Russian musicology's adaptation of ideas from Russian theatre theory. Her view of *akcja* as musical dramaturgy is therefore two-fold. On the one hand, chains of musical events articulate purely musical arguments; on the other, those events and chains induce certain expressive effects or extra-musical associations. Together the streams of signification form a band of musical energy shaping the course of a composition and its perception (i.e., an *akcja*). In theatrical theories of dramaturgy, Ryszard Daniel Goliański explains, 'changeable energy levels and phases of

⁶⁰ Irina Nikolska, 'Melodia i niektóre zasady jej konstruowania w twórczości Witolda Lutosławskiego z lat 1960-1980', *Muzyka* 40/1-2 (1995), p. 84; see also pp. 80-83.

⁶¹ Irina Nikolska, 'Symfonicizm Witolda Lutosławskiego', *Muzyka* 37/3, especially pp. 40-43.

development' are both taken into account in defining a text's dramaturgy.⁶² Elements of potential interest to the analyst of musical dramaturgy therefore include defining developmental events, noting their expressive content and interpreting how they interact to produce the 'coherence, clarity, logic of construction and rate of development of plot' necessary for a work to be dramatically successful.⁶³ Such interactions, if not always clearly systematized, seem to be at the heart of Nikolska's dramaturgic approach to theorizing *akcja*.

Ironically, the most comprehensively realized theorizing of *akcja* along these 'Eastern' lines has been produced by a 'Western' musicologist. In his work on Lutosławski's symphonic forms, however, Rust entirely eschews issues of extra-musical meaning, symbolizing his intent to respect the autonomy Lutosławski claimed for his music by only ever talking of 'musical action'. For Rust, 'musical action' is the 'deepest level of structure' present in Lutosławski's compositions, not thematic design or background pitch structure, but rather

an ordered progression of psychological reactions that the composer hopes to elicit from the listener by juxtaposing contrasting sections of carefully calculated temporal proportions. The level of contrast and the durations of the adjacent sections determine the nature and extent of the desired psychological reactions.⁶⁴

When Rust sets out to define musical sections and then measure the extent to which they form a developmental contrast to other sections, the superficial parallels between his method and Russian dramaturgic theory becomes clear. Yet in measuring contrast he privileges the expressive impact of textural complexity above all else, justifying his

⁶² Ryszard Daniel Golianek, 'Theatrical Concept of Dramaturgy and its Application to Musical Analysis', *Interdisciplinary Studies in Musicology* (Poznań: Poznańskie Towarzystwo Przyjaciół Nauk, 1995), p. 237.

⁶³ J. Sławiński, *Słownik terminów literackich* (Wrocław, 1988), p. 102. Quoted and translated by Golianek.

⁶⁴ Rust, 'A Theory of Form', p. 57.

decision through the composer's use of texture graphs when sketching his compositions.⁶⁵ Rust states that Lutosławski usually sketched such graphs first. This was probably not the case. While it is very difficult in practice to say what came first in his preparatory work on a composition (because Lutosławski rarely dated his sketches), the folios in the Lutosławski collection of the Paul Sacher Stiftung in Basel suggest that verbal descriptions usually came first, with graphs following at a later stage. Nevertheless, Rust's belief enables him meticulously to focus on texture and, most impressively of all, gradually to pan back from an initially tight close-up on the music's details to a wider-angled perspective.

Rust argues that the more complex a texture is, the more intense the psychological experience will be for the perceiver. His graphing of Fig. 101-19 in the second movement, 'Direct', of Symphony No. 2 illustrates this by mapping rising and falling levels of complexity in the form of a line graph. For Rust, 'complexity provides the composer with an independent mode of musical expression'.⁶⁶ There are certain problems with his method. For one thing, although he aligns his complexity graph with representations of harmony and amplitude, the impact of these different elements on expression in Symphony No. 2 is not made entirely clear. Rust's concern, though, is with mapping just one aspect of the unfolding of Lutosławski's music as precisely as possible.

This dedication yields interesting findings. To consider longer spans of music, Rust segments the work into larger portions and then averages the proportions of complexity and time within each segment. This enables him to produce a composite line of complexity for 'Direct': an end-weighted arch shape which reveals a notable

⁶⁵ As discussed in Nikolska, *Conversations*, p. 131. Her book includes several examples of such graphs.

⁶⁶ Rust, 'A Theory of Form', pp. 74-5.

disparity. At the climax of the work, where a macrorhythmic *accelerando* of foreshortening limited-aleatory blocks gives way to a conducted acceleration, textural complexity falls sharply. This means, Rust claims, that the climax at Fig. 153 comes as a surprise. One could disagree with this interpretation, suggesting that a different variety of increasing complexity (the metered *accelerando*) becomes dominant here and unites with other signifiers to imply an impending climax (shifts in dynamic level, register, orchestration, etc.); the harmonic and thematic content of this climax, from the perspective of the music's *akcja*, may also be significant, as discussed below in this thesis. Yet Rust's theory does allow one to suggest why the climax feels oddly disappointing. The switch to a more 'direct' means of shaping at this stage in the music, after so much textural sophistication, risks short-changing listeners who have hitherto been spoiled by the music's manifold subtleties.

Engagingly, Rust admits that his method of quantifying 'one kind of textural complexity does not account for every kind of contrast that affects the unfolding of a musical action'⁶⁷ and that he has 'not completely defined "musical action"'.⁶⁸ It seems both contradictory and unfortunate, therefore, when he later concludes that changing complexity *is* 'musical action', the 'feature shared by all of the composer's work' that forms 'the structural background of every piece':

Against this background, patterns of musical character, harmony, counterpoint, timbral contour, pitch space and rhythm connect various motivic entities in the music, producing a network of formal meaning and musical expression that is the trademark of Lutosławski's noble artistic output.⁶⁹

If one adds what Rust thinks of as 'musical action' into this collection of musical features, though, the idea of 'a network of formal meaning and musical expression' may

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 100.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 100.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.* p. 213.

come closer to evoking the bands of sensuous and schematic signification of which Lutosławski's musical plots may ultimately be deemed to consist.

Michael Klein's work on Lutosławski and narrative constitutes the other rigorous American contribution to this area of the literature.⁷⁰ Yet Klein's approach is, in certain ways, diametrically opposed to Rust's and, indeed, to most of the existing non-'Eastern' literature on Lutosławski. Klein's main concern is with the extra-musical symbolism of Lutosławski's networks of formal meaning and musical expression. His recently published account of the 'logic of suffering' in Symphony No. 4 consequently challenges many conventions in the field and, in particular, its adherence to the composer's 'rhetoric of autonomy' regarding musical meaning. This may suggest a certain kinship with some Polish and Russian writings, as when Klein elegantly deconstructs Lutosławski's critical paroxysms when confronted with the hermeneutic ramifications of some of his own statements.⁷¹ However, what sets Klein's work apart from, for example, Tarnawska-Kaczorowska's writings is the rigorous theoretical grounding of his analysis, which forms the set-piece reading in a chapter on narrative in his study of intertextuality in western art music. Consequently, to extricate the bare essentials of that reading from its context maligns both Klein's analysis and his wider theoretical arguments. This is necessary, though, because what he has to say about the 'expressive narrative' of Symphony No. 4 pertains directly to the present study's concerns.

The term 'expressive', Klein writes, 'covers primarily affective meanings (sadness, apprehension, etc.) but may also cover dramatic situations or ideas (outburst,

⁷⁰ Michael Klein, *Intertextuality in Western Art Music* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2004), pp. 108-36.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 112-14

transcendence, etc.)'.⁷² Following Paul Ricoeur, Klein views all narratives as tales of catastrophe, tragedy and suffering, an ideology that invades his reading of Symphony No. 4 most dramatically. His interpretation emanates from what he reads as the work's moment of *peripeteia* or reversal, and the point at which the listener's hopes that the music's expressive narrative might take a turn for the better are dashed:

From this moment of suffering, one looks both backward and forward to find the expressive logic that emplots the *peripeteia*, joining it to the other musical events in a chain of causation that makes time human.⁷³

The symphony's climactic moment of 'outcry, anguish, despair, even death',⁷⁴ happens at Fig. 85's climactic chord. This follows the passage between Fig. 73 and 85 which Klein, responding to the conventional meanings which he intertextually attaches to the music's expressive content, reads as 'a causative sequence of events: reversal leads to recoil leads to pronouncement leads to outcry'.⁷⁵ The brass and strings' unison melody in the moments before the catastrophe thus forms an 'allusion to the chorus of a Greek tragedy, making a pronouncement upon the dramatic action'.⁷⁶ Up until that reversal, the music had corresponded to a 'darkness to light' or 'tragedy to triumph' narrative archetype of the kind articulated, to give an obvious example, by Beethoven's Symphony No. 5 (1804-8); in Klein's view, however, the catastrophe on which the chorus pronounces plunges the music back into darkness, leading one to search retrospectively for a logic linking the events that led to this outcome.

This arresting interpretation represents, in many respects, the most sophisticated attempt yet to talk about issues of narrative and meaning in relation to *akcja* and

⁷² *Ibid.*, p. 115. Aspects of Klein's theories of musical narrative are discussed further in Chapter Two.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, p. 120.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 121.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 123.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 123.

Lutosławski's music. As was the case with Rust's focus on textural complexity in Symphony No. 2, however, Klein's concentration on expressive markers in Symphony No. 4 omits information about other aspects of the climax – aspects, such as the harmonic and thematic construction of the passage, which might deepen or complicate his already nuanced interpretation. Klein would not, one suspects, debate this point. Such matters are simply not part of the intertextuality within which he creates his reading of Symphony No. 4. The narrative of an *akcja*, however, is there to be read from the totality of a composition's network of formal and expressive, sensuous and schematic, purely musical and extra-musical signs. Approaching a more detailed understanding of how such networks are constructed, how one might emplot their elements, and how one might think of those musical plots as structures open to a range of interpretations, is one of the main aims of the present study.

In this regard, Klein's suggestion that future listeners to Lutosławski's Symphony No. 4 'may find the first signs of a code that we, who hear the symphony in its time of origin, have yet to dream' offers a usefully double-edged admonishment.

That unknown code will give the signs of this symphony a new pertinence, erasing the narrative I have sketched and telling a new one. The symphony will ride the surface of history, picking up new voices along the way and losing others to the erosion of time.⁷⁷

On the one hand, this statement acknowledges that the narrative Klein reads into Lutosławski's final symphony is not the only interpretative conclusion that one could draw from the music's *akcja*, while nonetheless indicating the necessity of achieving a better understanding of such networks of meaning. On the other hand, however, Klein's statement concedes that the intertextual matrixes within which all of Lutosławski's pieces form individual nodes will continue to evolve, bringing new and as yet

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 136.

unimagined strategies for interpreting his music to prominence as others fade into insignificance. The present study contends that there is much more to Lutosławski's musical plots than has hitherto been acknowledged and that the ideas this thesis outlines offer one route towards a fuller understanding of this vital aspect of his music. If its discoveries, arguments and interpretations succeed in alerting the field to the importance of these matters, while forming a useful node (however temporary) in the intertextual network surrounding the composer's output, it will have served its primary purpose.

CHAPTER ONE

Lutosławski's Poetics of Musical Plot

Lutosławski's generation of composers produced several major figures who also created a significant body of provocative and characterful writings on music.¹ In terms of rhetorical flair or mere prolificness, Lutosławski's writings do not fall into quite the same class,² although he was undoubtedly provoked into producing his writings by a nexus of reasons similar to those motivating the publications of many other twentieth-century composers – motivations including the need to explain one's musical language and establish its individuality, thus helping to carve out a niche for oneself in a competitive new music marketplace. As Wilson writes, the 'rhetoric of autonomy'

has served an especially important function for writers and artists ever since the advent of what Felicity Nussbaum has called 'the published self as property in a market economy' – the function, namely, of differentiating them from other creators and proclaiming the uniqueness of their work in a competitive market of symbolic goods.³

Lutosławski's success in this venture can partly be judged on the basis of the celebrated international standing he achieved during his lifetime. It could be notable, for instance, that he secured the publication in America of a pair of important essays about the

¹ For example John Cage (1912-92), Elliott Carter (b. 1908), Olivier Messiaen (1908-92) and Michael Tippett (1905-98).

² Important early writings include 'Kompozytor a odbiorca', *Ruch Muzyczny* 4 (1964), pp. 3-4, trans. 'The Composer and the Listener', in Nordwall, *Lutosławski*, pp. 119-24; 'Teoria a praktyka w pracy kompozytora' (Theory and Practice in the Composer's Work), *Studia Estetyczne* 2 (1965), pp. 128-33, repr. in Jarociński, *Lutosławski*, pp. 14-21; and 'O roli elementu przypadku w technice komponowania', *Res Facta* 1 (1967), pp. 34-8, trans. 'About the Element of Chance in Music', in Lidholm, Ligeti and Lutosławski, *Three Aspects of New Music*, pp. 45-54.

³ See Wilson, 'György Ligeti', p. 6. Wilson quotes Felicity Nussbaum, *The Autobiographical Subject* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1989), p. xiv.

symphony shortly before receiving one of his most prestigious US commissions (Symphony No. 3);⁴ yet those essays also played a role in helping him to crystallize elements of his approach to musical plot. His writings and public statements, in other words, served a range of interacting purposes.

Lutosławski's written texts share with his other 'symbolic goods' a precision of expression and clear-cut formal structuring. Nevertheless, they rarely contain as much flair, wit or drama as his music. This may relate to the fact that Lutosławski generally preferred to keep his strongest opinions to himself. He was uncomfortable with the idea of making public proclamations, in part because he was a modest and private person who preferred to let his music do the talking; he had also witnessed the destructive effects on more outspoken Polish colleagues when their words had been exploited politically.⁵ Yet while hardly explosively polemical, his most concentrated output of writing, which dates from the 1960s, concerns the elements of Lutosławski's mature style that set him apart from – or, more strongly, consciously against – what he perceived to be the modernist mainstream.

This is particularly true of the texts in which Lutosławski discusses the ideas he would come to relate, by the end of the 1960s, to his concept of musical *akcja* and more generally to the view of form which he posits as an alternative to the problems of formal structuring he associated with serialism and, in particular, Moment-form. He was also working through these ideas, however, because they interested him creatively as a composer. Therefore, while Lutosławski's writings obviously had a complex range of motivations, including many relating to a 'rhetoric of autonomy', their interrelated

⁴ Symphony No. 3 was commissioned in the early 1970s by Georg Solti and the Chicago Symphony Orchestra. The two essays, 'A new approach to orchestra' and Lutosławski's contribution to *The Orchestral Composer's Point of View*, are discussed in the final section of this chapter.

⁵ This was the case, for example, with Panufnik. See Thomas, *Polish Music*, pp. 65-73.

artistic motivations must also be recognized. In some of these texts, as Lutosławski lays bare the rudiments of his concept of musical plot, one senses him trying to define himself as a composer. The fact that these key texts are lectures, not essays, may be significant in this regard. Although modest, Lutosławski had a strong sense of his own historical position.⁶ His lecture scripts may not, as such, have appeared quite so onerously permanent to him, at least in comparison to his published essays and conversations, and he appears to have felt able to be unusually forthcoming about his own music (judging by his statements in later years) when wearing the mask of mentor. Perhaps Maliszewski's influence can be felt here, his apparent generosity of spirit informing Lutosławski's own approach as a mentor.⁷ In these less guarded texts, midway between essays and conversations, one finds a number of ideas designed to enthuse and inspire other musicians. They also bear the potential, however, to illuminate the enthusiasms and inspirations of Lutosławski's own music.

Just as Lutosławski appears to have sought aspects of his own musical voice through these lectures, so they should enable scholars, in turn, to find new ways of reading his music. They are, in this respect, a prose equivalent to his pre-compositional sketches: an invaluable resource which, now publicly available for consultation in the Paul Sacher Stiftung, demands the field's critical scrutiny. How analysts might begin judiciously to utilize the traces of Lutosławski's ideas as revealed in his lectures, and to conceptualize the nature of his own self-theorizing, is discussed at the end of the present chapter, the bulk of the foregoing material having been dedicated to examining those Lutosławski lectures whose contents appear to be most relevant to this study's main

⁶ See, for example, the discussion 'The Classical and the Avant-Garde' in Kaczyński, *Conversations*, pp. 123-29.

⁷ Maliszewski taught the young Lutosławski free of charge; Lutosławski later repaid the debt by offering free advice to young composers.

concerns. Because the thoughts expressed in those lectures did not spring miraculously into existence in the 1960s, however, this chapter begins by examining the influence on Lutosławski of Maliszewski's theories of musical form. Other influences are important, but they can be more productively considered within a wider context, beginning with Lutosławski's response to the ideas of his mentor.

Lutosławski and Maliszewski, form and content

Maliszewski (1873-1939), a Polish composer, musicologist, and one of the Chopin Institute's founders, taught Lutosławski analysis and tutored him in composition at the Warsaw Conservatory in the mid-1930s, having already instructed him privately since 1930. A graduate of the St Petersburg Conservatory, Maliszewski had studied with Rimsky-Korsakov and Glazunov between 1898 and 1902. His conservative stylistic outlook as a teacher of composition – he told Lutosławski that he thought the post-Debussyan harmony of his student's *Symphonic Variations* (1936-8) 'simply ugly'⁸ – can therefore be traced to his own educational background. According to Richard Taruskin, 'By the turn of the century... Russian music had entered its "Brahms phase"', becoming 'increasingly divorced from the realities of the surrounding world' and producing music in which 'a combination of denationalization and safe conservatism proved utterly bland'.⁹ Maliszewski's Symphony No. 1 (1904) certainly received short shrift from the more progressive Russian composer Alfred Nurok. Reviewing a 1904 concert organised by the Conservatory to showcase its 'more diligent students', Nurok reports that, although Maliszewski was toasted as 'a rising star', he personally found

⁸ See Bálint András Varga, *Lutosławski Profile: Witold Lutosławski in Conversation with Bálint András Varga* (London: Chester Music, 1976), pp. 4-5.

⁹ Richard Taruskin, *Stravinsky and the Russian Traditions: A Biography of the Works through Mavra* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996), p. 57.

‘anything but sufficient reason to acknowledge in this composer even the slightest trace of original creativity’, damning the young Pole’s ‘philistine eclecticism’.¹⁰

The parochialism of the creative environment which shaped Maliszewski the composer, however, might usefully be separated from the ferment of original music theory in early twentieth-century Russia which probably influenced his approach to musical form (and thus his primary influence on Lutosławski).¹¹ Due to the lack of Maliszewski-authored academic materials to have survived World War II, as Rust has noted, his teachings survive primarily as an oral tradition, not least through Lutosławski’s testimony.¹² One must therefore be wary of making declarations about the origins of Maliszewski’s theories, such as their possible relationship to Glazunov or Boris Asaf’yev’s ideas.¹³ The apparent originality of Maliszewski’s thinking on the ‘psychology of musical form’, however, is clearly somewhat at odds with the formality of his compositions, and it is therefore against the context of Russia’s early twentieth-century network of competing music theories that his course on analysing musical form, which had a decisive impact on Lutosławski, may ultimately be best understood.

Maliszewski did not, it must quickly be stated, teach a course in musical *akcja*. Lutosławski was clear on the separation of his own concept and his teacher’s ideas. As he told Nikolska,

It would not [do to] over-emphasize this influence [i.e., Maliszewski’s] in the context you have just broached [*akcja*]. Maliszewski, however, did teach us how to develop the ‘action’.¹⁴

¹⁰ ‘A. N.’, ‘Pokontsertam’, *Mir iskusstva* 4 (1904), p. 81, quoted and trans. in Taruskin, *Stravinsky*, p. 69.

¹¹ A ferment reported on by Simon Perry in ‘Aspects of Russian Music Theory in the Early 20th Century’, a paper given at the Symposium of the International Musicological Society 2004, Melbourne (12 July 2004).

¹² Rust, ‘A Theory of Form’, p. 108.

¹³ If anything, David Haas’s recent study *Leningrad’s Modernists: Studies in Compositional and Musical Thought 1917-1932* (New York: Lang Publishing, 1998), when taken alongside his earlier article ‘Boris Asaf’yev and Soviet Symphonic Theory’, *Musical Quarterly* 76 (1992), pp. 410-32, affirms the independence of Maliszewski’s thinking from the theorists working at the time he was teaching.

¹⁴ Nikolska, *Conversations*, p. 105.

It is important to recognize this apparent separation between Maliszewski's ideas and Lutosławski's mature output (as opposed, perhaps, to Maliszewski's influence on Lutosławski's music of the 1930s and 1940s). This is not always clearly appreciated. As indicated by the following discussion of Rae and Rust's appropriation of Lutosławski's descriptions of Maliszewski's teachings, a number of misunderstandings about this matter appear to have crept into the field and, through repetition, become accepted as facts rather than interpretations. Chief among these is the form and content dichotomy hinted at already in this study, which is explored below through this section's discussion of the key tenets of Maliszewski's ideas and the Lutosławski literature's interpretation of what Lutosławski said and, more importantly, composed in relation to this dichotomy. There is a need to reassess the nature of the 'deep and long-lasting influence'¹⁵ on Lutosławski of Maliszewski's ideas. Primarily, one must ask whether an initially faithful adoption led, in the long term, to a considerably freer adaptation of Maliszewski's thinking as part of Lutosławski's more wide-ranging consideration of musical plot.

Maliszewski's course on musical form was based around his analysis at the piano of the first movements from classical sonatas composed predominantly, according to Lutosławski, by Beethoven. As Lutosławski told Rae,

I attach great importance to playing with the listener's perception. I always reckon with his power of anticipating or thinking about what could happen. ... All those are tricks which I learned mainly from the sonatas of Beethoven. The course on musical forms that was given by my professor of composition, Maliszewski, has remained in my memory for my whole life. In his analyses of the sonatas of Beethoven, he explained the psychological factor in perceiving a form... To give you an example of how the psychological approach works, I can give you the terminology he used. He used four different words of 'character': Introductory, Narrative, Transitional

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 29.

and Concluding. In each large-scale form there is always the use of those four characters... [O]nly in the Narrative is content the most important thing to be perceived, while in all the other three the role of a given section in the form of the music is more important than the content.¹⁶

The four ‘characters’ relate to the basic functions of different sections in a sonata-form first movement, such as introducing the work, bridging a transition between ‘narrative’ ideas (themes, harmonies and their subsequent development) or achieving closure.

Discussing Maliszewski’s views on sections of a ‘narrative’ character with Rust, Lutosławski explained their purpose as ‘the exposition of the content – nothing more’:

It doesn’t play any role in the form because it is just exposing the content but not the formal function... Of course, it is more complicated. There is much more to say about it, but I think this is the key that may be enough for you to understand the direction of his way of thinking.¹⁷

Here, Lutosławski could be read to imply a need to differentiate Maliszewski’s theory (‘his way of thinking’) from Lutosławski’s own. In both the Rae and Rust quotations above, Lutosławski’s examples are given to suggest a flavour of Maliszewski’s ‘considerably more complicated’ approach. Yet this is not necessarily the spirit in which such statements have been interpreted in the Lutosławski literature, which has sometimes sought to appropriate these hints of Maliszewski’s thinking, and especially his form/content distinction and the four characters, as tools with which to analyse all of Lutosławski’s music.

Rust, for instance, finds such an appropriation useful due to the absence of thematic ‘narrative’ material, as he perceives it, in many of Lutosławski’s mature pieces. He identifies ‘Lutosławski’s compositional practice of writing entire pieces

¹⁶ Lutosławski quoted in Rae, ‘Pitch Organisation’, p. 30.

¹⁷ Rust, ‘Conversation’, p. 209. Maliszewski’s use of the word ‘narrative’ seems to have nothing to do with the theorizing of narrative by, for instance, the Russian formalists. Rather, he uses the word to indicate the presentation – the *narration* – of musical ideas. His theory was not a narratological theory, and talk of narrative here should not, therefore, be confused with matters to be discussed in Chapter Two.

(such as *Symphony No. 2*) without melodic themes' and claims that in this context Maliszewski's distinction becomes useful 'because we can apply neo-Maliszewskian distinctions of form and content to Lutosławski's works based solely upon the perceived proximity of a musical goal, rather than upon the presence or absence of important musical themes'.¹⁸ Rust therefore downplays Lutosławski's explanation of the complexity of the applicability of these divisions to his own music, as in the following statement to Nikolska:

[I]n Beethoven thematic material proper – a new musical thought, that is to say, a new theme – always appears in 'narrative' sections, whereas in 'transitional-natured' episodes use is made, as a rule, of frequently recurring motives taken out of the theme(s)... Also in introductory and concluding sections, form is more important than thematic content. An introduction, for example, is supposed to suggest to the listener that some significant events are expected to take place before long... In my music, these four 'characters' – in pure form – are not to be found; after all, it is quite a different world in respect of stylistics. And yet there is a certain connection.¹⁹

The potential importance of thematic content, not least in relation to the interaction of material from 'narrative' and 'formal' sections, is more apparent in such statements than Rust's reading may suggest. What is really surprising, though, is that the 'certain connection' between the ideas of teacher and pupil has been sought almost exclusively with respect to Maliszewski's 'formal' characters, and not simultaneously with regards to the ways in which Lutosławski might also have sought to rethink classical-romantic harmonic and thematic discourse – the 'narrative' content at the heart of the 'psychological' structural games played, in Maliszewski's estimation, by sonata forms – in his own mature idiom.

¹⁸ Rust, 'A Theory of Form', p. 110.

¹⁹ Nikolska, *Conversations*, p. 89. Quoted in Rust, 'A Theory of Form', p. 111. Rust refers, at one point, to 'Maliszewski's and Lutosławski's theory of musical character', problematically eliding the two (*ibid.*, p. 125).

The restrictiveness of Rust's approach becomes clear in his analytical discussion of these matters. By following in the footsteps of Stucky's Maliszewski-style analysis of Lutosławski's neo-classical Symphony No. 1 (1941-7),²⁰ which was itself based on an annotated copy of the score (marked up to indicate passages in the different characters) given to Stucky by the composer, Rust avoids any discussion of the themes of the work in order to posit all four musical characters as texture types. In essence, he reduces all of the elements of the music to rhetorical significations marked by changes in texture. The variable 'introductory, transitory, or finishing' gestures, he states, all 'imply transience',²¹ while homophonic 'narrative' sections imply a point of repose. He consequently argues that the textures in Lutosławski's music 'function in a manner that is similar to harmonic function in tonal music',²² in that 'the function of the narrative character can be compared to that of a tonic arrival; the other three characters approximate the role of dominants'.²³ Rust's interpretation is not without insights, particularly the notion that the 'narrative' sections are more static texturally (or in some other fashion) when compared to other musical events. Yet the deepest impression his reading leaves of Lutosławski's 'narrative' sections is that they are simply a different kind of 'formal' transience, a slower gear in the music's movement to and from its peaks in textural complexity. This view implies that underneath the surface of Lutosławski's music, however sophisticated and apparently traditionally thematic (as in Symphony No. 1), lies a simple musical semaphore in which sections function merely to symbolize movement towards or away from a moment of arrival, or to indicate a point of repose.

²⁰ Stucky, *Lutosławski*, pp. 25-8.

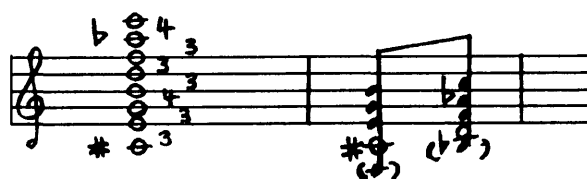
²¹ Rust, 'A Theory of Form', p. 121.

²² *Ibid.*, p. 121.

²³ *Ibid.*, p. 125.

Had Rust's analysis of Symphony No. 1 paid closer attention to the content of the piece's 'narrative' sections as thematic and harmonic material, however, he might have noted a potentially more sophisticated interaction of elements. He briefly mentions the role of D and D flat as the pitch centres of the first movement's two principal subject groups, for instance, and the stress on these pitches which occurs at the movement's peak of intensity (Fig. 31/bb. 5-6). He does not, however, note the ways in which prominent musical ideas at the start of the work posit and start to explore this fundamental tension between the two pitches, therefore pointing the way towards the movement's climactic conflict. For instance, the eight-note chord at the start of the piece is rooted on C sharp. As well as being constructed from thirds in a manner which would become characteristic of Lutosławski's mature use of limited interval-class harmonies, it can also be heard as a chord aggregate of two tetrachords (another typical Lutosławski construction later on in his career). These four-note chords, in turn, are rather like dominant ninths which have had their 'true' roots (A and B flat) shorn off to reveal C sharp and D respectively as their bass notes (see Ex. 1.1).

Example 1.1: Opening chord of Symphony No. 1



Several facets of this chord could therefore be read to create structural and expressive effects that anticipate the gist of the movement's symphonic argument. Rhetorically, the 'introductory' character of the first two bars partly relates, for example, to the bitonal harmony that spurs the music into life. Its 'double dominant'

dissonance creates a momentum playing on tonal codes and leading one to expect the resolution of an arrival on an alternative, more consonant harmony. The root of the eight-note sonority could also be heard as a structural leading-note linking the root of the chord, C sharp, to the D of bar 3 (an arrival already anticipated in the construction of the opening chord). Yet this 'narrative' arrival on D is rendered somewhat equivocal by the first violins' C-sharps, which contradict the basses' pizzicato Ds; the conflict between those two pitches is further summarized in the agitated neighbour notes of the second violins' semiquaver ostinato. The solo trumpet's pert D-major first subject may therefore sound over-confident in its display of 'narrative' tonic repose – a confidence swiftly revealed to be unfounded when the bass progression from B flat to A flat (the enharmonic dominant of C sharp) in Fig. 1/bb. 3-5 inaugurates the music's path towards the distant tonal territory of D flat and the key of the second subject group. Separating the 'form'- and 'content'-related aspects of this music, therefore, is problematical and perhaps undesirable.

Rust moves on to discuss the *Overture for Strings* (1949) and the Concerto for Orchestra, again positing 'narrative' sections merely as examples of poised homophony separated by more texturally complex and therefore propulsive passages. This permits him to claim that Maliszewski's 'content vs. form... dichotomy'²⁴ remains intact in these pieces, while usefully extending his neo-Maliszewskian theory from the imprint he finds in Symphony No. 1 in the direction of Lutosławski's 'non-thematic' mature works, including Symphony No. 2. Again, however, one might wonder whether attention to the main musical ideas presented in these pieces, and their relationships to matters of

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 136.

harmonic and thematic substance elsewhere in the pieces concerned, might lead one to a less elegantly reductive but richer interpretation. This is not the route taken by Rust, though; nor is it the route taken by Rae.

Rae seizes on the fact of Maliszewski's influence on Lutosławski as evidence of a 'compositional creed' revolving around 'a dichotomy between shape and substance' manifested in most of Lutosławski's music.²⁵ Support for this interpretation is extracted from Lutosławski's dualistic illustration of his own creative process, which he depicted as simultaneously viewing the outlines of a form (like a city viewed from the air) and working at ground level (as if erecting a scaffold to meet the sky):

When I start work, it is as though I am flying over a city, and slowly losing height I can see more and more clearly the outlines, the streets and houses. Naturally I also start work frequently near the 'earth', when I see every detail very clearly and in close-up, and do not worry whether or not they are going to be eventually part of the whole concept or not.²⁶

Rae therefore argues that the distinction between form and content in Lutosławski's music is 'clear-cut', and he borrows Jungian theory to explain how 'Lutosławski's treatment of large-scale closed form could justifiably be described as an archetypal dramatic shape "filled out with the material of conscious experience."'.²⁷ Like Rust, he subsequently finds no comparable harmonic or thematic procedures to those of classical first-movement sonata form in Lutosławski's music, treating pitch centres in a similar fashion to Rust by arguing that such details in Lutosławski's music are there 'to serve rather than govern the overall dramatic shape';²⁸ ditto the twelve-note sonorities deployed by Lutosławski to mark his mature pieces' major points of climax. Their

²⁵ Rae, 'Pitch Organisation', p. 30.

²⁶ Varga, *Lutosławski Profile*, p. 35.

²⁷ Rae, 'Pitch Organisation', p. 43. For a discussion of Jungian archetypes see Carl Jung, ed., *Man and his Symbols* (London: Picador, 1978 [1964]), p. 58.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 45.

placing is 'strategic',²⁹ Rae explains, as Lutosławski's choice of chord at such moments is always significant. In the absence of any kind of thematic, harmonic or other developmental framework within which to consider the precise nature of such chords strategically, however, one is left with the impression, as in Rust's analyses, that for Rae their consequence resides in marking the climax of an expressive musical process with a suitably arresting statistical firework, as opposed to, say, closing a syntactical musical discourse in tandem with reaching a composition's peak of sensuous intensity. In this view, Lutosławski's pitch centres and twelve-note sonorities become the 'material of conscious experience' filling out a structural archetype, as opposed to musical thoughts playing a more integral role in a composition's fusion of form and content.

In such analyses, the gulf between Lutosławski's music and Maliszewski's favoured compositional model, Beethoven, could hardly appear wider. As well as discussing Maliszewski's analyses in his published conversations, however, Lutosławski also talked directly about Beethoven and other composers whose music he admired with regard to its formal construction. Lutosławski told Nikolska, for example, that his need to generate an *akcja* partly related to Beethoven and Chopin's influence, and to the 'profoundly impressive' musical plots of works including Beethoven's piano sonatas and late quartets, and Chopin's ballades, Cello Sonata (1845-6) and the Polonaise-Fantasy (1846).³⁰ Regarding Beethoven, he was forthcoming with Kaczyński about the nature of his influence.

Beethoven was a master of a particular kind of game played with an imaginary listener... There are incredibly subtle ways of leading the listener towards a certain direction, and then bringing some little change after which it appears that we are going in a completely different direction.³¹

²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 45.

³⁰ See Nikolska, *Conversations*, pp. 105-7.

³¹ Kaczyński, *Conversations*, p. 16.

The Maliszewskian terminology here might lead one to conclude that these ‘incredibly subtle ways’ and ‘little changes’ refer to manipulations of texture or rhetorical character.

Alternatively, however, one might consider whether Lutosławski’s understanding of these works was more subtle than such readings would allow. Talking to Nikolska about modernist music which does not express an *akcja*, for example, he asked

why is there no ‘plot’ (‘action’) – nor even development – not only in many music-pieces of the sixties and seventies but also in many of the later compositions[?] The bulk of contemporary music is being written as a succession... of certain sonic phenomena... which – having been written down – make up a form. *My* method of approach to the very process of composing a piece is quite different. I do not ‘linearize’ sonic events on an abstract basis, I do not mount them just in their succession: I sort of compose sonic phenomena as they are to be *perceived*... A weak spot of contemporary music is lack of consideration for perception, which was not the case in Beethoven’s quartets, or Chopin’s ballads, etc. ... Music-pieces with no musical ‘plot’ are – more often than not – boring and static, with one thought being spread over a considerable space of time.³²

As Rust points out, Lutosławski’s view of music in such statements can be contrasted with Karlheinz Stockhausen’s ideas on Moment-form and varieties of music ‘far removed from dramatic formal schemes that have the effect of finality’ or ‘a developmental curve that spans the entire duration of the piece’.³³ However, Lutosławski does not talk only of intensity or dramatic structuring in the music he advocates in favour of pieces ‘“linearized” on an abstract basis’: he speaks also of musical thoughts, their logical development, and designing these processes of development to be perceptible.

³² Nikolska, *Conversations*, p. 106.

³³ Karlheinz Stockhausen, *Texte zur elektronischen und instrumenten Musik*, Dieter Schnebel, ed. (Cologne: DuMont, 1963), vol. 1, pp. 198-9. Translated by Rust in ‘A Theory of Form’, p. 207.

Lutosławski statements like the above do not wholly discount Rust or Rae's readings; nor do they dismiss, however, the potential for a more wide-ranging approach to examining Lutosławski's re-imagining of Maliszewskian form and content in his music. His mentor's teachings clearly lit a fire in Lutosławski's mind regarding the possibility of music's primary purpose being the creation of chains of musical events which engage and manipulate the listener in a manner somewhat similar to the events in a literary plot. Lutosławski, in turn, appears to have thought deeply about such matters on his own terms, deciding to compose for the perceptual abilities of his 'ideal listener'³⁴ – i.e., himself – in the hope that other listeners sympathetic to his structural aims, and culturally aware of the traditions on which it drew, would experience his musical plots in a similar fashion. His music, in this respect, is indeed 'a record of perception, a perceptual process written down'.³⁵ The question for analysts, though, must relate to the object of that perceptual process.

Studies of Lutosławski's music sometimes seem enamoured with the notion of a composer capable of directly sculpting his listeners' perceptions, as if his music could achieve this while bypassing the stuff of the music which had so deeply impressed him as a student – musical materials including harmonic relations, thematic developments, musical logic, etc. – via some shorthand of ultimately rather superficial musical signification. Rust and Rae come close to suggesting, for instance, that Lutosławski's 'narrative' sections merely give the impression of significant musical content being presented, as opposed to actually presenting material germane to an overarching developmental discourse, as if 'narrative' passages are present in his music merely to pace waveforms of sensuous intensity (rather than, for instance, to motivate or guide

³⁴ See Lutosławski, 'The Composer and the Listener' in Nordwall, ed., *Lutosławski*, pp. 119-24.

³⁵ Nikolska, *Conversations*, p. 106.

them). Yet Lutosławski's published statements are hardly devoid of alternative paths one might follow in assessing this matter.

The above-quoted passage from Bálint András Varga's book of conversations with Lutosławski, for example, depicting a dualistic process of working from the air and at ground level, and alluded to by Rae and many other scholars in their discussions of form and content in Lutosławski's music,³⁶ has an intriguing context which is cited far less often, but which is potentially highly pertinent to the present investigation:

[O]ne cannot start working without having some key ideas. Once you have the most important – I would not say themes, but groups of sounds, which may mean something for the composer even without belonging to any particular context, then one can start work.

While working, two opposing forces must be functioning. One, the concept of the whole work, should work inwards, towards the inside of the composition. The other outwards, towards the development of the key ideas themselves. The balance of the two ensures the structure of the living musical form. ...

I always imagine [key ideas] as sounding very concrete on instruments or groups of instruments. ...

I can only start work when I have an overall idea of the new composition, and I have certain key ideas. In music today they are not necessarily melodic themes but can concern form, order, and certain technical procedures as well.

When I start work, it is as though I am flying over a city...³⁷

Once considered more fully, this important statement suggests that it is the 'key ideas' that came first for Lutosławski, at least some of the time. Certainly, only once the 'key ideas' were conceived, he implies, could he begin composing in earnest. His terminology ('living musical forms') even suggests an attachment to nineteenth-century conceptions of organicism and thus a more dynamic fusion of form and content. Identifying what these 'key ideas' might consist of, therefore, and how Lutosławski

³⁶ See, for example, Martina Homma, '“Vogelperspektive” und “Schlusselideen”', *Musik-Konzepte* 71-73 (1991), pp. 33-51.

³⁷ Varga, *Lutosławski Profile*, p. 35.

responded to their implications over the course of a composition, could prove to be a particularly useful step when seeking better to understand his concept of *akcja*.

It is on these issues that Lutosławski's lectures of the early 1960s are most provocative, as they can be read to support a more reflexive view of the interaction of form and content in his music, and in doing so to begin to suggest a range of alternative approaches to the analysis of both Lutosławski's compositional method and his compositions. Given the documentary materials available to Rae and Rust when they wrote their theses, of course, their conclusions about Lutosławski and Maliszewski, and the compositional 'dichotomy' of form and content, are understandable. It is a mark of their perceptive engagement with Lutosławski's music, moreover, that a re-evaluation of certain of their fundamental ideas in the context of newly available documentary materials by no means invalidates many of their more subtle analytical findings. The lectures brought to light below nevertheless suggest that interpretations sidelining the role of harmonic and thematic content in Lutosławski's music, and thus the possibility of a more symbiotic relationship between that content and the structures of his musical forms, may eventually come to seem rather provisional.

'Problems of Musical Form'

Among the numerous Lutosławski lecture scripts housed in the Paul Sacher Stiftung are five texts not listed in any major Lutosławski bibliography.³⁸ These documents date from his first trip to the USA in 1962, when (alongside an impressive round of

³⁸ See, for example, Stanisław Będkowski and Stanisław Hrabia, *Witold Lutosławski: A Bio-Bibliography* (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 2001) and James Harley, Martina Homma and Maja Trochimczyk, 'Witold Lutosławski: Bibliography', *Polish Music Journal* 5/1 (Summer 2002): http://www.usc.edu/dept/polish_music/PMJ/issue/5.1.02/lutoslawskibbl.html (accessed 13 May 2004). This is something of an oversight, as the lectures are listed in the bibliography of Jarociński's much earlier book *Witold Lutosławski* (1967).

networking with American orchestras and meetings with composers including Lukas Foss and Edgard Varèse) Lutosławski served as composer-in-residence at the summer school of the Berkshire Music Center, Tanglewood. The five lectures are entitled ‘Music in the XX Century’ (I), ‘On Aleatorism’ (II), ‘Problems of Musical Form’ (III), ‘Pitch, the Interval and Harmonic Aggregate’ (IV) and ‘Some Problems Concerning Rhythmics’ (V).³⁹ The two lectures on subjects directly pertaining to the present investigation’s concerns are ‘Pitch, the Interval and Harmonic Aggregate’ and ‘Problems of Musical Form’ (henceforth referred to as ‘Problems’ and ‘Pitch’). As ‘Problems’ introduces Lutosławski’s notion of ‘key ideas’ and, according to the lecture script, was intended to be presented before ‘Pitch’, ‘Problems’ is discussed first. The next section of this chapter then turns to ‘Pitch’ and its potential for developing a more nuanced understanding of Lutosławski’s ‘key ideas’.

The ‘Problems’ manuscript consists of sixteen typed pages with corrections in pencil and blue ink, most of which suggest alternative words for the Polish terms Lutosławski was seeking to translate. There are also margin notes on pronunciation and occasional spelling mistakes. Nonetheless, his language is clear and what he has to say regarding his approach to composition is all the more striking for his forthright tone. The lecture indirectly traces Lutosławski’s adaptation and augmentation of Maliszewski’s theories to meet the demands of his own mature style. In doing so, it reveals the utmost significance of ‘content’ and particularly harmonic and thematic ideas in his music, and the subservience of ‘formal’ materials to their clear articulation.

³⁹ Roman numerals on the lecture manuscripts indicate the order in which they were delivered. Jarociński’s bibliography lists the texts in a different order (following Lutosławski’s numerals, his alternative ordering is I, V, III, IV, II). More significantly, perhaps, he lists the titles in Polish. Lutosławski probably drafted the lectures in Polish then translated them into English. In Basel, for example, there is a draft of a lecture entitled ‘Z zagadnień formy muzycznej’ marked ‘III Wykład Tanglewood’ in the top left corner of the first page and bearing numerous pencil and ink corrections.

Lutosławski's basic bone of contention in 'Problems' concerns the challenge of constructing large-scale closed forms in a period dominated by high modernism's more open or fragmented structures. He describes large-scale closed forms as 'an arrangement of specific kinds of musical material within the period of time which the composer has designed for his composition' (1).⁴⁰ His difficulty with more open or fragmented structures (Stockhausen's *Carré* of 1959-60 is given as an example) is that, while 'no earlier epoch has produced such variety and riches of form' (1), Lutosławski does not actually like any of the new solutions.

In this way, there arises something which could be called 'anti-form', an aggregate of events following one upon the other, which demand no continuity of concentration not only during the period of listening but even of hearing. (2)

He therefore dismisses the structures of some modernist music as 'a kind of formal atrophy' (3) and stresses his own interest in works where sensing 'the relation of [a] particular section to the form as a whole' (3) remains crucial.

The 'problems' of his lecture's title relate to the issue of finding new ways of recreating a classicist sense of structural interconnection within a modernist idiom. Before outlining his solution, Lutosławski therefore recapitulates for his students the ways in which, in his view, this effect was achieved in classical-romantic music. In doing so he pays passing homage to his own teacher, Maliszewski, when he speaks of 'one of the most important factors in the structure of musical forms, the factor which certain old theorists call "the character of the music"' (3). He then proceeds to give an extremely clear definition of the four Maliszewski characters, 'narrative, transitionary, introductory and terminative' (3). The words 'transitionary' and 'terminative' here appear merely to be an indication of Lutosławski's slight struggles with the English

⁴⁰ Page references to the lectures discussed in this chapter, which are given in brackets in the main text, refer to the lecture manuscripts in the Lutosławski Collection at the Paul Sacher Stiftung.

language in 1962; he would later refer to these as the ‘transitional’ and ‘concluding’ characters. The order in which he lists the terms appears to be more significant than the slightly different language.

Lutosławski explains that the character of a section of a musical form is ‘the relationship of this particular section to the form as a whole’ (3) and provides a series of appealing first-person accounts (perhaps recalled from his own studies with Maliszewski) of what he believes a listener should experience during music of each type. Notably, the first example he gives relates to the ‘narrative’ character:

In a section that has a narrative character the musical content itself is the most important thing and dominates the listener’s attention. The perception of this section proceeds as follows: ‘I hear this and nothing else occupies my attention.’ (3)

Passages of a transitional character (‘I hear this, but, above all, I feel that what I hear is leading me on to something different which I shall hear in a moment’), introductory character (‘I hear this, but I realize that actually I am anticipating the hearing of something else’) and concluding character (‘I hear this, but I realize that in a moment the whole form or some stage of it is about to end’) are, on the other hand, sections in which ‘the listener feels that he is about to pass over to another moment of the over-all [*sic*] form’ and ‘in which... the musical content is not the most important element’ (3-4). This suggestion supports the idea of a distinction in Lutosławski’s thinking between sections outlining crucial musical ‘content’ and others which shape the articulation of a succession of ‘narrative’ events and thus have a ‘formal’ function. The crucial thing to note, however, is that ‘narrative’ content, in Lutosławski’s view, appears to have been of primary importance.

Key ideas

When embarking on the construction of a large-scale closed form, Lutosławski says, the content of the ‘narrative’ events should be one’s first priority:

Our first consideration should be the moments of intense musical significance... With these moments we place others, less arresting, which by themselves are of no great intrinsic significance and which would lose their meaning if taken out of their context... [b]ecause the significance of such moments depends above all on their relationship to other moments of the form... In other words: their significance depends first and foremost on their formal function... These two types of music constitute the foundation upon which to build a large form, and upon our ability to manipulate them depends the architectural worth of our large forms. (7)

The ability to understand Lutosławski’s music, it seems reasonable to suggest, might therefore also depend on the development of a more precise appreciation of the substance of his ‘moments of intense musical significance’. Usefully, in this regard, Lutosławski also reminds one of the need to consider the balance between the different kinds of event:

If we fill the whole form with music of... intense musical significance... then our form becomes a sort of ‘potpourri’, and the most attractive moments do not compensate for its structural weakness. If, on the other hand, we deprive our form entirely of moments of independent musical interest and base everything on contrast, preparation, transition, anticipation, that is to say, on the manifold formal functions, then we get a form which is ‘laboured’, ‘empty’ and unsatisfactory. (7-8)

This implies the need to analyse both the main ‘narrative’ events of a composition and those events which lead to and from them. Analyses of Lutosławski’s music, if they are to avoid becoming unsatisfactory in the composer’s own terms, must therefore seek to focus anew on his music’s apparently primary ‘content’ without losing sight of the role played by his pieces’ ‘formal’ sections.

The main gap in the field's knowledge nonetheless relates to the content of Lutosławski's 'moments of intense musical significance' or more precisely to what it is that makes them significant individually and in terms of their relationship to other similar events. 'Problems' offers a number of clues as to where one might begin to look. In his description of sections with a 'narrative' character in tonal sonata-form first movements, Lutosławski locates their significance primarily in the statement of important harmonic and thematic material. Such a section 'is marked by harmonic inactivity, is more or less restricted to the tonic key, and is strongly imbued with melodic-rhythmic content' (4). When such sections arrive they should therefore command the listener's attention. 'The entry of [a] new narration section is like the entry of a new character in a drama' (5), Lutosławski says, making an intriguing early connection in his writings to theatrical thinking and leading one to wonder if following the fate of the musical ideas that characterize such sections might be as crucial to understanding the workings of his music as following the interactions of the characters in a play.

One of the most arresting sections of 'Problems' discusses the distinctiveness of the ideas which populate Lutosławski's own 'narrative' events, while suggesting aspects of the musical parameters which create their developmental implications:

In order, then, to tackle the construction of a large form, we must possess a certain number of ideas of intrinsic value. The French call such an idea 'idée clef' – a key idea. In the case of the classics the key ideas were themes, that is to say, concepts of a melodic-rhythmic nature. The theme, too, was clothed in its own characteristic harmony, and summarized within itself the main idea of the whole work and determined its general physiognomy.

Nowadays the key idea of a composition cannot be a theme, for the simple reason that in the texture of contemporary music the theme, in the sense in which it is defined here, just doesn't exist. It will be represented instead by a single structure or 'sound object' or, to put it differently, an independent complex of sounds bounded in

time... These key ideas determine the cast of the whole work just as themes do in classical music. (8)

The profound ramifications of this statement deserve to be savoured. ‘Problems’ implies that Lutosławski’s ‘key ideas’, his harmonic and thematic *objets sonores*, are his music’s principal content: these are the characters which populate his own musical dramas. A Lutosławski *akcja* must therefore concern the interaction, development and evolution of these musical ideas at ‘moments of intense musical significance’, plus the articulation of that discourse by means of the music’s more formal sections.

Lutosławski goes on to outline five ingredients that can interact to characterize musical ideas in a contemporary idiom (9-10). His parameters and descriptions are summarized in Fig. 1.1. He hints that the last ingredient, ‘Harmony’, is the most

Fig. 1.1: Lutosławski’s musical parameters for the creation of musical ideas

Lutosławski’s parameters	Summary of Lutosławski’s description
‘Disposition of sounds in the musical gamut’	The registral placement of sounds, the compass of a sonority, its relative highness or lowness, compactness or looseness
‘Timbre’	The individual instruments or families playing and the effects on their sounds of register, dynamics, attack, means of tone production, different combinations etc.
‘Types of rhythm, and frequency of impulses’	The contrast between conducted and limited-aleatory sections, types, speeds and complexities of rhythmic groupings etc.
‘Intensity’	Dynamic levels and the number of instruments playing
‘Harmony’	<i>See main text</i>

important in the construction of his own 'key ideas' and the other events in his musical forms. 'In my own work as a composer', he says, 'I must say I find this harmonic aspect of sound material one of the most important in constructing large forms' (10). This implies, therefore, a crucial role for harmony and, more generally, pitch organisation in the construction of his 'key ideas'. He does not further explain this here, however, indicating that he is going to return to the issue of harmony at length in 'Pitch', as discussed below. First, however, the other significant concepts that Lutosławski explores in 'Problems' must be considered.

Static and dynamic events

The remainder of 'Problems of Musical Form' demonstrates how Lutosławski's reflections on Maliszewski's theories of musical form, as well as furnishing Lutosławski with ideas for an individual approach to the creation of musical arguments within his contemporary idiom, encouraged him to coin new terminology better suited to his own music. First, Lutosławski replaces Maliszewski's 'narrative' with 'static' to describe the most significant events in his music (i.e., those relating to the presentation or development of 'key ideas'). 'Static' describes the variety of perception, in Lutosławski's opinion, that a listener experiences during such moments, remaining, 'as it were, in a state of balance, directing our attention neither forwards nor backwards' (11). He goes on to describe 'static' events as follows:

If all the features of a composition are maintained for some time without change, if – in other words – the music remains in the same register, with the same timbre and intensity, etc., then its character may be described as static. (12)

Slightly confusingly, Lutosławski's 'static' is thus both a description of the musical quality of these events and of the listener's state of absorption in the detail of

such passages. This latter meaning, however, is problematic in that interrelating the chain of 'static' events which form the gist of a musical *akcja* clearly requires one actively to anticipate what might be coming next while remembering what came before. The term does capture something of the musical character of these events, as Rust's stress on 'homophony' and Lutosławski's description of a 'narrative' event's inactivity noted. No music, of course, can be utterly 'static', as sounds unfold over time. A 'static' Lutosławski idea, however, could be one in which a musical idea is somehow sustained (like the opening chord of Symphony No. 1).

Lutosławski replaces the three 'non-narrative' or 'formal' Maliszewski characters with a single one: 'dynamic'. The term 'dynamic' reflects 'a lack of balance' induced by such events in the mind of a perceiver and the manner in which, Lutosławski says, 'they exert some kind of force... and direct our attention to what is just about to follow' (11). Again, Lutosławski's choice of term is somewhat unfortunately double-edged. On the plus side, it usefully evokes a state of perception akin to that described in relation to music in Maliszewski's 'transitional' character. One might note, however, that in such moments one's perceptive activity is arguably less active than during a 'static' event (as one seeks a logic of interconnection). One must also be careful not to take 'dynamic' as a description of the musical quality of such sections, albeit while noting (as Rust does in his discussion of Maliszewski's 'formal' characters) that such events may nonetheless involve more rapid changes to the music's materials than the superficially stable 'static' events.

It is important, of course, not to be overly critical of Lutosławski's terminology, if only because he was writing in his third language (after Polish and French) and had yet to master the nuances needed to evoke the finer shadings of his musical style.

Nevertheless, it may be useful to think of these concepts, and their relationship to Maliszewski's terminology, as simplified in Fig. 1.2, which summarizes Lutosławski's descriptions of 'static' and 'dynamic' events in the 'Problems' lecture.

Fig. 1.2: Static and dynamic events

Type of event	Maliszewski terms	Desired affect on listener perception (Lutosławski's description of Maliszewski's characters)	Musical characteristics indicated in 'Problems'
<i>Static</i>	Narrative; content	'I hear this and nothing else occupies my attention'	Sustained harmonies, distinctive motivic ideas, no obviously goal-directed changes in tempo, timbre, dynamic level, etc.
<i>Dynamic</i>	Introductory, transitional, concluding; formal	'I hear this, but, above all, I feel that what I hear is leading me on to something different which I shall hear in a moment'	Changing harmonies, rapidly evolving or repeated motivic ideas, shifting dynamic levels, more obviously goal-directed changes to dynamic level, rhythm and tempo, timbre, etc.

Interestingly, Lutosławski states that a sudden change to all of the features in a composition to something completely different will not necessarily change the music's character: 'It will only bring about a juxtaposition of two contrasting but static sections of the music' (12). This description may help to explain Lutosławski's antipathy to some modernist music. In his own terms, pieces in which events change suddenly, with no apparent links between one event and the next, would be entirely 'static', with every single event vying for one's attention as a moment of intense significance ('a

potpourri'). He cites the opening juxtaposition of *Jeux vénitiens* as a pair of 'static' events being articulated in this manner. The difference, however, is that these two events are, in turn, repeated – or, more precisely, that later events in the movement are variations on the first two 'static' passages. If many more different types of event were alternated at the start of *Jeux vénitiens* in this manner, the music might not have the same effect.

The first movement of *Jeux vénitiens* is a somewhat misleading example, however, in that its evolution does not involve any 'dynamic' events, in Lutosławski's definition, moving to and from its varied 'static' moments of significance. Instead, the entire movement is gradually revealed to be 'dynamic' at a broader structural level.

Lutosławski explains that composers

can only obtain the dynamic character when one, several, or all the features of the musical texture undergo change in a continuous way. The observation by the listener of this change, and especially his awareness of the direction in which it is taking the music, incline him to divert his attention from what he is hearing at the moment, that is to say, from the actual musical content of the given section. At such a moment part of the listener's attention is taken up by matters of a formal nature, such as, for example, anticipation of a new stage of the form, conclusion of the present stage or of the whole work. (12)

Lutosławski provides an example of a 'dynamic' event from the start of the fourth movement of *Jeux vénitiens*. Here, he says, 'we feel certain that at any moment now we are going to hear something significant' (14). The entry of the pianos at rehearsal figure A1 marks this arrival. Again, one can imagine how the 'dynamic' quality in the preceding texture is engineered to build towards this 'first intervention', as Lutosławski describes it, via a gradual groundswell of musical intensity formed by the accumulation of *sfpp* accents from beat 10 onwards.

Rather than thinking of Lutosławski's music articulating a strict binary opposition between 'static' and 'dynamic' events, it may be more useful to consider the possibility of a richer continuum of states ranging between stasis and dynamism, while nevertheless articulating the movement between moments of greater and lesser significance in a musical plot. More fundamentally, however, the examples that Lutosławski provides from *Jeux vénitiens* to illustrate his 'Problems' lecture leave one wondering exactly how 'key ideas' in his mature idiom might summarize 'the main idea of the whole work' or 'determine the cast of the whole work just as themes do in classical music' – not least because, in this respect, 'Problems' stops just as it is getting most interesting. The composer himself acknowledges this issue:

At this point I am purposely cutting short these reflections on the subject of constructing a large form; although really it would seem that I am only now coming to the most important part. Perhaps I ought to show you ways of combining sections having different formal functions; examine everything concerning the temporal proportions of particular parts of the form; reflect upon the degree of concentration of musical content at particular moments in the form in order to obtain what might be called the 'psychological balance' of the form – in other words – perhaps I ought to consider everything that would enable us to construct a large form in such a way as to ensure that the listener's perception of it would be a complete, independent experience. (15)

At the very least, though, one might conclude from these comments that Lutosławski did consider such matters in the shaping of his large-scale closed forms. At this early stage of his stylistic maturity, of course, he might still have been in the process of working out how to create 'key ideas' in his new idiom that were capable of containing the developmental seeds of an entire composition. One might nonetheless begin to make a number of deductions about this matter on the basis of what he does say in 'Problems' and his Tanglewood lecture on pitch.

One thing that is clearly articulated by ‘Problems’ is the individuation of Lutosławski’s thinking from Maliszewski’s theories. As Lutosławski told his Tanglewood students at the end of his lecture,

Sometimes the attaching of a name to phenomena which are familiar to us, and the marshalling of them into some kind of order, acts as a stimulus to our own processes of thought on a given subject. (16)

It seems reasonable to suggest that this statement from a lecturer to his students could be read as symbolic, perhaps even consciously so, of Lutosławski’s maturing relationship to his own mentor’s ideas. The links in this chain of influence, as discussed above, are there to be observed; but the originality of Lutosławski’s later adaptation of his teacher’s concepts must also be recognized and engaged with more fully.

‘Problems’, in this regard, offers a compelling and provocative stimulus.

‘Pitch, the Interval and Harmonic Aggregate’

About twenty-five years after writing ‘Problems of Musical Form’, Lutosławski said the following to Nikolska with reference to ‘key ideas’:

As far back as the sixties... I saw that the main weak point of modern music was the fact that the very notion of theme (or even motif) [had been] discarded. In classical music, even a short motif is highly effective: its impact on the listener is ‘radioactive’. Such a concentration of energy... was only seldom – extraordinarily seldom – to be found in the [music] of the sixties. In those days, I tried to find some sort of substitute for conventional theme (in the shape of a combination of a small number of notes).⁴¹

⁴¹ Nikolska, *Conversations*, p. 113.

A vital question, in the light of ‘Problems’ and statements such as this, relates to deducing the nature of Lutosławski’s ‘key ideas’ and how they might achieve a ‘radioactive’ impact on the structure of an *akcja*.⁴²

In ‘Problems’ Lutosławski had dropped a number of hints in relation to these matters. He had explained that, ‘in the case of the classics’, a ‘key idea’ was presented in the form of a theme ‘clothed in its own characteristic harmony’, and was capable of summarizing ‘the main idea of the whole work’, thus determining a piece’s ‘general physiognomy’. He then explained how thematic ideas might be reconfigured in modern music, arguing that, while it was unlikely to be presented melodically, a ‘key idea’ could manifest itself as ‘a single structure or “sound object” or, to put it differently, an independent complex of sounds bounded in time’. Such post-tonal *objets sonores*, he claimed, remained capable of determining ‘the cast of the whole work just as themes do in classical music’, and in his description of the musical parameters determining their nature Lutosławski placed a particular stress on the role of harmony. He also stated that he would return to these matters in more detail in his Tanglewood lecture on pitch organisation.

‘Pitch, the Interval and Harmonic Aggregate’ does not explain how a ‘key idea’ could generate or animate the entire structure of a composition. It does not, in fact, discuss ‘key ideas’ at all. What it does do is cast new light on Lutosławski’s principal harmonic pursuit: the construction of harmonies with a distinctive limited interval-class content and therefore, in another of Lutosławski’s idiosyncratically preferred words, ‘quality’. One can therefore deduce from the ‘Pitch’ lecture certain principles which, considered in light of the ideas put forward in ‘Problems’, permit the formulation of

⁴² Stucky indicates the importance of intervallic restriction and motivic construction to Lutosławski’s music, naming them as the first two ‘constants’ or ‘agreeably imprecise’ tendencies he locates as being influential in all Lutosławski’s music. See Stucky, ‘Change and Constancy’, pp. 151-52.

hypotheses concerning both the nature of Lutosławski's 'key ideas' and the ways in which they might perform their 'radioactive' function in a Lutosławski *akcja*. This section begins, therefore, by examining 'quality', the defining trait of Lutosławski's approach to pitch organisation, before moving on to consider its potential implications for the presentation and development of 'key ideas' in a musical plot.

Harmonic quality

In 'Pitch', Lutosławski explains that pitch organisation

connote[s] everything that relates to the interval in composition, the [horizontal] sequence of sound... also the simultaneous sound or the vertical aggregate, or if we wish to resort to an older term – the chord. (1)

His inspiration in this regard, he reveals, was Debussy's 'astonishing discovery' of the 'scope of impenetrable and unexplored possibilities that were concealed in the 12[-]tone scale of equal temperament':

[Debussy] represents an epoch as regards the knowledge of simultaneous sound... It is a gift of nature, a consequence of a deep spiritual need and at the same time of a specific sensual temperament. (2)

The polemical thrust of Lutosławski's lecture, however, relates to the way in which, he argues, all of these possibilities seem 'to be reduced to naught' (3) by the serial pitch structures of composers following in the footsteps of Schoenberg's twelve-note technique. In Schoenberg's music, Lutosławski rather sweepingly claims,

the role and meaning of the chord is not of primary importance in the course of the composition. Above all, simultaneous sound is not the result of a choice made according to its qualities of expression or sound colour... but is simply the function of the use of the series which is the foundation of the dodecaphonic technique. (3)

Thus Schoenberg and his followers relinquished 'the great wealth of possibilities inherent in the development of the chord system' by introducing 'a concept which is

completely alien to Debussy's sensualism' and which must 'lead to the disappearance of qualitative differences between intervals' (3). Leaving aside the shortcomings of Lutosławski's apparent insensitivity to this repertoire (which could be read as one of his less subtle attempts to differentiate his own compositional project via a 'rhetoric of autonomy'), his comments usefully draw attention to the primacy of limited interval-class constructions in his approach to pitch organisation. In turn this suggests that, if harmony lies at the heart of his 'key ideas', interval was potentially his deepest compositional concern in this regard. If a 'key idea' consists, in Lutosławski's matter-of-fact yet telling phrase, of 'a combination of a small number of notes', then one might reasonably expect the intervals formed between those notes to be of particular salience.

Lutosławski proposes in his 'Pitch' lecture that different limited interval-class (henceforth i.c.) complexes, horizontally or vertically presented as either lines or harmonies (limited-aleatory textures combine both modes of presentation, although in such cases Lutosławski tended to privilege the 'quality' of the vertical harmony over the horizontal composite),⁴³ have contrasting characteristics which are perceptible to listeners irrespective of the precise pitches that articulate them:

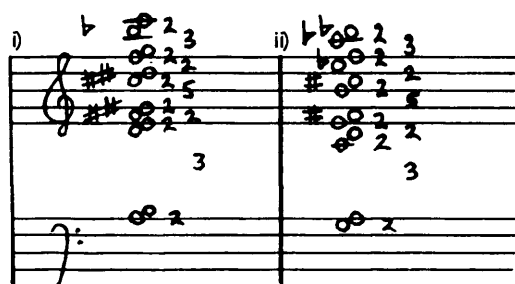
the simultaneous combination of sounds and sound sequences which may be treated as arrangements of different psychological impulses that differ in quality... [lead to] different reactions of our ear... we consciously register certain individual traits of each separate interval irrespective of its range. (4-5)

In other words, whether the cumulative twelve-note harmony revealed by the opening limited-aleatory texture of *Jeux vénitiens* occurs as illustrated in Ex. 1.2 (i) or (ii), the 'quality' of its sound, Lutosławski proposes, will in effect be the same: a twelve-note chord pairing i.c.s 2 and 3 around a central perfect fourth (i.c. 5). The fact that Ex. 1.2 ii

⁴³ See, for example, Kaczyński, *Conversations*, pp. 60-62.

is a tone lower than Ex. 1.2 i would not therefore alter its fundamental harmonic character, i.e., its ‘quality’.⁴⁴ In Lutosławski’s view, an intervallic ‘quality’ will be noted by listeners regardless of (or at least ahead of) its specific pitch content.

Ex. 1.2: Different twelve-note chords with exactly the same ‘quality’



To illustrate the ‘qualitative difference between intervals’ in his ‘Pitch’ lecture, Lutosławski provided a range of examples from his then recent pieces. From the *Five Songs* (1956-7) he cites twelve-note chords rich in thirds (Ex. 1.3 i) in ‘Zima’

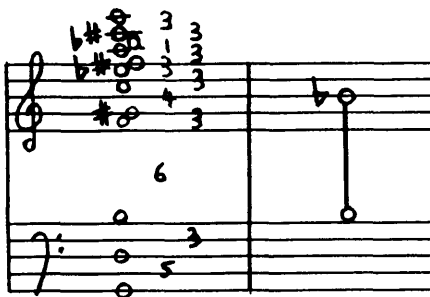
Ex. 1.3: Limited interval-class constructions from ‘Zima’ and ‘Wiatr’

The image shows three musical staves, labeled i), ii), and iii), each containing a twelve-note chord. Staff i) is in G major (one sharp) and staff ii) is in F major (one flat). Both chords are constructed from two octaves of a single interval, resulting in the same intervallic 'quality' despite the different pitch content. Fingerings are indicated by numbers 1-5. The chords are labeled i), ii), and iii) and are associated with the measures 'Start', 'b. 61', and 'b. 96' respectively.

⁴⁴ These two chords are taken from the earliest extant sketch for the harmonic underpinning of this event, which shows the higher transposition of the chord (Ex. 1.2 i) crossed out above the lower version (Ex. 1.2 ii), which appears in the final version of the score. Lutosławski’s sketch for the higher chord is annotated with the numbers shown in Ex. 1.2. See Thomas, ‘*Jeux vénitiens*’, pp. 223-4.

(‘Winter’), and aggregates constructed from minor seconds with major seconds (Ex. 1.3 ii) and from minor seconds (Ex. 1.3 iii) in ‘Wiatr’ (‘The Wind’); the last example actually pairs i.c.s 1 and 5.⁴⁵ He also highlights a contrast in ‘quality’ marking the climax of the ‘Apogée’ in *Musique funèbre*. At the highpoint of the piece, Lutosławski explains, ‘sharp contrasts [are] achieved by placing side by side two chords of the twelfth [i.e., twelve-note chords] of a diametrically different working and a diametrically different structure’ (8). Example 1.4 shows these two twelve-note chords

Ex. 1.4: Climactic harmonies in *Musique funèbre*, ‘Apogée’, start



and the adjacent i.c.s (one is almost an all-i.c. chord, the other is a semitone cluster) which produce, in Lutosławski’s view, their distinct ‘qualities’.

It is possible to draw together a basic taxonomy of the ‘qualities’ which occur most frequently in Lutosławski’s music, some of which come ready assigned with evocative titles coined by their creator. Describing the ‘quality’ of certain textures in *Mi-parti* (1975-6) to Kaczyński, for instance, Lutosławski referred to one type as ‘warm’ or ‘mild’ and to another as ‘ice-cold’:

⁴⁵ These are not Lutosławski’s actual examples. The lecture manuscript does not specify which chords he was referring to, so illustrative examples from the relevant pieces have been selected.

The first pages of the *Mi-parti* score show that the harmony is based on twelve-note chords where thirds predominate... On the other hand, the chord which I call 'ice-cold' [the woodwind and brass chord sustained after the climax of the work at Fig. 40] consists of tritones and perfect fifths; it is the absence of thirds that produces this 'ice-cold' effect.⁴⁶

Elsewhere, he refers to the i.c. pairing 2+5 as 'cold' in contrast to sonorities with more than three different types of adjacent i.c.s, which he considers 'grey'.⁴⁷

Stucky provides a number of examples of 'icy' chords constructed of the adjacent i.c.s 1, 5 and 6, and he also lists recurring harmonies with alternative 'qualities' relating to their preponderance of major seconds (i.c. 2) or a mixture of major and minor thirds (i.c.s 3 and 4), although he does not give their respective temperatures.⁴⁸ Rust identifies these limited i.c. 'qualities' as 'ice-cold', 'cold' and 'warm' respectively.⁴⁹ A number of Stucky's examples are reproduced in Ex. 1.5 i. Rae gives examples of a number of further 'qualities' pairing different combinations of i.c. (see Ex. 1.5 ii).⁵⁰ It might be possible to arrange these 'qualities' into a continuum running between 'ice-cold' and 'hot'. Some of the i.c. pairings in Ex. 1.5, perhaps, could be posited as tepid or cool 'qualities' somewhere between the two extremes. Yet Lutosławski himself used inconsistent terms to describe the same 'qualities' in different compositional contexts. Talking to Varga about the 'Fugue' in *Preludes and Fugue*, for instance, Lutosławski called the 'cold' quality (2+5), which dominates the fugue's bridging episodes, 'consonant' or 'serene', while referring to the 'quality' (1+6) articulated by the intervening fugal subjects as 'dissonant':

⁴⁶ Kaczyński, *Conversations*, p. 118.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 60-1.

⁴⁸ Stucky, *Lutosławski*, p. 116-7.

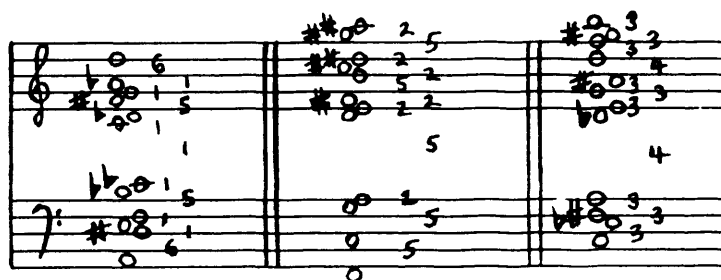
⁴⁹ Rust, 'A Theory of Form', p. 17.

⁵⁰ Other characteristic Lutosławski harmonic constructions include chord-aggregates (see Rae, *The Music of Lutosławski*, pp. 52-6) and a selection of harmonies apparently derived from chords Lutosławski had particularly liked in other composers' pieces. For a discussion of this latter strategy see Charles Bodman Rae, 'The Role of the Major-Minor Chord in Panufnik's Compositional Technique', in Jadwiga Pajastach, ed., *Andrzej Panufnik's Music and Its Reception* (Kraków: Musica Iagellonica, 2003), pp. 138-39.

in the bridge passage of the fugue, I deliberately used vertical and horizontal (sometimes both) sequences consisting of perfect fifths, fourths and major seconds, which have a pure serene atmosphere. In a figurative sense, I might also say a 'consonant' mood, as opposed to 'dissonant'. These bridge passages are contrasted with some themes of the fugue which are based on tritones and minor seconds, and exude the opposite atmosphere.⁵¹

Ex. 1.5: Lutosławski chords with different 'qualities'

i) Jeux vénitiens: iii/R Sym. No. 2: ii/112 Paroles tissées: 47



ii) Jeux vén: iv/C Jeux vén: iv/D Pr. & F: 60



Livre pour orchestre: 102 Sym. No. 2: 153



⁵¹ Varga, *Lutosławski Profile*, pp. 21-2.

Rather than resorting to temperature metaphors, one might therefore alternatively posit Lutosławski's range of 'qualities' as stretching between a post-tonal rethinking of harmonic consonance (i.c.s 2+5) and dissonance (i.c.s 1+6).

Another arbiter of changes to 'quality' in a given compositional context, however, is instrumentation. Continuing to discuss the 'ice-cold' chord after the climax of *Mi-parti* with Kaczyński, Lutosławski noted that

'ice[-]cold' chords constitute the basis of the prologue and the epilogue in *Musique funèbre*; but their effect on the listener is not the same, as the instrumentation is different. The strings produce a totally different atmosphere – while the chords remain almost the same. The long vertical notes of the wind instruments [in *Mi-parti*] produce this 'ice-cold' effect.⁵²

This implies that looking for stable formal or expressive meanings in relation to different 'qualities', let alone attempting to organize a continuum of such harmonies, could prove futile. Lutosławski himself confirmed that

all these terms, even the ones I have used myself... are just temporary, workaday descriptions. I won't insist that a particular chord is 'warm' and another one is 'cold' or 'ice-cold'. The somewhat superficial associations of sounds are responsible for these descriptions.⁵³

The function of the 'quality' articulated by a harmony, melody or texture, therefore, may relate primarily to the precise compositional context in which it occurs and its subsequent role in a piece, as opposed to a stable set of metaphorical or conventional associations.⁵⁴

⁵² Kaczyński, *Conversations*, pp. 118-9. Rae also notes the 'local harmony' created by Lutosławski's different orchestrations of the layers in a chord aggregate (see Rae, *The Music of Lutosławski*, pp. 52-6). A fine example of such layers can be heard at the opening of Symphony No. 3.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, p. 118.

⁵⁴ This is not to suggest, however, that Lutosławski might not sometimes have drawn on the topical associations of certain interval-class pairings, or invested certain 'qualities', in his own mind, with a specific iconic function. See, respectively, the discussion of the i.c. 1+6 pairing in Maja Trochimczyk, '“Dans la Nuit”: The Themes of Death and Night in Lutosławski's *Oeuvre*', in Skowron, ed., *Lutosławski Studies*, pp. 96-124, and Nikolska's take on the centripetal or centrifugal role of sonorities rich (not

Lutosławski told Rust that, through the use of different ‘qualities’,
you can achieve something that in a certain sense may replace the
keys in tonal music. We have no minor, no major now in our
twelve-note chromaticism.⁵⁵

He then provided a specific example from the opening of his String Quartet (1964):

WL: Up to [the point the other players join in, the first violin] doesn’t
play any intervals other than minor seconds and tritones, or their
variations... There are no other intervals in the melody and it gives a
certain... quality is the best term...

DR: So it’s the harmonic contrast that replaces tonally functioning
harmony?

WL: Not function. Function is a little misleading, but character of
different keys – that means major and minor. Yet there are many
more harmonic characters than that in [my] music. There are many
more, I should say, qualities.⁵⁶

Lutosławski’s use of the word ‘character’ here appears merely to be an attempt to evoke
the greater similarity between his different ‘qualities’ and changes of mode (as opposed
to changes of key) in tonal music. The word ‘character’, however, also recalls his
description of the impact of the entry of a ‘narrative’ (‘static’) event in ‘Problems’ (i.e.,
‘The entry of [a] new narration section is like the entry of a new character in a drama’).
Given that ‘key ideas’ are most likely to occur in ‘static’ sections, it therefore seems
reasonable to suggest that if ‘key ideas’ are the characters in Lutosławski’s musical
plots, then their most notable characteristics must consist, at least some of the time, of
articulating a specific ‘quality’.

It may be possible that some ‘qualities’ in Lutosławski’s music have tangible
expressive effects drawing on earlier conventions of consonance or dissonance, for
example, which would be recognised by Lutosławski’s listening community; other

necessarily, unusually in Lutosławski’s harmonic thinking, between adjacent pitches) in major sevenths
or minor ninths; see Nikolska, ‘Melodia’.

⁵⁵ Rust, ‘Conversation’, p. 214.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 215.

recurring harmonic constructions might achieve ‘iconic’ meanings, in Raymond Monelle’s sense,⁵⁷ within that community through familiarity with the composer’s stated intentions, such as his use of what he termed ‘centrifugal’ (rich in minor ninths) and ‘centripetal’ chords (rich in major sevenths) respectively to suggest instability or stability.⁵⁸ It seems reasonable, however, to propose that the primary role of ‘qualities’ in an *akcja* could relate to the musical plots formed by the interaction, evolution and transformation of Lutosławski’s ‘key ideas’, the characters ‘clothed’ in the costumes of his different ‘qualities’. Quite how such ‘key ideas’ might hold the germinal seed for an entire composition remains to be answered, not least because the ‘Pitch’ lecture, like ‘Problems’, remains silent on this matter. Other scholars, though, have discussed ways in which shifts in i.c. ‘quality’ might articulate both formal and expressive effects in Lutosławski’s pieces. Their work may therefore be consulted to begin to deduce ways in which a ‘key idea’ might spread its influence, radioactively, through an *akcja*.

Qualities in action

Rust and Rae both view ‘quality’ as one important means by which Lutosławski created structuring contrasts between different sections of a musical form. For Rae, in fact, ‘Lutosławski’s sound-world, that synthesis of the conceptual and the compositional, is essentially one of contrasts’, including ‘contrasts of intervallic character and interval combinations’.⁵⁹ He gives a paradigmatic example of this from the last of the *Five Songs*, ‘Dzwony Cerkiewne’ (Orthodox Church Bells), in which Lutosławski sets words by Kazimiera Iłakowicz contrasting ‘bells when they are singing’ and ‘when they are angry’:

⁵⁷ See Raymond Monelle, *The Sense of Music* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000), pp. 17-19.

⁵⁸ See n. 54.

⁵⁹ Rae, ‘Lutosławski’s Sound-World’, p. 16.

[Lutosławski's] musical setting takes this sonic, poetic image and represents it through very clearly defined contrasts in the melody (the vocal-line begins smoothly but then becomes very angular), in the harmony (the three components of the first twelve-note chord are rich in minor thirds and tritones, whereas in the four components of the second twelve-note chord major sevenths and minor ninths predominate), as well as dynamics and attack.⁶⁰

Rae links such instances of 'quality' contrast to a 'binary subdivision in [Lutosławski's] musical thinking' and thus to the more general critical notion of the 'compositional creed'⁶¹ alluded to above regarding the idea of a stark dichotomy between form and content in Lutosławski's music and thought. Rae therefore argues that Lutosławski's contrasts of 'quality' juxtapose 'different pairings of intervals in order to provide a kind of substitute for the properties of key change in building successive stages of the form'.⁶² Alongside stark contrasts, however, Rae also notes the possibility inherent in this approach of 'introducing changes of interval pairing more gradually by changing only one of the interval classes in a particular pair'.⁶³

As Rae admits, however, 'Lutosławski's sound-world is not *only* about contrasts'⁶⁴ and, in light of Lutosławski's comments in 'Problems', one might concede a need to go further in seeking to define the ways in which Lutosławski's deployment of 'qualities' could achieve more nuanced structural effects than enabling stark juxtapositions such as those between the 'singing' and 'angry' bells. One might also consider the fact that his realisation of the contradiction in Iłakowicz's poem, and the examples Lutosławski himself gave in his 'Pitch' lecture, are from relatively early in his mature period. They therefore stem from a time when one might expect startling but

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 35.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p. 23.

⁶² As noted above, changes of mode, i.e., major to minor, might be the more appropriate analogy here.

Ibid., p. 28.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, p. 28.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 34.

perhaps also somewhat brash harmonic effects to be one result of Lutosławski's grappling with his new approach to pitch organisation.

As well as seeking localized contrasts, Rust notes 'quality' affinities between non-contiguous sections in Lutosławski forms. His approach to the issue of harmony in Lutosławski's mature music is to

create inventories of pitch-class sets, based upon criteria of intervallic structure, whose constituent members would be likely candidates for a specific warm, cold or ice-cold label. Such a categorization will help us recognize harmonic affinities between temporally remote passages in longer works.⁶⁵

Given the 'workaday' nature of Lutosławski's labels, the different functions of such 'qualities' when they appear in different instrumentations, and the fact that he used more than three 'qualities', one might ponder the ultimate usefulness of this reductive approach. One might also wonder about the extent to which affinities less apparent to the ear and perhaps only recoverable through a derivation of pitch-class set theory are significant, the aural perceptibility of the differences between intervals having apparently been the primary inspiration for Lutosławski's invention of his 'qualities'. Nonetheless, as with Rust's approach to textural complexity, his committed structuralism yields interesting analytical results. Utilizing Allen Forte's rules for genus formation,⁶⁶ Rust posits 'warm', 'cold' and 'ice-cold' genera in which three-note p.c. sets ('warm' 3-11; 'cold' 3-5; 'ice-cold' 3-7 and 3-9) with the appropriate i.c. content for each 'quality' are 'embedded' within groups of tetrachords, pentads and hexachords. He then presents analyses of sections from Lutosławski pieces including *Mi-parti* and *Chain 2* in which a genus is 'prolonged' as a source 'quality' for a portion of the form – a potential allusion to the basic structuring role of tonal (or modal) areas.

⁶⁵ Rust, 'A Theory of Form', p. 19.

⁶⁶ Allen Forte, 'Pitch-Class Set Genera and the Origin of Modern Harmonic Species', *Journal of Music Theory* 32/2 (Fall 1988), pp. 187-270.

For example, shifts from ‘ice-cold’ to ‘warm’ at different climactic moments in *Chain 2*, Rust argues, such as the piece’s main climax at Fig. 115, form a bold contrast which ‘bolsters their dramatic portent’⁶⁷ while helping the listener to hear a structural association between these events. This suggests an appealing link between harmony’s expressive and formal roles in Lutosławski’s music. One can certainly imagine a jarring shift from one ‘quality’ to another inducing powerful intimations of drama. The familiar trope concerning the form and content dichotomy, however, dominates Rust’s reading of Lutosławski’s harmonic approach, which he views as primarily expressive, and structural only to the extent that its shifts in ‘quality’ can imply broad-brush contrasts and sectional relationships. Rapid fluctuations in genus, Rust explains, accompany all of the climactic moments in *Chain 2*, such as Fig. 14-15 in the first movement, where ‘warm’ and ‘ice-cold’ harmonies alternate in quick succession.⁶⁸ By contrast, he claims, ‘harmonically unstable dramatic moments were [typically] followed by more stable passages that provided relief for the weary listener’, thanks to their use of ‘primarily one type of harmony in order to highlight the section’s singular musical identity’.⁶⁹

The basic observations here are analytically sound and useful. Rapid shifts could be heard to imply disequilibrium, while a stable ‘quality’ could suggest a resolution into relative harmonic equilibrium. In this way, Rust paves the way for the connection his thesis forges between the tonic-‘narrative’/dominant-‘non-narrative’ neo-Maliszewskian characters discussed above and his attempt to reduce form and content in Lutosławski’s music to a singular expressive purpose, in which all of the elements combine to articulate post-tonal equivalents to tonic-dominant shifts. Noting the

⁶⁷ Rust, ‘A Theory of Form’, p. 41.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 38.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 42.

structural association of climactic points in *Chain 2*, however, may indicate further possibilities for the analysis of Lutosławski's 'qualities' and their roles in his plots.

If the 'quality' aggregations created by different i.c. pairings, for example, can be thought of as being equivalent to different keys or modes in tonal music, could initial presentations of a 'quality' (or a pair of 'qualities') outline harmonic tensions to be explored over the course of a piece? If so, this could be one manner in which one might begin to think of 'key ideas', cloaked in a distinctive intervallic 'quality', as influencing or even generating the course of entire compositions. One might, for instance, consider the possibility of preliminary 'static' events reflecting, anticipating or inaugurating larger-scale shifts in 'quality' through an unstable local detail of pitch organisation. Ambiguous or greyer i.c. 'qualities' implying a need for purification, events articulating a single 'quality' but intriguingly implying another, or a search for affinities between initially contrasted 'qualities' (embodied perhaps in more than one 'key idea') might also be considered compositional possibilities. In this view, a 'key idea' would be the encapsulation (a harmony, a motive, a texture, etc.) of a question of 'quality', the working through of which could constitute an *akcja*'s principal 'static' events and generate a good deal of its expressive and formal force.

Discussing his analyses of tonal sonatas with Nikolska, Lutosławski explained the findings which had most interested him:

How does the composer use his musical thoughts and devices[?] How does he develop it all? How – in terms of proportionality – does he introduce new musical ideas into his musical construction[?]... Music abiding by the laws of perception keeps the listener in readiness, it is fraught with surprise, it bears new information; it must not lack consistency, though – it should not be a disconnected conglomeration of this and that and yet another thing.⁷⁰

⁷⁰ Nikolska, *Conversations*, p. 107.

Statements such as this suggest that it is worth considering the ways in which Lutosławski may have sought to develop germinal musical thoughts or ‘key ideas’ (at ground level) while simultaneously considering the ways in which the form of a composition might reflect the nature of those ideas (as if viewed from the air). One might, for instance, imagine such considerations leading to a point at which theoretical divisions between form and content in his finest music become gainfully blurred – gainful, at least, from the polemical perspective of arguing for Lutosławski’s success as a composer who created solid musical content and, within his own style, structures which avoid becoming disconnected conglomerations of this and that.

Supporting evidence in favour of such an investigation can be gleaned from a better-known Lutosławski lecture. Written several years after the Tanglewood set, ‘Notes on the Construction of Large-Scale Closed Forms’ (c. 1967)⁷¹ discusses ways in which dramatic situations from extra-musical realms might be borrowed to invigorate the presentation and development of the ideas constituting a purely musical plot. As the later lecture adds nuance to the approach to understanding *akcja* one can begin to hypothesize in response to Lutosławski’s 1962 presentations, it must therefore be carefully examined in the context of the present investigation.

‘Notes on the Construction of Large-Scale Closed Forms’

In the field of Lutosławski studies, ‘Notes on the Construction of Large-Scale Closed Forms’ has attained a talismanic, near mythical, status. Often cited, occasionally quoted, rarely discussed in depth or at length, it could nonetheless be argued to have

⁷¹ This lecture can be dated to the first half of 1967 because, although it references both movements of Symphony No. 2 (1965-7), which was premiered in its completed form in June 1967, it does not use the term *akcja*, which Lutosławski only began to deploy (as detailed below) in mid-to-late 1967.

asserted a significant influence on writings about the composer. The concerns discussed in this lecture, for example, while hardly representative of the entirety of Lutosławski's creative aesthetic – it does not mention, for instance, 'key ideas' and intervallic 'quality' – do seem to tally with the literature's claims for a dichotomy between shape and substance in his music. This may relate to the focus of the lecture and to Lutosławski's originally intended purposes in delivering it.

'Notes' was envisaged for presentation at the Darmstadt Summer School and so for a pedagogical purpose akin to Lutosławski's reasons for writing 'Problems'. However, it would also have been delivered in a context in which Lutosławski could have expected to receive a more informed and critical reception (at least in comparison to Tanglewood). He can consequently be seen to be pre-emptively fighting his aesthetic corner in this lecture and becoming more openly polemical than was often the case in his public statements. In fighting that corner, moreover, Lutosławski focuses on just one side of his approach to constructing a musical form. The upshot is a distortion of his compositional project that, given the relative familiarity of this text, could be one root of the 'dichotomy' trope.

Without using the terms directly, 'Notes' primarily discusses 'dynamic' events as opposed to the pivotal 'static' events to and from which 'dynamic' sections lead. Lutosławski appears to have done this in order to deal with rudimentary compositional matters of a potentially wide stylistic applicability while concurrently seeking to persuade other musicians of the value of recapturing certain aspects of past formal archetypes and their concomitant modes of listener perception. To achieve this, he demonstrates ways in which elements common to a variety of musical styles can be manipulated to induce comparable effects regardless of a composer's individual musical

style. The lecture's obvious concomitant shortcoming is that it does not then discuss to and from what such sections might lead because it focuses on 'dynamic' events and other similar devices but not, for the most part, on the content of a composition's moments of prime significance (i.e., in Lutosławski's case, 'static' events developing 'key ideas'). Consequently, it seems plausible that the dissemination of this lecture, which Lutosławski ultimately did not deliver at Darmstadt but 'toured' widely in the late 1960s and early 1970s,⁷² could have played a part in developing the view of his music in which the expressive demands of large-scale form are seen to dominate the working through of substantial musical content with reflexive connotations for a piece's overall structure.

When considered in the context of a wider range of Lutosławski's statements, however, and especially his 1962 lectures on form and pitch organisation, 'Notes' can be read to add further detail to the sense of *akcja* emerging from his earlier texts. First, Lutosławski explores ways in which fresh or refreshed musical conventions can be manipulated to engage a listener's powers of anticipating and remembering significant events in a composition. Second, he discusses his adaptation of other conventions from extra-musical sources. These so-called 'borrowings' are fascinating because, on the one hand, they relate to the shaping of content as much as form and because, on the other hand, they involve extra-musical resonances which could be heard to supplement the primarily harmonic and thematic signifiers of his musical plots. Whether Lutosławski ever publicly presented the sections of his 'Notes' lecture on 'borrowings' is uncertain, however, as the passages in which he deals with conventions adapted from extra-musical sources have been bracketed and, in one place, crossed out entirely in the

⁷² See, for example, the discussion of a British delivery of this lecture in the early 1970s in Philip Wilby, 'Lutosławski and a View of Musical Perspective', in John Paynter, Tim Howell, Richard Orton and Peter Seymour, eds, *Companion to Contemporary Music Thought* (London: Routledge, 1992), pp. 1127-45.

lecture manuscript. The following survey of the lecture's contents will therefore begin by examining the polemical backdrop against which Lutosławski contextualizes his main points. It then discusses 'once-only conventions' and other ways in which Lutosławski depicts his emulation of rhetorical effects from tonal music. Finally, it turns to the contentious issue of his 'borrowings' and Lutosławski's discussion of this matter in relation to his String Quartet.

Active and passive perception

Lutosławski begins 'Notes' with a plea for musical comprehensibility and the composition of new pieces capable of involving, as opposed to baffling or boring, contemporary audiences:

When composing large-scale closed forms, I always remember that what I am principally engaged in doing is organizing the process of perception of the work. To my mind a piece of music is not only an arrangement of sounds in time but also the set of impulses transmitted by those sounds to the listener and the reactions those impulses awake in him. (1)

Lutosławski clearly did care if people listened beyond the summer schools and university campuses,⁷³ and in order to clarify the kind of music he advocated to reach such an audience, his lecture goes on to draw a distinction between two types of engagement that music can shape, the 'active' and the 'passive':

The latter is how I would qualify the variety in which the listener's attention is totally absorbed by what he is hearing at a given moment. Active perception, on the other hand, occurs when a part of the listener's attention is, at certain moments, occupied in assimilating what he has heard earlier or in anticipating, foreseeing, waiting for what he is about to hear. (1)

⁷³ One might, in other words, contrast his views with Milton Babbitt in 'Who Cares If You Listen?' (1958), repr. in Gilbert Chase, ed., *The American Composer Speaks: a Historical Anthology, 1770-1965* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1966), pp. 234-44.

Lutosławski's vocabulary here is, once again, inadvertently confusing.⁷⁴ It seems initially perplexing, for example, that Lutosławski's description of 'passive' perception sounds so close to the listener's absorption in 'static' events which he deemed to be vital in 'Problems'. Clearly, however, the two states cannot be comparable. One might well be absorbed in listening to a 'static' event, but that absorption includes allowing one's mind to range 'actively' back and forth through one's memories and anticipations of a piece in an attempt to connect unfolding musical thoughts to other significant events. In Lutosławski's music, musical 'stasis' leads to 'active' perception. 'Active' perception is what is required if one is to experience a chain of events as a musical plot.

Precise vocabulary aside, in comparison to 'Problems' Lutosławski's polemical barbs are both sharper and subtler in 'Notes'. Discussing recent music he hears as invoking a uniformly 'passive' response, Lutosławski's statement that such work is going through an interesting evolution and 'reaching a high level of distinction' barely veils the pejorative tone of his ensuing description. This account could not only be applied to his personal bugbear, Moment-form – Lutosławski makes a double-edged reference here to Stockhausen and his 'distinguished achievements in this field' – but also taken to reflect his views on other serial, chance-based and improvisatory approaches to formal construction:

A composer working in this vein strings together a series of sound occurrences which follow in no consequential order without revealing any ulterior pattern which might guide the process of perception. All that matters is the 'now' of audition; no other effort is needed for the perception of the music except that required by listening at a given moment. (2)

⁷⁴ A confusion along these lines was experienced, in the present author's judgement, by Wilby in 'Lutosławski and a View of Musical Perspective'; his report inverts the meanings of 'active' and 'passive' listening.

Lutosławski's aesthetically insensitive dismissal of so much music groups a multitude of disparate approaches under the umbrella of some kind of modernist Muzak. Because such pieces are impossible or undesirable to follow expressively or structurally, Lutosławski implies, all the audience can do is go with the flow – thereby experiencing, one might counter, the alternative conceptions of musical event, form and time some pieces were designed to invoke. Read as music criticism, the limitations of Lutosławski's statements are obvious (if admirably fearless, given his lecture's intended point of delivery in the lion's den of musical high modernism); as an illuminating contrast to the approach he deems more valuable, however, they remain useful.

Lutosławski explains the lack of perceptibly consequential relationships in music that engenders a 'passive' response partly through the absence of conventions akin to those he hears marshalling the quasi-logic of tonal pieces. The absence of readily perceptible musical logic is, obviously, the other main sticking point:

Now in the case of music the idea of a consequential relationship is very mistily defined. In contrast to logic, mathematics and so on, music does not deal in unambiguous elements, or indeed in any elements at all that have some meaning other than a conventional one. Accordingly the notion of a consequential relationship can be applied to music only metaphorically: the elements hang together solely on the strength of accepted, familiar convention, and their concatenation bears only a passing resemblance to the relationship between cause and effect. It works only if there exists a convention to which the listener is sufficiently well-attuned for the composer to be able to create the illusion of something self-evident with all the persuasiveness of a logical chain of reasoning. (2)

These are astute observations, acknowledging that musical logic is at best a game of consequentiality involving culturally encoded conventions and make-believe on the part of both creators and perceivers. Lutosławski's statement also implies his personal commitment to searching for ways of creating musical plots 'with all the persuasiveness of a logical chain of reasoning' through his work on 'key ideas', 'qualities' and so forth.

Lutosławski's concern in 'Notes', however, is not with musical logic, but rather on ways of rousing listeners to the fact that such processes may be occurring in the first place. His concentration is therefore focussed on the rhetorical means available to contemporary composers 'for stimulating both the listener and his powers of anticipation' (1). The modern composer seeking to compose a large-scale closed form, Lutosławski states, must 'find ways of activating the listener's memory and anticipation despite the absence of recognised conventions which could serve as a cue' (4). One must, in other words, re-imagine the rhetoric as well as the logic of tonal music.

Once-only and other conventions

In 'Notes' Lutosławski states that he has recently been 'hunting' for devices with which to 'activate' listeners, describing one of his main discoveries as the 'once-only convention'. Lutosławski explains that '“once-only conventions” serve chiefly to stimulate the listener's powers of anticipating what is about to take place in a work... their purpose is to direct the attention forward, that is, into the immediate future' (6). These are the kind of events that he described in 'Problems' as being 'dynamic'. They achieve their effect of 'jogging the listener into anticipation of what may be about to occur [through] the introduction of changes which are of a continuing nature and point in a single specific direction' (9). In this context, he conspicuously contrasts 'once-only conventions' to 'passages which might be called static' (9).

The nature of 'once-only conventions' has been widely misunderstood in the literature to date, perhaps as a result of the limited access to this lecture that was possible during the composer's lifetime. Rae, who did briefly consult the lecture manuscript, provides a representative account. He claims that the simplest form of

‘once-only convention’ is a repeated idea established in a Lutosławski work ‘in order to play with the listener’s expectation of its recurrence’ and gives examples including the repeated octave Cs in the String Quartet and the oboe refrain in *Epitaph* (1979).⁷⁵ Rae is correct to link the term to Lutosławski’s ‘desire to simulate effects typical of music composed within the general framework of tonal conventions’⁷⁶ but wrong to give this particular definition. Such recurring features certainly exist, but they need to be reclassified, probably as a characteristic variety of interventional or refrain-like ‘key idea’. Yet Lutosławski’s unfortunate terminology must take the bulk of the blame here for any misunderstanding. As Lutosławski’s description in ‘Notes’ makes clear, such gestures are unique (‘once-only’) merely to the degree that they are individual compositional realisations of well-worn musical conventions. Thus the term ‘once-only convention’ is somewhat paradoxical.

Some of Lutosławski’s examples of ‘once-only conventions’ in ‘Notes’ achieve their effects through rudimentary means; others are more musically sophisticated. The ten-second crescendo from *piano* to *forte* at Fig. 89 in the first movement of *Trois poèmes d’Henri Michaux* (1962-3), for example, creates a (‘dynamic’) expectation of immanent arrival at a significant (‘static’) event because ‘loudness has its limits and we realise that it will not be long before these are reached’ (9). This expectation is duly satisfied when the choir enters with a fifteen-second limited-aleatory texture based around a resplendent twelve-note sonority (pairing i.c.s 2 and 5) and the words ‘Pensées à la nage merveilleuse’. Yet a ‘once-only convention’ might ‘take place not only within the span of short sections but also in the course of whole stages in the development of a large-scale form’ (11). Lutosławski stresses the crucial importance of this possibility in

⁷⁵ Rae, ‘Pitch Organisation’, p. 32.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 32.

the broader shaping of a composition, demonstrating how he imagined ways in which larger spans of his music, made up at the local level of variegated textures and ideas, could gradually accrue a sort of macro-dynamism (and not necessarily solely in the form of a macro-rhythmic *accelerando*). He gives the example of 'Direct', the second movement of Symphony No. 2:

the rhythm, tempo and, to some extent, the scoring undergo a parallel, gradual transformation over a period of fifteen or so minutes. This transformation acts as a kind of scaffolding supporting the whole form. It consists of several sections with a great deal of variety, all of them, however, subordinated to a common principle which enables them to come over as a single whole. (11)

The 'common principle' is dynamism, which in 'Direct' is created by the accumulating wave of development that makes the movement such a contrast to its predecessor, 'Hésitant'.

In contrast to 'once-only conventions', which are designed to compel the listener to anticipate what will happen next, Lutosławski also discusses the need for devices capable of directing the listener's thinking 'back into the immediate past, to make him recall what he has just heard and instinctively piece together a section of music' (6). They therefore provide an opportunity 'actively' to gather one's thoughts and summarize a section's contents before perceiving the next part of a piece. To achieve this, Lutosławski suggests, composers 'can fall back on certain typical mental reactions which have been partly shaped by the old musical conventions' (6), and particularly on musical devices capable of replicating the function of the cadence in tonal music.

The most obvious solution, he says, is to insert a hiatus, thereby giving 'the listener a chance to take brief stock of the preceding passage and prime himself for the next one' (6). He gives as an example of this effect the brief pause between Fig. 4 and 5

in Symphony No. 2. Another quasi-cadential effect can be achieved, Lutosławski suggests, through ‘changes in tempo, dynamics, tone-colour, disposition of sounds and so on’ (7), as long as those changes occur suddenly, as at the change from section A to B in the first movement of *Jeux vénitiens* (which encourage one ‘actively’ to experience those sections as independently significant musical events).

Lutosławski also indicates a large-scale punctuation device capable, he proposes, of causing us ‘automatically [to] fuse in our memory everything that has gone before from the very beginning’ (8). As an example of this, he cites the entrance of the voice in Beethoven’s Symphony No. 9 (1817-23), ‘which immediately defines the previous movements as a separate whole, that is as the instrumental part of the symphony’ (8). A perhaps more acute analytical example relates to Pierre Boulez’s *Le Marteau sans maître* (1953-5) and the moment when, Lutosławski notes, low tam-tam pitches are heard for the first time and ‘we become fully aware that everything beforehand has taken place in a medium and high register’ (8). Both of these examples can be related to Lutosławski’s own compositional practice and not least to the change of tessitura and orchestration that marks the start of ‘Direct’.

Borrowings

In comparison to the more forthright observations elsewhere in ‘Notes’, the self-censorship implied by Lutosławski’s bracketing and (in the case of one concluding reference) crossing-out of sections referring to the topic of extra-musical ‘borrowings’ in the ‘Notes’ manuscript is fascinating. These sections do not seem to have been bracketed merely to expedite delivery of the lecture. Like most of Lutosławski’s other lecture scripts, ‘Notes’ is sixteen pages long without the cuts. Perhaps because he

considered such issues to be perfumed with the scent of romanticism, he was reticent to discuss them in Darmstadt or elsewhere; this might have been a factor in the apparent edits. Yet these musical devices are also rather different from the other conventions discussed in 'Notes', in that they are not merely rhetorical in their intended function: a 'borrowing' could affect either 'static' or 'dynamic' events. Lutosławski's editing might therefore reflect this disparity and an awareness that his lecture fails convincingly to tie together its two main themes. However, his apparent uncertainty about the wisdom of including these comments probably related primarily to his fear that broaching such matters would lead his critics into programmatic temptation.

Lutosławski immediately signals that he wishes to downplay his 'borrowings':

The second, much less important, area into which the search for ways of organizing the perception of a large-scale form has taken me lies in the direction of borrowings from the other arts, principally the theatre. This can be fruitful when the aim is to create more intricate formal situations in which the simple, elementary once-only conventions I have mentioned are no longer enough. (5)

He then further qualifies his attention to these 'less important' matters, again stressing their minor role in his music while, at the same time, implying their significance:

Of course, looking beyond the boundaries of pure music for bearings in other spheres is something of a makeshift. But you have to remember that in the realm of pure music there cannot be found at present any durable, universally known conventions to which reference could be meaningfully made... In these circumstances, to venture outside music as such in search of some familiar phenomenon on whose sequence might be modelled the construction of a music form seems a natural reflex. The drawback with this procedure, of course, is not only that it detracts from the homogeneity of music but also that it is bound to be arbitrary in its methods of conveying the grammar of non-musical idioms into the language of music. This weakness is offset to some extent by the freshness that music gains through such transplants from the outside. (5-6)

Such statements toe the high modernist/formalist line, to a degree. Yet they also indicate how, for Lutosławski, the creation of musical ideas inspired by non-musical

concepts sometimes played a role in his compositional process. As he says, he ‘would rather not pass over these matters since they form an element in the process of composition’ (13). Nor, therefore, should a consideration of his concept of *akcja* pass over their limited but significant role in his music.

From a historical or biographical perspective, it may be noted that Lutosławski had enjoyed ample opportunity to examine and absorb conventions from the main source of his ‘borrowings’. Attending plays, even more so than attending concerts, was a primary means of artistic sustenance for Lutosławski throughout his life. For over a decade after World War II, however, the theatre was a much more literal source of provision. During this period, writing music for dramatic productions dominated Lutosławski’s output, at least in terms of the sheer volume of music he composed.⁷⁷ From 1946 to 1959, for example, he wrote incidental music for at least fourteen plays, mainly productions of Teatr Polski in Warsaw. These ranged from Shakespeare’s *Macbeth* (composed 1953, staged 1958) and Corneille’s tragedy *El Cid* (staged 1947-8, Lutosławski’s first post-war score for the theatre), to modern texts such as Lorca’s *The Shoemaker’s Prodigious Wife* (1954) and Polish works including Słowacki’s tragic-comedy *Fantazy* (1948).⁷⁸

The amount of music he produced for dramatic productions by Polish Radio during this period is even more staggering. Between c. 1948 and 1959 Lutosławski worked on at least seventy-seven productions, although not all of these were, strictly speaking, plays. The dramatic radio output falls into three categories: music for plays adapted or written for the radio, for poetry recitals, and for abridgments of books.

⁷⁷ An early Lutosławski manuscript of incidental music for *Haroun al-Rashid* (1931) by Janusz Makarczyk, a play about the eighth-century caliph featured in the *Thousand and One Nights*, is no longer extant.

⁷⁸ Scores from Lutosławski’s theatre music can be found in the Teatr Polski deposit at Warsaw University Library and in the Lutosławski Collection at the Paul Sacher Stiftung.

Consequently, the range of literary materials and performances to which he was exposed was even more diverse. For Polish Radio, Lutosławski provided music for productions ranging from ancient Greek plays and poems, including adaptations of Homer (Aleksander Maliszewski's 1945-50 *Odysseus's Return*) and Sophocles's *Antigone* (another A. Maliszewski adaptation, production date unknown), to more modern texts like Hemingway's *For Whom the Bell Tolls* (1950), Gogol's *The Inspector General* (1952, and incidentally one of Lutosławski's favourite plays) and versions of classic Polish works including Wyspiański's *The Wedding* (1952), Mickiewicz's *Pani Twardowska* and Tuwim's *Słowieńnie* (production dates unknown). A survey of these scores and their relevance to his mature concert music is beyond the remit of this thesis, not least because production details and recordings of the radio plays are prodigiously difficult to access. A few points may briefly be mentioned, though, in the context of his 'borrowings'.

First, some of Lutosławski's later pieces appear to have adapted musical ideas from his theatrical scores. Homma, for instance, has discovered a reference in the sketches to *Mi-parti* connecting it to a radio play score, *Magia* (a dramatic enactment of Theocritus's Second Idyll broadcast in 1953).⁷⁹ Second, some of his later music appears to draw directly on conventions with which Lutosławski worked directly when composing for radio and the stage. The most prominent of these could be his use of Greek chorus-like textures, as at the climax of Symphony No. 4. Research conducted for the present study has discovered, for example, that Lutosławski's music for a 1956 radio adaptation of Aristophanes' tragi-comic *Lysistrata* included a number of actual

⁷⁹ Martina Homma, 'On Inner Dialogue and Cross-Referencing, on Self-Reference and Cross-Reference, in Witold Lutosławski's Sketches', paper presented at the Symposium of the International Musicological Society 2004, Melbourne (14 July 2004). In this regard, one might look closely at connections between the flute melody in *Magia* and the flute line at Fig. 5 in *Mi-parti*.

choruses sung by members of the cast.⁸⁰ Third, one might imagine that Lutosławski's involvement in the creation of purely aural dramas at Polish Radio could have influenced his own creative path. The pacing of a radio play's most significant plot events through carefully regimented time; the economy of gesture and content required to present events in a drama; the way in which radio productions rely (to an even greater extent than the theatre) on the audience's capacity for imaginatively connecting and embellishing the narrative cues provided; the possibility of achieving all of this through sound alone: the impact on Lutosławski of his work for Polish Radio clearly requires more detailed assessment than is possible in the present context.

Lutosławski's 'borrowings' from these and other theatrical experiences, as discussed in his 'Notes' lecture, nonetheless appear to have had the following principal role. By adapting specific dramatic gestures and situations from the stage, literature, real-life and so on, he sought to inflect his musical plots in ways he considered to be fresh and interesting. Consequently, while such inspirations may be 'imprecise, slippery, arguable, and def[y] purely musical analysis' (13), as Lutosławski describes his 'borrowings' in 'Notes', they need not defy all analysis, including the interpretative skills of sympathetic listeners aware of the wealth of sources that Lutosławski drew upon in constructing his musical plots. His lecture points the way in this regard.

In the longest bracketed section of 'Notes', Lutosławski depicts the opening of his String Quartet as follows:

In its patterning there can be detected an analogy with a stage play. It opens with a soliloquy by the first violin. It is composed of a number of very brief phrases which are punctuated from time to time by a four-note refrain. Each of these phrases represents a separate musical idea, none of which are developed but instead are discarded after a brief while. The structure of the phrases is characteristic: each of

⁸⁰ The present author has obtained a recording of this and other adaptations from the archives of Polish Radio.

them starts with a fair amount of energy which is quickly exhausted.
(13-14)

He then expands upon the nature of this ‘borrowing’:

The rhythm is to a certain extent modelled on human speech with its typical inflections to match meaning and accent phrases, words and even syllables. It should not be supposed from this that the music is here intended actually to say something literally. All that it has borrowed from speech is its outward habit, its purely vocal features and the manner in which it flows in time. (14)

One might deduce from this description that the opening of the String Quartet ‘borrows’ the convention of the theatrical soliloquy to accentuate the presentation of certain musical ideas and, in particular, its germinal four-note cell.⁸¹ As the music combines a number of factors to give this impression, an analytical sketch of the String Quartet’s opening can therefore begin tentatively to address the question of how ‘borrowings’ might inflect other elements in an *akcja*.

The first violin begins alone (see Ex. 1.6), playing fragmentary ideas in which only i.c.s 1 and 6 are heard between its consecutive notes. A yet more restrictive idea, however, underlies this pattern-making: the germinal four-note cell in which consecutive semitones etch a minor-third cluster and to which the violin returns more explicitly each time one of its more ‘dynamic’ attempts at pattern-making runs out of energy. (The pitch construction of the passage reveals many interlocking versions of this four-note set: G, A flat, A, B flat, then E, E flat, D, D flat, then C, C sharp, D, E flat, etc.) In addition, it may be structurally significant that the line, after beginning on g, rises to a peak on g’’ at the height of the *poco avvivando* before slowly sinking back to an accommodating d flat’ midway between g and g’’ (G will become a pitch of

⁸¹ A comparison can be made here to the start of Lutosławski’s Cello Concerto. See Rae, *The Music of Lutosławski*, p. 93, who also makes this link and states that ‘the composer has referred to this solo [in the String Quartet] as a “monologue”, although its hesitant, introspective quality might be better styled as a “soliloquy”’ – Lutosławski’s precise choice of word in ‘Notes’.

*) Repeat the phrase between repeat marks until you see the audience has become completely quiet.

‘Actively’ combining the implications of the ‘soliloquy’ so far – as, following Lutosławski, the three-second hiatus at the end of the second stave encourages one to do – one might interpret the preceding music as follows. On the one hand, the piece’s first

⁸² This study follows the convention, when indicating specific registers, in which c = middle C, c' = the C an octave above middle C, C = the C an octave below middle C, C' = the octave below that, etc.

‘key idea’ has been highlighted by the ebb and flow of the ‘soliloquy’ model, which constantly returns to this motive during the passage’s stiller and thus more ‘static’ moments. On the other hand, the music is simultaneously seeking to become more ‘dynamic’ and thereby move beyond the restrictive stasis of a ‘key idea’ defined, at this stage, by the four-note set and, more generally, by the i.c. ‘quality’ 1+6 and a focus on the note G.

Urgent leaps pressurize the underlying motive during the ensuing *precipitando*, as impetuosity leads to a flowing developmental eloquence unattained in the first section of the ‘soliloquy’. This eloquence, crucially, begins to exceed the boundaries of the ‘key idea’ (statements of the four-note set overlap and distort) and the music’s nascent sense of pitch centre also starts to shift (significantly, for reasons that soon become apparent, to C). At the *tempo primo* after the *precipitando*, an even greater variety of dynamics, articulations and durations – in tandem with the music’s most declamatory and ‘theatrical’ gestures yet – can then be heard to continue the attempt to move beyond the restrictions of the ‘key idea’. The eerie suspension of dynamism in the ‘static’ series of *senza vibrato* E flats in the fifth staff also cuts against the grain of events thus far (while foreshadowing E flat’s significance later in the piece, most conspicuously at the start of the second movement). The soliloquist, it seems, keeps trying to do or say something different – i.e., something other than musical thoughts based around presenting its ‘key idea’ – but has not yet been successful in achieving the dynamism needed definitively to articulate arrival at another ‘static’ event and thus a new instalment in the piece’s embryonic musical plot.

In ‘Notes’, Lutosławski states that the ‘borrowing’ for the link between the end of the ‘soliloquy’ and Fig. 1, the next section of the String Quartet,



is a stage situation in which a character breaks off in mid-speech after a short sentence repeated more and more softly, having perhaps noticed the presence of other persons who are not supposed to hear what he has been saying. These other people then begin to speak. (14)

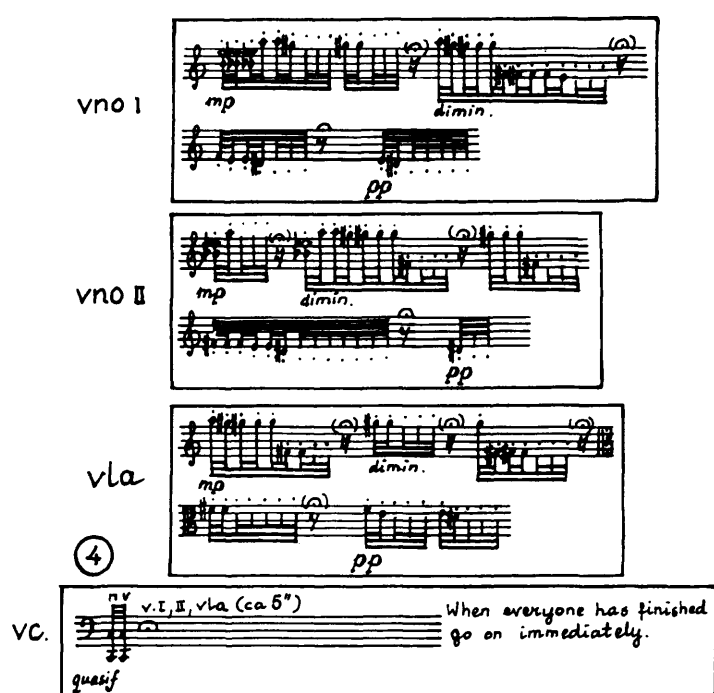
It seems unlikely that listeners could grasp the origins of this ‘borrowing’ and deduce that particular meaning. The textural contrast formed by the murmuring entry of the three other instruments, however, is a striking example of Lutosławski’s music gaining freshness from a ‘borrowing’. In this particular context, both what the new ‘people’ say and how they say it begins to clarify the tension between the first violin’s virtuoso efforts to develop new ideas and an obvious alternative: not trying to do so. The new situation begins at Fig. 1 as the second violin, viola and cello explore the quartertonal space between c and B’, thereby performing the most restricted examination yet of the semitonal building blocks behind the opening ‘key idea’. Tentative echoes of melodic leaps in the ‘soliloquy’ then develop in each part, but that is as far as the music progresses here. The dull *con sordino* tone, lacklustre rhythms and general lack of progression in the ensuing limited-aleatory texture create an apathetic antithesis to the more propulsive sections of the ‘soliloquy’.

As Lutosławski noted,

the listener might be led to imagine that this passage will run for a long time. The musical discourse is, however, abruptly cut short by the entry of the first violin. At the moment the energy [of this intervention] reaches its peak, with C having been repeated for the fifth time, there follows a three-second break, after which C is once more repeated piano. Once again there is a distinct analogy with a line spoken excitedly and suddenly broken off as a result of some outside factor or some inner psychological impulse. The final piano repetition of C brings the incursion of the first violin to an end and at the same time opens a new episode in which the first violin is joined by the viola and second violin. (15)

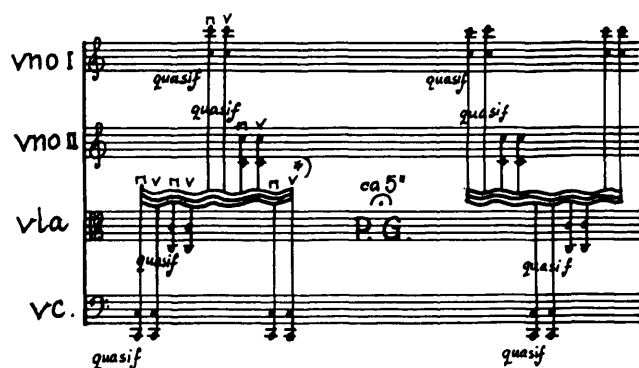
This description of Fig. 2 to 3 marks the end of Lutosławski's comments in his 'Notes' lecture on the String Quartet's 'borrowings'. He does not go on to mention, for instance, the aggressive *quasi forte* octave Cs initiated by the cello at Fig. 4, which then ricochet throughout the ensemble (see Ex. 1.7), calling the piece's initial progress to a

Ex. 1.7: String Quartet, Fig. 4



Ex. 1.7: String Quartet, Fig. 4. The score shows four staves: VNO I, VNO II, VLA, and VC. VNO I and VNO II have dynamics *mp*, *dimin.*, and *pp*. VLA has dynamics *mp* and *pp*. VC has a circled 4 and a note with *quasif* and *v.i., II, vla (ca 5°)* above it. A text box says "When everyone has finished go on immediately."

*) repetition of the same note



Ex. 1.7: String Quartet, Fig. 4. The score shows four staves: VNO I, VNO II, VLA, and VC. VNO I and VNO II have dynamics *quasif*. VLA has dynamics *quasif* and a wavy line. VC has dynamics *quasif* and a wavy line. A circled 4 is above the VC part. A text box says "ca 5°" and "P.G."

*) The waved line suggests unequal distances between entrances

halt. One might wonder, however, if Lutosławski had another theatrical ‘borrowing’ in mind here: a clandestine meeting scattered by a booming ‘who goes there?’. The freshness of this sudden shift to a diametrically opposed musical idea, like the juxtaposed sections at the start of the first movement of *Jeux vénitiens*, serves to define a refrain-like ‘key idea’ of importance during the remainder of the piece. Furthermore, it provides a rhetorical cadence-like gesture inviting the listener to ‘sum up’ that which has just been experienced while preparing to perceive the next instalment in the piece’s musical plot. Following the above line of thought, one might therefore be tempted to summarize events thus far as representing a tension between development and inertia, with the incursive cadential gesture signifying the piece’s most inert event yet and thereby crystallizing the tensions outlined in the music’s opening minutes. Listening to the remainder of the composition as a working through of the essential opposition characterized by the music’s two ‘key ideas’ is an interesting interpretative strategy.

Lutosławski’s ‘borrowings’ do not appear, therefore, to relate to programmatic plots ‘behind’ his pieces; or, if they occasionally do relate to something along those lines, helping his music unambiguously to communicate its creative sources and inspirations may not be their primary function. Like his occasional use of expressive topics, ‘borrowings’ do not reveal (to paraphrase V. Kofi Agawu) what Lutosławski’s music means; they do, however, play a role in determining how it means.⁸³ To discuss these matters in more detail it will obviously be necessary to theorize the interacting components of Lutosławski’s musical plots more robustly. Before that process commences, however, it remains imperative to consider the emergence of *akcja* as a specific term in Lutosławski’s discourses of the late 1960s. The value of this is two-

⁸³ V. Kofi Agawu, *Playing with Signs: A Semiotic Interpretation of Classic Music* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1991), p. 5.

fold. On the one hand, it permits a consideration of where this term came from at this particular point in Lutosławski's creative evolution. On the other, it forces one to consider how the traces of his concept of musical plot can be carried forward in this investigation, as it turns towards the development of a theoretically-grounded approach to the analysis of *akcja*.

Lutosławski's *akcja* epiphany: from *Poesis* to *poiesis*

Rust dates Lutosławski's first uses of the term 'action' to 1968 and to the aforementioned pair of American-published essays relating to the symphony.⁸⁴ The sources are correct but Rust's dating is imprecise. Close scrutiny of the source texts and their relationship to the matrix of documents from the late 1960s in which Lutosławski begins to talk of *akcja* reveals that the word had become part of his lexicon by the second half of 1967. The dating is important, because it marks an epiphany in the language he used to describe the ideas that one can see crystallizing in his lectures, therefore symbolizing the emergence of those concepts from the shadow of Maliszewski's ideas. The question of where precisely the term *akcja* came from, however, and how exactly it emerged in his statements and writings at this time, can be investigated for further interpretative resonances. This section explores these matters and then concludes by considering the nature of Lutosławski's personal understanding of *akcja*.

Lutosławski's interest in the theatre could easily have furnished him with the term *akcja*. One wonders, however, if there was a more specific prompt which led him

⁸⁴ Rust, 'A Theory of Form', p. 57.

to start talking of music as plot in the late 1960s. In 1973, for instance, he told Varga that he was

preoccupied with a classical piece, a Greek tragedy, looked at through the eyes of a 20th century [*sic*] man. It would not be an opera in the traditional sense of the word, but rather a stage oratorio, with some stage effects.⁸⁵

The precise text with which Lutosławski was preoccupied is currently unknown.

Documentation of talks with Scottish Opera in the 1970s, though, reveals certain classical subjects on his mind. In an exchange of letters, the Orpheus myth was cited as a guide to the kind of text Lutosławski was most interested in adapting.⁸⁶ His operatic concerns could therefore have led to a renewed concern for the theatre, its devices and terms. His particular interest in Greek myths and dramas, however, could at the same time have taken him in the direction of Aristotle.

At present there is no proof that Lutosławski ever read Aristotle's *Poetics*, the philosopher's treatise on tragic drama. Research undertaken for the present study has discovered that Lutosławski's private book collection, most of which remains intact in his former Warsaw home, does not seem to include a copy.⁸⁷ An impressive set of Polish translations of Aristotle's works has nonetheless been discovered there,⁸⁸ suggesting a keen interest in the philosopher's work, plus copies of the tragedies of Aeschylus, Euripides and Sophocles,⁸⁹ and a three-volume Polish history of philosophy

⁸⁵ Varga, *Lutosławski Profile*, pp. 31-2.

⁸⁶ Letter from Frederick Rimmer to Witold Lutosławski (7 November 1979), Lutosławski Collection, Paul Sacher Stiftung, microfilm 215.1: 2221-2222

⁸⁷ It is possible he gave it away. According to his stepson, Marcin Bogusławski, Lutosławski gave away boxes of books shortly before his death in 1994 (personal communication).

⁸⁸ These editions of Aristotle were all published by PWN (Polska Wydawnictwo Naukowe). According to its own encyclopaedia, the publishing house first produced a translation of *Poetics* ('Poetyka') in 1939. See http://encyklopedia.pwn.pl/4007_1.html (accessed 27 October 2004).

⁸⁹ A bookmark in Lutosławski's copy of Aeschylus, tr. Stefan Srebrny, *Tragedie* (Warsaw: PIW, 1949), marks the play *Prometheus Bound*.

by Władysław Tatarkiewicz.⁹⁰ This history does discuss Aristotle's *Poetics* in sections bookmarked and annotated by the composer. It is plausible, then, that similarities between Lutosławski's terminology concerning *akcja* and the text of Aristotle's *Poetics* are not entirely coincidental.

This is not merely a matter of Lutosławski's use of the word *akcja* and his translation of it, in later years, as both 'action' and 'plot' – a dual usage which could have been adopted from the *Poetics*. Aristotle's treatise also contains other vocabulary that proves somewhat interchangeable with typical Lutosławski terms.

We have laid down that tragedy is an imitation of a complete, i.e. a whole, action, possessing a certain magnitude... A whole is that which has a beginning, a middle and an end... Well-constructed plots should therefore not begin or end at an arbitrary point...

magnitude also should not be arbitrary... just as in the case of physical objects and living organisms, [which] possess a certain magnitude... readily taken in at one view, so in the case of plots: they should have a certain length, and this should be such as can readily be held in memory.

A plot is not (as some think) unified because it is concerned with a certain person... the plot, as the imitation of an action, should imitate a single, unified action – and one that is also a whole.⁹¹

The concern for closed forms with a beginning, a middle and an end; the requirement that a form's outline be perceptible by an audience the first time it is experienced; the necessity for formal wholeness: echoes of all of these Aristotelian concepts can be found, similarly expressed, in Lutosławski's statements about *akcja* and musical form.

Another route towards Aristotle, however, and more specifically towards the term *akcja*, may be even more significant, not least because it can be dated more

⁹⁰ Władysław Tatarkiewicz, *Filozofia staroży i średniowieczna* (Warsaw: Spółdzielnia Wydawnicza, 1948); vol. 2, *Filozofia Nowożytna* (1949); vol. 3, *Filozofia XIX wieku i współczesna* (1950).

⁹¹ Aristotle, *Poetics*, trans. Malcolm Heath (London: Penguin, 1996), chapter 5.1-5.3, pp. 13-15.

precisely to the time of Lutosławski's *akcja* epiphany. In the late 1960s, Lutosławski contributed to a published collection of lectures originally presented at Stockholm's Royal College of Music. First published in 1965,⁹² 'About the Element of Chance in Music' appeared in print (and in English) in 1968 alongside texts by György Ligeti and the Swedish composer Ingvar Lidholm. It is the latter's contribution, ' "Poesis" for orchestra', that may be of significance here. Lidholm (b. 1921) had recently taken charge of the composition class at the Royal College when Lutosławski visited in March 1965 to present his lecture.⁹³ The two became good friends; indeed, Lidholm recalls 'many exciting meetings with WL until his death'.⁹⁴ By the time of his *akcja* epiphany in the second half of 1967, Lutosławski had therefore had several opportunities to read Lidholm's text. Research for this thesis has discovered that Lidholm believes Lutosławski may have read the manuscript during his visit to Stockholm in March 1965, but that it is more likely that he read it when they were preparing their essays for publication in 1967, or perhaps as early as 1966. The matters discussed in Lidholm's essay may also have come up in general conversation. Lidholm remembers 'many talks about musical form and structures in general' if not specifically on the topics of 'musical action, music and drama, theatre, abstract musical plots etc.'. ⁹⁵

Lidholm's lecture discusses his 1963 composition *Poesis*, an exuberantly theatrical piece composed to celebrate the fiftieth birthday of the Stockholm Philharmonic Orchestra. The live recording of its world premiere performance, conducted by Herbert Blomstedt on 14 January 1964, won the 1965 Koussevitzky

⁹² Witold Lutosławski, 'Om det aleatoriske princip i musikken', trans. Birgit Giedecker, *Dansk Musiktidsskrift* 40, no. 3 (1965), pp. 58-61.

⁹³ See Ingvar Lidholm and Bo Wallner, 'Foreword', in Lidholm, Ligeti and Lutosławski, *Three Aspects of New Music*, p. 7. Lutosławski first visited the Royal College in 1964.

⁹⁴ Personal communication.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*

International Recording Award. Interestingly, its sound-world contains several ‘Polish’ moments, most obviously in its deployment of clusters in a manner familiar from, for example, Krzysztof Penderecki’s scores of the early 1960s (Lidholm states that, although *Poesis* is a ‘very personal’ score, Lutosławski and ‘some other Polish composers emanated a great inspiration during these years’).⁹⁶ Intriguingly, several passages in *Poesis* also bear a resemblance to music Lutosławski had yet to compose. Its double bass cadenza is reminiscent of some of the solo writing in the Cello Concerto and may also remind one of the double bass solo in *Preludes and Fugue*. *Poesis*’s opening tissue of high violins, in which glissandi slide between sustained pitches, is also similar to several moments in the first movement of *Livre pour orchestre*. The theatrical quality of *Poesis*, however, is the subject of Lidholm’s lecture.

His intention in the work, he explains, ‘was namely to formulate a kind of instrumental drama in which the *tutti* orchestra is placed in a dramatical contrasting relationship to a few individual solo instruments... [who] are also members of the *tutti* orchestra, but make in turn certain exits and entrances’.⁹⁷ The concertante parts – piano, double bass, and four percussionists – become personae in the musical discourse, entering into a variety of relationships with each other and with the orchestra’s other sections and materials. Lidholm’s description of this process makes ample use of theatrical analogies along the lines of ‘exits and entrances’ and in doing so illustrates how *Poesis* moves beyond simplistic comparisons to the concerto grosso. Blocks of highly contrasted material are opposed to ‘create a sense of drama’;⁹⁸ starker

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*

⁹⁷ Ingvar Lidholm, ‘“Poesis” for orchestra’, trans. Christopher Gibbs, in Lidholm, Ligeti and Lutosławski, *Three Aspects*, p. 57.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.* p. 59.

juxtapositions have ‘the character of dramatical exclamation marks’;⁹⁹ a central section involves ‘frenetic action’;¹⁰⁰ and the ‘musical-dramatical material’ builds, in two overlapping intensity curves, ‘towards a dramatical and dynamic culmination’ near the end.¹⁰¹

These words and phrases are enough to alert one to the possibility of some overlap between Lutosławski’s concepts and his Swedish colleague’s ideas. It is when Lidholm reflects on the dramatic structure of *Poesis*, however, that the possibility of his ideas having helped Lutosławski’s thinking on *akcja* becomes most alluring. In search of ‘criteria for dramatic form’ against which *Poesis* might be measured, Lidholm cites a discussion of Aristotle’s *Poetics* by Henrik Dyfverman and, in particular, Dyfverman’s analysis of playwright Gustav Freytag’s take on Aristotle’s theory of tragedy.¹⁰² Freytag mapped turning points in a tragic plot onto an Aristotelian model, with pivotal events including ‘Das erregende Moment’, which Lidholm describes as ‘the moment in drama when the first cloud appears on the idyllic sky... the point during the action when the audience gets the impression that now something is going to happen’.¹⁰³ Lidholm discusses *Poesis* in similar terms, culminating in his text’s final paragraph:

The cast in the ‘drama’ called *Poesis* consists of... the large and richly equipped orchestra, which is like a chameleon and thus can play many parts and appear in a number of disguises, and then the solo instruments which... have several real key roles. These solo instruments are sometimes deployed in a collective sense, and sometimes they give expression to an instrumental-human absurd situation. But this cast is not capable of formulating any logically factual concrete dramatical truths. They can only express

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 60.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 60.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, p. 78.

¹⁰² Lidholm does not provide a reference, but Dyfverman’s writings include the text *Dramats teknik* (Utgivningsår, 1949).

¹⁰³ Lidholm, ‘“Poesis” for orchestra’, p. 79.

themselves in music – and therefore *Poesis* is only music, absolute music.¹⁰⁴

Many of Lutosławski's major compositions of the 1960s and 1970s – not least those involving conspicuous theatrical 'borrowings' – could also be described as 'instrumental-human absurd situation[s]' which, nonetheless, 'only express themselves through music'. Consequently, the *Poesis* essay appears to be the most likely source of Lutosławski's discovery of the word 'action' (plus related analogies to the theatre and perhaps even Aristotle's *Poetics*) being used in a way commensurate with his own evolving thinking. Talking with his colleague, reading Lidholm's essay and getting to know *Poesis* may all have helped Lutosławski find aspects of his own critical voice on the matter of musical plot. The timing was certainly apposite, given *akcja*'s emergence in his texts and public statements between 1967 and 1970.

Lutosławski's publications of this period are listed in Fig 1.3. His essay 'A new approach to orchestra' (1968) and his contribution to the collection *The Orchestral Composer's Point of View* (1970) are the most important texts. Their publication dates, however, are misleading. The untitled *Composer's Point of View* essay, for instance, appears to have been written in late 1967.¹⁰⁵ Likewise, while 'A new approach to orchestra' was published on 24 June 1968, according to its opening paragraph it was written by Lutosławski as he completed Symphony No. 2. This dates the article, at the absolute latest, to the first week of June 1967 (the completed work was premiered on 9 June 1967 in Katowice) and suggests that Lutosławski may have begun to use the term *akcja* a few months into that year.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 80.

¹⁰⁵ According to Nowacki, Lutosławski's responses to the questions about Symphony No. 2 in his June 1967 interview were based on the *Point of View* essay. The 1967 Warsaw Autumn programme note for Symphony No. 2 also cites this text.

Fig. 1.3: Lutosławski publications 1967-1970

Date published	Document
1967	Kazimierz Nowacki, 'Symphony No. 2 by Witold Lutosławski' ¹⁰⁶ – interview about the symphony Lutosławski, programme note for Symphony No. 2 ¹⁰⁷ Tadeusz Kaczyński, 'O II Symfonii z Witoldem Lutosławskim rozmawiał Tadeusz Kaczyński' – interview on Symphony No. 2 ¹⁰⁸
1968	Tadeusz Kaczyński, ' <i>Paroles tissées</i> . Wywiad z Witoldem Lutosławskim' – interview with Lutosławski about <i>Paroles tissées</i> ¹⁰⁹ Lutosławski, programme note for <i>Paroles tissées</i> ¹¹⁰ Lutosławski, 'Polish Music in the Fifth Diorama program' – account of a Swiss music festival ¹¹¹ Lutosławski, 'A new approach to orchestra' – essay about Symphony No. 2 ¹¹² Kazimierz Nowacki, 'Witold Lutosławski, <i>Paroles tissées</i> ' ¹¹³ – interview about the work
1969	Lutosławski, programme note for <i>Livre pour orchestre</i> ¹¹⁴ 'Livre pour orchestre' – interview with Lutosławski ¹¹⁵
1970	Lutosławski, '[On Symphony No. 2]' – further essay about the work published in <i>The Orchestral Composer's Point of View</i> ¹¹⁶

¹⁰⁶ Kazimierz Nowacki, 'Symphony no. 2 by Witold Lutosławski', *Polish Music* 2/3 (6) (1967), pp. 7-14.

¹⁰⁷ Witold Lutosławski, '[Symphony No. 2]', in *XI Międzynarodowy Festiwal Muzyki Współczesnej 'Warszawska Jesień'* (Warsaw: ZKP, 1967), pp. 167-8.

¹⁰⁸ Tadeusz Kaczyński, 'O II Symfonii z Witoldem Lutosławskim rozmawiał Tadeusz Kaczyński', *Ruch Muzyczny* 11/21 (1-15 November 1967), pp. 3-6. Kaczyński interview translated into English by Krzysztof Klinger in Nordwall, ed., *Lutosławski*, pp. 105-18; see also Kaczyński, *Conversations*, pp. 55-64.

¹⁰⁹ Tadeusz Kaczyński, '*Paroles tissées*. Wywiad z Witoldem Lutosławskim', *Ruch Muzyczny* 12/4 (15-29 February 1968), pp. 3-6. Later published in Kaczyński, *Conversations*, pp. 43-54.

¹¹⁰ Witold Lutosławski, '[*Paroles tissées*]', in *XII Międzynarodowy Festiwal Muzyki Współczesnej 'Warszawska Jesień'* (Warsaw: ZKP, 1968), pp. 145-6.

¹¹¹ Witold Lutosławski, 'Polish Music in the Fifth Diorama program. Travel notes from Romanesque Switzerland', *Polish Music* 3/3 (10) (1968), pp. 26-9.

¹¹² Witold Lutosławski, 'A new approach to orchestra', *Christian Science Monitor* (24 June 1968), 'Home Forum', p. 8. See also Witold Lutosławski, 'O dzisiejszej orkiestrze', *Ruch Muzyczny* 12/17 (1-15 September 1968), p. 4; parallel translation in French provided by Maria Renata Pragłowska. A German

In 'A new approach' and the *Point of View* essay, Lutosławski experiments with a variety of uses of the term *akcja*, most of which tally with later deployments. A few, however, are slightly different. Often, he places scare quotes around the word, which he translates in these texts as 'action'. The variations in usage and quotation marks combine to draw attention to the term's newly privileged status in Lutosławski's self-theoretical lexicon and indicate the way in which the composer gradually discovered the clearer uses of the term familiar from his later statements.

Writing in 'A new approach', Lutosławski makes explicit the analogy between his concept of a large-scale closed form and a play's plot:

The process of listening to a large-scale form may be compared to that of following the action of a play, during which the spectator is supposed to integrate the episodes, which succeed one another, and to be able to recall the whole afterwards.¹¹⁷

The context of this quote, with its shadings of Lidholm and Aristotle, is also significant.

In the opening section of the essay, Lutosławski has already described his mature understanding of symphonism as being less a matter of working with orchestras, sonata forms or other generic structures than the formation of a certain structural quality:

The essential feature of such a form is the presence of a number of sections, whose functions are not only to express musical ideas, but also to determine the relationship of those ideas with other sections in the work or in the whole form. This makes the listener apprehend the performance of a large-scale work not as a sequence of sound

translation, 'Ein neuer Weg zum Orchester', trans. Heinz Vogel, followed in *Melos* 36/7-8 (July-August 1969), pp. 297-99.

¹¹³ Kazimierz Nowacki, 'Witold Lutosławski. *Paroles tissées*', *Polish Music* 3/3 (10) (1968), pp. 10-13.

¹¹⁴ Witold Lutosławski, '[*Livre pour orchestre*]', in *XIII Międzynarodowy Festiwal Muzyki Współczesnej 'Warszawska Jesień'* (Warsaw: ZKP, 1969), pp. 16-17.

¹¹⁵ Tadeusz Marek, 'Livre pour orchestre by Witold Lutosławski', *Polish Music* 4/1 (12) (1969), pp. 9-12.

¹¹⁶ Witold Lutosławski, '[On Symphony No. 2]', in Robert Hines, ed., *The Orchestral Composer's Point of View: Essays on Twentieth-Century Music by Those Who Wrote It* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1970), pp. 128-51. Published in Polish as 'Nowy utwór na orkiestrę symfoniczną', in *Res Facta* 4 (1970), pp. 6-13.

¹¹⁷ Lutosławski, 'A new approach', p. 8. The essay makes several analogies to plays and the theatre, as do his 1968 interview and programme note for *Paroles tissées*.

phenomena, independent of each other, but rather as one single experience.¹¹⁸

That Lutosławski goes on to discuss ‘the action of a play’ after this opening gambit concerning the need to express musical ideas and then determine the nature of their interrelationship helps to clarify an important point. For Lutosławski, a work was symphonic when it articulated an *akcja*. A symphony, in other words, is not merely a serious work for symphony orchestra, but a piece with an *akcja* for symphony orchestra. An *akcja* is therefore the essence of a Lutosławski symphony and, indeed, of any other significant large-scale closed form.

Symphony No. 2 is the primary concern of the *Point of View* essay, which has two main sections. In the first, Lutosławski somewhat pessimistically assesses the relevance of the symphony orchestra to composers in the 1960s, asking whether it is ‘a relic bequeathed to us... [or] perhaps a living organism... with years of development still lying ahead of it’.¹¹⁹ In the second section he then discusses Symphony No. 2 in considerable detail, beginning with an explanation of closed forms. He makes the essay’s first telling use of ‘action’ when describing the functions of ‘Hésitant’ and ‘Direct’:

The composition... constitutes an indivisible whole. There is a close interdependence between the two movements though they stand in sharp contrast to each other in many respects... the first movement is designed to involve the listener in the musical ‘action’; it is the kind of music that makes the listener receptive to the musical ‘occurrence’ presented by the second movement.¹²⁰

Describing the mournful woodwind refrains punctuating ‘Hésitant’, Lutosławski then deploys ‘action’ in a slightly different way:

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 8.

¹¹⁹ Lutosławski, ‘-’, in *The Orchestral Composer’s Point of View*, p. 129.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 135.

Each of the episodes is followed by a slow, short refrain which is always played by three instruments... As the refrain ends, a new group of instruments takes up a new episode. Always, however, the initial attempt seems tentative. It is followed by the central ‘musical action’ of the episode.¹²¹

Lutosławski’s phrase ‘the central “musical action” ’ implies a short-lived terminological problem. An *akcja* is made up of differently sized elements – ideas, events, sections, movements – and Lutosławski’s slightly confusing use of the phrase ‘musical action’ here specifically to indicate a smaller span of music indicates simultaneously the centrality of the concept to his thinking at this time and his uncertainty about how exactly to use the word. In later statements an *akcja* is the plot encompassing all of a piece’s events. His published texts of the late 1960s, however, indicate ways in which he experimented with a range of uses of the word before settling on its definitive meaning and usage.

After the 1960s, the concept, rhetoric and terminology of *akcja* that Lutosławski developed in his essays and lectures during that fertile decade continue to resonate throughout his later conversational discussions of the topic. Most of these documents do not significantly advance the picture of *akcja* outlined in the present chapter. More is revealed about ‘key ideas’ and harmonic ‘quality’, as documented above; on the issue of extra-musical meaning and ‘borrowings’, Lutosławski engaged in several animated exchanges, some of which have already been indicated. These and other later statements about *akcja*, however, reinforce rather than revise the traces of his concept that one can find in his texts of the 1960s.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 138.

These documents, this thesis proposes – pending the theoretical and analytical discussions to follow – suggest that an *akcja* (at least in Lutosławski's works of the 1960s and 1970s) consists of a chain of 'static' events interlinked by 'dynamic' transitions. The 'static' events present and develop the implications of 'key ideas', the most important characteristics of which relate to Lutosławski's approach to pitch organisation and, primarily, matters of i.e. 'quality', although pitch centres and thematic motives may also play a role. Invented and adapted rhetorical conventions help shape the presentation of an *akcja*'s main events. Situations developed in an *akcja* are sometimes 'borrowings' from the stage, literature and even real-life. Nuance will be added to an *akcja* by Lutosławski's deployment of gestures, topics and other musical signifiers with strongly marked extra-musical associations. What, however, can one conclude from these texts about the nature of Lutosławski's own understanding of *akcja*? Was it a full-blown theory or a category of knowledge more suited to his creative requirements?

This thesis submits that the recoverable traces of Lutosławski's concept do not reveal a theory in the sense of a systematic and comprehensive body of ideas that one might apply to the analysis of Lutosławski's music; nor do the traces point towards the conclusion that Lutosławski had a secret theory of *akcja*, glimpses of which are afforded by such statements. Instead, Lutosławski's concept of *akcja* appears to have evolved beyond his adaptation of Maliszewski's ideas – and in response to a wide variety of further artistic inspirations, reactions and innovations – into what one might instead term, in the Aristotelian sense, a poetics of musical plot.

Aristotle's intention for his *Poetics* was not to tell others how to dissect or criticize a tragic play. Rather, it was an attempt to make a contribution to the

‘productive sciences’.¹²² As Julian Barnes argues, Aristotle was not seeking ‘to produce a “theory” of tragedy which would hold good for all time’, but ‘was telling his contemporaries, who worked within the conventions of the Greek stage, how to write a play’.¹²³ Stravinsky, in his *Poetics of Music*, similarly observes from the perspective of an artist how ‘Aristotle’s *Poetics* constantly suggests ideas regarding personal work, arrangements of materials, and structures’ due primarily to its concern with *techné* – the making and doing of things – above the formation of ‘lyrical dissertations about the essence of beauty’.¹²⁴ Lutosławski’s ‘parallel path’ of work on his poetics of musical plot, as with other aspects of his compositional language, probably accompanied him throughout his musical life.¹²⁵ A limited amount of theorizing was therefore part of his everyday making and doing of things, and in the case of *akcja* this process – especially intense during the early-to-mid 1960s – enabled him to make music articulating what he considered to be instances of musical plot.

Discussing the field of ‘poetics’ as it applies to literary criticism beyond the boundaries of tragic theory, Jonathan Culler offers a slightly different definition which can usefully be considered as one begins to ask how a composer’s poetics, or the traces thereof, might conscientiously be adapted by the analyst:

Poetics starts with attested meanings or effects and asks how they are achieved... Hermeneutics, on the other hand, starts with texts and asks what they mean, seeking to discover new and better interpretations.¹²⁶

¹²² Hence the title *Poetics*, which stems from *poiētikē*, ‘the word translated as “productive” in the phrase “the productive sciences”’; see Julian Barnes, *Aristotle* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982), p. 24.

¹²³ *Ibid.*, p. 84.

¹²⁴ Igor Stravinsky, *Poetics of Music in the Form of Six Lessons* (New York: Vintage Books, 1947), p. 4.

¹²⁵ The term ‘parallel path’ comes from Homma, ‘Lutosławski’s Studies in Twelve-Tone Rows’, pp. 194–210.

¹²⁶ Jonathan Culler, *Literary Theory: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), p. 61.

The challenge for the attempt to understand *akcja*, having outlined the traces of Lutosławski's thinking, is to move beyond the limitations of what one can glean from those traces while also utilizing them, where useful and appropriate, in readings of his compositions which seek to discover 'new and better interpretations'. In doing so, it will be necessary not to submit to the 'poietic fallacy', as defined by Taruskin, 'the conviction that what matters most (or more strongly yet, that all that matters) in a work of art is the making of it, the maker's input'.¹²⁷ Nor, for that matter, should one uncritically accept the 'rhetoric of autonomy' dictated by Lutosławski concerning certain aspects of his work, such as the boundaries he sought to set for interpretations of his music. On the other hand, given the apparent pertinence to such an investigation of the matters revealed in the present chapter, it could also be expedient to make some use of Lutosławski's evidence.

Taruskin's use of the term 'poietic' provides a clue as to how such a delicate balancing act might proceed, through its reference to Jean Molino's tripartite model for understanding the semiotic construction of musical communication. In Molino's model, 'immanent' analyses – theoretically objective interpretations of musical or historical texts – are recognized as being 'subject to poietic [creative] and esthetic [interpretative] criteria'.¹²⁸ This idea, as developed by Jean-Jacques Nattiez,¹²⁹ has been adapted, in turn, by Klein in an attempt, pertinent to the concerns of this thesis, to structure investigations into the nature of musical narrative:

On the poietic level, a composer may wish to write music that narrates, focusing on musical attributes that signal narration. On the immanent level, the music may have such attributes, regardless of

¹²⁷ See Richard Taruskin, 'The Poietic Fallacy', *The Musical Times* vol. 145 no. 1886 (Spring 2004), pp. 10-12.

¹²⁸ Jean Molino, 'Musical Fact and the Semiology of Music', *Music Analysis*, 9/2 (1990), p. 130.

¹²⁹ Jean-Jacques Nattiez, *Music and Discourse: Toward a Semiology of Music* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990).

whether the composer intends to write narrative music. On the esthetic level, a listener may want to hear music as narration, regardless of the composer's intent. Narrative on the poietic level is a matter for biography and history. Narrative on the immanent level is a matter for the conjectures of theory. And narrative on the esthetic level is a matter for probing the ways that we read texts.¹³⁰

One might feel that ideas gleaned from the traces of Lutosławski's concept of *akcja* could immediately be used in 'esthetic' analyses of his music, entirely skipping considerations of theory at the immanent level. It should already be clear, however, that this thesis's proposals concerning *akcja* require a number of readings against, or at the very least which seek to move beyond, the limitations of Lutosławski's statements and, furthermore, their analytical appropriation by the existing Lutosławski literature. The available traces of his poetics of *akcja* will require, if one is to turn towards analysis and interpretation, theoretical reinforcement.

Considering *akcja* 'immanently' in light of the conjectures of theory, however, may not so much set in stone the existing traces of Lutosławski's concept as transform it into a different kind of poetics: a theoretical strategy designed to enable the creation of fresh interpretations of his music. Attempting to do this will not, to paraphrase Nattiez, reveal the total semiotic fact of *akcja* merely by working through, at different points, a selection of the possible tacks one could take in an engagement with Lutosławski's music and ideas. Indeed, the primary benefit of moving between a composer's poetics and analytical interpretation via theoretical considerations may ultimately be to permit the 'dialectical oscillation among the three [semiotic] dimensions of the object' which, Nattiez writes, true analysis 'never stops engineering'.¹³¹ This is a process which, by its very definition, cannot be completed by this thesis. It can, however, be initiated.

¹³⁰ Michael Klein, 'Chopin's Fourth Ballade as Musical Narrative', *Music Theory Spectrum* 26/1 (2004), p. 24.

¹³¹ Nattiez, *Music and Discourse*, p. 32.

A consideration of theories of narrative could therefore further inform the understanding of *akcja* which this chapter has begun to advance. Certain questions, for example, such as the issue of whether a musical form made up of isolated ‘static’ events can be experienced as a goal-directed structure, can be engaged with more fully in relation to existing theories. It might also be possible, however, that Lutosławski’s statements and music – the output, after all, of a twentieth-century composer who reflected deeply on matters of music, plot, narrative, drama and meaning – could lead one to re-evaluate certain tenets of those existing theories. The thoughts of recent and living composers are a conspicuously absent voice in recent writing on music and narrative. It is towards theories of plot, narrative and musical narrativity, then, that this investigation must now turn, in order better to understand Lutosławski’s poetics of *akcja*, but also to begin to assess the ways in which Lutosławski’s concepts and music might inspire new thinking on music and narrative.

CHAPTER TWO

Plotting Musical Narrativity

The quest to read music as some kind of narrative, Joseph Kerman asserts, is ‘one of music criticism’s most persistent and persistently controversial projects’.¹ The controversy stretches back at least as far as nineteenth-century debates concerning the value of programme music in comparison to *absolut Tonkunst*. During the last twenty years, however, the issue has re-emerged as a site of critical disputation. On one side of the debate stand those who would agree with Roman Jakobson’s assessment that instrumental music, like many other non-verbal art forms, contains the linguistic potential to communicate aspects of a plot:

It is evident that many devices... are not confined to verbal art. We can refer to the possibility of transposing *Wuthering Heights* into a motion picture, medieval legends into frescoes and miniatures, or *L’après-midi d’un faune* into music, ballet, and graphic art. However ludicrous may appear the idea of the *Iliad* or *Odyssey* in comics, certain structural features of their plot are preserved despite the disappearance of their verbal shape.²

On the other side, many more would perhaps concur with Nattiez and consider ‘the notion of musical story-telling or narration as just another metaphor to which human language, with its meagre means, has to resort in order to attempt to define the specificity of the unfolding of music in time’.³

¹ Joseph Kerman, *Concerto Conversations* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1999), p. 47.

² Roman Jakobson, ‘Closing Statement: Linguistics and Poetics’, in Thomas A. Sebeok, ed., *Style in Language* (Cambridge, Mass.: The M.I.T. Press, 1960), p. 350.

³ Jean-Jacques Nattiez, ‘Can One Speak of Narrativity in Music?’, *Journal of the Royal Musical Association* 115 (1990), p. 241.

Some of Lutosławski's views on music and narrative would appear to coincide with Nattiez's position that the entire idea is some kind of ontological self-delusion on the part of uninformed listeners:

Can the music tell a story, of whatever kind? The answer must certainly be no. So does my work rest on a contradiction? Perhaps.⁴

The contradiction to which Lutosławski refers, of course, is the distinction he makes between a 'purely musical' *akcja* and programme music deemed capable of communicating an 'extra-musical' story. Yet if one adopts such a hard-line stance, and narrating is deemed to lie beyond music's semiological grasp, is it possible even to talk of musical plot? Is not plot conceivable only within a framework of narrative conventions? As Lutosławski says, perhaps. One might turn such questions around, though, and in doing so begin to uncover the range of musical qualities to which interpreters are responding when they talk of music as narrative.

Talking about plot in music, for instance, may be one way to speak not of musical story-telling per se, but rather of a quality one might call musical narrativity, thereby indicating one's perception of a mode of coherence which rests on certain general conventions of narrative, but which achieves artistic ends other than relating a pre-existent verbal story. Following this route could take one closer to Jakobson's 'certain structural features' while acknowledging the other side of the debate's concerns, perhaps via Nattiez's telling admission that, when it comes to the issue of musical narrativity, probably 'there is no smoke without fire'.⁵ The theoretical issue at hand, it follows, is to blow away that smoke, and with it the more extravagant claims for or against music's narrative properties by those engulfed in the fumes, in search of the

⁴ Jean-Paul Couchoud, *La musique polonaise et Witold Lutosławski* (Paris: Stock Musique, 1981), p. 131. Translated in Benoît Aubigny, 'Poetic and Dramatic Schemes in Lutosławski's Vocal-Instrumental Works', in Skowron, ed., *Lutosławski Studies*, p. 81.

⁵ Nattiez, 'Can One Speak', p. 241.

fire itself – a revised quest to read some music as story-like which dovetails with the broader goals of the present study and thus provides the basis of this chapter. Nattiez's important contribution to the debate asked 'Can One Speak of Narrativity in Music?'. If one is to speak of *akcja* in Lutosławski's music, resolving how one might more generally speak of music as narrative becomes an equally compelling issue.

Not all of the ideas arising from such an investigation, if it is to have the independence necessary to do its complex topic any justice, will have an impact on the development of a better understanding of Lutosławski's poetics of *akcja* or his music; nor will it be possible to reach definitive conclusions here on a number of matters arising from an *akcja*-inspired investigation of music and narrative. As this rich and complex theoretical issue has been raised, however, it should nonetheless prove productive to give it due attention, not merely to engage theoretically with Lutosławski's concept of *akcja*, but also because a number of the ideas discussed may have wider theoretical and analytical applications. Consequently, some of the issues raised in the ensuing discussion that are not directly applied in the strategy for Lutosławski analysis outlined at the end of this chapter, or in the subsequent analysis of *Livre pour orchestre* in Chapter Three, point to the possibility of further work outside of the scope of the present study. The Afterword therefore returns to these issues in order to indicate ways in which a consideration of musical narrativity inspired by the current investigation might continue to evolve beyond its boundaries.

Narrative: story and discourse

Human beings are *homo fabulans*, 'the tellers and interpreters of narrative'.⁶ Stories, Culler argues, are humanity's pervasive mode of knowing, whether we are 'thinking of our lives as a progression leading somewhere' or investing the sound of a clock's tick-tock (in Frank Kermode's example) with a sense of plot-like causality.⁷ Recent work on cognition has even begun to define the schemas of internal cognitive and affective experience as protonarrative structures.⁸ Not surprisingly, then, the apparently basic drive to hear and tell stories has had an impact on cultural theory. Scholars have increasingly claimed 'cultural centrality for narrative'⁹ while investigating its unique power, as a paradigmatic mode of communication, to package and promote ideological tenets and claims. Jean-François Lyotard's *The Postmodern Condition*, for example, has had a profound influence on science, the arts and humanities through its interrogation of 'Grand Narratives', the metanarrative tropes of knowledge which exclude so much in order to streamline and deproblematize the spread of information.¹⁰

Less grandly but equally impressively, in literary and film studies the field of narratology developed many competing schools and theories of narrative during the twentieth century. The immense task of summarizing, let alone synthesizing, the vibrant and variegated traditions propagated merely by the major French and Russian scholars of narrative – not to mention the contributions of regional groups like the little-

⁶ Mark Currie, *Postmodern Narrative Theory* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1998), p. 2.

⁷ Jonathan Culler, *Literary Theory*, p. 82. For Kermode's 'tick-tock' see Frank Kermode, *The Sense of an Ending* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1967), p. 45.

⁸ See, for example, Michel Imberty, 'Can One Speak Seriously of Narrativity in Music?', in Alf Gabrielsson, ed., *Third Triennial ESCOM Conference: Proceedings* (Uppsala Universitet: Uppsala, 1997), pp. 13-22.

⁹ Culler, *Literary Theory*, p. 82.

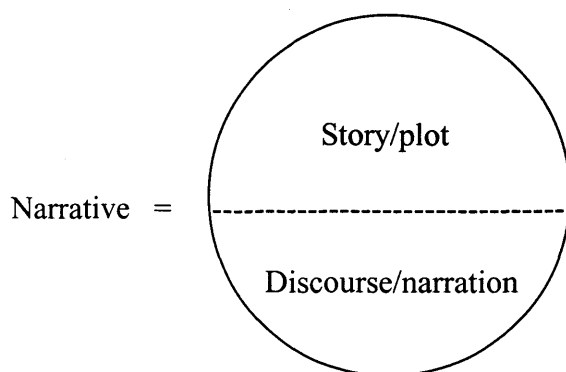
¹⁰ Jean-François Lyotard, trans. Geoff Bennington and Brian Massumi, *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1984 [1979]).

known Polish formalists – lies beyond the scope of this thesis.¹¹ As Culler has written, however, if scholars of narrative agree on one concept, it is

that the theory of narrative requires a distinction between... ‘story’
– a sequence of actions and events... – and... ‘discourse’, the
discursive presentation or narration of events.¹²

Even with this simplification, terminological confusion is almost unavoidable. For example, while Culler’s story and discourse are roughly equivalent to the Russian formalists’ *fabula* and *sjuzhet*, and to the French structuralists’ *histoire* and *discours*, the term *récit* is sometimes substituted for *fabula*, or even for *sjuzhet*. Nonetheless, Culler’s basic distinction usually holds true. Narratives can consequently be considered to have two essential aspects: a tale (the narrative’s story/plot) and its telling (the narrative’s discourse/narration). Fig. 2.1 illustrates how the totality of any narrative text consists of these two ‘levels’: story and discourse.

Fig. 2.1: Narrative levels



¹¹ Culler provides a concise overview in ‘Story and Discourse in the Analysis of Narrative’, *The Pursuit of Signs* (London: Routledge & Keegan Paul, 1981), pp. 169-187, and cites Seymour Chatman’s *Story and Discourse: Narrative Structure in Fiction and Film* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1978) as a useful synthesis. Mieke Bal’s *Narratology: Introduction to the Theory of Narrative*, 2nd edn (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997) is a recently updated major study, while Susana Onega and José Ángel García’s *Narratology: An Introduction* (London: Longman, 1996) is a usefully annotated reader. The work of Kazimierz Wóycicki and the Polish formalists is discussed by Karcz in *The Polish Formalist School*.

¹² Culler, *The Pursuit of Signs*, pp. 169-70.

Narratives, then, are not merely plots and stories. In fact, a narrative is never 'just' a story. Narratives are texts (in the widest sense of the word) signifying what Culler calls the 'nondiscursive, nontextual given' of a story which, hypothetically, exists prior to and independent of any such presentation.¹³ Consequently, perceivers and analysts of narrative texts do not encounter stories in their putative 'nontextual' form. Instead, they encounter discourses from which they must identify the events in a plot. Culler again:

Confronted with a text... the reader makes sense of it by identifying the story and then seeing the text as one particular presentation of that story; by identifying 'what happens', we are able to think of the rest of the verbal material as the way of portraying what takes place. Then we can ask what type of presentation has been chosen and what difference that makes.¹⁴

A fundamental question concerning musical narrativity therefore relates to identifying the aspects of music which might be taken to signify elements of a plot (such as Lutosławski's 'key ideas', 'static' events, etc.) by listeners open to the perception of a musical narrative; another relates to the issue of what the plots those listeners assert can be meaningfully said to consist. Consequently, much of the following theoretical discussion concerns elements of the 'story' level and matters of its perception, and particularly the question of how one moves beyond noting the individual events in a putative plot during one's engagement with a text's discourse and comes to understand those events as a unified, story-like structure. Such questions are particularly germane, in the context of the present study, as they may help to identify ways in which the separate events in a Lutosławski *akcja* can be experienced as a goal-directed structure.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 171.

¹⁴ Culler, *Literary Theory*, p. 86.

There are also many ways in which discourse can be analysed. These include the questions of whether a text is being noticeably narrated (as in a novel in the first person), whether a conspicuous narrator is internal (part of the story) or external, who is being addressed by the narrator (or narrators), and when a narrative is taking place in time in relation to the story. There is also the issue of focalization. One should not merely question who is telling the story, but also whose point of view that narrator is representing (it is not always the narrator's own). Related and only ostensibly simpler questions deal with how (and why) events in a story have been highlighted, de-emphasized, elided or reordered (from the 'nontextual' story order) in the narrative discourse. Further questions one might ask about instances of musical narrativity could therefore include the degree to which instrumental music, within its semiological limitations, is capable of shaping aspects of a narrative's discourse. More fundamentally, however, it is necessary to ask what might constitute the level of discourse in a musical narrative and how one might separate its signifiers from those denoting events in a musical plot.

To begin to approach such issues as they relate to the controversial topic of musical narrativity and thus *akcja*, though, it should first prove useful to define the minimal conditions required for a text to invoke narrativity. Narrativity has been variously described as the 'organizing principle of all discourse, whether narrative or non-narrative', 'the manner in which a text is decoded as narrative', and 'the language structure that has temporality as its ultimate reference'.¹⁵ More generally, narrativity

¹⁵ See, respectively, A. J. Greimas and J. Courtés, *Semiotics and Language*, trans. L. Crist *et al* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1982 [1979]), p. 209; Mieke Bal, *Narratologie* (Paris: Klincksieck, 1977), p. 5; Paul Ricouer, 'Narrative Time', *Critical Inquiry* 1/7 (1980), p. 169. Cited (and translated) in a useful glossary provided in Jann Pasler, 'Narrative and Narrativity in Music', in J. T. Fraser, ed., *Time and Mind: Interdisciplinary Issues* (Madison, Connecticut: International Universities Press, 1989), pp. 233-57.

can be defined as a quality ascribed to any text one can read as a discourse invoking the emplotment of a story. The journey towards a theoretical understanding of musical narrativity and *akcja* must therefore begin with an examination of the nature of story, plot and emplotment, and thus of narrativity itself.

Story, plot and emplotment

A basic definition of a story might state that a story is information communicated by a plot and that a plot is a linear sequence of events implying a logic of causation and transformation. In a plot, as Kermode implies, tick leads to tock, not to tick. This is because a story, conventionally, requires that transformations take place both between the events of a plot (differentiating one from the other) and thematically over its entire duration. As Culler writes, 'There must be an initial situation [e.g., a tick], a change involving some sort of reversal [the pendulum reaches its apex and starts to swing the other way], and a resolution that marks the change as significant [a tock]'.¹⁶

Resolutions can involve 'the move from one relationship between characters to its opposite, [e.g.] from a problem to its solution, or from a false accusation... to its rectification'.¹⁷ A sequence of events may imply a story, therefore, not merely by evoking a logic of sequential causality within the conventions of a particular cultural community, but also through that sequence's 'appropriateness to a thematic structure' (as Culler puts it regarding literature and with unintentional but intriguing musical connotations) involving a fundamental change of state.¹⁸

Theorizing the codes of signification involved in the communication of a story was a primary concern of Barthes's writings on narrative. Barthes's two principal

¹⁶ Culler, *Literary Theory*, p. 84.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 84.

¹⁸ Culler, *The Pursuit of Signs*, p. 178.

works in this regard – his 1966 essay ‘Introduction to the Structural Analysis of Narratives’ and 1970 book *S/Z*¹⁹ – mark a crest in the twentieth-century wave of interest in the structures and properties of narrative texts. Arguably, the narratology of the Russian formalists and French structuralists marked the most intensive investigations of plot since Aristotle’s *Poetics*. Terrence Cave claims that Aristotelian thinking and terminology were ‘revived and redefined by the practitioners of formalist and structuralist poetics’,²⁰ including Barthes, whose ‘Introduction’ essay includes numerous references to Aristotle, while *S/Z* ‘seems to echo commentaries on *Poetics*’ through a density of Aristotelian language.²¹ Yet Barthes also brought the new wave crashing down in *S/Z*, a text in which structuralism collapses into what would come to be termed poststructuralism and in which theoretical currents such as reader-response criticism and intertextuality are anticipated, perhaps even inaugurated. Barthes’s two works on narrative therefore provide an especially rich vantage point from which to begin to consider the nature of story, plot and their perception, plus the potential application of such ideas to the analysis of Lutosławski’s music.

Decoding Barthes

To understand Barthes’s theories of narrative it is useful to know something about the background to his ideas, and especially the distinction between the ‘syntagmatic’ approach of the formalists and the ‘paradigmatic’ approach of the structuralists, as exemplified by texts including Vladimir Propp’s *Morphology of a Folktale* and A. J.

¹⁹ Roland Barthes, ‘Introduction à l’analyse structurale des récits’, *Communications* 8 (1966), ed. and trans. Stephen Heath as ‘Introduction to the Structural Analysis of Narrative’ in *Image-Music-Text* (London: Fontana Press, 1977) and *S/Z* (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1970).

²⁰ Terrence Cave, *Recognitions: A Study in Poetics* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990), pp. 199-200.

²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 206.

Greimas's *Sémantique structurale*.²² Propp's formalist work sought a grammar of narrative with which to identify a limited number of story archetypes underlying all narratives. His work thereby attempted to cut through thematic material and 'show the constructive armature that supports it'.²³ The structuralists, alternatively, posited a notionally vertical mode of narrative analysis. Greimas, for example, reformulated Propp's ideas on linear narrative structuring (his paradigmatic structures) as binary matrixes revealing (like Claude Lévi-Strauss's analyses of myths)²⁴ structural oppositions.

The influence of both formalist and structuralist theory can be found in Barthes's 'Introduction' essay. On the one hand, Barthes's idea of a plot as a thread of 'functional units' governing 'the logic of narrative possibilities, the unfolding of the actions performed by the characters and the relations among them'²⁵ demonstrates the impact of Propp. On the other hand, Barthes's understanding of plot functionality is structuralist in moving beyond (or rather above) Propp's concern for the linear succession of narrative events in order to understand how, as much as what, a narrative's form means. To understand a narrative, Barthes wrote,

is not merely to follow the unfolding of the story, it is also to recognize its construction in 'storeys', to project the horizontal concatenations of the narrative 'thread' onto an implicitly vertical axis; to read... a narrative is not merely to move from one word to the next, it is also to move from one level to the next[.]²⁶

²² Vladimir Propp, *Morphology of the Folktale*, 2nd edn, trans. Laurence Scott, ed. Louis A. Wagner (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1968 [1928]); A. J. Greimas, *Sémantique structurale* (Paris: Larousse, 1966).

²³ Peter Brooks, *Reading for the Plot: Design and Intention in Narrative* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1992 [1984]), p. 14. Brooks provides a useful guide to these and other key texts. See *Reading for the Plot*, pp. 14-23.

²⁴ Claude Lévi Strauss, *Structural Anthropology*, trans. Claire Jacobson and Brooke Schoepf (New York: Basic Books, 1963); see, for example, pp. 206-31.

²⁵ Onega and Garcíá, eds, *Narratology*, p. 45.

²⁶ Barthes, 'Introduction', p. 87.

Barthes's 'narrative "thread"' – his term for a plotline – therefore involves a chain of connected but not necessarily consecutive events. Barthes refers to these plot threads as 'functional sequences' made up of 'functional units' and padded out by 'expansion' or 'catalyzing' units. The structuring of a plot, he writes, 'is essentially characterized by two powers: that of distending its [functional] signs' over the length of the text 'and that of inserting unforeseeable expansions into these distortions'.²⁷

For an event in a plot to be functional, Barthes explains, it must 'inaugurate or conclude [or, he says elsewhere, temporarily sustain] an uncertainty'.²⁸ A plot must therefore be inaugurated by an enigma: a question, imbalance or ambiguity to be developed and resolved by ensuing functional events. Barthes cites an example of a functional sequence's inauguration from Flaubert's 'Un Coeur simple' (1877). If at a certain point, Barthes suggests, the narrative 'tells the reader, seemingly without emphasis, that the daughters of the Sous-Préfet of Pont-l'Évêque owned a parrot, it is because this parrot is subsequently to have a great importance'.²⁹ It may be some time, however, before the reader discovers its significance. Consequently, the elasticated gap between the initiation and closure of a functional sequence, by catalyzing the principal units of the narrative thread and thereby manipulating a perceiver's expectations, creates what Barthes calls 'suspense'. Because the units of a functional sequence are 'pulverized' and separated across the text by expansion units, perceivers, driven by their psychology and cultural convention to seek an enigma-resolving closural event, experience psychological unease until the final functional unit arrives and 'predicates' the plot (like a verb completing a sentence). As the elastic stretches, tension rises, thanks to the text's

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 117.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 94.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 89.

veritable ‘thrilling’ of intelligibility... ‘suspense’ accomplishes the very idea of language: what seems the most pathetic is also the most intellectual – ‘suspense’ grips you in the ‘mind’, not in the ‘guts’.³⁰

The affective power of a plot, Barthes therefore argues, is primarily cognitive. The passion which overcomes the emplotting reader

is that of meaning, that of a higher order of relation which also has its emotions, its hopes, its dangers, its triumphs. ‘What takes place’ in a narrative is from the... point of view of [reality] literally *nothing*; ‘what happens’ is language alone, the adventure of language...³¹

Several obvious points of contact between Barthes’s theorizing of plot and Lutosławski’s poetics of *akcja* can immediately be noted. There is an obvious parallel between Barthes’s idea that plots divide into functional and catalyzing events and Lutosławski’s notion of ‘static’ events and their less significant ‘dynamic’ counterparts. Barthes’s ‘veritable “thrilling” of intelligibility’, the intellectual yet emotional suspense of emplotting the story-related events of an unfolding narrative discourse, may similarly remind one of Lutosławski’s statements about playing with the ‘active’ listener and shaping an *akcja* as a psychological experience. One might also begin to wonder if part of the thrill of emplotting an *akcja*’s moments of intense musical significance could relate, in some instances, to the enigmatic implications of one or more ‘key ideas’. If so, reading such music through Barthes’s more widely recognized and robust terminology – for instance viewing a ‘key idea’ as a plot enigma inaugurating a functional sequence of ‘static’ events exploring its radioactive implications – might suggest the beginnings of a theoretically-engaged tool-kit for analysing Lutosławski’s music. It also begins to indicate links between the composer’s poetics, his music and an informative wider context.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 119.

³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 124.

The role of the active perceiver comes to the fore in *S/Z* with a revolutionary force which reshapes the core of Barthes's thinking. On the surface, *S/Z* demonstrates a more fully realised system for theorizing plot than the 'Introduction' and, in doing so, offers even more tools for narrative analysis (and, potentially, the analysis of musical narratives). In *S/Z*, however, Barthes promotes the perceiver of a narrative from enthralled re-constructor to empowered creator and in doing so opens the authorially closed boundaries of the functional sequence to reveal a proliferation of equally valid stories. Consequently, to speak of story, singular, is anathema to the Barthes of *S/Z*. His aim by 1970 was to establish 'not the *real* text, but a plural text, the same and new'.³²

S/Z proposes five narrative codes or codes of reading, 'a kind of network... through which the entire text passes (or rather, in passing, becomes text)'.³³ McCreless, in an important musicological essay on Barthes discussed later in this chapter, decodes the rationale behind the five codes as follows:

Barthes's understanding... turns on his contention that we, as readers, process narratives according to certain learned codes. The five codes... are essentially interlocking yet analytically separate models that describe how we read and interpret narratives... a means of sorting and interrelating its thematic, symbolic, referential, and sequential elements.³⁴

Barthes calls two of his codes 'irreversible' – the 'hermeneutic code' or code of truth and the 'proairetic code' or code of actions – because the interpretation of both is dependent on their units being perceived as part of an irreversible sequence of events. Barthes's description of the first of these, the hermeneutic code, makes clear its kinship

³² Barthes, *S/Z*, p. 16.

³³ *Ibid.*, p. 20.

³⁴ Patrick McCreless, 'Roland Barthes's *S/Z* from a Musical Point of View', *In Theory Only*, 10/7 (1988), p. 5.

with the enigmas, functional units and narrative threads outlined in his earlier essay's description of plot:

Let us designate as *hermeneutic code* all the units whose function it is to articulate in various ways a question, its response, and the variety of chance events which can either formulate the question or delay its answer; or even, constitute an enigma and lead to its solution.³⁵

Barthes likens the proairetic code to the role of the string section in an orchestra:

what sustains, flows in a regular way, brings everything together, like the strings, are the proairetic sequences, the series of actions, the cadence of familiar gestures.³⁶

Quite how the irreversible codes are differentiated one from the other is never made entirely clear in *S/Z*. Are hermeneutic events, for example, a special category of the proairetic? According to Peter Brooks, the very notion of plot may be understood as 'an "overcoding" of the proairetic by the hermeneutic, the latter structuring the discrete elements of the former into larger interpretative wholes, working out their play of meaning and significance'.³⁷ The active perceiver of a plot, in other words, sifts the sequence of proairetic events by sorting the crucial elements (the functional sequence or hermeneutic code) from the narrative chaff (catalyzing non-functional or proairetic events); as part of this process, the hermeneutic events are simultaneously emplotted to reveal the plot's story.

For the Barthes of *S/Z*, however, emplotment is an act of consumption and thus ideologically problematic. This issue relates to the current in *S/Z* which subverts the book's evolution of its initial narratological agenda. Barthes argues that narrative texts (his example is *Sarrasine*, a novella by Balzac written in 1830) can be read in a way that 'opens' them to exceed and escape from the 'closed' semantic boundaries of their plots.

³⁵ Barthes, *S/Z*, p. 17.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 29.

³⁷ Brooks, *Reading for the Plot*, p. 18.

According to Barthes, *Sarrasine* will most often be read as a 'readerly' text, an interpretative strategy in which the reader focuses on the novella's irreversible elements, particularly the hermeneutic enigma embodied and resolved by the story's functional sequence. Alternatively, however, it could be read as a 'writerly' text, in which case one resists the seductive allure of reading for the plot and instead 'opens' the text by paying closer attention to reversible details which might otherwise pass by unnoticed in the rush to emplot the irreversible codes.

To signify his resistance to the 'veritable "thrilling" of intelligibility', and thereby the way in which distasteful cultural or political agendas might be smuggled into the perceiver's consciousness via the diversionary tactic of 'suspense', Barthes advocates 'starring' a text in order to slow one's reading down, segmenting a narrative discourse and its subsequent analysis with asterisks and thereby dividing both into smaller units than the 'Introduction' essay's functional and catalyzing events. The purpose of this is to encourage concentration on the full range of any one moment's connotations. Cultural or extra-narrative resonances, which Barthes analyses through his 'reversible' codes, may in turn strongly resist 'closed' or 'readerly' interpretations of the work and reveal the kinds of stories within stories that Kermode calls 'narrative secrets'.³⁸ The reversible 'semic', 'referential' and 'symbolic' codes (reversible because the relevant aspects of their signifying capacity can be understood regardless of where they appear in the order of a story) are decoded by the reader in response to their cultural connotations. Barthes even refers to the referential code as a cultural code.

Early examples of the reversible codes given by Barthes in his analysis of *Sarrasine* include femininity (the semic code), mediation (the referential) and

³⁸ Frank Kermode, 'Secrets and Narrative Sequence', in W. J. T. Mitchell, ed., *On Narrative* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980), pp. 79-99.

daydreams (the symbolic). These all have specific narrative purposes in relation to the irreversible units in *Sarrasine*'s plot. Yet rather than being read to contribute merely to the opening and closure of a hermeneutic sequence, Barthes maintains that the cultural codes may open up the text itself if, instead of subjugating their signifiers to the demands of the plot, the reader explores their meanings more independently. Reading *Sarrasine*, in this view, might not be about experiencing suspense relating to the 'hermeneutic' issue of discovering the true nature of the title character's enigmatic identity, sexuality or gender; it might instead provoke a critical meditation on the text's implications regarding those topics. With this crucial shift, Barthes's analysis of *Sarrasine* is intended neither to show how the novella 'realizes a [structuralist] system nor to arrive at an interpretation of the work':³⁹ it is intended to demonstrate how a story's meanings can proliferate. This strategy, in turn, steers *S/Z* away from the consumerist hedonism of reading for the plot, instead presenting a critique of such submissive strategies and, by extension, of the authoritarian cultural products which encourage them. The impact of thinking like this on cultural theory (including, in part via the New Musicology, music criticism) has been as enormous.

It is possible, desirable even, to envisage post-structuralist deconstructions of a Lutosławski *akcja* inspired by the Barthes of *S/Z* and concentrating, for instance, on the cultural work carried out by the 'borrowings', conventions, gestures and topics which colour some of the events in his pieces. Arguably, however, it will initially be just as useful to consider ways in which Barthes's more basic theorizing of narrative permits one to identify and analyse the 'readerly' aspects of Lutosławski's musical plots, not least because the cultural resonances of the plots themselves may ultimately prove to be

³⁹ McCreless, 'Roland Barthes's *S/Z*', p. 4

a productive site for 'writerly' interpretations of his music. As Barthes wrote in his 1957 essay 'Myth Today', 'To parody a well-known saying, I shall say that a little formalism turns one away from History, but that a lot brings one back to it'.⁴⁰

One can consequently begin to envisage various uses to which one might put a Barthes-inspired analysis of a Lutosławski piece. One might identify an *akcja*'s plotline, its sequence of 'static'/functional and 'dynamic'/catalyzing events; analyse the functional units working through the enigmatic implications of one or more 'key ideas'; consider other types of signifier which may overcode and enrich the semantic potential of events in the musical discourse; and contemplate the 'veritable "thrilling" of intelligibility' that Barthes referred to as plot's game of suspense and which Lutosławski discussed in similar terms as music's play upon the 'active' listener's imagination, expectations and psychology. In turn, one might also begin to consider the wider interpretative resonances of an *akcja* and the ways in which it will become meaningful to individual listeners in separate ways.

Viewed through the lens of Barthes's 'Introduction' essay and *S/Z*, an *akcja* begins to appear goal-directed and meaningful partly by virtue of the imagination of Lutosławski's 'active' listener, the 'reader' of his musical plots. In Barthes's famous essay 'The Death of the Author', which was published between the 'Introduction' and *S/Z*, he proposes the perceiver of a text to be 'the space on which all the quotations that make up a writing are inscribed without any of them being lost',⁴¹ thereby pointing the way towards intertextuality and the infinitely reinterpretable text. Less radical approaches to the relationship between text and reader, however, may initially prove

⁴⁰ Roland Barthes, 'Myth Today', in *Mythologies*, trans. Annette Lavers (London: Vintage, 2000 [1957]), p.112.

⁴¹ Roland Barthes, 'The Death of the Author', in Heath, ed., *Image-Music-Text*, p. 148. First published as 'La mort de l'auteur', *Mantèla* V (1968).

more appropriate to the attempt to theorize *akcja* and the manner in which one might experience the narrativity of a Lutosławski composition. Theoretical work on the ways in which narrative texts invoke the perception and emplotment of a story – inducing that suspense which ‘grips you in the “mind”, not in the “guts” ’ – may therefore be useful to consider here. In particular, reader-response theory offers a more detailed perspective on the ways in which narratives entice perceivers both actively to emplot a story’s structure and reflectively to consider its symbolic ramifications.

Reading for the plot

The tradition of reader-response criticism emerged during the mid-twentieth century, its roots drawing on the philosophical doctrine of phenomenology. Proposed by Edmund Husserl, phenomenology ‘seeks to bypass the problem of the separation between subject and object, consciousness and the world, by focussing on the phenomenal reality of objects as they appear to consciousness’.⁴² The related idea of intentionality focuses attention on the role of the subject in determining the reality of the object – an idea which, Roger Poole notes, ‘has been one of the most fertile in 20th-century thought’.⁴³ Intentionality is an active (as opposed to passive) model of human cognition which takes into account ‘the intending, selecting, choosing and ordering capacities of the mind in the act of perception’; the mind is therefore deemed to create the ‘patterns, context and interrelation’ of perceived phenomena, as opposed to ‘merely noting [their] brute and isolated existence’.⁴⁴ Lutosławski’s concept of ‘active’ listening and playing with the listener’s psychological expectations, like Barthes’s notions of both ‘readerly’

⁴² See Culler, *Literary Theory*, p. 123; see also Edmund Husserl, *Ideas: General Introduction to Pure Phenomenology*, trans. W.R. Boyce Gibson (London: Allen & Unwin, 1931 [1913]).

⁴³ Roger Poole, ‘Intentionality’, in Alan Bullock and Stephen Tombley, eds, *The New Fontana Dictionary of Modern Thought*, 3rd edn (London: Harper Collins, 2000 [1977]), p. 436.

⁴⁴ Poole, ‘Intentionality’, p. 436.

and 'writerly' perception, could in this basic sense be considered phenomenological. In turn, this suggests that reader-response work on narrative may add further depth to the ways in which one might theorize the perception and interpretation of Lutosławski's music, and particularly the way in which an *akcja*'s plot events might be perceived as a unified and goal-directed structure.

Applications of reader-response theory to narrative analysis unsurprisingly emphasize 'the important role of the reader in establishing the "meaning" of any literary text, thus subverting the emphasis which is traditionally laid upon the text as an "objective" entity whose nature and meaning are to be established by the self-effacing reconstructions of the reader or critic'.⁴⁵ Although not a conceptually unified critical position sustained by a school of thinkers, scholars associated with this area, according to Jane Tompkins, are united by their questioning of the objectivity of the text:

What that [question] yields, ultimately, is not a criticism based on the concept of the reader, but a way of conceiving texts and readers that recognizes the distinctions between them. Reading and writing join hands, change places, and finally become distinguishable only as two names for the same activity.⁴⁶

This approach leads to positions of varying extremity. In Stanley Fish's essay 'Literature and the Reader', for instance, moment-to-moment responses to a text locate the drama of reading in 'the developing responses of the reader in relation to the words as they succeed one another';⁴⁷ yet his later work adopts the more radical stance (paralleling Barthes in *S/Z*) that texts 'are written by readers, not read, since... the formal features of the text... and the reader's interpretative strategies are mutually

⁴⁵ Roger Poole, 'Reader-response theory', in Bullock and Tombley, eds, *The New Fontana Dictionary of Modern Thought*, p. 730.

⁴⁶ Jane P. Tompkins, 'An Introduction to Reader-Response Criticism', in Tompkins, ed., *Reader-Response Criticism: From Formalism to Post-Structuralism* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1980), p. x.

⁴⁷ Stanley Fish, 'Literature and the Reader: Affective Stylistics' (1970), in Stanley Fish, *Is There a Text in This Class? The Authority of Interpretative Communities* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1980), p. 26.

independent'.⁴⁸ The most forceful principle to emerge from Fish's reader-response work, nonetheless, is the idea that a narrative's story and discourse are negotiated by readers through their engagement with a text.

Such engagements are the focus of Iser's theory of reading. For Iser the literary work has two poles, the artistic and the esthetic.

The artistic refers to the text created by the author, and the esthetic to the realization accomplished by the reader. From this polarity it follows that the literary work... must lie halfway between the two.⁴⁹

Iser's 'literary work', which has similarities to the 'neutral' or 'immanent' level of the text theorized by the semiological tripartition, is a virtual entity, 'an area in which reader and author participate in a game of the imagination', and Iser therefore argues that texts must be conceived in terms of how the reader's 'active and creative' participation is invoked.⁵⁰ The emplotment of a story takes place, in this view, at a point of interaction between text and perceiver within the latter's imagination. The component parts of a narrative text, Iser states, are signifiers which 'convey information' and 'disclose subtle connections' (such as Barthes's enigmas and functional units) thereby permitting the reader to '“climb aboard” the text' and emplot its story's correlates.⁵¹ Yet those connections, Iser stresses, are not merely less concrete than the text's component signifiers: they are not actually there 'in' the text but are instead projections on the part of the reader.

Whatever we have read sinks into our memory and is foreshortened. It may later be evoked again and set against a different background with the result that the reader is enabled to

⁴⁸ Tompkins, 'An Introduction', p. xxii.

⁴⁹ Wolfgang Iser, 'The Reading Process: A Phenomenological Approach', in Iser, *The Implied Reader: Patterns of Communication from Bunyan to Beckett* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1974 [1972]), p. 274.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 275.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, p. 272.

develop hitherto unforeseeable connections... Thus, the reader, in establishing these interrelations between past, present and future, actually causes the text to reveal its multiplicity of connections. These connections are the product of the reader's mind working on the raw material of the text.⁵²

Perceiving a plot is not merely a process of moving between past, present and future in search of a story's emplotment, but one in which the totality of a plot and further aspects of a story's meaning emerge as a result of 'the whole dynamic process':

the written text imposes certain limits on its unwritten implications... but at the same time these implications, worked out by the reader's imagination, set the given situation against a background which endows it with far greater significance than it might have seemed to possess on its own... In this way, trivial scenes suddenly take on the shape of an 'enduring form of life.' What constitutes this form is never named, let alone explained in the text, although in fact it is the end product of the interaction between text and reader.⁵³

Iser therefore views perceivers of a narrative text as working towards what Virginia Woolf called a story's most 'enduring form of life': not the story itself but some metaphoric resonance thereof. The product of this creative interaction is 'the virtual dimension of the text... the coming together of text and imagination',⁵⁴ which Iser calls a 'gestalt'. This abstraction

must inevitably be colored by our own characteristic selection process. For it is not given by the text itself; it arises from the meeting between the written text and the individual mind of the reader with its own particular historiography of experience... The 'gestalt' is not the true meaning of the text; at best it is a configurative meaning.⁵⁵

Iser consequently rejects the extremes of either a poietic or esthetic fallacy regarding the specifics of a story or the meaning of its 'gestalt': there is neither a single authorial meaning nor an infinity of acceptable readings. 'Both extremes are conceivable', Iser

⁵² *Ibid.*, p. 278.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, p. 276.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 279.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 284.

concedes, but most readings will ‘find some form of balance between the two conflicting tendencies’.⁵⁶ A kind of communication between artist and audience can therefore result if the reading of a plot formed by the perceiver, or the outline of a virtual ‘gestalt’ formed through the perceiver’s engagement with a story, is somehow similar to the story or ‘gestalt’ imagined by the artist.

Some tenets of Lutosławski’s poetics of *akcja* appear to coincide with aspects of reader-response theory, and particularly Iser’s writings, as productively as they do with Barthes’s theories of narrative. For instance, Iser’s description of climbing aboard the text, by expanding in more detail on the experience of emplotment outlined by Barthes, could be used to validate Lutosławski’s view of the ‘active’ perception required to emplot an *akcja*. Furthermore, regarding the key issue of how an *akcja* can be considered joined up, unified, directed and dynamic in the absence of functional tonality or another similar system, Iser’s thinking implies that the deepest momentum or unity of any plot-like structure is, ultimately, a readerly invention. One could therefore hypothesize that there is no reason why an ‘active’ listener should not emplot an *akcja* and consider the emergent musical plot every bit as dynamic, directed and unified as, say, the contrapuntal-harmonic structure of a Bach prelude or the thematic developments in the first movement of a Beethoven sonata.

Iser’s notion that a form of communication between artist and audience is made possible through the projections of the perceiver in response to a text with a plot could also bring a new perspective to Lutosławski’s oft-stated desire to make contact with his listeners.⁵⁷ As he wrote in his ‘Notebook of Ideas’ in 1972, ‘I feel an ardent wish to communicate with people through art all the time’:

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 285.

⁵⁷ See, for example, Lutosławski, ‘The Composer and the Listener’.

How can this goal be achieved? Through the utmost sincerity of artistic expression at all levels, from technical details to the most secret and intimate depths... Artistic creation may thus be viewed as a hunt for human souls resulting in a cure for the most acute of human sufferings, a sense of loneliness.⁵⁸

This statement and others similar to it are often quoted as exemplifying Lutosławski's humanism. Thinking about his composition of pieces with plots as an attempt to encourage 'active' emplotment and, in turn, the emergence of configurative meanings akin to Woolf's 'enduring form of life' may, however, offer a route towards both a more 'technical' and 'intimate' understanding of the manner in which his music sought to achieve these fundamental artistic aims. Calling to mind another Lutosławski *cri de coeur*, one might even be tempted to speculate about the purpose of such communications:

We [all] live in a certain kind of world, but creative artists live a sort of double life, because several hours a day they are in another world, in the world that has (apparently, at least) nothing in common with the external world in which we live. I think that this ideal world is the world of our dreams, of our wishes, of our notion of ideal, and we spend quite a lot of time every day in this ideal world. And our task, our role, our mission, is to make this ideal world available for those who are not accessed to it...⁵⁹

Lutosławski gave this answer to a question about links between his Symphony No. 3 and recent political events in Poland. He had made no conscious response, he stated, although he could not rule out an unconscious one. However, his statement about the ideal world may suggest an attachment to the idea of art capable of transcending human struggles in order to posit, in more abstract but perhaps also more universal terms, alternative solutions and experiences (such as, perhaps, the orchestra in Symphony

⁵⁸ Witold Lutosławski, 'Notebook of Ideas', entry dated 2 March 1972, repr. and trans. in Guzowska, ed., *Lutosławski homagium*, p. 40.

⁵⁹ Lutosławski was speaking here of the answer he gave at a pre-concert talk prior to a Proms performance of Symphony No. 3 in London. Quoted in Rae, *The Music of Lutosławski*, p. 178.

No. 3 achieving melodic ‘solidarity’ towards the end of the piece). His musical plots could be a way of understanding his attempts to achieve these deeply felt aims.

Even if one accepts, however, that the conditions for narrativity and emplotment outlined by Barthes and Iser’s theories support the possibility of theorizing and analysing Lutosławski’s musical plots along the lines etched above, the next question must nonetheless relate to whether or not one can realistically support the idea of musical signifiers like ‘key ideas’ creating the required enigmas, chains of causation and transformations for a story-like musical structure to be shaped and perceived. Can music relay enough information to form a discourse retelling an *Iliad* or a *L’après-midi d’un faune*, or are its semiological limitations better suited to more ambiguous invocations of narrativity – invocations that play, perhaps, on the intangibility of narrative meaning as it is constituted and experienced as a virtual entity in the minds of Barthes, Iser and Lutosławski’s similarly conceived ‘active’ perceivers? At the point where literary theory can no longer assist with such an inquiry, the narratological debates of musicology stand ready to take over.

Speaking of musical narrativity

Defining narrativity in the context of his *New Grove* entry on the topic, Fred Maus describes it as ‘the quality of some artefact that makes it an example of narrative or, in some usages, a quality that creates a resemblance to narrative’.⁶⁰ The search for such musical examples or resemblances, however, forms ‘a tantalizing, confusing, problematic area of inquiry’, and not merely because that inquiry takes place at the

⁶⁰ Fred Everett Maus, ‘Narratology, Narrativity’ in Sadie and Tyrrell, eds, *The New Grove Dictionary*, vol. 17, p. 641.

intersection of many disciplines.⁶¹ When the quest to read music as narrative was reinvigorated in the 1980s, through the attempts of a number of musicologists to map literary narratology onto instrumental western art music, the critical resistance from other quarters was equally vigorous. Consequently, the question of whether or not one can speak of narrativity in music has few generally accepted positions. Emboldened by Lutosławski's creative poetics, however, and its resonance with the theories of narrative discussed above, this section engages both sides of the debate in search of common ground with which more closely to theorize musical narrativity.

The first wave of positive engagement with the possibility of musical narrativity, including significant contributions from Maus, McCreless and Anthony Newcomb,⁶² was soon followed by the work of a second wave of scholars less persuaded of music's narrative propensities. Of these writings, the most notable contribution was by Nattiez, although Carolyn Abbate and Lawrence Kramer's input was also significant.⁶³ Rather than leading to an invigorated synthesis, new propositions and further debate, however, the dialectical rebuttals of the second wave left the field in a state of suspended animation, apparently unsure of its discoveries or future direction.

The wider musicological context of the debate may have been partly responsible for this unsatisfactory outcome, explaining both the intensity of the first wave's engagement and the apparent void left in the wake of the second. Caricaturing the New

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p. 642. Maus lists the disciplines of 'historical interpretation, technical music theory, philosophical study of expression and representation, and semiotics' alongside music criticism and narratology.

⁶² See, for example, Fred Maus, 'Music as Drama', *Music Theory Spectrum* 10 (1988), pp. 56-73, repr. in Jenefer Robinson, ed., *Music and Meaning* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1997); McCreless, 'Roland Barthes's *S/Z*'; Anthony Newcomb, ' "Once More Between Absolute and Program Music": Schumann's Second Symphony', *19th-Century Music* 7/3 (1983-4), pp. 233-50.

⁶³ See Nattiez, 'Can One Speak', Carolyn Abbate, *Unsung Voices: Opera and Musical Narrative in the Nineteenth Century* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991), and Lawrence Kramer, 'Musical Narratology: A Theoretical Outline', *Indiana Theory Review* 12 (1991), pp. 141-62.

Musicology's 'largely *uncritical* admixture and dissemination of new or borrowed methodologies, ideologies, and buzz-words' during the period of theory transfusions which invigorated music criticism in the 1980s and 1990s,⁶⁴ Nicholas Cook and Mark Everist describe a 'curiously serial process in which theoretical positions were taken up and cast aside':

Geertzian thick description, narratology, *Annalisme*, and the Bloomian 'anxiety of influence' were all explored and then discarded in turn. Multivalency – the acknowledgement of the possible equal validity of multiple interpretations... – itself seems to have emerged as a passing phase, to be replaced by the next critical position.⁶⁵

One might therefore suggest interlinked reasons for the waning of the first wave's investigation of musical narrativity after the second wave's contribution. Not only did Nattiez, Abbate and Kramer pose important and difficult questions, but by the time they had finished asking them, the swarm of critical musicological endeavour had moved on to colonize pastures new. It would be wrong, though, to assume that the second wave had rendered all of the first wave's ideas untenable. A fresh examination of the debate's core texts – not least Nattiez's essay, which is often erroneously taken to be entirely against the idea of musical narrativity (it is not, and the manner in which he accepts the possibility of musical narrativity is significant) – reveals a different picture.

During the first wave a number of writers pursued particularly close analogies between music and narrative, often via a direct deployment of theoretical approaches adapted from narratological theories for the analysis of literature. Edward T. Cone, for example, addressed strategies for listening to a Brahms intermezzo in terms of the ways

⁶⁴ Nicholas Cook and Mark Everist, eds., *Rethinking Music* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001 [1999]), p. ix.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, p. ix.

in which one might read (and re-read) a detective story;⁶⁶ Newcomb, influenced by Propp's work, argued for paradigmatic plot archetypes in music, for instance locating a journey from pastoral innocence to cosmopolitan corruption in Mahler's Symphony No. 9 (1909-10);⁶⁷ and McCreless, as discussed in more detail below, searched for contrapuntal-harmonic enigmas in Beethoven's 'Ghost' Trio, Op. 70 (1808) by welding Barthes's narrative codes from *S/Z* to a Schenkerian framework.⁶⁸ More generally, however, the first wave's efforts focused on two different models within which conceptions of musical narrativity might be framed.

One might call these two models the mimetic and diegetic hypotheses. In the mimetic approach, music is deemed capable of representing agents and their activities in the manner of a play or another narrative text which unfolds as a real-time imitation of events. In the diegetic approach, music is deemed capable of projecting a narrator to recount a plot involving agents and their activities in the manner of a novel or an epic poem. As Klein notes, the second wave deemed music incapable of clearly representing specific agents and acts, let alone projecting a narrating voice, thus casting the framing models adrift in a 'shadow realm between mimesis and diegesis'.⁶⁹ From the shadows, however, another hypothesis has emerged to find favour, positing instances of musical narrativity as representations of the experiencing consciousness of a fictive persona.⁷⁰ Attractively, this synthesis links back to Cone's pioneering work in *The Composer's Voice* and to the idea that, in some music, one can posit 'a musical persona that is the

⁶⁶ Edward T. Cone, 'Three Ways of Reading a Detective Story – or a Brahms Intermezzo', *Georgia Review* 31 (1977); reprinted in *Music: A View from the Delft*, ed. R. P. Morgan (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989), pp. 77-93.

⁶⁷ Anthony Newcomb, 'Narrative Archetypes and Mahler's Ninth Symphony' in Stephen Scher, ed., *Music and Text: Critical Inquiries* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), pp. 118-36.

⁶⁸ McCreless, 'Roland Barthes's *S/Z*'.

⁶⁹ Klein, 'Chopin's Fourth Ballade as Musical Narrative', p. 24.

⁷⁰ See, for example, Gregory Karl, 'Structuralism and Musical Plot', *Music Theory Spectrum* 19 (1997), pp. 13-34 and Klein, 'Chopin's Fourth Ballade as Musical Narrative'; some of Cumming's analyses in *The Sonic Self* (e.g., pp. 236-40 and 249-73), while not narratological, take a similar approach.

experiencing subject of the entire composition, in whose thought the play, or narrative, or reverie, takes place'.⁷¹ It also permits both the mimetic and diegetic hypotheses to be upheld, slightly reformulated, in the form of cognitive interactions between vividly defined personae-like ideas which are governed or reflected on by a super-ego-like internal narrator. As this can be read as a synthesis, however, it remains vulnerable to the doubts raised about both the diegetic and mimetic hypotheses by the second wave. It is instructive to examine those objections in detail.

A chief problem with the mimetic hypothesis can be explored through Karl's work on Beethoven's 'Appassionata' Sonata, Op. 57 (1804).⁷² Karl's interpretation of the role of the insistent D-flat to C motif in the first movement of this work pivots around perceiving this musical idea as an antagonist interrupting the reverie of the movement's protagonist, represented by Beethoven's more voluble opening theme. How, though, can one identify when those notes do or do not represent the antagonist? The first few appearances of the motif, for example, tally neatly with Karl's reading; but the composing out of the motif in the ensuing transition surely calls for alternative strategies. In fairness, this is actually a slight misreading of Karl's argument. Viewing the work through the experiencing consciousness hypothesis as a fiction of mental life, these musical ideas are more akin, Karl argues, to an intellectual reverie (the opening idea) on which a darker thought (the D flat to C motif) impinges. In this regard the composing out of the motif during the transition might be thought of as a mulling over of various ideas en route to the fictive persona's next fully-formed cognition (the second subject). The crucial point for Karl is the nature of the interaction of these ideas (i.e., that the D flat to C motif antagonizes, not that it represents an 'actual' antagonist). Yet

⁷¹ Edward T. Cone, *The Composer's Voice* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1974), p. 94.

⁷² See Karl, 'Structuralism and Musical Plot'.

the basic problem remains unresolved: it is not within the semiological range of music unambiguously to say when the D flat to C motif represents an antagonist or explicitly to signify how that antagonist, or any other agent, is behaving.

The possible solution of reading the transition as a narrational gloss on preceding events raises the spectre of the second wave's main objection to the diegetic hypothesis, which posits the idea of a musical narrator being projected to present events, direct the perceiver's attention towards salient details and encompass those details within a narrational commentary. Vera Micznik, for example, argues that there is no need 'to appeal to external agency' and posit a narrator outside of the musical text because '“narrational knowledge” is communicated, the “possible story” is enacted and at the same time told by its own materials'.⁷³ The music, in other words, enacts both a tale and its telling. This neat idea echoes the Adornian notion that 'music recites itself, is its own content, narrates without narrative'.⁷⁴ Yet the argument that one can talk of narration in music if only one recognizes, as William Kinderman asserts, the correct 'configuration of audible elements inherent in the work of art'⁷⁵ imposes a dangerous circularity of logic. Prior to having formed an interpretation of a piece as a narrative, it may prove difficult to differentiate between the elements of a story and the elements of a composition narrating that story.

These basic objections were incisively refined by Nattiez and Abbate's work on narrativity. Nattiez bluntly claimed that 'it is not within the semiological possibilities of

⁷³ Vera Micznik, 'Music and Narrative Revisited: Degrees of Narrativity in Beethoven and Mahler', *Journal of the Royal Musical Association* 126 (2001), p. 243.

⁷⁴ Theodor W. Adorno, *Mahler: A Musical Physiognomy*, trans. Edmund Jephcott (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992 [1960]), p. 76.

⁷⁵ Kinderman, William, 'Integration and Narrative Design in Beethoven's Piano Sonata in A-flat Major, Opus 110', in Lewis Lockwood, Christopher Reynolds and James Webster, eds., *Beethoven Forum 1* (1992), p. 143.

music to link a subject to a predicate'.⁷⁶ In other words, music cannot unambiguously signify, describe or connect representations of agents and their acts. This argument waves farewell to overly literal applications of the mimetic hypothesis. Nattiez writes of Strauss's *Till Eulenspiegels lustige Streiche* (1894-5) that, 'with the help of the title, I can readily agree that it concerns the life and death of a character. I certainly hear that he moves, jumps, etc. But what exactly does he do? I don't know'.⁷⁷ Music can hint, through gestures and other culturally recognised conventions, at types of action, mood and atmosphere, while instruments and groupings can approximate different agents (e.g., a clarinet as a lusty prankster) – especially to listeners primed to listen for such signifiers via a programme note or evocative title. It cannot, however, specify much in the way of detail. The gap for the interpreter's imaginative response in such narratives may therefore appear to be dauntingly wide. Abbate, meanwhile, stresses an upshot of music's semiological limitations with ramifications for the diegetic hypothesis: music cannot posit a past tense.

In terms of the classical distinctions, what we call narrative – novels, stories, myths, and the like – is diegetic... It is a tale told later, by one who escaped to the outside of the tale... Music's distinction is fundamental and terrible; it is not chiefly diegetic but mimetic. Like any form of... temporal art, it traps the listener in present experience and the beat of passing time, from which he or she cannot escape...⁷⁸

This appears, in turn, to bid farewell to literal applications of the diegetic hypothesis.

It would be a mistake, however, to read too much into these counter-arguments, which are not as sweeping as has often been portrayed.⁷⁹ Arguably, the second wave's objections were not to the idea of musical narrativity per se but to the idea of music

⁷⁶ Nattiez, 'Can One Speak', p. 244.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 244.

⁷⁸ Abbate, *Unsung Voices*, p. 53.

⁷⁹ See, for example, Kinderman, 'Integration and Narrative Design' and Karl, 'Structuralism and Musical Plot'.

narrating. It seems perfectly plausible that some music will present ideas in a plot-like manner, signifying causation and transformation and therefore evoking emplotment. In turn, the emplotted story-like gestalt may permit listeners to explore a range of semantic resonances which can be rooted in the material of the music to greater or lesser degrees. One may, in other words, be able to talk of musical narratives, meaning instances of musical narrativity, but not of literal narratives represented through music or music which narrates. The distinction is subtle but vital and rests upon something Lutosławski appears to have understood in his own terms, and which Barthes and Iser theorized more precisely: the role of the perceiver in ‘actively’ creating any experience of narrativity and thus any narrative’s plot.

Nattiez’s essay reflects on these subtleties. As his ‘no smoke without fire’ comment indicates, while he is adamant that instrumental music cannot link subjects and predicates or deal in semiotic specifics, Nattiez is unable to shake the idea that some music can nonetheless articulate a more abstract mode of narrativity, enticing the listener to draw analogies (such as his response to *Till Eulenspiegel*) which, as Jim Samson similarly notes, ‘may be difficult to substantiate, fanciful even’, and yet ‘are somehow compelling’.⁸⁰ But what is doing the enticing? Nattiez writes about the temptation to ‘create a relation of causality’ in response to some sequences of musical ideas, ‘a relation which is purely hypothetical and which creates precisely the interest of the plot’.⁸¹ Furthermore, like Barthes, Iser and Lutosławski, he sites these relationships of causality within the creative exchange between text and perceiver: ‘only when the

⁸⁰ Jim Samson, *Chopin: The Four Ballades* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), p. 87.

⁸¹ Nattiez, ‘Can One Speak’, p. 242.

listener decides to link the succession of sound events according to a plot', Nattiez writes, 'does he build up the musical work as a narrative'.⁸²

A musical narrative, in this view, 'is not only a plot or a story, but also an *act*, that which Molino terms the narrative "thread" ', and because 'this process... operates when we hear music in a more or less spontaneous mode of listening', music can therefore give rise to 'the narrative impulse'.⁸³ One problem here relates to the potent ramifications of the word 'narrative'. Strictly speaking, Nattiez is talking of an impulse to emplot threads of ambiguous yet allusive musical events, as opposed to an impulse to translate those musical events into a non-musical story. It is not, therefore, that musical narratives reveal the adventures of a playful Till or a frolicking Faun, but rather that, through the apparently innate human reflex of emplotment working in tandem with cultural conventions for the interpretation of some western art music, a plot-like reading may be formed in relation to even the most abstract set of musical signs. Piecing together this reading, it follows, will be enough to evoke Barthes's suspense and the drama of listening for some 'active' perceivers – especially when the music concerned, as may be the case in Lutosławski's pieces, includes elements replicating the enigmas, functional sequences and so on which evoke experiences of narrativity in verbal or otherwise more semiologically explicit texts. A reading of a piece as a plot, however, also has the potential for generating metaphoric resonances and this may lead some listeners to reflect imaginatively on the connotations of that story-like structure, proposing a more literal interpretation or narrativization. In both of these respects, albeit to different degrees, Nattiez was right to identify the experience of musical narrativity as 'just another metaphor' with which humans seek to understand music.

⁸² *Ibid.*, p. 242.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, p. 243.

Yet this 'just' is the crux of the matter. Is it misguided, intellectually unethical even, for listeners to respond to these symbolic enticements to emplotment, or merely wrong for listeners to claim too much on behalf of any one reading through their narrativizations? Commenting on Cone's work, Nattiez argues that readings of music as some kind of plot run the 'serious risk of slipping from narrative *metaphor* to an ontological illusion': the belief that, 'since music *suggests* narrative, it could itself *be* narrative'.⁸⁴ These words are the key. It may be beyond the semiological possibilities of music to narrate or represent a story, but there is a vast gulf between the kind of strong reading required to translate musical signifiers into a literal narrative and the rather more minimal conditions required for the evocation of musical narrativity. Alan Street, for instance, rightly views over-enthusiastic musical narrativizations which locate all of the signifiers of a story within a musical text as 'an act of ventriloquism: a manipulation of the figure of prosopopoeia for the sake of jumping the abysmal gap between word and work'.⁸⁵ As Alistair Williams points out, however, because all reflection on music 'actively shapes our perception, performance and creation of music... when we speak of narrative in music, the situation is not different from general issues of meaning in music, which stem from an intersection of music and discourse, and are not entirely located in either'.⁸⁶ Some music, moreover, will be 'more susceptible to a narrative frame of mind' than other music because, although it cannot

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 245.

⁸⁵ Alan Street, 'The Obligato Recitative: Narrative and Schoenberg's Five Orchestral Pieces, Op. 16', in Anthony Pople, ed., *Theory, Analysis and Meaning in Music* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), p. 183.

⁸⁶ Alastair Williams, *Constructing Musicology* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2001), p. 43. Cook makes analogous points in a discussion of the formation of musical meaning which touches, notably, on reader-response theory. See Nicholas Cook, *Music, Imagination, and Culture* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992 [1990]), esp. pp. 16-22.

literally represent or narrate a plot's events, music can 'allude to them semiotically... leaving the listener to complete the rest'.⁸⁷

Ironically, given the conventional wisdom regarding an equally abysmal gap between the first and second waves, this is what many music theorists with an interest in musical narrativity have claimed all along. Rather than proposing the existence of all-encompassing systems of musical-narrative signification capable of explicitly representing or telling a story, Karl, for instance, reminds his readers that 'no major advocate of musical narratology actually maintains that music narrates in any traditional sense'.⁸⁸ Musical narrative, Karl writes, 'has little to do with narrative' and the term 'is merely a misleading placeholder standing for an elusive sense of teleology', i.e., musical narrativity.⁸⁹ The similarity to Nattiez's position is obvious. Some music, furthermore, has apparently been created by composers as diverse as Brian Ferneyhough, Judith Weir and, of course, Lutosławski, who talk openly of their intention consciously to design music akin to, and yet distinct from, a literal narrative.⁹⁰ Musical narratives need not, therefore, be programmatic works or attempts to tell extra-musical stories through purely musical means; they may, however, be compositions which require a more judicious approach to the interpretation of their narrativity. It is therefore appropriate to ask, within this newly constrained theoretical framework, how some music may continue to evoke narrativity in spite of (or perhaps partly because of) its semiological limitations. In this newly filtered light it should prove valuable to examine the existing literature on musical discourse and, particularly, musical plot, in

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 43.

⁸⁸ Karl, 'Structuralism and Musical Plot', pp. 13-14.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 14.

⁹⁰ Ferneyhough described his *Carceri d'Invenzione I* (1982) as being plot-like to the present writer during a documentary interview filmed in 2004 and shown at the London Sinfonietta event 'Inventions: Ferneyhough in Focus' (14 February 2004). Judith Weir discussed music and narrative in an interview by the present author for the London Sinfonietta. See http://www.londonsinfonietta.org.uk/perform/weir_interview.html (accessed 23 May 2005).

search of ideas which remain viable after the strictures of the second wave and in order to assess their implications for the analysis of Lutosławski's poetics and music.

Musical discourse/narration

In the wake of Nattiez and Abbate's strictures, several ways of speaking of narration in instrumental music appear to remain viable. Abbate's own concept of musical discourse focuses on how music might evoke narration through a 'bizarre and disruptive effect':

Such moments seem like voices from elsewhere, speaking (singing) in a fashion we recognize precisely because it is idiosyncratic.⁹¹

This conception of musical discourse has found support in writings by Kramer⁹² and Elizabeth Paley, who locates an Abbattean moment of narration in Act 3, Scene 4 of Schumann's *Manfred* (1848-9) when 'a disembodied musical "voice"... emerge[s] from beyond the diegetic realm of the play to speak to the listening audience'.⁹³ At this moment, a 'dominant seventh above B flat is left hanging, unresolved, abandoned' precisely when a key character's 'speech fails to arise'. Nonetheless, Paley claims, 'I *hear* something in this unexpected silence':⁹⁴ an unsung voice narrating and, within the context of the drama, a 'spine-tingling incantation' which 'raises a ghost from the dead'.⁹⁵ An important point to note here is that Paley is speaking figuratively when she says 'I *hear* something'. She imagines hearing something at this point in

⁹¹ Abbate, *Unsung Voices*, p. 29.

⁹² Kramer talks of 'a voice that emerges from within language to spread itself throughout the whole system, fissuring it in every direction'. See Lawrence Kramer, ' "As If a Voice Were in Them": Music, Narrative, and Deconstruction', in *Music as Cultural Practice 1800-1900* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), p. 178.

⁹³ Elizabeth Paley, ' "The Voice Which Was My Music": Narrative and Nonnarrative Musical Discourse in Schumann's *Manfred*', *19th-Century Music* 24/1 (Summer 2000), p. 4.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 8.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 4.

the piece, thereby authoring this discursive event in response to less than explicit signs.

This is a vital distinction, demonstrating that music may be able to signify the appearance of acts of narration, creating discourse-like effects to be emplotted by the listener as special musical-narrative events overcoding the gist of a musical plot.

Robert Hatten's work on musical narrativity, for example, presents a similar idea inspired by literary theorist Mikhail Bakhtin, who argued that discourse in the novel is dialogic, with a polyphony of different voices participating in the telling of a story. A novel's 'totality of the world of objects and ideas', according to Bakhtin, is orchestrated 'by means of the social diversity of speech types and by the differing individual voices that flourish under such conditions', including '[a]uthorial speech, the speeches of narrators, inserted genres, [and] the speech of characters'.⁹⁶ The move from one voice of this 'polyphony' or 'heteroglossia' to another creates a shift in discourse level. Subsequently, while they do not literally create narration, Hatten argues that musical effects akin to a shift in discourse level may lead one to interpret certain passages as 'putting a "spin" on the presentation of events' in the manner of a critical commentary.⁹⁷ One of Hatten's examples of this is the Turkish march from the finale of Beethoven's Symphony No. 9, which he reads as a new musical voice interrupting the discourse and making a gesture of inclusiveness by filtering the movement's main theme through a populist topic.

Similarly, an analysis of Chopin's First Ballade (1831-5) by Klein reads the piece's introduction as a narrational frame and thus a passage of discourse one shift removed from the ensuing music. 'We hear the opening', he writes, 'as the

⁹⁶ Mikhail Bakhtin, *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays*, ed. Michael Holquist, trans. Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981), p. 263.

⁹⁷ Robert Hatten, 'On Narrativity in Music: Expressive Genres and Levels of Discourse in Beethoven', *Indiana Theory Review* 12 (1991), p. 76.

announcement of a profound and painful tragedy, and the closing progression [of the opening] tells us that the story is an old one [due to its Phrygian bass], as if one is about to recount a legend or myth'; when the 'real' action begins, one is therefore led to emplot the moment as follows: 'Once upon a time there was a waltz'.⁹⁸ The lyre-like figuration of the broken piano chords, intertextually suggestive of a bard tuning up, may be another overcoding which intensifies this effect. The key point, however, is not that the music is actually putting a spin on events or announcing its presentation of a painful tragedy, but that it can, perhaps, allude semiotically to acts of spin or announcement (in much the same way *Till Eulenspiegel* suggests something like leaping or dying) and therefore entice listeners to emplot such effects within a narrative reading.

Moments such as these may be as rare in Lutosławski's music as they are in other repertoires; possible shifts in discourse level in his pieces can nonetheless be suggested. His codas, for instance, may be a productive place to look. After the climax of Symphony No. 4 and its quivering aftermath, the music's fiery coda, which changes the tone of the music entirely, could be heard – as an adjunct to Klein's tragic reading of the piece – to wave a defiant fist in the direction of the piece's catastrophe. In this way, one might read something grimly affirmative into this section, such as an 'authorial' argument in favour of the need to keep going in the aftermath of tragic events. An authorial presence shaping the music might similarly be felt at the end of *Preludes and Fugue*, due to the sudden volatility of the closing gesture, which Lutosławski likened to a curtain crashing down at the end of a play.⁹⁹ More prosaically, however, this effect could be read as a rhetorical gesture akin to the quasi-cadential juxtapositions and pauses Lutosławski discussed in his 'Notes' lecture. As McCreless has illustrated, the

⁹⁸ Klein, 'Chopin's Fourth Ballade', pp. 36-7.

⁹⁹ I am indebted to Steven Stucky for this insight.

closure of a composition is not merely signalled by the resolution of a musical plot's functional sequence, but is simultaneously signalled by expressive and rhetorical factors.¹⁰⁰ The many permutations of bringing a discussion of musical rhetoric into an examination of musical narrativity are beyond the remit of the present study.

Nonetheless, the potential of beginning to consider rhetorical musical gestures as being, in some cases, discursive contributions to a musical narrative – shaping and drawing attention to aspects of a plot in the manner of the unseen authorial presence directing, for example, a film's presentation of its story – are obvious. Their role as a discursive overcoding of Lutosławski's musical plots will clearly need to be considered, to some extent, in close readings of his music.

John Rink suggests an alternative musical narrator. For Rink, the performer of a piece is a hidden narrating presence who,

as 'story-teller', determines the music's essential 'narrative' content by following indications in the score as to 'plot' and... by shaping the unfolding tale on the spur of the moment in an expressively appropriate manner.¹⁰¹

More broadly, one might think of a performance – i.e., anything which purposefully influences the nature of the music heard by the audience, from conducting and playing to the mixing and editing of a recording – as, in this view, a form of narrational discourse shaping the presentation of a pre-existing narrative text (i.e., a musical score).

Rink's proposition is made in the context of an analytical commentary on Chopin's ballades in which he suggests a link between the 'intonatory curves' of spoken narrative and the 'intensity curves' he believes to be 'traceable in each of the ballades',

¹⁰⁰ See Patrick McCreless, 'The Hermeneutic Sentence and Other Literary Models for Tonal Closure', *Indiana Theory Review* 12 (1991), pp. 35-73. McCreless cites work on closure by musicologists including Agawu, Hatten, Kerman and Meyer.

¹⁰¹ John Rink, 'Chopin's Ballades and the Dialectic: Analysis in Historical Perspective', *Music Analysis* 13/1 (1994), p. 112.

and which can be used to study performance-related issues such as ‘timing, momentum and, above all, “dynamic shape”’.¹⁰² In a paper extending these ideas,¹⁰³ Rink illustrates his personal ‘narration’ (i.e., performance) of Liszt’s ‘Vallée d’Obermann’ (1852) with an intensity curve. This analytical tool, which graphs the intensity level of a piece as a line moving up and down against the horizontal axis of time, is problematic ‘not least [due to] the difficulty of defining and objectively quantifying intensity’.¹⁰⁴ Yet the construct has a distinguished analytical lineage including Wallace Berry’s *Structural Functions in Music*, where intensity curves were proposed to represent issues of timing, changes of momentum, relative high and low points, and so on.¹⁰⁵ The method therefore offers an approach to analysing a performance’s shaping of ‘the hidden “story” or message latent in the score’.¹⁰⁶

Judged merely on circumstantial evidence in the relevant literature, Lutosławski’s music would seem to articulate something which leads listeners to consider ‘intensity’ an important component of many of his pieces. Stucky and Homma, for instance, both mention Kurt Westphal’s idea of the ‘Verlaufskurve’ with specific reference to Lutosławski’s structuring of expressive tension; Homma also mentions theorists of musical ‘energy’ including Ernst Kurth and includes an intensity graph-like ‘Formskizze’ of *Mi-parti* in her book;¹⁰⁷ Rust’s textural complexity graphing

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, p. 112.

¹⁰³ John Rink, ‘Translating Musical Meaning: The Nineteenth-Century Performer as Narrator’, in Cook and Everist, eds, *Rethinking Music*, pp. 217-38. Notably, from the perspective of the current study, Rink cites William Rothstein’s suggestion that a performer shapes a musical narration ‘from all he or she knows and feels about the work: listeners, in turn, will construct their own narratives, guided by the performer’. See William Rothstein, ‘Analysis and the Act of Performance’, in John Rink, ed., *The Practice of Performance: Studies in Musical Interpretation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), p. 237.

¹⁰⁴ Rink, ‘Translating Musical Meaning’, p. 235.

¹⁰⁵ See Wallace Berry, *Structural Functions in Music* (New York: Dover, 1987 [1976]), esp. pp. 1-12. Rink cites related work by a range of theorists. See Rink, ‘Translating Musical Meaning’, p. 235, n. 68.

¹⁰⁶ Rink, ‘Chopin’s Ballades’, p. 112.

¹⁰⁷ See Stucky, *Lutosławski*, p. 128, and Homma, *Witold Lutosławski*, pp. 113-14 and 145.

is a not unrelated device, complexity having been analysed in this approach as a primarily expressive factor; and Chapter Three of the present study discusses an existing intensity graph of *Livre pour orchestre*.

That Berry's conception of intensity revolves around the idea of intensity shifting as a result of changing parameters (pitch, dynamics, rhythm, timbre, etc.) may indicate one reason for the attention that scholars of Lutosławski's music have paid to this area. Intensity increases or decreases, Berry claims, when at least one musical parameter is changing in a continuous and directed manner. When most or all musical parameters are relatively stable, intensity evens out. The parallels between this idea and Lutosławski's description of 'static' and 'dynamic' events in his 'Problems' lecture are obvious. When music is 'dynamic', following Berry's model, expressive intensity will rise; indeed, Berry himself calls such passages dynamic and describes their converse events as moments of stasis. One might deduce, in turn, that moments of arrival will be marked when intensity levels off, with the height or depth of an intensity plateau accentuating or downplaying an event's significance. Intensity curves may therefore serve as a means of representing another way in which Lutosławski's pieces lead one to perceive an *akcja*'s unfolding in a certain way, for example by allowing intensity to remain still during a 'static' or functional plot event, or by pacing a 'dynamic' event's implication of immanent arrival at a moment of intense significance by changing intensity sharply or more slowly.

Where useful, intensity curves could also serve as a reminder that a musical *akcja* is formed by the triangular interaction of music, 'active' listening and performance. Dealing with the full ramifications of this intersection lies beyond the boundaries of the present study. To start such an investigation, however, one might

consider ways in which different performances of a Lutosławski piece could significantly inflect the presentation of an *akcja* and thus the story-like structure that a listener might emplot. In Lutosławski's 1976 recording of *Livre pour orchestre* with the Polish Radio National Symphony Orchestra, for instance, the final movement's climactic limited-aleatory texture at Fig. 445 is allowed to resonate for considerably longer than in Günter Herbig's 1979 recording with the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra. Lutosławski allows one to savour the full implications of the climactic moment; Herbig cuts briskly away, like a film director more interested in the aftermath of a plot's apotheosis than the climactic event itself. The different emphases alter the musical discourse to such an extent that the perceiver might be led to emplot or interpret the musical narrative in significantly different ways. Like overcodings of narrational or rhetorical effects, therefore, and the role of musical intensity, these are factors relating to a musical discourse level which, as the conclusion to this chapter discusses, must be woven into any strategy for analysing *akcja* or musical narrativity.

Musical story/plot

Maus, Karl, Kerman and most other theorists of a musical story-level acknowledge that musical narratives can only go so far in signifying a plot. Maus, for instance, has gradually withdrawn from the theory of music as drama which he developed in the 1980s. While he maintains that analogies 'between instrumental music and drama are less vague and problematic than analogies with prose narrative',¹⁰⁸ this is not because he believes music can literally present a drama. In retrospect, however, even his most innovative early work is consistent with a view of instrumental music being capable of

¹⁰⁸ Fred Maus, 'Narrative, Drama and Emotion', *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 55/3 (Summer 1997), p. 293.

evoking narrativity but not of presenting a detailed story. Musical plots, instead, are viewed as encouraging listeners to emplot an abstract structure which serves as an impetus for more specific interpretations.

Maus therefore stresses the role of perceivers in hearing ‘musical successions as story-like because they can find something like actions, thoughts, and characters in music’ and are tempted to imagine those moments as going ‘together to form something like a plot’.¹⁰⁹ He also eschews the idea of music signifying detailed narrative content, stating that ‘there is no single determinate underlying story to be recovered from a text’; subsequently, ‘retellings or paraphrases’ of compositions – i.e., narrativizations – ‘are constructed by readers or hearers in the service of various interests they happen to have’.¹¹⁰ A story-like structure revealed in this manner will thus permit ‘the play of different interpretations’.¹¹¹

In this context Maus engages with the question of what signifies the plot in a musical narrative and what aspects of a musical event conspire to evoke causality and a logical sequence. Inspired by Donald Davidson’s philosophy of actions and events,¹¹² Maus’s original paper on the subject analyses the opening of the *Allegro con brio* of Beethoven’s String Quartet, Op. 95 (1810) to name its events’ modes of behaviour.¹¹³ In describing these events, Maus fuses formalist and expressive terminology. Terms like loud, aggressive and clumsiness appear amidst talk of neighbour-note motions, secondary inversions and satisfactory structure; some descriptions, like ‘awkward incompleteness’, appear to unite both lexicons. The events are then thought of not as a

¹⁰⁹ Fred Maus, ‘Music as Narrative’, *Indiana Theory Review* 12 (1991), p. 6.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 7.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 33.

¹¹² Donald Davison, *Essays on Actions and Events* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1980). Davison’s actions are not plots in Lutosławski’s sense but rather the acts of agents.

¹¹³ Maus, ‘Music as Drama’.

specific and detailed series of plot events but rather as contributors to the formation of *pre-stories*: abstract but not meaningless musical structures which may give rise to an experience of narrativity.

Maus's concern to explore formal and expressive signifiers together relates to what Karl describes as a key endeavour of the 'radical narrativists': the quest 'to integrate structural and semantic-expressive aspects of musical works in the act of analysis by developing concepts capable of functioning in both domains'.¹¹⁴ Karl also defines synthesizing titles for various kinds of event in a musical plot, although his overall conception of musical narrativity, as already discussed, is not of a play-like mimesis but rather of a simulacrum of mental life. In this view, quasi-sentient agents and their acts are represented through an interplay of music's formal, harmonic and thematic relationships, as coloured by textures, topics and other expressive markers, to form an 'idealized fiction of mental life' and thus an allegory of narrative.¹¹⁵ In this context Karl analyses the function of events in Beethoven's 'Appassionata' sonata, including the interacting motifs and themes discussed above with reference to the mimetic hypothesis. Karl identifies two types of event. One set involves only one agent (e.g. a protagonist's outbursts, sobs, leaps) while the other implies the interaction of different agents (e.g., an antagonist's disruption or counteraction of a protagonist) – an impressive taxonomy of signifiers, the analytical application of which permits Karl to claim that the sequences formed by such events are a 'fundamental mode of organisation' in music such as the 'Appassionata'.¹¹⁶ Their plot-like structure is coherent, however, not 'because it embodies a specific meaning or tells a particular

¹¹⁴ Karl, 'Structuralism and Musical Plot', p. 14.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 17.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 23.

story, but because its abstract dramatic plan possesses an inner logic capable of suggesting any number of stories of a particular type without telling any of them'.¹¹⁷

A semantic-expressive blending of signifiers in Maus and Karl's approaches may nonetheless be deemed somewhat problematic if, following Barthes, one feels that the different codes interacting to form events in a functional sequence should not be so vigorously synthesized. An obvious solution to this issue is to focus on just one type of code. Kerman's conception of narrativity in concertos, for instance, focuses primarily on the expressive connotations of gestures and dramatic exchanges between soloists and ensembles, exchanges he reads (in a manner which Donald Tovey and Charles Rosen would recognize) as 'enact[ing] scenes of human activity'.¹¹⁸ The theory he erects to encapsulate this project is therefore appealingly transparent. Kerman conceives the forms of concertos as a series of nodal points (i.e., plot events) characterized by shifts in the relationship between soloist and ensemble which listeners emplot, he argues, to reveal a story-like structure. Like Karl and Maus, he does not view the object of his attentions as a literal narrative or plot, instead positing such forms 'as a mnemonic field with markers rather than a preset matrix for narrative'.¹¹⁹

To evoke the qualities of human interaction symbolized by a concerto, Kerman prescribes fresher tropes for identifying the changing relationships between soloist and ensemble in order to replace the protagonist/antagonist binary. This leads to the most novel aspect of his method. Because simulacra of agency are much simpler to identify in a concerto, Kerman deploys evocative nouns to describe the changing roles of

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 32.

¹¹⁸ Kerman, *Concerto Conversations*, p. 3. Tovey and Rosen, in different yet connected ways, found ways of reading music as drama. See, for example, Donald Francis Tovey, *Essays in Music Analysis*, 6 vols (London: Oxford University Press, 1935-9), and Charles Rosen, *The Classical Style* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1972).

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 47.

soloists and ensembles. These include 'tease', 'survivor', 'mourner', 'minx', lover', 'acolyte', 'midwife', 'diva' – nouns which, Kerman admits, may seem 'fanciful'.¹²⁰

However, by naming his mnemonic field's nodes in this consistent fashion, he creates the possibility of reading them in succession to reveal 'relationship stories':

Roles can change with time – abruptly... or gradually.
Relationships, too, change with time. When this happens purposefully over the course of an entire concerto, the composer has in effect constructed a narrative or, more concretely, a musical process that could be read as a narrative. A relationship story, we could say.¹²¹

One potential problem with Kerman's method is that he does not document in detail every reason why, for example, he reads the orchestra in Tchaikovsky's Violin Concerto (1878) evolving from being the slave of the soloist to the violin's critic. In this respect, one might wonder if the manner with which he distinguishes the nodes in his readings tells the whole story of his analyses. His more detailed analytical work elsewhere using this method suggests that the clarity which makes his approach seem more transparent than Maus or Karl's relates to a less explicitly detailed, but none the less present, synthesis of different types of signification.¹²² One might also wonder, in response to Maus and Karl's work as much as Kerman's, whether the significations they read as implying specific types of act are truly so explicit. Put another way, without the help of Strauss's title, would Nattiez even hear jumping?

Nevertheless, from Kerman, Karl and Maus's work emerge at least two valuable lessons for the theorizing and analysis of Lutosławski's musical plots. First, while on the one hand one must take into account a range of musical signifiers inflecting the

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 50.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 52.

¹²² See, for example, his analysis of Beethoven's Piano Concerto No. 4 in G major, op. 58 (1805-6), in Joseph Kerman, 'Representing a Relationship: Notes on a Beethoven Concerto', *Representations* 39 (Summer 1992), pp. 80-101.

content of any plot event, focussing primarily on just one musical-narrative code could be a productive strategy, especially if one is able, perhaps in the commentary accompanying that analysis, to acknowledge other noteworthy elements overcoding a particular set of events. One might focus, for example, on the presentation and development of a piece's 'key ideas', raising other issues only as appropriate to that discussion. Second, their work suggests that the sequence of events will not literally reveal a story, but rather a pre-story, abstract dramatic plan or mnemonic field (such as a functional sequence of 'static' events) open to the drama of emplotment's suspense but also, in turn, to a range of additional interpretative resonances. This tallies with Nattiez's more metaphorical conception of musical narrativity and, in turn, connects to Iser's thinking on the active role of the perceiver in shaping both the emplotment and further interpretation of any experience of narrativity.

The level and control of detail in McCreless and Novak's extensions of Barthes's codes from *S/Z* form an informative contrast to other plot-based music analyses.¹²³ Their writings reveal the value of breaking down musical texts in order to consider the full range of codes that interact to form the cumulative effect of any one event. Following Barthes, both analysts take seriously the 'starring' of a text to enforce a slower reading, segmenting pieces of music and then analysing each event via codes derived from or inspired by *S/Z*. The proairetic code is therefore adapted to relate to a basic sequence of events in the music. McCreless links the proairetic to the contrapuntal-harmonic structure plotted by Schenkerian graphs, suggesting that voice-leading events form a ready-made starring of a musical text. He then traces hermeneutic events onto this proairetic sequence, the enigmas he identifies relating to a

¹²³ McCreless, 'Roland Barthes's *S/Z*'; John Novak, 'The Programmatic Orchestral Works of Leoš Janáček: Their Style and Their Extra-Musical Content' (Ph. D. thesis, University of Texas, Austin, 1994), esp. pp. 201-76.

chromatic ‘problem’ presented early in a composition and developed over the course of the piece. McCreless comments:

While it is easy enough to find hermeneutic aspects... of tonal music in a wide variety of styles, the code works best, in my opinion, in a limited class of tonal pieces; those works of the late eighteenth century and of the nineteenth century that employ the technique of expanding a chromatic detail into a structural issue at deeper levels.¹²⁴

The enigma McCreless analyses in the first movement of Beethoven’s ‘Ghost’

Trio is the stress placed on the note F at the start of the piece. The pitch jars in the context of D major, the composition’s tonal centre. Discussing McCreless’s work, Novak usefully summarizes the functional sequence which sustains and, eventually, resolves that enigma:

The principal hermeneutic issue is the recurrence of the pitch F and its resolution: this note recurs throughout the piece, sometimes resolving down to E, other times resolving up to F#. Part of the development section is in the key of F... whose reference to the opening “enigmatic” F is achieved through a return of the motive and texture of the piece’s opening. The F reaches its apotheosis during the recapitulation in a lengthy F major passage.¹²⁵

The music can then close securely in D major having reached the hermeneutic sequence’s point of predication by resolving the enigmatic implications of F.

Several theoretical ideas relating to possible characteristics of a musical enigma are therefore revealed here. First, the enigma is an arresting idea; second, it can be read as a problem to be resolved in the context of a particular composition’s stylistic framework; third, later instalments in a functional or hermeneutic sequence will be marked, on occasion, by a return not only to the problem but also to other elements (texture and motive in this case) which interrelate the functional events (both Novak and

¹²⁴ McCreless, ‘Roland Barthes’s *S/Z*’, p. 16.

¹²⁵ Novak, ‘The Programmatic Orchestral Works’, p. 211.

McCreless link the hermeneutic to the semic code, adapting the latter to trace recurring textures, etc.). Such thoughts could be of use in the devising of a strategy to identify and analyse Lutosławski's 'key ideas'.

In his analyses of programmatic pieces by Janáček, Novak overcodes proairetic sequences derived not only from quasi-Schenkerian graphs but also – in 'the absence of an *Urlinie* and contrapuntally correct prolongations'¹²⁶ – from prose commentaries drawing on other stylistic features and each piece's programme. This indicates the adaptability of a Barthes-style segmentation to different musical styles while permitting one of the extensions of McCreless's work that marks the originality of Novak's contribution: using theories of musical narrativity to discuss a genre of music which claims specifically to articulate a narrative and, moreover, leaves a trail of literary breadcrumbs (the programme) for interpreters to follow. Because Janáček's approach to pitch organisation blends 'modality, chromaticism, and quickly alternating key centres', Novak also deems it 'sufficiently tonal that it can offer chromatically oriented enigmas'.¹²⁷ The opening enigma of *The Fiddler's Child* (1912), Novak argues, can therefore be defined quite similarly to the one McCreless locates at the start of Beethoven's 'Ghost'. The difference is that, in the Janáček piece, the pivotal idea's enigmatic quality unravels to reveal a tangle of musical and extra-musical motivations:

In [*The Fiddler's Child*] the opening passage is in E-flat minor; the second note of the piece, the F-flat, seems out of place. This F-flat is hermeneutically the most significant note of *The Fiddler's Child*, and it returns several times in various guises throughout the work. The enigma is "solved" later in the piece, both on a musical level, and a programmatic level. On the musical level, the note later becomes its own key (E major); at the very end of the piece, the F-flat is "resolved," in an unanticipated E-flat major chord. On the programmatic level, the F-flat key is found through a series of clues to represent the

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 214.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 215.

longing for happiness. This happiness is finally achieved at the work's close through death.¹²⁸

As with the Beethoven example, Novak argues, instalments in the hermeneutic sequence developing the F-flat enigma in *The Fiddler's Child* are marked by the recurrence of textures and motives. For instance, the second occurrence of the enigma, in bars 9-10, corresponds with a '32nd-note group in stretto presentation' which, after the melismatic opening bars of the piece, may be noted as a striking textural contrast. The texture thus forms a motive whose fate is tied to the F-flat enigma's evolution and eventual resolution. His work also suggests the need to consider the programme of such pieces as a special form of discourse-level overcoding, enticing one to hear leaping and dying, happiness and death, and so on in a programmatic piece.

McCreless and Novak's demonstration of the adaptability of the proairetic code to various forms of structural articulation reinforce the impression that Lutosławski's music could be similarly 'starred' (not least given Janáček's use of block-like formal juxtapositions). McCreless's tracing of musical enigmas to a peak of development in Beethoven's music, and thus to a repertoire which strongly influenced Lutosławski's compositional development, is also interesting. More significant, however, may be the analysts' focus on enigmas as harmonic problems that require a solution if a plot's functional sequence is to be closed. Both of the above enigmas, for instance, suggest that tensions within very different harmonic styles can be read as enigmas initiating the hermeneutic thread of events on which the fate of a piece's 'story' rests. Notably, Novak contends that such enigmas may continue to play a role in music moving beyond the framework of functional tonality. One might therefore hypothesize a similar role for 'key ideas' in Lutosławski post-tonal compositions, particularly given the harmonic

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 215-6.

conventions of his mature style, which creates the possibility of both conflicting harmonies (i.e., different i.c. pairings) and conflicted ones (i.e., ambiguous or otherwise opaque i.c. 'qualities'). Furthermore, the interrelation McCreless and Novak find between the hermeneutic code and 'semic' motives suggests that other musical parameters may be dealt with independently yet considered in relation to their role in shaping the listener's recognition and emplotment of functional events. Their work exemplifies the promise of adapting Barthes's theories to the analysis of musical plots and thus amplifies the potential for utilizing such an approach in the analysis of Lutosławski's music.

Hatten and Klein's writings on 'expressive narrative' suggest another form of musical overcoding. As noted in the Introduction of the present study with reference to Klein's analysis of Lutosławski's Symphony No. 4, analysis of an expressive narrative takes a step back from individual moments to consider broader transformations (e.g., evolutions of music's intimations of mood or expressive state). Hatten and Klein both seek to identify the expressive states evoked by the different stages of a work; the evolution or stability mapped by those stages then reveal the nature of the expressive narrative. For example, Hatten reads the slow central movement of Beethoven's 'Hammerklavier' sonata (1817-18) as an example of a 'change-of-state' expressive genre (his genres being somewhat similar to Newcomb's plot paradigms) called 'tragic-to-transcendent'. This reading rests on the movement's modulation into G major, which is accompanied by hymn-like textures that mark, for Hatten, a religious or spiritual topic and thus 'a vision of grace in the midst of tragic grief',¹²⁹ his reading narrativizing the music in response to both purely musical and extra-musical significations. This

¹²⁹ Robert Hatten, *Musical Meaning in Beethoven: Markedness, Correlation, and Interpretation* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994), p. 16.

symbolizes, as such, the possibility of transcendence achieved ‘through a positively resigned acceptance’.¹³⁰ Such work reminds one of the usefulness of seeking a more mobile perspective on aspects of a piece’s plot, utilizing close-ups on the musical detail but also standing back, when possible, to consider the fuller panorama created by the elements contributing to its expressive and formal structure, especially as emplotment activity cedes to interpretation.

Before a strategy for developing such analyses of Lutosławski’s pieces can be outlined in light of this chapter’s discussions, however, a substantial issue remains to be tackled. A crucial difference between Lutosławski’s output and the music analysed by the above theorists is that his mature style (even in comparison to Janáček’s) is markedly post-tonal, with his individual approach to pitch organisation being but one of the markers of his modernism post-1956. Conventional critical wisdom dictates that modernism in music is an anti-narrative style. If one wishes to speak of *akcja* and narrativity in Lutosławski’s pieces of the 1960s and thereafter, one must therefore address the issue of whether or not one can speak of narrativity in modernist music.

Narrativity in twentieth-century music

As Whittall points out, the term modernism has become ‘swathed in the varied garments of highly diverse definitions and use’.¹³¹ Productively, from this perspective, Leon Botstein identifies modernism in music as ‘a multi-faceted but distinct and continuous tradition within 20th-century composition’.¹³² One of the facets Botstein notes, moreover, is a theme of relevance to the present study. He locates the scepticism of

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 20.

¹³¹ Arnold Whittall, ‘Between Polarity and Synthesis: The Modernist Paradigm in Lutosławski’s Concertos for Cello and Piano’, in Skowron, ed., *Lutosławski Studies*, p. 244.

¹³² Leon Botstein, ‘Modernism’, in Sadie and Tyrrell, eds, *New Grove*, vol. 16, p. 868.

early musical modernists towards tonality, rhythmic regularity, conventional instrumental techniques, generic forms, readily recognised types of musical expression, etc., within a broader stylistic trend:

The link between music and narration particularly came under scrutiny. Modernity demanded the shattering of expectations, conventions, categories, boundaries and limits as well as empirical experimentation... and the confident exploration of the new.¹³³

That inspection and consequent rejection of music's 'story-telling properties'¹³⁴ focused primarily on the employment of programmes by some late romantic composers. The 'shattering of expectations', however, arguably undermined a more fundamentally plot-like aspect of much previous western art music: its propensity for evoking narrativity through the presentation of musical events implying a logic of sequence.

Modernist music, in this view, revealed a potential for innovation, discontinuity and fragmentation allied to what Christopher Butler identifies as a more general early twentieth-century failure of belief 'in the project of representing the world through the narrative of historical development', the artistic consequent of which was an embrace of 'language [that] becomes more and more elliptical, and turns to juxtaposition and the alogical, to the simultaneous and the collaged'.¹³⁵ Discussing Stéphane Mallarmé's sacrifice of 'plot for mood',¹³⁶ for instance, Butler cites poems in which typographical inventiveness gave 'new values' to a text's signifiers through 'defamiliarizing juxtaposition' suggesting 'complicated networks of metaphoric association'.¹³⁷

Similarly, art critic Rosalind Krauss locates anti-narrativity in modernist visual art from cubism and Piet Mondrian to Agnes Martin and Robert Ryman through the use of grid-

¹³³ *Ibid.*, p. 869.

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 869.

¹³⁵ Christopher Butler, *Early Modernism: Literature, Music and Painting in Europe 1900-1916* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), p. 10.

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 11.

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 5.

like patterns. This icon of modernism, she states, ‘announces... modern art’s will to silence, its hostility to literature, to narrative, to discourse’.¹³⁸ The grid resists development: it is ‘antinatural, antimimetic, antireal’, and its juxtapositions and lack of hierarchy and linearity emphasize its ‘hostility to narrative’.¹³⁹

This structure, impervious both to time and to incident, will not permit the projection of language into the domain of the visual, and the result is silence.¹⁴⁰

Within that silence, however, new voices could begin to make themselves heard, unencumbered by the historiography of narrative forms and thus better able to reflect (and reflect on) the experience of modernity.

Comparable ideas regarding grid-like structures, juxtapositions, discontinuities, collage and a turn away from narrativity are reflected in the musicological literature on modernist music. Writing on Stravinsky, for example, Jonathan Cross locates a ‘non-developmental, non-narrative objectivity’¹⁴¹ in works such as *Symphonies of Wind Instruments* (1920, rev. 1947) through the composer’s ‘exploration of block construction’.¹⁴² Representing ‘the very antithesis of symphonic argument’ (and thus musical narrativity), Stravinsky’s alternating yet unchanging blocks create ‘no sense of a directed (linear) motion’: even when foreground voice-leading suggests continuities, ‘deeper (middleground) level discontinuities’ are achieved ‘through fragmentation, opposition, disruption’.¹⁴³ Some sense of structural continuity clearly remains, not least because these events occur in succession over a finite period of time, and Cross cites Cone’s notion of ‘interlock’ to emphasize the manner in which Stravinsky finds novel

¹³⁸ Rosalind E. Krauss, *The Originality of the Avant-Garde and Other Modernist Myths* (Cambridge, Mass.: M.I.T. Press, 1986), p. 9.

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 9.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 158.

¹⁴¹ Jonathan Cross, *The Stravinsky Legacy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), p. 16.

¹⁴² *Ibid.*, p. 10.

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*, pp. 10-11.

ways of ‘balancing these powerfully contradictory elements’ without evoking musical narrativity.¹⁴⁴

Writing of the ‘profound musical experience’ of discontinuity in modernist music, Jonathan Kramer extends a line of development from the ‘extreme expression of discontinuity’ in *Symphonies of Wind Instruments* to mid-twentieth-century music including Cage’s anti-teleological chance works (‘static, endless Nows’), Reich’s minimalist process pieces (‘a desperate attempt to recapture continuity?’) and Stockhausen’s moment forms (‘self-contained sections that do not relate to each other in any functionally implicative manner’).¹⁴⁵ Susan McClary, on the other hand, argues that the disappearance of functional tonality from much twentieth-century music was the loss that robbed it of the power to create causation, continuity and logic and therefore to tell stories in the manner of ‘the great era of narrative in music’.¹⁴⁶ Somewhat brashly, she subsequently depicts musical modernism’s progression towards anti-narrativity as part innovation, part revisionism:

And so they ditched narrative composition and even prohibited the narrative interpretation of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century instrumental pieces. Better NO meaning at all than THOSE meanings!¹⁴⁷

There may be a problem, however, with simplistically associating the disappearance of functional tonality, or any other iconic aspect of modernist music, with

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 7-8; also p. 19. Cone’s notion of interlock is discussed in Edward T. Cone, ‘Stravinsky: the Progress of a Method’, *Perspectives of New Music* 1/1 (1962), pp. 18-26. Butler locates similar juxtapositions in Debussy and Schoenberg’s music. See Butler, *Early Modernism*, pp. 11-12, p. 53.

¹⁴⁵ Jonathan D. Kramer, ‘Moment Form in Twentieth-Century Music’, *The Musical Quarterly* 64/2 (1978), p. 179. See also Eero Tarasti, *A Theory of Musical Semiotics* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994), pp. 276-87.

¹⁴⁶ Susan McClary, ‘The Impromptu That Trod on a Loaf: or How Music Tells Stories’, in Mieke Bal, ed., *Narrative Theory: Critical Concepts in Literary and Cultural Studies*, vol. 4 (London: Routledge, 2004), p. 281.

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 281. McClary’s ‘they’ possibly refers not only to composers (although surely not ALL composers) but also to the cabal of nineteenth- and twentieth-century musicians and music critics she identifies as proponents of a cult of absolute music in Susan McClary, ‘Narrative Agendas in “Absolute Music”’, in Ruth A. Solie, ed., *Musicology and Difference: Gender and Sexuality in Music Scholarship* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), pp. 326-344.

a move towards anti-narrativity. Micznik, for instance, argues that tonality's dissolution may actually have strengthened music's power to invoke narrativity, at least where other existing conventions continued to play a significant role. In her view, a 'higher degree of narrativity' is to be found in music relying on what she terms 'gestural semantic' ideas than through music primarily reliant on tonal syntax.¹⁴⁸ Hence in Mahler's music she discovers an 'unprecedented semantic saturation in which... topics, gestures, character, rhetoric and genre... compensate for the decline of conventional [tonal] syntax and... the lack of traditional tonal plots'.¹⁴⁹ It is too soon to discount the existence of a similar but as yet uncharted saturation of newly conventional (or anti-conventional) 'gestural semantic' ideas in modernist music. Moreover, the sheer amount of recent writing on narrativity in post-tonal western art music plus other twentieth-century musics (jazz and rock for instance) – a putative 'third wave' of work on music and narrativity – would seem to suggest, albeit circumstantially, that McClary may be swimming against the tide on this particular issue.¹⁵⁰

Directly responding to McClary's argument, for instance, Vincent Meelberg, contends that any music can potentially invoke narrativity because all music is experienced as a temporal unfolding of events:

A piece of music starts at a given moment, manifests itself for a certain period of time, and finally ends. In between the beginning and the ending, sounds can be heard. These sounds themselves are not moving, but because of the succession of sounds the listener gets the impression the music, constituted by these sounds, is

¹⁴⁸ Micznik, 'Music and Narrative Revisited', p. 249. See also Robert Samuels, *Mahler's Sixth Symphony: A Study in Musical Semiotics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995).

¹⁴⁹ Micznik, 'Music and Narrative Revisited', p. 250.

¹⁵⁰ See, for instance, Annabelle Paetsch, 'Aspects of Narrativity and Temporality in Britten's *Winter Words*', *Music & Letters* 74 (1998), pp. 538-54; Richard Burke, 'Film, Narrative, and Shostakovich's Last Quartet', *Musical Quarterly* 83/3 (Fall 1999), pp. 413-429; Brian Harker, '“Telling a Story”: Louis Armstrong and Coherence in Early Jazz', *Current Musicology* 63 (2000), pp. 46-83; Rebecca Leydon, 'Debussy's Late Style and the Devices of the Early Silent Cinema', *Music Theory Spectrum* 23/2 (Fall 2001), pp. 217-241; and David Nicolls, 'Virtual Opera, or Opera between the Ears', *Journal of the Royal Musical Association* 129/1 (2004), pp. 100-142.

moving forward. Often, during the listening, the listener has certain expectations about the direction the music will take while moving forward, and these expectations are either met or not. Unexpected moments may shed new light on moments that have already passed, while fulfilment of expectations may offer consolidation. It is the sum of all these, and other, musical characteristics that suggest that music tells a story.¹⁵¹

Consequently, Meelberg argues, there can be no *a priori* objection to the idea of musical narrativity in modernist music (and, in the case of his particular analytical example, Helmut Lachenmann's String Quartet No. 2 of 1989); or, for that matter, a good deal of other musics. Post-tonal western art music still does many of the things tonal western art music did – and many of them were part and parcel of its evocations of musical narrativity.

Meelberg's 'certain expectations', '[u]nexpected moments' and 'fulfilment of expectations' hint at a potentially more nuanced understanding of why some twentieth-century music will nonetheless be less likely to encourage narrative readings than other pieces. It is not a question of juxtaposition, discontinuity or a lack of goal-directed functional harmony equating to anti-narrativity (any more than tonal continuity equals narrativity). Montage editing in the cinema, the panels of cartoon strips, the individual small paintings that make up the eight panels of William Hogarth's *The Rake's Progress* (1735): none of these structures, fragmented and discontinuous as they are, sacrifice narrativity on the altar of modernity. This is because *what* is being juxtaposed matters a good deal more than the presence of juxtaposition per se. If the separate events of a text (shots in a film, the cells of a cartoon, events in Tom Rakewell's life) are either highly repetitive or heterogeneous, it is less likely that a plot of events implying a logic of causation and transformation will be perceived. On the other hand,

¹⁵¹ Vincent Meelberg, 'A Telling View of Musical Sounds: A Musical Translation of the Theory of Narrative' in Bal, ed., *Narrative Theory*, p. 287.

the possibility remains that, should the cells not be so repetitious or varied, the separate events, when experienced in sequence, will tempt emplotment and thus generate (as opposed to forbid) an experience of narrativity. There is no logical reason why post-tonal music should not be capable of being similarly tempting if it contains clearly delineated successive events which are neither overtly heterogeneous nor repetitious.

More radically, one might even propose that modernism's more extreme textural and harmonic expressions of discontinuity, far from irrevocably damaging music's potential to invoke emplotment, might actually enhance music's capability to be story-like, as long as some of the events thus articulated can be heard to approximate a logically-evolving sequence. As Barthes's idea of the catalyzed functional sequence implies, plot is almost always an experience of discontinuity, the 'suspense' of which relates to the perceiver's attempts to emplot its temporally separate events. Iser also notes that, when the flow of a text is interrupted and it heads off in unexpected directions, as perceivers we 'bring into play our own faculty for establishing connections – for filling in the gaps left by the text itself'.¹⁵² Modern texts, indeed, 'are often so fragmentary that one's attention is almost exclusively occupied with the search for connections between the fragments'.¹⁵³ Ricoeur makes a similar argument, claiming that a plot's diversions and delays intensify the urge to connect its elements into a comprehensible whole. 'By means of the plot', he writes, 'goals, causes, and chance are brought together within the temporal unity of a whole and complete action' in a 'synthesis of the heterogeneous'.¹⁵⁴

¹⁵² Iser, *The Implied Reader*, p. 280.

¹⁵³ *Ibid.*, p. 280.

¹⁵⁴ Paul Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative*, trans. Kathleen McLaughlin and David Pellauer (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984 [1983]), vol. 1, p. ix.

Regarding the possibility that a modernist musical style may thus intensify the invocation of emplotment, it seems noteworthy that three recent theoretical discussions touching on narrativity in music also reflect on juxtaposition and discontinuity.

Following Ricoeur, Klein's theory of expressive narrative proposes that moments of rupture (such as the tragic outcry he hears at the climax of Lutosławski's Symphony No.

4) lead one to search for the expressive logic that joins them to other events.

The plot imposes its unity by crossing the boundaries of disjunction, hiding lapses in predictive logic, and binding different types of discourse. Emplotment brings together scattered events, temporalities, motivations, characters, lyric descriptions, secret thoughts, unintended consequences, and makes of them a narrative.¹⁵⁵

This idea of emplotment fruitfully coincides with Lutosławski's claim, in his lectures on musical form, that stark juxtapositions can call attention to significant plot events (as in the first movement of *Jeux vénitiens*) and, in turn, structure a discontinuous chain of developments yielding a musical plot.

For Cook, such moments may lead to emplotment; they may also create an experience of the uncanny. In a forthcoming discussion of collage and juxtaposition, Cook argues that musical juxtapositions, while at times releasing an uncanniness which is self-valuable as an aesthetic experience in its own right, can also initiate chains of association running backward and forward.¹⁵⁶ Of the first variety, Cook cites the eruption of boogie from a passage of pseudo-modernist piano music in John Zorn's *Snagglepuss* (1990) as a collision of blocks that creates an alternative (anti-narrative) figurative space capable of generating odd metaphorical associations. The opening of Beethoven's Piano Concerto No. 4, op. 58 (1808), on the other hand, creates what one

¹⁵⁵ Klein, *Intertextuality*, p. 116.

¹⁵⁶ Nicholas Cook, 'Uncanny Moments: Juxtaposition and the Collage Principle in Music', in *The Divining Rod: Essays in Music and Interpretation*, ed. Byron Almén and Edward Pearsall (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, forthcoming).

might think of as an enigma through juxtaposition: the abrupt shift from G major to B major initiates a search for the logic to interconnect these relatively disparate tonal areas. Significantly, from the perspective of the present study's concerns, one of Cook's touchstones here is Jerrold Levinson's idea of musical 'concatenation', which posits that one experiences music not by seeking to ground every last sound in the protective custody of a through-composed formalist model (such as a continuous and overarching contrapuntal-harmonic scheme) but rather by identifying 'the individual bits' that matter 'and the transitions between them'.¹⁵⁷ Lutosławski's 'static' and 'dynamic', Barthes's functional and catalyzing events, Iser's memorizing and foreshortening: many conceptions of plot make a similar distinction.

An exceptionally clear account of concatenation in a modernist context is provided by Matthew McDonald in a paper on Ives's *The Unanswered Question* (1908, rev. 1930-5).¹⁵⁸ Regarding the flute answers to the trumpet's persistent query, MacDonald suggests that, with 'numerous voice-leading connections suggest[ing] that certain Answers pick up where others have left off',¹⁵⁹ emplotment is evoked:

After hearing the piece, the listener can retrospectively reconfigure and connect the Answers to create a coherent linear chain of events.¹⁶⁰

McDonald even argues that the connections between different answers may lead the listener to read something into the piece beyond this basic plot of events, in the form of a discursive revision of the sequence's story order in which the first three answers, 'we are invited to imagine',¹⁶¹ imply one eternal loop, with the full set of six implying

¹⁵⁷ Jerrold Levinson, *Music In The Moment* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1997), p. 27.

¹⁵⁸ Matthew McDonald, 'Silent Narration? Elements of Narrative in Ives's *The Unanswered Question*', *19th-Century Music* 27/3 (Spring 2004), pp. 263-86.

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 272.

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 273.

¹⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p. 273.

another endless cycle. In the case of *The Unanswered Question*, the quality of unanswerability is thereby symbolized (to recall Kermode) by the music's tick leading to tock but then back to tick again, for ever and ever, in a plot which could be interpreted not as embodying a fundamental change of state (the discovery of 'an answer') but rather as an eternal cycle in search of resolution (a state of unanswerability, or of an enigma – the question of the proper musical response to answer the trumpet's question – that cannot be resolved). Not only, therefore, can separate but not exceedingly dissimilar events invite emplotment; MacDonald implies that they can lead the listener to imagine reconfigurations of that plot within a virtual narrative discourse.

Under certain modernist circumstances one might suggest, then, that musical narrativity will not merely survive: it will thrive. The profound affective power of some modernist music to disturb and unnerve in equal measure may even be related to its potential continually to invoke yet deny its instantiations of musical narrativity. The fractious altered states represented and embodied by an expressionistic piece such as Schoenberg's *Erwartung* (1909), for example, could be heard to derive much emotional and symbolic power from the refusal of the piece's flux of musical and textual fragments to reveal the plot-like structure which, consciously or otherwise, audiences may seek to impose on its discontinuities (along with a literal story to resolve the many riddles posed by the onstage action). This implies, in turn, a potentially more complex picture of modernist music's purported anti-narrativity. Surface stylistic traits, such as block-like juxtapositions or a lack of functional harmony, may be symbolic of a turn from earlier paradigms but may not, perhaps, be the primary locus of the style's anti-

narrative disposition. Rather, the refusal of some modernist music to make good on its persistent promises of narrativity could mark a more potent subversion.

As Chapter Three argues in the case of *Livre pour orchestre*, an alternative (but equally modernist) subversion could be to thwart an ostensibly modernist composition's establishment of 'conventional' anti-narrativity by revealing the residual potential for narrativity sublimated within its modernist stylings. Certainly, between empowering narrativity and abolishing it entirely, one can conceive of a more diverse range of musical responses. Jann Pasler, for instance – one writer on musical narrativity to have consulted widely with living composers – identifies 'three radical musical innovations' developed by twentieth-century composers 'to play with, manipulate, and abort... expectations of narrative'.¹⁶² She calls these innovations 'anti-narratives', 'nonnarratives' and instances of 'nonnarrativity', and she also suggests several new forms of narrative created by the return of some twentieth-century composers to earlier conventions (in which regard, one should also note the vast swathe of twentieth-century music which never abandoned them in the first place and thus continued to invoke, fulfil and indeed sustain the idea of musical narrativity). Pasler's innovations and new forms of narrative, however, permitted composers to engage with the modernist project of 'nourish[ing] other understandings of life, which are neither unilinear nor goal-orientated' and incorporate a 'multiplicity of perspectives and references' seeking to reflect contemporary experience.¹⁶³

Pasler's 'radical musical innovations' may be thought of as manipulations of musical story and discourse which problematize or subvert music's potential for invoking the perception and emplotment of musical narratives. Her 'antinarratives', for

¹⁶² Pasler, 'Narrative and Narrativity in Music', p. 235.

¹⁶³ *Ibid.*, p. 235.

instance, frustrate the listener's expectation of narrative (Pasler understands a narrative as any musical process unfolding over time and revealing a transformation of musical theme, expressive state, etc.) through abrupt juxtapositions and discontinuity. She cites Stravinsky's *Symphonies of Wind Instruments* in this regard plus Stockhausen's Moment-forms, noting Stockhausen's description of *Carré* as a piece which 'tells no story'.¹⁶⁴ 'Nonnarratives' utilize signifiers which may elsewhere function as elements of a musical narrative 'but without allowing them to function as they would in a narrative'.¹⁶⁵ Her example in this case is early minimalism's use of tonal triads and their inversions (as in Steve Reich's 1967 piece *Piano Phase*) in the absence of 'tonal or thematic dialectic... conflict or interruption, direction or goals'.¹⁶⁶ One might also argue that the continuity of such music, and thus the lack of clearly defined events, could mitigate against its ability to invoke emplotment – noting, perhaps, later Reich's greater periodicity, not least in works with a programmatic context, such as *Different Trains* (1988). 'Nonnarrativity', in turn, is a quality of music shunning 'any organizing principle, whether an overall structure or preordained syntax', which thereby tries 'to erase the role of memory' or other pre-existing conventions of musical experience from the act of musical perception.¹⁶⁷ Various pieces by John Cage provide Pasler's examples here.

Pasler's new forms of musical narrative may be thought of as relating, primarily, to new kinds of musical stories that composers might tell or to new ways in which they might tell them; some seek to affect a musical narrative's story level, in other words, others its level of discourse. As such, they may relate more directly to Lutosławski's

¹⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 244.

¹⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 246.

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 247.

¹⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 247-8.

music than ‘antinarratives’, ‘nonnarratives’ and ‘nonnarrativity’. A partial return to tonality, not to re-imagine its signifiers for modern purposes but to use them in the manner of earlier musical styles, and a related use of allusions to/quotations from earlier music (for their conventional resonance) are two possibilities which Pasler notes in this regard. Each could provide an enrichment of the signifying means of contemporary forms of musical narrative. Pasler does not consider the possibility of a composer shaping a novel harmonic language which draws more obliquely on tonal conventions (such as Lutosławski’s creation of a mode of pitch organisation based around limited i.c. ‘qualities’) as another way of forging a means of signifying something like tonal cause and effect, but this could be a related approach.

Pasler’s discussion of recent operas, meanwhile, while problematically not observing carefully enough the distinction between narrativity in texted multimedia works and non-texted instrumental music, indicates some possibilities relating to alternative ways of telling a story (or rather telling a plurality of similar but not identical stories) by developing a musical discourse level. Citing the different versions of Euridice’s death presented in Birtwistle’s *The Mask of Orpheus* (1973-83) – narrations interspersed with myths which also comment on the Orpheus story – Pasler notes how the tale is told in a variety of ways and from contrasting perspectives. Such perspectives, moreover, may disagree and therefore undermine (or at the very least cause one to be cautious about declaring the truth of) any single story one might seek to emplot in relation to such a discourse. The question, in such pieces, is which story to emplot – or whether one should instead entertain a multiplicity of competing possibilities.

In opera, where words and onstage action lend semiological assistance to the storytelling, such narrative pluralities, and the modernist/postmodernist equal opportunity of truths and points of view they liberate,¹⁶⁸ are not so difficult to identify. Locating a dialogic discourse, as already discussed, is much more of a problem in instrumental music. A mere disruption or shift in discourse level could barely begin to signify this complex type of effect. Could such possibilities be implied in other ways, however, by the story and discourse of non-texted music? In many Birtwistle pieces – for example the recent *Theseus Game* (2003) – role-playing soloists could be heard to comment on, as much as participate in, the presentation of the pivotal events in a musical plot. The sections of Birtwistle's *Tragoedia* (1965), on the other hand, could be read as a reordered discursive presentation of the (never revealed) putative story order of a tragic ritual. One might also imagine musical stories told in 'split-screen', with several events (or events and simultaneous commentaries on those events) being presented at the same time, as in the fugue of Britten's *Young Person's Guide to the Orchestra* (1946). The overlapping and dialoguing events in Lutosławski's *Chain* series offer another site for investigating such possibilities; considering the separate roles of the flutes, strings and trumpet in *The Unanswered Question* may raise similar issues; and many of Carter's compositions are rich in stratified events which would be read, conventionally, as anti-narrative, but which one might alternatively consider as creating new polyphonies of musical story and discourse. This might even be one way in which Cone's notions of stratification, interlock and synthesis could be connected to thinking on musical narrativity.

¹⁶⁸ Musical-narrative ideas such as these converge productively with contemporary notions of the self and subjectivity. See, for example, Kenneth J. Gergen, *The Saturated Self: Dilemmas of Identity in Contemporary Life* (New York: Basic Books, 2000 [1991]) and Robert Jay Lifton, *The Protean Self: Human Resilience in the Age of Fragmentation* (New York: Basic Books, 1993).

If music's story level – the tale, not the telling – is invested with a similar potential to survive and evolve under modernism, one might also begin to search for instances of 'weak narrativity', 'denarration' or 'bifurcating narrative', to name just three types of narrativity identified in recent work on modernist and postmodern literature and poetry.¹⁶⁹ Denarration, for example, is identified by Brian Richardson as 'an intriguing and paradoxical narrative strategy that appears in a number of late modern and postmodern texts': a 'narrative negation in which a narrator denies significant aspects of her narrative that had earlier been presented as given'.¹⁷⁰ A simple example, Richardson says, would be a pair of statements such as 'Yesterday it was raining/Yesterday it was not raining'; he goes on to locate more subtle examples in works by Beckett. Examples of entire plots being denarrated can be found in novels including Iris Murdoch's *The Black Prince* (1973), Margaret Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale* (1986) and Yann Martel's *The Life of Pi* (2001), where a disturbing coda leaves one wondering if the entire story that has been focalized from the perspective of the hero of the tale (a boy marooned on a boat with a tiger) was, in fact, an invention (a fiction within a fiction) by the psychologically traumatized child. The novel does not answer the question and one is left either to choose for oneself which story to emplot or whether to entertain both possibilities as equally viable.

Could a modernist musical plot similarly relocate discontinuity, open-endedness, multiplicity and ambiguity to its story level, leading emplotting perceivers to expect the closure of a functional sequence, only to pull the rug out from beneath them? The shift of pitch focus from D and F to C and G at the end of Birtwistle's *Earth Dances* (1985),

¹⁶⁹ See Brian McHale, 'Weak Narrativity: The Case of Avant-Garde Narrative Poetry', *Narrative* 9/2 (May 2001), pp. 161-67; Brian Richardson, 'Denarration in Fiction: Erasing the Story in Beckett and Others', *Narrative* 9/2 (May 2001), pp. 168-74; and Alan Soldofsky, 'Bifurcated narratives in the Poetry of Robinson Jeffers, C. K. Williams, and Denis Johnson', *Narrative* 11/3 (October 2003), pp. 312-31.

¹⁷⁰ Richardson, 'Denarration in Fiction', p. 168.

for example, might lead one to doubt one's reading of the structural cardinality of earlier events in the music that focussed on D and F, and in turn to an unravelling of any musical story one had hitherto been emplotting in relation to those notes.¹⁷¹

Alternatively, *Livre pour orchestre*, as discussed in the next chapter, could be a candidate for a denarration of anti-narrativity which thematicizes, within the musical narrative itself, the issue of narrativity versus modernist fragmentation.

If some recent music is deemed capable of achieving such effects, an investigation of narrativity in twentieth- and twenty-first-century music could usefully connect with one or two wider trends in current music theory. First, such pieces could form sites for analytical investigations of multiplicity and ambiguity leading not to an 'exclusive and closed hearing of ambiguous musical situations, but [to] an open and plural one',¹⁷² thereby bolstering the claims of such readings as being every bit as significant as those pertaining to apparently more closed compositions (and leading one to wonder if Cook and Everist's claims for the death of multivalency have been somewhat exaggerated). Second, just as some of modern literature's favourite tricks can be traced back at least as far as Laurence Sterne's *Tristram Shandy* (1759-66), unexpected yet compelling correspondences between ostensibly distant and distinctive musics may start to appear in this context, leading to a reflexive or intertextual enrichment of musicology's understanding of those repertoires.¹⁷³

¹⁷¹ Whittall reads this shift as a 'hero' expiring and 'yielding place to something new'. See Arnold Whittall, 'Birtwistle, Maxwell Davies and Modernist Analysis', *Music Analysis* 13/2-3 (1994), p. 153. Birtwistle's music, given his fascination with theatre and myth (an intriguing link to Lutosławski) make his music an ideal site for narrative investigation. See, for example, Robert Percy, 'Identities and Plot: Harrison Birtwistle's *Secret Theatre* and its Implications for Selected Compositions by Robert Percy' (Ph.D. thesis, City University, London, 2004).

¹⁷² Jonathan Cross, 'Editorial', *Music Analysis* 22/1-2 (2003), p. 3.

¹⁷³ In this regard, see the essays by Marianne Kielian-Gilbert and Wayne C. Petty in *Music Analysis* 22/1-2 (2003).

At the very least, however, it is surely apparent that much modernist music (and many other musics outside of the classical-romantic canon) could hold new musical stories and new ways of telling musical stories alongside new and authentically alternative modes of coherence or, for that matter, incoherence. Useful extrapolations, in this regard, could be made from close analyses of individual pieces, such as Chapter Three's examination of Lutosławski's *Livre pour orchestre*. Investigating individual compositions, though, will always require a concomitant sympathy for the means available in an individual composer's style to shape (or subvert) the experience of musical narrativity – one further reason why the following outline of a strategy for analysing *akcja*, drawing together ideas from both the present and the previous chapter, must now be presented.

Analysing *akcja*

First, a few framing suggestions on how one might speak more circumspectly yet positively of narrativity in music. Any piece of music can inspire 'musical narrativization', an interpretative act in which a listener invents an explanatory narrative in response to events in a composition. As McClary indicates, if one wishes to hear a story of 'minimal infraction answered by incommensurate brutality' akin to the plot of Hans Christian Anderson's cruel story 'The Little Girl Who Trod on a Loaf' in a Schubert impromptu, so be it.¹⁷⁴ There are no laws against doing so. Indeed, to claim that any such reading is inappropriate is to risk appearing, at the very least, befuddled by old-fashioned formalist dogma. Where things begin to go wrong, perhaps, is when those responsible for musical narrativizations claim that the music is doing the bulk of

¹⁷⁴ See McClary's reading of Schubert's Impromptu, Op. 90, No. 2 in E flat major in McClary, 'The Impromptu That Trod on a Loaf', p. 269.

the representing or narrating. The second wave of musical narratology puts paid to such readings. It should, however, be possible to plot a course towards rich and provocative readings which respect the semiological limitations of music's narrative propensities as well as the imaginative role of the independently 'active' perceiver.

Whether or not almost all music is an instance of 'musical narrativity' and therefore open to such readings is another question. The boldest claim underlying Pasler's essay is that, excepting instances of 'nonnarrativity', most music has narrativity. Even her 'antinarratives' and 'nonnarratives' have musical narrativity as she defines it: 'the presence of some organizing principle, some macrostructure and syntax characteristic of a certain period and place, [which] presents the listener with a set of probability relationships concerning, for example, where to expect a climax, or how opposing ideas may be brought into reconciliation'.¹⁷⁵ For example, although Stockhausen's *Stop* (1965) is a piece by a composer whose music seeks to tell few stories, Pasler locates narrativity within it.

While there might not be a story, connectedness, mutually entailing implications, or even hierarchical configuration in *Stop*, there is, however, narrativity. The piece consists not only of a continuous metamorphosis of tones and noises, but also of a particular organizing principle: the presentation of a twelve-tone row, the gradual interpenetration of noises with pitches, and the noises' gradual increase in dynamic intensity from being very soft to very loud.¹⁷⁶

This abstract structural scheme, in Pasler's view, is the 'story' one can emplot in response to the 'discourse' of Stockhausen's composition.

Any piece (perhaps even instances of 'nonnarrativity') could be read as a narrative discourse presenting a story (or anti-story) of this sort. Indeed, when one considers the way in which more relaxed talk of 'musical narrative' has become a cliché

¹⁷⁵ Pasler, 'Narrative and Narrativity', pp. 243-44.

¹⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 245-46.

of the more journalistic strands of music criticism, where the term narrative is often paired with 'symphonic' or 'logic', one might feel that Pasler is on to something. As Karl puts it, the phrase 'musical narrative' is a potentially misleading placeholder, but it does nonetheless seem to serve a purpose as an evocative indicator of musical narrativity in this broader and perhaps more generally acceptable sense. Such uses are bound to make one uncomfortable if one labours under the misapprehension that to talk of musical narrativity is to indicate a belief in music's power to relate a literal or verbal story. As this chapter has indicated, however, the first and second waves of the musical narratology debate, while rightly identifying a difference between musical narrativizations and musical narrativity, do not deny the existence of the latter nor the importance of seriously considering its significance (not least as a provocation to musical narrativizations).

Whether or not one should call all pieces demonstrating narrativity 'musical narratives' is another matter. Just because a piece 'has narrativity', it does not follow that the structure it leads one to emplot will take the form of (to recall Culler's description) a chain of events implying a logic of causation which, furthermore, present an initial situation, a change involving some sort of reversal and then a resolution marking that change as significant. To argue that a composition's 'discourse' has musical narrativity need not be to argue that it encourages perceivers to emplot a story-like 'story'. Pieces which do invoke a story-like structure, however, are precisely those which one might more justifiably describe as musical narratives. This may seem like terminological hair-splitting and, as the music narratology moment fades into musicology's history, unnecessarily cautious. It will clearly be necessary, however, to continue to denote those instances of musical narrativity with a story-like structure in a

way which distinguishes this aspect of their construction, just as one would wish to be able to indicate musical ‘antinarratives’ and ‘nonnarratives’.

A Lutosławski piece with an *akcja*, for example, would seem well-placed, on the face of the documentary and theoretical evidence examined in Chapters One and Two, to receive the designation ‘musical narrative’. The events signifying an *akcja* within a Lutosławski piece’s discourse – and especially the development of ‘key ideas’ at the composition’s moments of intense musical significance – could be read, for instance, as a discontinuous series of events invoking emplotment as a functional sequence working through the ramifications of an enigmatic initial situation. This does not mean that musical factors more cardinal to other musical narratives, such as expressive content or instrumental interplay, will not also be relevant to the emplotment and interpretation of a Lutosławski *akcja*. Further factors tincturing an *akcja*’s events will certainly need to be taken into account, as will discursive elements rhetorically shaping the discourse through which the *akcja* is presented. Nonetheless, the most obvious hook for such readings can be – and arguably must be if one wishes to pay any particular attention to the composer’s hints in this regard – the chains of events whose content reveals a primarily pitch-based plot involving enigmas (‘key ideas’) and a functional sequence (of ‘static’ events) exploring their radioactive ramifications. Analysing an instance of musical *akcja* could therefore proceed by filtering aspects of Lutosławski’s poetics of musical plot through a number of the theoretical approaches discussed in the present chapter.

1. Segmentation

Following Lutosławski's distinction between 'static' and 'dynamic' events and Barthes's concept of a plot being a succession of functional and catalyzing units, an initial segmentation or starring of a Lutosławski composition (open to revision later on as more detail becomes apparent through closer analysis) could be made to identify potentially functional ('static') and catalyzing ('dynamic') events. Such a segmentation should prove valuable, as McCreless and Novak note, by forcibly 'slowing down' one's reading and thereby focussing one's attention on the potential implications of each moment, rather than encouraging one to rush ahead to emplot the most obvious turning points in a piece.

2. The functional sequence

Having identified a putative sequence of events in an *akcja*, one could then examine those events for the presence of enigmatic 'key ideas' and their developments at 'static' moments of intense significance. In this regard, Lutosławski's descriptions of 'static' and 'dynamic' events offer a useful analytical prompt, permitting one to resolve an issue that problematizes other theories of musical plot and discourse: namely the issue of salience and being able to identify when an event is (or is not) part of a plot.

Lutosławski's poetics of musical plot has built-in redundancy which, along with his concern for rhetorically accentuating more significant moments, helps this process of identifying a piece's functional sequence. One might then seek to analyse the engine of a Lutosławski piece's evocation of causation, logic and narrativity.

Following Barthes, as adapted by McCreless and Novak – and Lutosławski's descriptions of 'key ideas' as combinations of small numbers of tones with a radioactive impact on the structure of a piece – one might search for a single harmonic or thematic idea posing a pitch-related problem (and probably an i.c. 'quality'-related problem) to be worked through and resolved. Alternatively, the interaction of two or more 'key ideas' (and contrasting 'qualities') may be the source of an *akcja*'s tensions, and their interactions could therefore be tracked across an *akcja*'s main events. One could also consider the possibility that some Lutosławski pieces contain both plots and subplots emerging in 'storeys' over the course of an *akcja*; where this is the case, moments when those strands intersect may be particularly salient to the understanding of a composition. In all instances, the evolutions, interactions and transformations of 'key ideas' over the course of an *akcja*'s functional sequence could be thought of as being as crucial to the musical narrative as the behaviour of the characters whose actions form the plot of a play (as Lutosławski himself indicated when speaking, in his 'Problems' lecture, of the impact of 'narrative' events in tonal music being like the entrance of a new character in a play). Follow these musical characters and one follows the course of an *akcja*. One should also bear in mind, however, that while Lutosławski's modernist style may accentuate the presentation of an *akcja*, modernism's locus might be relocated to the music's story level in some of his pieces. The plot one might emplot, in other words, could bear modernist surprises of its own.

The analysis in Chapter Three adopts Barthes's terminology from his 'Introduction' essay as opposed to *S/Z*. First, it is a more elegant fit with aspects of Lutosławski's poetics. Second, the usefulness of adapting Barthes's earlier approach to narrative here may form a useful contrast to McCreless and Novak's adaptations of *S/Z*.

Third, the aims of Barthes's 'Introduction' essay are arguably more closely aligned to the analysis of musical plot (and to the aims of the present thesis), compared to the philosophical dissonance one might feel between Barthes's 'writerly' project in *S/Z* and the way in which his ideas from that text have been previously adapted to 'readerly' music analysis.

Graphically representing the turning points in an *akcja*'s functional sequence could also be a useful step. In order to consider the interaction of the sensuous and the schematic in shaping both an *akcja* and its perception, and to counterbalance the artificiality of the initial segmentation, one could follow Berry and Rink by plotting an intensity curve or similar diagram and then mapping the identified functional events onto it. This would represent the articulation and pacing through time of an *akcja*'s unfolding in a musical discourse and serve, at the very least, as a reminder that one is also responding to a performance and its narrational inflections when making such judgements (even if that performance is merely taking place inside the mind or memory of a score-reading analyst). It will also encourage one to begin considering the ways in which sensuous, expressive or statistical factors influence one's perception of the primarily schematic, formal or syntactical determinants of a musical *akcja*.

Plotting a functional sequence onto an intensity curve could also help one to clarify aspects of one's initial segmentation and analysis. As Berry and Lutosławski separately indicate, one might expect to find functional events at moments when intensity is perceived to be stable; catalyzing events, on the other hand, may tend to occur where intensity is dynamically accruing or dispersing. Although doing so lies beyond the remit of this thesis, developing a collection of such diagrams relating to different pieces may enable one to draw broader conclusions about Lutosławski's

shaping of musical plot, uniting considerations of familiar issues like end-accenting with new thinking about *akcja*. It may also permit comparisons to be made to other composers' approaches, the 'static' and 'dynamic' shaping of musical intensity to accentuate key events in a musical text being a feature of a much wider range of music.

3. Overcodings

A further benefit of 'starring' one's analysis of a piece is that additional points of interest can be noted en route to the production of one's reading of an *akcja*'s functional sequence. The 'dynamic' catalyzing events serving as formal transitions between functional 'static' events in an *akcja*, for example, are often home to Lutosławski's most sophisticated developmental workings. More crucially, however, pitch-related 'static' events in the functional sequence will be overcoded by recurring motifs such as timbres, textures and gestures to which one's analytical commentary could usefully draw attention. McCreless and Novak's thinking on the semic code as a signaller of major events in a functional sequence may be useful here. However, as this study follows Barthes's 'Introduction' essay as a model for analysing *akcja*, it proposes that it may be simpler to note these effects and other overcodings – such as rhetorical gestures, topics and expressive signifiers – in the course of one's analytical narrative (as opposed to seeking explicitly to deal simultaneously with every possible musical and narrative code, an approach which renders Novak's most sophisticated efforts somewhat difficult to decrypt). Such observations might, of course, receive extra prominence in the analysis of pieces (such as Lutosławski's String Quartet) in which utilizing Kerman's 'relationship story' approach, for example, could provide a useful way of overcoding

one's analysis of a functional sequence to recognize other prominent musical factors, such as chamber or concertante interactions.

4. Interpretation

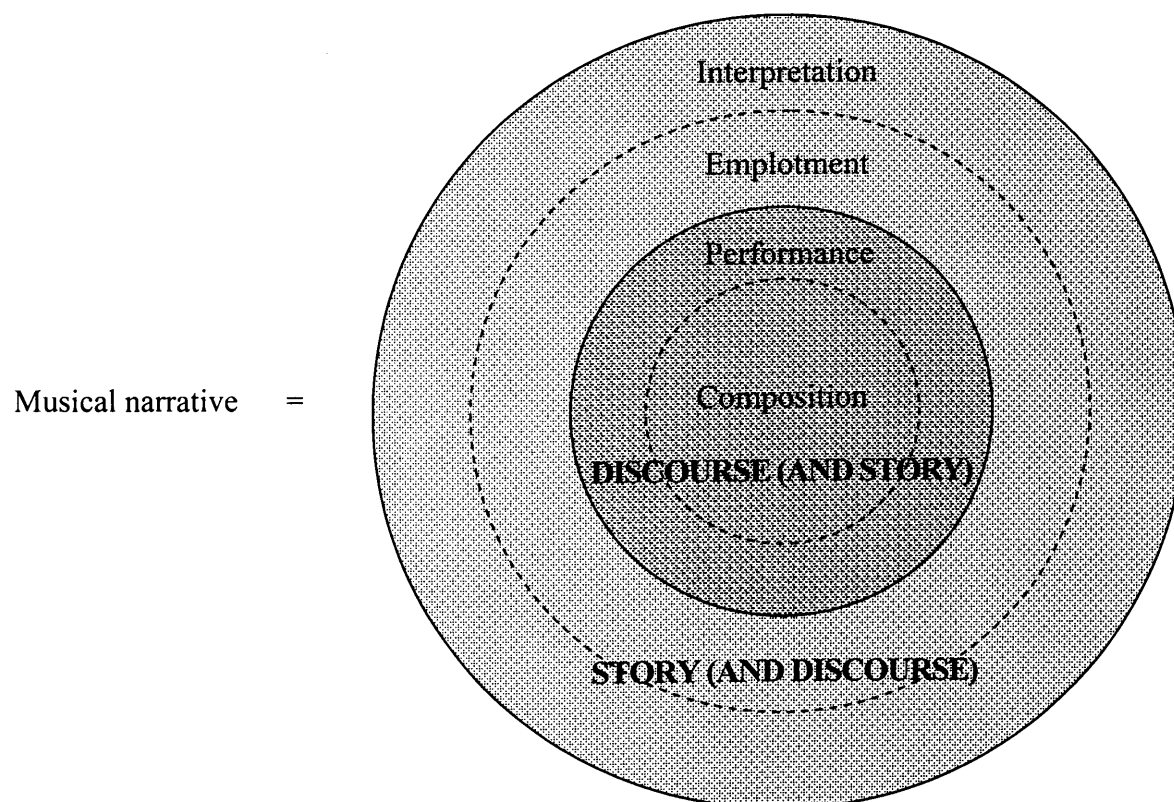
Lutosławski's thinking on 'active' perception, Barthes thoughts on writerly creativity and Iser's concept of the virtual text all encourage one to reflect on the wider resonance of an *akcja*'s story-like structure. The dramatic suspense of actively emplotting a Lutosławski *akcja* may, of course, be enough 'meaning' for many listeners. Yet emplotting an *akcja* – or carefully considering other aspects of its discourse – could also open the door to further artistic, biographical and cultural resonances and thus, potentially, to narrativizations revealing, to recall Woolf's evocative phrase, a composition's more enduring forms of life.

Once an *akcja* has been emplotted one could therefore, following Iser, consider whether the piece's pre-story, mnemonic field or whatever one wishes to call it might be thought of, in turn, as a metaphor. In this regard, it may be useful to include in one's analysis of an *akcja* any narrativization of the story-like structure one develops in response to the piece, not to claim interpretative veracity for any such reading, but in order that other listeners can compare and contrast it to their own responses. Not all pieces will lend themselves to analogies as vivid as McClary's loaf-treading impromptu, but when they are derived, as in her Schubert analysis, through a close analysis of a musical narrative by an analyst open to a plurality of influences and concerns, the approach carries the potential for both candour and communicability. It may also point the way towards a fuller understanding of the humanistic philosophy underlying

Lutosławski's music, especially if, over time, a community of narrativizations begin to emerge concerning certain pieces – narrativizations which may turn out to contain, on closer inspection, shared semantic essences.

These issues are reflected on further in the conclusion to Chapter Three's analysis of *Livre pour orchestre* and in the Afterword. The place of narrativization in the development of an approach to the understanding and analysis of *akcja* – and also in the quest to find more prudent yet positive ways of talking about musical narrativity – is also indicated in the outer 'interpretative' circles of Fig. 2.2's illustration of the elements which interact during the creation and experience of instances of musical narrativity. One cannot simply divide such musical experiences into story and

Fig. 2.2: Musical narrative as an interaction of composing, performing and listening



discourse, creation and perception. Whatever the signs encoded in a composition's score may suggest in this regard, a performance will add its own layer of narrative signifiers, and a listener's emplotment and interpretation of an instance of musical narrativity will enrich the situation still further. If a narrative is the cumulative outcome of story, discourse and perception, a musical narrative is the cumulative outcome of composing, performing and listening. The analysis in Chapter Three documents one such accumulation, while seeking to demonstrate how the sketch for a theoretically-grounded approach to analysing *akcja* that this thesis has begun to develop can be applied in practice – albeit in the context of a composition whose sophistication swiftly encourages one to move beyond demonstrating the basics of this preliminary analytical strategy in search of more nuanced interpretative insights.

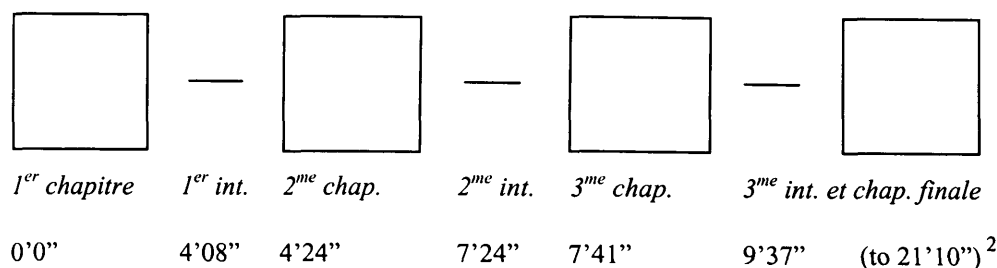
CHAPTER THREE

‘Livre’ or Symphony? Lutosławski’s *Livre pour orchestre*

On 29 May 1968, Witold Lutosławski wrote a letter to Berthold Lehmann, conductor and Generalmusikdirektor of the Hagen Städtisches Orchester. Addressing the conductor in German, the composer discussed various practical matters relating to the parts and score of his soon-to-be-completed commission from Hagen, *Livre pour orchestre*, which had been scheduled for its first performance later that year as part of the Hager Musiktage. Towards the end of his letter, however, Lutosławski broached a subject of considerably greater significance: the question of *Livre pour orchestre*’s title. The composer, it appears, had changed his mind.

Lutosławski’s original plan for *Livre pour orchestre*, devised shortly after Lehmann had first approached him regarding a commission in 1962, had furnished the composition’s title. As Lutosławski explained in an interview around the time of the work’s premiere, he had intended to compose ‘a loosely connected group of movements... a cycle of composition[s] of different lengths ending with a long finale’.¹ Indeed, he had initially thought that the work would have more than its eventual four *chapitres* separated by short *intermèdes* (as represented in Fig. 3.1), envisaging a collection of differently hued orchestral miniatures, interspersed with interludes and with the slightly longer final *chapitre* as a rhetorical gesture of closure. That plan had

¹ Tadeusz Marek, ‘*Livre pour orchestre* by Witold Lutosławski’, *Polish Music* 4/1 (12) (1969), p. 12.

Fig. 3.1: *Livre pour orchestre*, structure and timings

suggested, in turn, the title *Livre pour orchestre*. Lutosławski reported that Lehmann had ‘seized at the title and idea with alacrity’.³

In an interview conducted at the time of the work’s Polish premiere at the 1969 Warsaw Autumn, Lutosławski gave an explanation of why he had decided to call his cycle of pieces a ‘Livre’. The origins of the title, he claimed, lay in the past. ‘Couperin’s *Livre de clavecin* and Bach’s *Orgelbüchlein*’, he told Kaczyński, ‘were both collections of compositions of various lengths and forms’.⁴ When Lutosławski returned to his plans in 1968, however, and began to compose a piece corresponding to his ‘Livre’ idea, the nature of the work began to change. ‘When I finished it’, he later reported, ‘it was much too organized, against my will, and the title no longer corresponded to the character of the piece’.⁵ Instead of maintaining their independence, ‘une certaine logique, un certaine action’ had emerged between the *chapitres*.⁶ In 1969, he described elements of this emergence in more detail, employing striking terms. The

² All timings given in the tables in this chapter are taken from Lutosławski’s 1976 recording of *Livre pour orchestre* with the Polish Radio National Symphony Orchestra (EMI 565305, 1978). For reasons that will become clear below, no timing is given in Fig. 3.1 for the start of the final *chapitre*.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 12.

⁴ Originally published as Tadeusz Kaczyński, ‘*Livre pour orchestre*. Rozmowa z Witoldem Lutosławskim’, *Ruch Muzyczny* 13/17 (1-15 September 1969), pp. 3-5. Translation in Kaczyński, *Conversations*, p. 73.

⁵ Varga, *Lutosławski*, p. 27.

⁶ Couchod, *La musique polonaise*, p. 136.

chapitres and *intermèdes*, he said, had become ‘links in the development of a single event’:⁷

I feel that the construction of closed forms involves the presence of contrasting elements, that is to say, elements with a sufficiently strong centrifugal force, and their subsequent subjugation to the unifying centripetal force. Only then is a composition likely to possess a firm and solid construction.⁸

His initial plan of a cycle of unconnected movements had been subjugated, it appears, by the demands of an overarching *akcja*.

The discussion of the piece’s title in Lutosławski’s 29 May letter to Lehmann confirms this change of direction. In doing so, it symbolizes creative tensions at the heart of this ‘masterpiece of the modern orchestral repertoire’.⁹ The composer’s own copy of this letter – along with approximately 28,000 further pages of correspondence with more than 3,500 individuals and institutions – can be read in the Lutosławski Collection at the Paul Sacher Stiftung (always a careful correspondent, Lutosławski typed his letters on carbon paper, in order to keep copies back for his own records). Its revelatory closing paragraph reads as follows:

Finally, I would like to waste a few more words about the title of the piece, as I find that the title ‘*Livre pour orchestre*’ sounds a little pretentious and does not correspond to the whole of the work’s form. As you will recall, my initial intention was to write a series of small pieces. In which case the previous title would have captured it, but in its current state my work is much nearer a large closed form. Therefore it is necessary to make a search for a new title. Please give me a little extra time to allocate a better title for you (possibly as simple as *Third Symphony*).¹⁰

⁷ Kaczyński, *Conversations*, p. 73.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 77.

⁹ Stucky, *Lutosławski*, p. 172.

¹⁰ ‘Zum Abschluss möchte ich noch ein paar Worte über den Titel des Stückes verlieren, ich finde, dass der Titel “*Livre pour orchestre*” ein wenig pretensiös klingt und entspricht nicht ganz der Form des Werkes. Wie Sie sich sicher erinnern werden, war es meine erste Absicht eine Reihe von kleineren Stücken zu schreiben. Dafür würde der vorgeschlagene Titel passen, aber in dem jetzigen Stand der Arbeit ist mein Werk viel näher einer grossen geschlossenen Form. Darum macht sich die Suche nach einem neuen Titel erforderlich. Bitte geben Sie mir doch noch ein wenig Zeit um Ihnen den entgeltigen Titel (möglicherweise ganz einfach 3. Symphonie) mitzuteilen.’ From Witold Lutosławski, letter to

By the time Lutosławski's letter had arrived in Hagen, however, the first performance of *Livre pour orchestre* had been announced for 18 November 1968. To change the title was therefore unpractical and, in turn, Lutosławski allowed his composition to be published under the name with which it was presented at its world premiere. Yet the fact that, in the twenty-five years before his death in 1994, Lutosławski often mentioned his belated letter to Lehmann suggests that, although he never publicly revealed his alternative title,¹¹ he remained deeply ambivalent about the validity of the designation 'Book for orchestra'.

Lutosławski, it must be noted, had not definitively settled on the alternative title Symphony No. 3, at least by the time of this letter to Lehmann. There may have been relatively simple reasons for this prevarication. Following in the heavy tread of his work on Symphony No. 2, a piece Lutosławski felt to have been a failure in certain respects, he might simply have been unhappy with the idea of closely associating his next work with its below par predecessor. Moreover, later works that he deemed symphonic (i.e., as orchestral pieces possessing an *akcja* and a certain magnitude), such as *Les espaces du sommeil* (which, with its baritone soloist, Lutosławski called a symphonic poem in a distinctly non-Straussian sense), *Mi-parti* and *Chain 3* (1986), do not bear the generic title either, but rather names which reflect more distinctive aspects of their nature. The analysis of the music presented below, however, suggests other reasons why Symphony No. 3 might not have been an adequate title. Lutosławski's post-compositional rationalization of *Livre pour orchestre*, and statements like 'in its

Berthold Lehmann, 29 May 1968 (Paul Sacher Stiftung, Basel: Microfilm 213.1/0450-0451), translation by present writer.

¹¹ He may have done so in private. Although none of the Lutosławski scholars I have consulted knew previously of the alternative title, Andrzej Chłopecki's recent Warsaw Autumn programme note on the four acknowledged symphonies speaks of there being, '[in] actual fact, ... five not four symphonies, because *Livre pour orchestre* (despite its name) is also a symphony.' Andrzej Chłopecki, 'Witold Lutosławski', *Warsaw Autumn 2004* (Warsaw: ZKP, 2004), p. 282.

current state my work is much nearer a large closed form', might lead one to imagine the work as being symphonic from start to finish. Yet this would not do justice to the complexity of the completed piece.

In *Livre pour orchestre* the competing compositional models of an anti-narrative 'Livre' and an *akcja*-articulating 'symphony' generate much of the piece's power. The outcome of their encounter is a swing in favour of the symphonic. That conclusion, however, not merely of the thematic and harmonic arguments powering the piece's ultimately plot-like discourse, but also of the piece's vacillation between being 'loosely connected' and 'links in the development of a single event', is far from predictable for much of its duration. For the first half of the piece (the finale begins about ten minutes into the piece's c. 20 minutes),¹² there are few intimations that the nature of the composition will even prove to be at stake. Consequently, to talk of the *akcja* of *Livre pour orchestre* is complicated, as it is a piece in which *akcja* emerges as an alternative mode of formal organisation at a crucial juncture in the composition (the start of the final *chapitre*). One almost needs to talk, therefore, of the piece's meta-*akcja*, or rather of an encompassing musical narrative in which a 'Livre' becomes a 'symphony', forging an ontological transformation that creates much of the composition's drama and, this chapter argues, symbolic resonance. Under these circumstances, neither title quite captures the music's dualistic nature – unless, perhaps, one considers the 'Livre' model to have a range of associations beyond those discussed by Lutosławski.

The conflicting tendencies in *Livre pour orchestre*, for example, may be productively considered in the context of a heritage of modernist 'Livres' tangentially acknowledged by Lutosławski in his post-compositional statements. The idea of a cycle

¹² Approximately twenty minutes, not the twenty-one minutes of Lutosławski's own recording, is the duration given in the score.

of loosely connected movements forms a network of associations with an important twentieth-century tradition in modernist literature and music of which Lutosławski was undoubtedly aware. Peter Petersen notes that, in Lutosławski's conversation about *Livre pour orchestre* with Kaczyński, the composer failed to comment on the existence of Boulez's *Le Livre pour quatuor* (1948-9) when outlining his own piece's heritage.¹³ In fact, in Lutosławski's first interview about *Livre pour orchestre*, Tadeusz Marek asked him outright about the music's place in a lineage including not only Couperin and Bach but also Boulez and Olivier Messiaen (his 1951 *Livre d'orgue*). Lutosławski was probably familiar with the Boulez, movements of which had been performed at the 1958 Warsaw Autumn by the Quatuor Parrenin, and his description to Marek of *Livre pour orchestre*'s original plan suggests the model's applicability, in Lutosławski's view, to all of these different 'Livres'.

It is only in the later interviews, then, that a veil is drawn over his piece's more recent forebears, in which context his description of the title as 'a little pretentious' to Lehmann (along with Lehmann's 'seizing with alacrity') becomes all the more intriguing. Lutosławski's later objection to the title may not only have been related to the music's creative change of direction, but also to an oblique acknowledgement of a modernist 'Livre' tradition with which Lutosławski did not want his music to be associated. One might therefore wish to examine the music's relationship to that tradition, not as Lutosławski planned or later rationalized it, but rather as it appears through close analysis of the music.

In Boulez's *Le Livre pour quatuor* the concept of the 'Livre' takes on an explicitly modernist edge which locates his piece amidst the type of experimental

¹³ Petersen, 'Microtones', in Skowron, ed., *Lutosławski Studies*, p. 334, n. 33. Boulez's piece was retitled *Livre pour cordes* in 1958 when Boulez rearranged the piece for a larger string ensemble.

structures Lutosławski disliked and regarded, as his lectures on form illustrate, as being unlikely to encourage 'active' listening. Yet consideration of the modernist 'Livre' model may cast light on the dualistic nature of Lutosławski's piece, to the extent of suggesting a locus for the tensions between its 'Livre'-like anti-narrativity and symphonic *akcja*. To get to the root of this, one must consider Boulez's inspiration. He had composed his quartet 'made up of detachable movements'¹⁴ and titled it *Le Livre pour quatuor* in homage to what, for him, was the 'Livre' concept's most significant recent precedent: Mallarmé's partially completed *Le Livre*, the existing fragments of which had been published (posthumously) in 1957.

For Boulez, Mallarmé's *Le Livre* was 'a revelation' and 'a perfect proof... of our [i.e., high modernist art's] urgent need for a poetic, aesthetic and formal renewal'.¹⁵ The influence of Mallarmé's work – 'at one end, a book perfectly composed and at the other a collection of sheets that is essentially external, a simple album in fact'¹⁶ – can be sensed not only in Boulez's quartet, but also in the open form of his Sonata No. 3 (1957).¹⁷ The attraction of Mallarmé's 'Livre' model can thus be related to Boulez's desire to find new approaches to large-scale formal structuring in the wake of tonality, sonata form, other outmoded generic archetypes and, arguably, the germ of musical narrativity underlying such music. In its organisation, the poet's 'book' reflects a resistance to descriptive mimesis at the level of both small groups of words and, in

¹⁴ Pierre Boulez, *Conversations with Célestin Deliège* (London: Eulenberg, 1976), p. 51.

¹⁵ Pierre Boulez, *Orientations: Collected Writings*, ed. Jean-Jacques Nattiez and trans. Martin Cooper (London: Faber, 1986), pp. 147-8.

¹⁶ From Jacques Scherer's essay, 'Le "Livre" de Mallarmé', which accompanied the 1957 publication of Mallarmé's *Le Livre* (Paris: Gallimard, 1957), as quoted and translated in Boulez, *Orientations*, p. 147.

¹⁷ Joan Peyser has even suggested that Boulez's continual revisions and expansions of notionally completed pieces form 'a great work, composed in fragments, that will one day be pulled together' and be comparable to the Mallarmé. Joan Peyser, *Boulez: Composer, Conductor, Enigma* (London: Cassell, 1977), p. 230. This suggestion is not quite as fanciful as it may seem. Boulez himself has likened Berlioz's output ('the scattered pieces of a Great Opus that escaped him') to Mallarmé's *Le Livre*. See Boulez, *Orientations*, p. 217.

terms of overarching narrative or teleology, at the level of its macrostructure.

Consequently, where words in Mallarmé's poems were afforded space to accrue what Butler calls 'complicated networks of metaphoric association' as part of the poet's sacrifice of 'plot for mood', in *Le Livre* the organisation of the entire work reflects similar ideas.

As Whittall points out, *Le Livre pour quatuor* is but one of Boulez's encounters with Mallarmé's poetry in this period, the richest being *Pli selon pli* (1962).¹⁸ Some of these encounters, Whittall suggests, 'seem designed to offer musical "upheavals" more "spectacular" than anyone else',¹⁹ thus demonstrating Boulez's high modernist credentials, not least in the form of his commitment to 'formal renewal'. Whittall argues, however, that a long engagement with Mallarmé's ideas had ultimately 'strengthened Boulez's predisposition to something less disruptive, an unstable yet organic modern classicism in which tendencies to formal and expressive "upheavals" were resisted, if not triumphantly resolved out in an integrating synthesis after the model of pure classicism'.²⁰ The mythological subject linking Debussy's 'Sirènes' and *Pli selon pli*'s 'Improvisation III' even permits Whittall to suggest that, just as 'the whole point of the "classic" story of the sirens is that Ulysses successfully resists their seductive song', Boulez's *Pli selon pli* could be read to reject or transcend 'a purer modernism' in favour of 'the siren call of a... less dangerous, modern classicism'.²¹ This places Boulez's 'resistance' to wholesale formal and expressive upheaval in his

¹⁸ Arnold Whittall, ' "Unbounded Visions": Boulez, Mallarmé and Modern Classicism', *Twentieth-Century Music* 1/1 (2004), pp. 65-80.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 67.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 68.

²¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 79-80.

responses to Mallarmé on a continuum of musical modernisms Whittall calls the ‘modernist paradigm’ in his *Lutosławski Studies* essay.²²

In this most refined discussion yet of the nature of Lutosławski’s modernism, Whittall identifies a modernist ‘tendency to underline forces making for [the] disruption of unities and the fragmentation of coherent wholes’, citing Carter as one composer whose music ‘is organized around sequences of stratified textures which interact but avoid decisive convergence or synthesis’. Lutosławski, on the other hand, is considered by Whittall to have developed a response to modernism at the site of ‘intense interactions between opposing tendencies: connection and fragmentation, progressiveness and conservatism, polarity and synthesis’. Whittall’s ‘modernist paradigm’ is therefore conceived as mobile enough to sustain a continuum of positions between ‘the notional extremes of polarity as absolute opposition and synthesis as total integration’. Whittall consequently identifies Lutosławski’s brand of modernism as a ‘resistance to the pull of both extremes’ and locates this resistance at the heart of the expressive and formal power of the pieces he views as Lutosławski’s finest compositions, those from the 1960s and 1970s.

Livre pour orchestre is one of those compositions. It is also a very different work to Boulez’s *Le Livre pour quatuor*, let alone *Pli selon pli*, and one would not wish to suggest facile connections between these works or their composers (nor, for that matter, between their compositions and Mallarmé’s *Le Livre*). Nevertheless, Boulez’s ‘modern classicism’ is surely close enough to Lutosławski’s resistance to compositional extremes, in Whittall’s description, to permit one to ask if a modernist tendency to resist the siren call of either classicist coherence or avant-garde fragmentation is played out in

²² Arnold Whittall, ‘Between Polarity and Synthesis: The Modernist Paradigm in Lutosławski’s Concertos for Cello and Piano’, in Skowron, ed., *Lutosławski Studies*, pp. 244-45. All subsequent quotes from these two pages.

Livre pour orchestre, and to consider the tensions in Lutosławski's piece in terms of the creative paradox between album and book in Mallarmé's paradigmatic model.

Jacques Scherer's writings on *Le Livre* describe a creative confrontation permitted by what he calls the text's 'double movement':

Here we find, in opposition to the concept of history as enslaved to the succession in irreversible time, an intelligence capable of mastering a subject by reconstructing it in all directions, including the reverse of temporal succession. The same double movement can show, ... as no ordinary book can show, that it is capable of achieving the clearly sensed diversity of an album and then of recomposing that as a structured whole. ... The confrontation is a creative one.²³

Did Lutosławski's post-compositional decision to seek to rename *Livre pour orchestre* relate to a creative confrontation in his finished piece, a confrontation between the anti-narrativity of the 'Livre' model and the symphonic narrativity of a closed form with an overarching *akcja*? If so, then for the perceiver of *Livre pour orchestre* there may also be a creative confrontation to be experienced during the 'active' emplotment of the piece, in the form of a moment when the pull of one pole is overwhelmed by the pull of another. Looking for the 'double movement' between album and book, anti-narrativity and *akcja*, modernism and classicism and, ultimately, 'Livre' and 'symphony' in this piece could therefore prove to be a productive interpretative strategy. Before embarking on that analytical investigation, however, this chapter will first consider a range of existing critical responses to *Livre pour orchestre*.

***Livre pour orchestre*'s critical reception**

A survey of the critical reception of *Livre pour orchestre* can be divided into a summary of early notices received plus general judgements concerning the music's character and

²³ Scherer, 'Le "Livre" de Mallarmé', quoted and translated in Boulez, *Orientations*, p. 147.

value, followed by a more detailed examination of the three substantial analytical commentaries that have been published concerning the work. The circumstances under which *Livre pour orchestre* received its world premiere were modest in terms of both the standard of the performance and its placement within a festival forming a noted but relatively quiet backwater of the new music scene in the 1960s. Lutosławski commented, for instance, that although Lehmann and the Hagen Städtisches Orchester ‘prepared with great care’, they ‘fought with obvious difficulties’ to perform the work and their standard of playing could in no way be compared to the best of the German orchestras with whom he had worked.²⁴ The premiere certainly did not receive the full glare of immediate critical scrutiny which greeted later Lutosławski first performances. ‘Practically nobody knew of the event’, Lutosławski told Varga, ‘only those who were present’.²⁵ As Stucky clarifies, however, the performance did not go entirely unnoticed or unreported.²⁶ Indeed, the critical notices *Livre pour orchestre* received in Hagen set the tone for ensuing assessments.

The title of Horst Kniese’s review, ‘Lutosławski schreibt für Hagen ein Meisterwerk’,²⁷ leaves little room for doubting the nature of its commentary. Stucky notes other ‘similarly lavish’ reviews²⁸ and offers numerous justifications for these affirmative first impressions, which he seconds unreservedly. ‘A highly charged work of dazzling inventiveness, ravishingly lush sound, and absorbing textural interplay’, he wrote in 1981, ‘*Livre* makes a strong claim to be the best and most attractive piece Lutosławski has ever written’.²⁹ Stucky draws a contrast between the work and its

²⁴ Varga, *Lutosławski*, p. 41.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 41.

²⁶ Stucky, *Lutosławski*, p. 90.

²⁷ Horst Kniese, ‘Lutosławski schreibt für Hagen ein Meisterwerk’, *Melos* 36 (1969), p. 22.

²⁸ Stucky, *Lutosławski*, p. 90.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 165.

predecessor, Symphony No. 2, arguing that *Livre pour orchestre* is not only ‘more concentrated, and more immediately appealing than its companion piece’,³⁰ but that it ‘magnifies every strength of the Second Symphony’:

There is no hint of struggle with technique; every detail of the work is expressive. Having posed himself new questions in the Symphony, in *Livre* Lutosławski attained a new certainty of purpose and mastery of technique to produce a masterpiece...³¹

Such is Lutosławski’s mastery of orchestral music in *Livre pour orchestre*, Stucky even suggests that ‘students of composition would do well to make this score their textbook’, just as Lutosławski had done with Stravinsky’s early ballet scores.³²

For Rae, too, *Livre pour orchestre* is ‘one of the landmarks of Lutosławski’s mature style’, and he also comments on its ‘sheer beauty of orchestral sound and richness... of harmonic sonorities’, suggesting that the work ‘is equalled (perhaps surpassed)’ by only *Les espaces du sommeil* and *Mi-parti* in terms of these qualities.³³ Rae argues, however, that *Livre pour orchestre*’s supreme achievement is its form. Reviewing an early American performance, Royal Brown was similarly struck by the combination of ravishing sounds and structural cunning, praising what he heard as music ‘so sonorously inventive and so intriguingly structured that one has the impression of hearing... the entire orchestra for the first time’.³⁴ It may therefore seem unsurprising, in retrospect, that after Jan Krenz had conducted the Polish premiere of *Livre pour orchestre* in 1969, his recording of the same year with the National Philharmonic of Warsaw won the Grand Prix du Disque of the Académie Charles Cros. This was music readymade for high fidelity and repeated listening.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 90.

³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 172.

³² *Ibid.*, p. 165.

³³ Rae, *The Music of Lutosławski*, p. 115.

³⁴ Royal Brown, review of *Livre pour orchestre*, in *High Fidelity/Musical America* 24 (June 1974), MA30. Quoted in Stucky, *Lutosławski*, p. 154.

Aside from lauding *Livre pour orchestre* for the splendour of its soundworld and formal inventiveness, a recurring theme in the literature has been to consider similarities between the piece and other Lutosławski compositions. Many of these observations have focussed on the work's form and the idea that it revisits and perfects an archetype imperfectly executed in earlier works. Such revisiting was definitely a Lutosławski trait and the obvious parallels between this form and other works are there to be heard.

Stucky, for example, suggests that *Livre pour orchestre* revives a formal scheme present in the *Three Postludes* (1958-63) and heard again (spread over four movements) in *Jeux vénitiens*. Another common observation, following Stucky, is that the macrorhythmic accelerando in the final *chapitre* has precedents in the *Postludes* and Symphony No. 2.

In this formal archetype – which has, since Stucky's book, been referred to in the literature as two-part, end-accented form – 'the early movements are short, incomplete fragments, and the longer finale consummates the musical action'.³⁵ In *Livre pour orchestre*, the macrorhythmic accelerando in the finale can be heard to power that expressive consummation, as noted by Rae when he observes how the preliminary stages in *Livre pour orchestre* can be heard to lead 'to a final movement that is considerably more extended and drives to a collective climax'.³⁶ One wonders, however, whether such observations, in reducing to an underlying archetype what, on closer inspection, are actually structurally diverse compositions, do Lutosławski an unintentional disservice by focussing attention away from the qualities that make each piece uniquely impressive. It simply does not seem enough in the way of an interpretation to claim that the formal mastery of *Livre pour orchestre* lies in its flawless execution of a less than original plan – not least because part of its achievement relates

³⁵ Stucky, *Lutosławski*, p. 131.

³⁶ Rae, *The Music of Lutosławski*, p. 110.

to an initially quite different formal plan being supplanted, at a later stage, by something closer to the end-accented archetype.³⁷

These potential shortcomings of the Lutosławski literature may be related to the fact that detailed or prolonged analytical assessments of *Livre pour orchestre* are thin on the ground (an absence which, in light of the piece's claim to being considered Lutosławski's 'other' symphony, deserves to be addressed beyond the boundaries of the present study). Few have been keen, it seems, to put their finger on the pulse of what makes this work a masterpiece, preferring to allude generously, but perhaps a little too generally, to the beauty of its soundworld and the cleverness of its structure. That is not to say, of course, that individual scholars – and especially Homma, Rae and Stucky – have not made penetrating analytical observations about *Livre pour orchestre*. The opposite is the case and the analysis below discusses a number of their insights.

As with the rest of Lutosławski's output, though, *Livre pour orchestre* has received little detailed attention which seeks to connect local content to the larger contours of the piece's form. Not least, this relates to the lack of serious appreciation thus far of Lutosławski's concept of *akcja*. Three substantial analytical commentaries do exist, however, by Philip Wilby, Tuchowski and, when one unites a number of his comments, by the composer himself. Due to the theoretical edifices within which Wilby and Tuchowski embed their respective claims, their analyses are considered first below. Against that context, Lutosławski's post-compositional commentary on *Livre pour orchestre* is then considered.

³⁷ Arguably Lutosławski's purest realisation of the 'Livre' model – complete with the option of performer re-orderings of sections, which Mallarmé envisaged for *Le Livre* – lay in the future, in the form of the preludes in *Preludes and Fugue*, as discussed in the Afterword. This suggests that the 'Livre' idea exerted a continuing hold on Lutosławski's creative imagination – a possibility strengthened by the sketches for Symphony No. 3, which speak of a *Tagesbuch* or notebook in relation to an idea that part of the piece would resemble a cycle of small pieces without a definite form and with only loose connections between them. See Homma, *Witold Lutosławski*, p. 129.

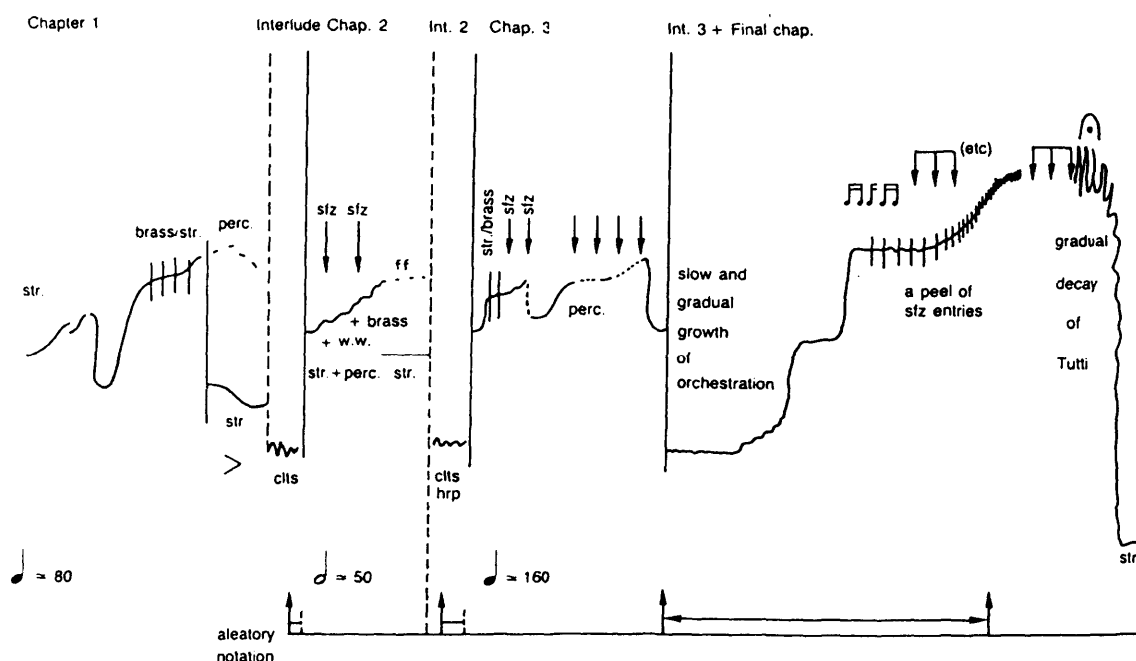
Analyses of *Livre pour orchestre*

Unity is, appropriately enough, a theme which connects Lutosławski, Tuchowski and Wilby's commentaries on *Livre pour orchestre*, although the reasoning with which they seek to read it into the music is different. Wilby's main focus is on the unity formed by *Livre pour orchestre* as a single expressive shape. He does, however, make a number of more detailed comments which, while unsupported by close analysis in his article, suggest further insights. For instance, his judgement that a 'sense of incomplete or "spoiled" music growing into finished and perfect thoughts' is a feature of Symphony No. 2, *Livre pour orchestre* and *Preludes and Fugues* is intriguing. What is this spoiled music and how is it perfected?³⁸

Wilby illustrates his reading of *Livre pour orchestre*'s expressive 'ground-plan'³⁹ (see Fig. 3.2) with a graph which bears comparison to the intensity curves discussed in the previous chapter, although Wilby's diagram raises a number of questions. The bifurcation of percussion and strings he indicates at the end of the *1^{er} chapitre* along with a hairpin, for example, may imply that his graph primarily represents dynamic levels. Yet the graph does not repeat this overlaying of lines in the finale's coda where, for example, loud brass motifs dissipate around the emergence of a hushed string texture in a similar fashion. The representation of the interaction of limited-aleatory and conducted sections in *Livre pour orchestre* along the bottom of Wilby's graph is also sketchy. Each movement, for instance, includes limited-aleatory textures. Some are even heard simultaneously with conducted materials. Once more, one might expect such gestures to be noted: if the contrast is important, surely the moments when limited-aleatory and conducted textures overlap are also potentially

³⁸ Wilby, 'Lutosławski and a View of Musical Perspective', p. 1142.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 1143.

Fig. 3.2: Wilby's graph of *Livre pour orchestre*

significant, not to mention the fates of materials that become associated with the alternating texture types during the work. As discussed below, the composer himself makes clear the role of texture types in rhetorically accentuating more significant aspects of the music's plot. Even for just bringing these interactions to light, however, Wilby's graph can be considered valuable.

Wilby's depiction of *Livre pour orchestre* stresses one thing above all: the ultimate emergence of a coherent and unified expressive shape from the music which redeems its original 'spoiling' (the peak in the final *chapitre* which consummates the intimations of its predecessors). Such observations fit well within the general critical view of the piece as a variation on the end-accented archetype. Wilby adopts the word 'spoiled' from Lutosławski's description of the 'spoiled march' which begins Symphony No. 2 in order to colour a depiction of the continually thwarted expressive

outcome of that work's 'Hésitant' movement; in turn, Wilby reads 'Direct' as the delayed culmination or 'unspoiling' of that expressive process. His graph of *Livre pour orchestre* – three smaller waveforms that subside before the finale scales truly notable heights – demonstrates how he applies this reading to the later work.

The 'spoiling', in Wilby's reading of *Livre pour orchestre*'s first *chapitre*, is of its potential to reach a sensuous peak of musical intensity inducing a sense of structural finality, not least due to its fragmentary changes of pace and direction. These changes evoked for Lutosławski 'in some sense an echo of expressionism'⁴⁰ and could perhaps be read as a local reflection of the overall sense of anti-narrative disconnection Lutosławski had originally planned between the movements of the piece. One wonders, however, whether a focus on the idea of 'spoiling' could be more nuanced. The analytical decision to subordinate *Livre pour orchestre*'s purpose to a single curve of expressive intent, for instance, may risk missing a more complex and also more powerful story to which its waveforms of sensuous intensity draw attention. A closer look at precisely what is 'spoiled' in the music in the opening movement may even reveal aspects of this interaction that enrich, rather than contradict, Wilby's analysis.

This is arguably the case in Symphony No. 2, for example, where Lutosławski's 'spoiled march' is the first event in the symphony's *akcja*. In light of the composer's lectures on musical form, one would expect such a crucial and structurally privileged moment either to present a 'key idea' with ramifications for the development of the piece's plot or dynamically to shape expectation of immanent arrival at a 'static' moment bearing significant information. The process of 'spoiling' here could be heard

⁴⁰ See Kaczyński, *Conversations*, p. 75. Wilby's approach bears traces of principles explored by Leonard B. Meyer in *Emotion and Meaning in Music* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1956), such as the idea of 'good continuation' and that inhibited expectations invoke emotional tensions which are released when those expectations are met after a period of delay – an idea with some similarities to Barthes's notion of 'suspense'.

to relate, in part, to the way in which a sense of rhythmic clarity, characterized by the initial stridency of the individual brass lines, cedes to a limited-aleatory blur from which an overall sense of motionlessness emerges. These players, ultimately, are not marching to the same beat; their fanfare heralds nothing more than a loss of direction. Instead, something significant has been spoiled: the ‘quality’ articulated by the fanfare.

At first the music’s ‘quality’ consists of i.c.s 2 and 5, with the quasi-diatonic glow of E-flat major implying – typically in Lutosławski’s mature output, as discussed in more detail below – not a nascent tonal centre but rather a pitch centre of consequence (in this case, a *pitches* centre formed by the dyad E flat/F). When ‘Direct’ gets under way, for example, after the fragmentary first movement, the turbulent clouds of harmony that shift and coalesce to form its initial series of ravishing sonorities reveal chords built from vertical arrangements of this i.c. pairing; it also stakes a claim at the very close of the work in blaring major-second dyads consisting of E flat and F, the opening two notes of the work. This quality is ‘spoiled’ at the start of the piece, however, as the brasses’ horizontal intervallic profile blurs to suggest a tighter vertical sonority characterised by a symmetrical arrangement of i.c.s 1 and 2 (see Ex. 3.1).⁴¹ On

Ex. 3.1: Horizontal and vertically accrued i.c. ‘qualities’ in Symphony No. 2, start

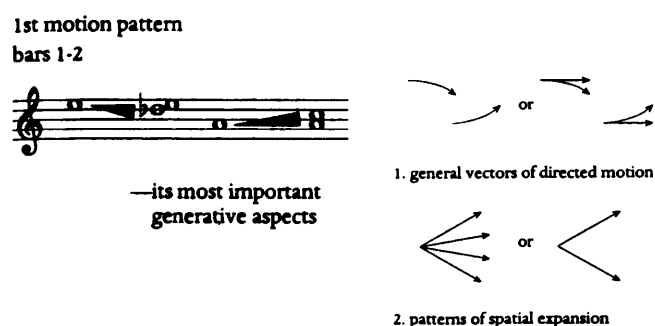


⁴¹ In all examples, accidentals refer only to the note they precede, as per Lutosławski’s own practice.

the reversal of this situation rests the fate of the symphony's plot.⁴² One might therefore wonder if the evolution of *Livre pour orchestre*'s hesitant symphonism could be read to stem from a similarly nuanced initial event.

Tuchowski's analysis of *Livre pour orchestre* is a fascinating attempt to deal simultaneously with sensuous and schematic elements of the music in order to show how, at least at a local level, they cooperate to shape the music's expressive flow between ideas of structural significance.⁴³ The problem with this approach is Tuchowski's project of unification. He seeks to prove the degree to which the music is, in an explicitly classicist sense, the diversification of an underlying unity. Adapting elements of Schenkerian analysis to demonstrate long-range structural connection, Tuchowski traces another layer of detail onto his pitch graphings in an ambitious attempt to map ways in which textural and registral 'motion patterns' (i.e., registral shapes occurring over time) layer unity onto Lutosławski's music. Tuchowski suggests that '*Livre* is integrated by two motion patterns' (see Fig. 3.3), the first and more

Fig. 3.3: Tuchowski's first motion pattern and its generative functions



⁴² This is something of a simplification, in that it discounts the second 'key idea' in the symphony, which pairs i.c.s 1+4 and is first heard articulated by Butsko's 'sceptical moralists' in a refrain for oboes and cor anglais. For a detailed discussion of the interaction of the i.c. 2+5 and 1+4 strands in 'Hésitant' see Casken, 'Transition and Transformation', pp. 4-8.

⁴³ Tuchowski, 'The Integrative Role', pp. 287-304.

important of which is heard in the first two bars of the piece and has a pair of vital aspects, ‘an overlapping of two vectors that indicate contradictory directions of motion (up and down)’ and a ‘spatial expansion factor’;⁴⁴ the second motion pattern, which Tuchowski does not discuss in such detail, relates to ‘linear pitch organization in the *Intermèdes*’.⁴⁵ As in a Schenkerian reduction, these patterns are found in the ‘foreground’ by Tuchowski but also nested at deeper structural levels.⁴⁶

Yet it is hard to think of a Lutosławski work – perhaps *any* musical work – which would not reveal similar motion patterns at various structural levels. Also, as with Rudolf Réti’s studies of thematic coherence – which Tuchowski cites as a precedent for his own work without noting the penetrating questions asked of such approaches by more recent analytical studies⁴⁷ – there is a tendency to identify the element which best fits the unifying bill, however commonplace that element in a particular compositional style (the second generative function of his first motion pattern, ‘patterns of spatial expansion’, is a case in point, being an utterly characteristic Lutosławski gesture). Consequently, one must question what matters of substance such analysis is actually revealing.

Tuchowski’s assertion that motion patterns ‘track’ from one ‘nodal point’ (i.e., a structurally important pitch or sonority) to another is nonetheless valuable. It demonstrates a way in which, on the surface of Lutosławski’s music, ‘dynamic’ passages catalyse and articulate the separation of, movement between and arrival at ‘static’ events in an *akcja*’s functional sequence. One strength of Tuchowski’s analysis, in this regard, is the clarity with which it demonstrates the structural significance of the

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 297.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 298.

⁴⁶ See *ibid.*, p. 299.

⁴⁷ See, for example, Nicholas Cook, *A Guide to Musical Analysis* (London: J. M Dent & Sons, 1989 [1987]), pp. 89-115.

pitch E in *Livre pour orchestre*. He is not the only scholar to have drawn attention to this pitch class (which was, as many works demonstrate, Lutosławski's favourite pitch centre).⁴⁸ Stucky also mentions the role of E in *Livre pour orchestre* in his book and, in *Lutosławski Studies*, reveals that he and Lutosławski – who always downplayed his awareness of the existence of such pitch connections, perhaps seeking a little too strenuously to give an impression of serendipitous genius as part of his 'rhetoric of autonomy' – disagreed on the 'quasi-tonic force exerted by the pitch E'.⁴⁹ The composer would probably also have contested Tuchowski's claim that '*Livre* is, so to speak, "stretched" between the initial E of the violins and the E of the final, contemplative dialogue between the flutes',⁵⁰ but his graphs argue plausibly for attention to be paid to such matters.

Regretfully, though, Tuchowski does not pursue some of the ramifications of his observations in *Livre pour orchestre*. For example, his analytical narrative asserts that 'one can hardly speak of a thematic aspect in the case of *Livre pour orchestre*'.⁵¹ Such arguments must surely be reconsidered in light of the documents discussed in Chapter One of the present study. While hardly thematic in the basic melodic sense, Lutosławski's assertion that 'key ideas' might determine the cast of the whole work just as themes do in classical music, with a combination of a small number of notes summarizing within itself the main idea of a whole work, may jettison forever blanket claims for his music's athematicism between 1956 and 1979. The analysis below, for example, demonstrates the role of E as part of a 'key idea', outlined at the start of the

⁴⁸ E is the most prominent pitch in both Symphony No. 3 and Symphony No. 4, for example.

⁴⁹ Stucky, 'Change and Constancy', p. 131, n. 10.

⁵⁰ Tuchowski, 'The Integrative Role', p. 298. Oddly, Tuchowski does not stretch it a little further to the root of the closing sonority. It is, for example, interesting to note the stress Lutosławski places on this final tetrachord in his Warsaw Autumn programme note – he names the four pitches, including the root, E. This suggests a certain importance for the sonority and that pitch.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, p. 301.

opening *chapitre* of *Livre pour orchestre*, which combines with other elements in the piece to ‘generate a web of motivic and thematic transformations’ such as Tuchowski finds in Symphony No. 4, but does not believe one can locate in the 1968 work.⁵² Thematic thinking, if not always manifested through melodic themes, would nonetheless appear to play a role in generating Lutosławski’s musical plots. The keenest problem with Tuchowski’s approach may therefore be that it seeks the composed-out unity of an essentially static and unevolving entity, reflected at different levels of the piece, as opposed to the rather different unity of a goal-directed plot of events involving changing ideas and changes to the relationships between them.

Lutosławski’s own comments on *Livre pour orchestre* bring the issue of unity and diversity to a head. No doubt, their basic thrust empowered many of the readings already cited, including Tuchowski’s. The composer’s comments reveal how, as noted above, he viewed his original plan for a ‘Livre’ of loosely connected movements as having metamorphosed into a large-scale closed form with a single overarching plot. More specifically, though, they suggest how a centrifugal (modernist) diversity is successfully overcome by a centripetal (classicist) move towards unification later in the piece, while outlining a vehicle – texture – which articulates this transformation and can be heard to act as a carrier wave for a number of less immediately apparent processes.

The composer’s Warsaw Autumn programme note for *Livre pour orchestre* outlines a dialectical tension between types of texture, a theme returned to again and again when Lutosławski commented on the piece.⁵³ He highlights (like Wilby) the contrast between the directed (conducted) music in the first three movements and the greater reliance on limited-aleatory textures in the finale (describing the linking

⁵² *Ibid.*, p. 301.

⁵³ Lutosławski, ‘Livre pour orchestre’, p. 16.

intermèdes as ‘moments de détente’). Discussing the work’s form with Marek, he quoted from another letter to Lehmann in which thoughts on the practicalities of coordinating the *intermèdes* seeded an examination of the role of this contrast between conducted material and chance procedures: ‘At first the *ad libitum* playing is clearly subordinated but as the work progresses it attains [increases] in significance until it comes to dominate the conducted playing’.⁵⁴ For this purpose, Lutosławski states, the delineation of *ad libitum* and *a battuta* segments has been ‘designated in the score to a greater extent than in my Symphony No. 2’.⁵⁵ The same point was amplified in conversation with Jean-Paul Couchod (‘c’est sur cette opposition même que se fonde la structure de l’oeuvre’)⁵⁶ and in the Kaczyński conversation, where Lutosławski explains that the opposition was ‘employed as an essential part of the composition’.⁵⁷

Encouraged by Kaczyński, Lutosławski expanded on this interaction’s importance in *Livre pour orchestre*. The two types of music, conducted and unconducted, ‘facilitate the process of listening and in a sense organise this process’.⁵⁸ This comment can be related to Lutosławski’s interest in rhetorically shaping a listener’s ‘active’ perceptual experience by signposting the main events in an *akcja*. Tracking the interaction of these types of material, Lutosławski implies, could permit the ‘active’ perceiver to grasp – to emplot – the outlines of the *akcja* of the work. The dialectic is not simply *ad libitum* versus conducted textures. One could, after all, follow almost any post-1960 Lutosławski work in terms of this interaction. What is more crucial here is the purpose and destiny of the materials that help further to distinguish the two texture types.

⁵⁴ Marek, ‘Livre pour orchestre’, p. 10.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 10-11.

⁵⁶ Couchod, *La musique polonaise*, p. 136.

⁵⁷ Kaczyński, *Conversations*, pp. 68-9

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 72.

In this regard it seems important that Lutosławski's discussion of perception and texture was interwoven with a description of the final *chapitre* which seems to confirm that there is more to its *akcja* than an exchange of positive and negative charge between *a battuta* and *ad libitum* textures. As discussed in more detail below, the final *chapitre* proper starts when a phrase emerges from a type of music which, up until that point, perceivers have been led to hear as just another *intermède*. However, as Lutosławski commented to Kaczyński, the emerging strand 'carries the germ of some musical content'.⁵⁹

Subsequent sections, played *ad libitum*, acquire more and more meaning, till the listener, who at first took the beginning of this movement as another interlude, realises that... something important is beginning to take place. Thus we reach the orchestral *tutti*, which can't possibly be taken for a moment of relaxation. On the contrary, we are at the height of the musical action in the finale. This consists of sections played *ad libitum*. These sections follow one another with ever-increasing rapidity and... lead up to the climax.⁶⁰

A later discussion by Lutosławski of the fusion of *akcja* and pitch organisation is worth citing alongside the above statement:

Often enough, I put off making use of intervals until a later stage of musical development so as to extensively employ a different intervallic complex for a long space of time. As a result, a definite sonic quality of music comes about. This quality may undergo changes – whether gradually or abruptly... I call it action. Harmonic alterations are inseparable from this action, they have a bearing upon it, they impart one or another meaning to it... they are instrumental in bringing about a certain dramaturgic result.⁶¹

The structural, expressive and ontological drama of *Livre pour orchestre* may be heard to pivot around the return of a certain 'quality' at 'the height of the musical action' – a return linked to 'key ideas' first heard in the mostly conducted opening *chapitre* and to

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 72.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 72.

⁶¹ Nikolska, *Conversations with Witold Lutosławski*, p. 124.

‘the germ of some musical content’ which grows out of the finale’s initial *ad libitum* and into its revelatory conclusion.

1^{er} chapitre

Performing a preliminary, Barthes-inspired ‘starring’ of the first movement of *Livre pour orchestre* (see Fig. 3.4),⁶² by segmenting the music into separate events and thus developing a basic overview of its form, is a relatively straightforward process. The

Fig. 3.4: *1^{er} chapitre*, structure

A1/i	A2/i	A1/ii	A2/ii	A1/iii	B1/i	B2/i	B3	B1/ii	B2/ii	A1/iv
String chords	Flowing strings	String chords	Flowing strings	String chords	<i>Pesante</i> string ‘theme’	Brass flourish	<i>Ad lib.</i> for basses, c’bassoon, piano, tuba	<i>Pesante</i> string ‘theme’ (cont.)	Brass flourish (cont.)	String chords and piano
bb. 1-5	bb. 6-9/ Fig. 101	Fig. 102	Fig. 103	Fig. 104	Fig. 104/ b. 8 to Fig. 105	Fig. 106	Fig. 107 (b. 1)	Fig. 107/ bb. 2-4	Fig. 108	Fig. 109 to end
	<i>Più mosso</i>	<i>Meno mosso</i>	<i>Più mosso/ Meno mosso</i>	<i>Lento misterioso</i>	<i>Poco più mosso ma pesante</i>	<i>Più mosso</i>	<i>Ad lib.</i>			<i>Lento</i>
<i>pp</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>mf</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>pp</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>fp</i>	<i>ff</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>mf</i>	<i>ppp</i>
Crotchet = c. 80	Crotchet = c. 120	Crotchet = c. 88				Crotchet = c. 160		Crotchet = c. 160		
c. 0’00’’	0’22’’	0’48’’	1’02’’	1’27’’	1’52’’	2’20’’	2’25’’	2’33’’	2’38’’	2’57’’ to c. 4’02’’

music can be roughly hewn into a three-part, ABA structure. The outer ‘A’ sections are dominated by quiet, gliding string textures. The inner ‘B’ section features louder and more robust exchanges between the strings and brass. It is also possible to identify

⁶² Expressive, dynamic and tempo indications refer to the start of each section, with the exception of A2/ii, where *più mosso* and *meno mosso* sections alternate.

certain events as being potential ‘static’ instalments in a functional plot sequence. The first five bars and the sustained chords at Fig. 102 are obvious candidates. Other passages, such as Fig. 101 and the return of the *pesante* string ‘theme’ at Fig. 107/bb. 2-4, are more clearly ‘dynamic’ catalyzing sections. What is one to make, however, of the *Lento misterioso* at Fig. 104, in which one hears a ‘static’ echo of the chords at Fig. 101 within a texture which is nonetheless continuously changing and thus potentially ‘dynamic’? Bars 6-9 raise a similar issue. At what point does the stasis of the opening five bars become the unmistakable dynamism of Fig. 101? And how is one to hear the sustained, and thus potentially ‘static’, brass chord at the end of Fig. 108?

Seeking to determine all of the *chapitre*’s individual passages as either ‘static’ or ‘dynamic’ merely through a cursory initial segmentation therefore presents an analytical challenge bearing a valuable lesson in relation to Lutosławski’s structuring of an *akcja*. As Stucky writes, the *1^{er} chapitre* could be considered as an essay in transformation⁶³ in which texture itself takes on a quasi-thematic quality,

a texture of extraordinary liquid quality made to glide continuously by means of glissando and quarter-tones, a stream of texture, now shallow, now coursing in deeper channels, now rushing ahead, now collecting in quiet pools of sound, now agitated, now tranquil...⁶⁴

Texture can thus be thought of as one of the elements generating the movement’s ‘mercurial temperament and capricious changes of direction’, and leading to the ‘hyperchangeable, nervous quality’⁶⁵ that Lutosławski linked to expressionism. The music, consequently, is hardly ever ‘static’ as its parameters are almost always altering. Indeed, it could almost be considered an essay in musical ‘suspense’, in Barthes’s sense,

⁶³ Stucky, *Lutosławski*, p. 124.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 167.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 165.

because Lutosławski's control of dynamism so teasingly manipulates one's expectation of the music's arrival at moments of significance.

The *1^{er} chapitre* of *Livre pour orchestre* is somewhat exceptional in this regard, of course, and could be thought of as inhabiting the opposite end of a spectrum to the juxtaposed textural blocks of the first movement of *Jeux vénitiens*. Both serve as a more general reminder, though, that analysing a Lutosławski *akcja* will usually require more than a search for adjacent blocks of material delineating 'static' plot events or smooth transformations articulating 'dynamic' transitions. Functional events in a musical plot may take the form of clearly delineated 'static' musical ideas advancing a line of argument, but they may also take the form of fleeting moments during passages of near stasis which are nonetheless 'dynamic' (as in the *Lento misterioso*) or points of articulation at the outer edges of otherwise 'dynamic' passages (as in the case of the sustained brass chord at the end of Fig. 108). Developing a more precise identification of what is 'static' and 'dynamic' in Lutosławski's music (and particularly the *1^{er} chapitre*) will therefore require a more subtle approach than responding to the most obvious changes in the music, even though these may provide helpful starting points. Listening 'actively' to what individual events contain, however, in terms of the musical ideas they present or develop, may be as crucial (if not more important) than an initial segmentation to the identification of the events' functions. At the close of the ensuing analysis a revised segmentation of the piece will therefore be proposed (in Fig. 3.5 on page 243). To avoid confusion, the section labels in Fig. 3.4 (A1/i etc.) will not be employed in the following discussion, in which the segmentation and labelling instead anticipate Fig. 3.5's more nuanced subdivisions.

The opening enigma of *Livre pour orchestre* is etched in the ravishing gestural arcs and diaphanous quartertonal glow of the piece's opening five bars (see Ex. 3.2), although it

Ex. 3.2: *Livre pour orchestre*, opening, bb. 1-5

a Monsieur Berthold Lehmann

LIVRE POUR ORCHESTRE

1^{er} CHAPITRE

WITOLD LUTOŚLAWSKI
(1968)

The musical score for the opening of *Livre pour orchestre* (measures 1-5) is presented for five staves: vni I div., vni II div., vle div., vc. div., and a fifth staff. The tempo markings are 3/4 (ca 80), rit., a tempo, 2/4, and 3/4 rit. The dynamics are p and pp. The score shows a complex rhythmic and melodic structure with many slurs and ties.

is difficult precisely to identify the moment when this relatively 'static' music becomes the 'dynamic' texture which gathers momentum in bars 6 to 9, and leads into the *più mosso* which starts at Fig. 101. One might consider bars 1 to 2 a 'static' event, symbolised by the pause at the end of bar 2; one might then hear bars 3 to 5 as a variation of the first two bars, undermining the inertia of the initial statement and beginning to create the momentum leading towards the *più mosso*. Yet the *rit.* and pause in bb. 3-5 suggest one could alternatively hear it as a second 'static' event – a consequent, perhaps, to an antecedent statement. It is simpler, then, to identify bars 1-5 as a bipartite 'static' event and to look within its alternation of a pair of slightly different

harmonies for the music's first 'key idea'. For the purposes of this analysis, bars 1-2 and 3-5 will be labelled STATIC 1a and 1b respectively.

One reason to consider the first five bars as a single bipartite unit is the gossamer thread of the lower cellos' A harmonic linking bars 1-5. The note A is not without significance later in the piece, but it must be considered in the context of the full richness of *Livre pour orchestre*'s opening 'key idea'. The pitch content of the opening five bars, as Rae observes, is much too specific to be considered 'merely' textural.⁶⁶ Stucky, for example, notes how bars 1-5 flow 'within the narrow registral ambitus bounded by a¹ and e²'⁶⁷ (both notes, in fact, prove to be significant), only to suggest that these fluctuations seed a predominantly textural development. Rae observes, however, how this perfect fifth is joined by an additional pitch when the music's initial arc of string tone is answered by a gesture which curls inwards and sustains its mesh of pitches, thereby disclosing the minor third between a and c' and, when one takes into account the already sustained e', the sonority Rae likens to an A minor triad. STATIC 1a's sonority, though, like the one formed by the arrival of the pause at the end of STATIC 1b, is more specific than even Rae allows, not least due to the 'quartertone heptachord'⁶⁸ sustained by the webbing of the compound glissando articulating its minor-third arc. The minor-third, e' to d-flat' wedge sustained above a in STATIC 1b, in turn, creates a sonority which, following Rae, one might nonetheless be tempted to hear as an A major triad.

Livre pour orchestre is not, of course, a tonal composition in which a tension between major and minor modes within the piece's first 'key idea' could be expected to

⁶⁶ Rae, *The Music of Lutosławski*, p. 112.

⁶⁷ Stucky, *Lutosławski*, p. 124. Stucky follows a different system for indicating registers to the present study, which would label these pitches a and e'.

⁶⁸ Petersen, 'Microtones', p. 336.

propel the machinations of its musical plot. Nor is it a piece, however, in which the diatonic resonance of such sonorities can be considered entirely incidental. As Petersen argues, Lutosławski's post-1960 approach to pitch organisation can be heard as 'the symbiosis of several tone systems': microtonality, diatonicism, pentatonicism and the composer's individual approach to twelve-note harmony – a 'quality'-focussed approach which, while dominant, 'does not mean that the other tone systems occurring in Lutosławski do not have value of their own'.⁶⁹ Petersen's 'occurring' might be too strong a word in this context, suggesting that the systems from which such sounds are derived are somehow functional in Lutosławski's mature music, organizing structural elements other than the micro-level details that Petersen so elegantly elucidates. Yet certain sonorities, like those at the start of *Livre pour orchestre*, obviously retain an aura associated with their original systems which marks them as significant while imbuing them with certain conventional characteristics (as Pasler noted some mid twentieth-century musical narrativities might seek to do by utilizing triadic harmony).

In effect, in the same way as Lutosławski sometimes overcodes musical events with extra-musical 'borrowings' to draw on their associated meanings and influence the way in which their function will be perceived, he appears sometimes to allude to tonal harmony for similar purposes. The allusion to tonal pitch organisation at the start of *Livre pour orchestre* is an important element of the opening 'key idea', for example, not because the gist of Lutosławski's *akcja* will turn out to concern a working through of tonal hierarchies (although the pitch centres A and E do play a supporting role), but rather because they enable him to mark certain elements at the centre of that discourse in a compelling, memorable and richly allusive way which draws on the latent

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 341-2.

associations of stability, for example, which one might attach to triadic sonorities, even in a post-tonal, totally chromatic context; in turn, the coat of modernist paint created by the quartertonal webbing helps to stop those allusions from sounding anachronistic,⁷⁰ while drawing particular attention to the thirds being etched and to the pitches, C and D flat, sustained at the end of each gesture, along with the boundary A and E. The overall effect can be read as making the harmonic contrast pivotal to the opening ‘key idea’ all the more apparent through the ‘borrowed’ suggestion of ‘minor’ and ‘major’ and the delicate microtonal tracery of the articulating gestures.

Lutosławski’s sketch for the opening of *Livre pour orchestre* (transcribed in Ex. 3.3),⁷¹ which can be viewed in the Paul Sacher Stiftung, clarifies the fundamental i.c. content of STATIC 1a and 1b’s bipartite ‘key idea’. No sustained notes, microtonal or otherwise, feature on this presumably early sketch,⁷² which in the score became the top line of the *divisi* first violins with no alterations (save for the addition of a missing suspension, indicated with an * on Ex. 3.3). The rhythms are notably precise, for instance, demonstrating the composed-out fluctuations which accentuate the marked *ritornellos* (and make the journeys between the opening’s sustained sonorities all the more tantalizingly languid). Most arresting of all, though, is the clarity of the two interlocking components revealed as central to this ‘key idea’ as sketched (i.e., minus the eventual tissue of microtonal suspensions shown in Ex. 3.2): the descending

⁷⁰ This is just one of the ways in which this harmony might also be considered a ‘remaking of the past’ in Joseph Straus’s sense. See Joseph N. Straus, *Remaking the Past* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1990).

⁷¹ Sketch 209-0001, transcribed by the present author.

⁷² It is never easy to ascertain such matters in Lutosławski’s sketches, due to their lack of dating or numbering by the composer. Moreover, in *Livre pour orchestre*’s case, there are remarkably few sketches available in Basel. No written preliminary notes, for example, appear to exist for this work (hence part of the value of the letters to Lehmann). Equally notable are the gaps in the sketches which are extant, especially in the short score for the work, as discussed below.

Ex. 3.3: Transcription of Lutosławski's sketch for the opening of *Livre pour orchestre*

and ascending minor thirds e' to d-flat' and a to c' (i.c. 3), moving within the ambit of a boundary perfect fifth formed by a and e' (i.c. 5).

The microtonal suspensions which flesh out and sustain these intervals in the finished score amplify the minor thirds at the kernel of this 'key idea'. The suspended boundary pitches e' and a enrich the sonorities' implications still further, though, introducing an element of uncertainty which veils (or perhaps, to recall Lutosławski's description of the opening of Symphony No. 2, 'spoils') this underlying 'quality' when the third glissando in bar 5 alights on D flat, as opposed to the C sustained by the rising gesture in bb. 1-2 and repeated in bb. 3-4. The suspended pitches therefore anchor the sense of alternating minor and major triads in STATIC 1a and 1b, and it is this alternation which brings another i.c. into focus: i.c. 4, in the form of the major third

on E or on A)? The initial attempts to resolve this enigma – which can be summarized as the ‘major-minor chord’ (see Ex. 3.4 iii) significant in many other Lutosławski pieces⁷⁴ – can be traced as a plot of ‘static’ events which emerges as a functional sequence over the course of the *1^{er} chapitre*’s musical discourse.

In bars 6-9 the music slips free of its mesmerizing opening and, with increasing momentum, heads into Fig. 101, the music’s first incontrovertibly ‘dynamic’ passage and thus a non-functional catalyzing section. Bars 6-9 can therefore be labelled DYNAMIC 1a; Fig. 101, into which bb. 6-9 flow, can be labelled DYNAMIC 1b. In Lutosławski’s music, however, the journeys between a plot’s functional events can be almost as interesting as the points of arrival. For example, as DYNAMIC 1a makes patterns with the intervals outlined in STATIC 1, it reveals a further role for the ghost of tonality lurking within Lutosławski’s harmony. The bellows-like registral expansion and contraction in DYNAMIC 1a – a statement and immediate reversal of Tuchowski’s first motion pattern’s ‘spatial expansion’ – in which the sense of increasing dynamism is augmented by tempo change and shifting dynamic levels, can therefore be analysed in several interlocking ways.

At the start of DYNAMIC 1a the pitch a, having been sustained throughout the opening five bars, bifurcates into two musical voices which crossover briefly and then diverge, expanding the registral space of the music dramatically while proceeding exclusively by leaps of i.c. 1, 3, 4 or 5 (Ex. 3.5 i). Sustained notes from that counterpoint simultaneously accrue a sonority of greater intervallic complexity and thus, in the context of the triadic aura of the music’s opening, ‘dissonance’ (Ex. 3.5 ii).

⁷⁴ Stucky observes that this chord is the p.c. set 4-17 [0, 3, 4, 7]; see ‘Change and Constancy’, pp. 143-7. As Stucky points out, however, ‘Forte-style set-theoretical analysis is not very useful for understanding Lutosławski’s music, especially the notion of the equivalency of set-forms’, which obscures the ‘quality’-related function of the harmonies in Lutosławski’s music (*ibid.*, p. 146, n. 42).

Ex. 3.5: DYNAMIC 1a, bb. 6-9, expanding sonority and tonal allusions

i)
 ii)
 iii)
 iv)

(A: I
 (E: IV
 II
 V
 V)
 I)

Yet the boundary pitches of bars 6-9 may also suggest a notional cadential motion from I-II-V in A or, alternatively, from IV-V-I in E (see Ex. 3.5 iv). Again, this is not tonal harmony and could hardly be heard as such. Yet there does also seem to be a conceptual role for 'borrowed' reminiscences of tonal contrapuntal-harmonic structuring within Lutosławski's music, especially at or around moments of plot significance, in the reinforcement of certain elements germane to the music's *akcja*. In this case, the bellows-like expansion and contraction reinforces the significance of the pitches A and E even as the opening texture which first indicated their opposing roles is superseded; the gestural sense of the opening a being stretched to meet the e at the end of bar 8 (Ex. 3.5iii) may intensify this effect. The move from a centring on A to a centring on E is of significance later in the piece.

DYNAMIC 1b's increasing intensity level gains impetus from the momentum generated by bb. 6-9. The 'dynamic' effect and intensification are achieved, most obviously, through Fig. 101's gradually increasing dynamic level and acceleration, and

by the rising register in the music's upper voice (the violins). This rising line forms an elongated echo of the upward glissandi at the start of the piece (and one of many examples of Tuchowski's first motion pattern's 'vectors of directed motion' being developed). Counterpointing this rising pattern from f sharp to f' in the violins, chains of pitches tumble away from the initial f sharp in the violas and cellos (see Ex. 3.6), the i.c. content of these 'broken chords' echoing the opening of the work and of the textural expansion in bars 6-9. The lower line then settles on an E flat (i.c. 3 'away' from F-

Ex. 3.6: DYNAMIC 1b, Fig. 101/bb. 1-3 (violas and cellos), tumbling 'broken chords'



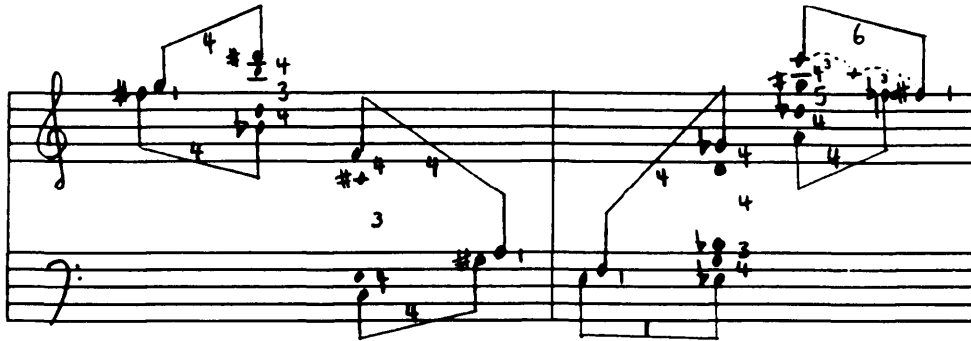
sharp) at Fig. 101/b. 5 before beginning its own slow ascent, as if in a slovenly canonic imitation of the violins' rising line. A flourish of i.c.s 3, 4 and 5 explodes from the registral channel created by these parallel rising lines, emphatically marking the arrival of the *chapitre*'s second 'static' event at Fig. 102 and the next instalment in its functional sequence, to which the music's rising intensity level and dynamism (to follow Berry and Lutosławski) can in retrospect be heard to have been leading.

The change of tempo to *Meno mosso* and the pauses at Fig. 102/bb. 1 and 3-4 help to denote the stasis of STATIC 2. The scale of the largest of the five sonorities – its ten-note chords form the music's plushest harmonies yet – also marks the passage as significant, as does the music's attainment of its first relatively stable plateau of intensity since STATIC 1. There is also a sense of harmonic stability additional to the

The fact that the A is at the top of some of these chords, as opposed to the root, does not bar it from significance. Boundary pitches in Lutosławski's music are often significant whether they appear at the top or the bottom of a texture (the pitches with which an expanding or contracting wedge-shape starts or ends can be similarly noteworthy). This is not to say that Lutosławski's music does not seem to place more weight, in terms of the plot significance of a pitch, on its appearances as a bass note. It may be notable here, for example, that while A formed the 'bass' note of piece's opening functional event, controlling perceptions of its 'triadic' harmony and thus becoming more prominent, it is no longer a secure root at Fig. 102. It has, in effect, been decentred, and it will not regain its original place of prominence in either this movement or in the later *chapitres* (save for one or two brief but salient recurrences in the finale). On the other hand, the note from which the entire work originated, E, while initially seeming less important because it was at the top of the opening texture, will form the root of several noteworthy sonorities yet to come.

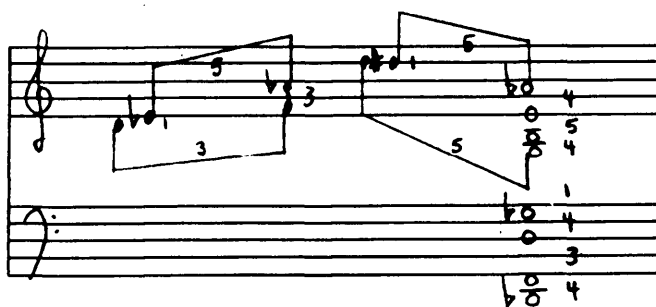
The G flat in the bass of Fig. 102's final chord, which replaces the A flat at the root of the first and third chords, introduces a hint of kinetic momentum as the music pivots away from this 'static' event and into the dynamism of the next passage (a hint of momentum created, perhaps, by a flattened-seventh tonal allusion shaped by the notional shift from A flat to G flat). The choppy tempos of the ensuing music from Fig. 103 (DYNAMIC 2) then parallel the textural instability of the section's alternating elements (while introducing an idea of choppily juxtaposed contrasts developed more intensively in the second half of the movement). In the brief *più mosso* sections (DYNAMIC 2a & 2c, Fig. 104/bb. 1 and bb. 3-4; see Ex. 3.8), energetic gestures reminiscent of DYNAMIC 1a explore rapidly expanding and contracting

Ex. 3.8: DYNAMIC 2a & 2c, Fig. 103/bb. 1 and 3-4



sonorities constructed mainly from i.c.s 3 and 4 (departing from and ending on i.c. 1 kernels, the interval at the centre of the opening ‘major-minor’ chord). In the *meno mosso* passages (DYNAMIC 2b & 2d, Fig. 103/bb. 1-2 and bb. 4-9), on the other hand, developments of the opening *glissandi* gestures glide lethargically from one point to the next while also outlining familiar intervals. Ex. 3.9 shows this pattern-making in DYNAMIC 2d.

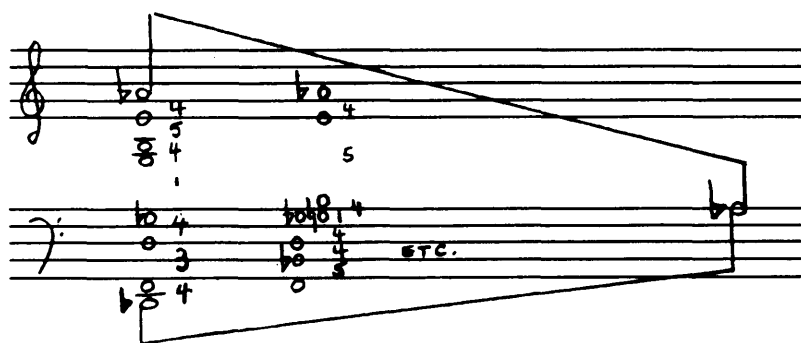
Ex. 3.9: DYNAMIC 2d, Fig. 103/bb. 5-9 to Fig. 104/b.1



The last and most drawn-out gesture comes to a rest in DYNAMIC 2e, the magically hushed *Lento misterioso* at Fig. 104 and a passage in which Lutosławski demonstrates just how slow the momentum of a ‘dynamic’ event can become without

being, as he would define it, 'static'. As mentioned above, there is a sense here of near stasis. This is partly created by the harmony of the initial chords at Fig. 104, which are formed from familiar i.c.s, as Ex. 3.10's illustration of the first two chords in the sequence shows. This echo might thus be thought of as a 'static' node, reminding one

Ex. 3.10: DYNAMIC 2e (Fig. 104, bb. 1-8)



of previous 'static' events (its 'qualities' echoing the chords at Fig. 102) even as the music moves towards more significant developments. Glissandi keep the music progressing, however, albeit at times virtually unnoticeably – if the *1^{er} chapitre* has a stream-like quality, this is its widest bend – until the process gathers momentum with the *poco accelerando* and crescendo which quicken the textural collapse that leads to the unison A flat at the start of Fig. 104/b. 8.

The *Poco più mosso ma pesante* of Fig. 104/bb. 8-12 (STATIC 3) inaugurates the more energetic second section of the movement with a new idea so fresh and characterful that it sounds like it could be a second 'key idea'. Amidst the sliding glissandi of the individual string parts, heavy forte downbowings articulate a melody which emerges from the midst of STATIC 3, the forthrightly thematic nature of the statement contributing much to its freshness (and tempting one to recall Lutosławski's

statement, with reference to Maliszewski's terminology, that a new theme's entry in a 'narrative' section is as momentous, and as vital for 'active' listeners to perceive, as the arrival on stage of a new character in a play). Its intervallic content, in this regard, combined with its boundary pitches, also imbues the idea with distinctiveness.

Ex. 3.11 shows the pitches and intervals outlined by the texture's accents; Ex.

3.12 shows the score for the end of this theme and the start of the ensuing passage.

Ex. 3.11: STATIC 3, accentuated pitches and intervals (Fig. 104/bb. 8-12)



The whole tones and semitones (i.c.s 1+2) filling in the thematic fragment's initial descent from a to e-flat create this event's new 'quality'. Also notable in this 'static' event – while not literally unchanging, the thematic fragment is essentially repeated with a slight variation (much like the presentation of the first 'key idea' in STATIC 1a and 1b) – is the minor-ninth leap between A-flat and a which sets the passage's boundaries using the notes at the opposite ends of Fig. 102's final chord (another i.c. 1). The cumulative effect is to suggest a new front being opened up in the *akcja*. It is not the fate of this distinctive new musical thought to find a solution to the music's existing enigma; it bears no obvious 'quality' relation to the earlier 'static' events. It flourishes only briefly, moreover, before the music becomes 'dynamic' again and returns

Ex. 3.12: STATIC 3 (end) and DYNAMIC 3/Fig. 105 (beginning)

The musical score for Ex. 3.12 consists of four staves, each representing a different instrument: vni I div, vni II div, vle div, and vc. div. The score is divided into two systems. The first system contains five measures, and the second system also contains five measures. The notation is complex, featuring many sixteenth and thirty-second notes, often beamed together. Dynamic markings (p, f, mf) are placed throughout the score, indicating changes in volume. A box labeled '105' is positioned above the first measure of the second system.

to more familiar developmental concerns. Nonetheless, this robust statement poses a new musical question: will this idea play a role in relation to the *chapitre*'s established plotline?

In the increasingly frenetic texture of Fig. 105 (DYNAMIC 3), quartertonal shifts within the individual voices replace glissandi to accelerate the pace of metamorphosis, although this sensuous sculpting is not the only way in which Lutosławski's control of pitch builds dynamism and intensity in this passage. Isolating the forte notes in this notationally fairly intricate texture (see Ex. 3.12 from Fig. 105) reveals a chordal pattern (see Ex. 3.13) which one hears rather more clearly in performances of the music than by reading the score: a heavily syncopated progression of four-note chords. There is no obvious pre-compositional pitch-to-pitch or rhythmic process controlling the patterns here, although it seems likely, given Lutosławski's

Ex. 3.13: DYNAMIC 3, Fig. 105

The image shows a handwritten musical score for Ex. 3.13, DYNAMIC 3, Fig. 105. It consists of three systems of staves. The first system is labeled '105' in a box. The second system is marked 'accal.' and the third system is marked 'Più mosso (♩ = 160)'. The music is written in treble and bass clefs with various chords and intervals, including some marked with asterisks and question marks.

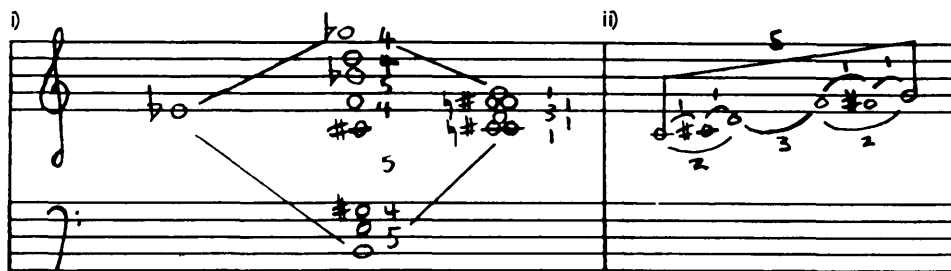
fastidiousness in these matters, that as yet undiscovered sketches for *Livre pour orchestre* might reveal some form of steely inner constructivism. Clearly, though, the chords which leap between the passage's increasingly disparate registers are derived from the movement's opening 'key idea'. Rather than developing the new 'quality' intimated by STATIC 3, DYNAMIC 3 therefore carries out a stern examination of existing pitch materials.

The intervallic control here is extremely tight. Every chord is built from a combination of i.c.s 3, 4 or 5 and spans either i.c. 1 or 3 (except for one chord, marked with an * in bar 7 of Ex. 3.13, where the low C disrupts both of these patterns – although this could simply be a slip of the composer or copyist's pen replacing an

intended E, the pitch which would ‘correct’ both the inner and boundary intervallic content of this sonority). The highest pitch in the texture, furthermore, is an a^u; A is therefore defined as the highest note of DYNAMIC 3 at precisely the register it topped the first, third and fifth chords of Fig. 102. The *accelerando* to crotchet equals 160, reached in the final bar of 105, also begins at this precise moment (Fig. 105/b. 4) in the score. The A is heard so briefly, however, that if it is noticed at all, it could only be heard to mark the last gasp, for now, of that pitch’s structural relevance.

At the peak of the ensuing acceleration, non-stringed instruments enter the fray to make their first contribution to *Livre pour orchestre*. The brass, notably, will play this interventional role again in this work (as they do in many other Lutosławski pieces), when they are released by an intensifying string texture in the finale to contribute to the music’s most crucial turning point (although on that occasion, perhaps significantly, their timbre will resonate with the strings). Here, though, the brass produce a squirming flourish as individual brass lines expand outwards from an initial e flat to an eight-note chord built from i.c.s 4 and 5 (Ex. 3.14 i) – a rapid, bellows-like expansion and contraction reminiscent of earlier gestures. By returning to the i.c. pairing that dominated the chords at Fig. 102, this event (STATIC 4) does not so much advance the plot as doggedly return to a solution mooted earlier, albeit with the additional energy lent by the change of instrumentation (a change which, recalling Lutosławski’s lectures on form, also helps rhetorically to mark this event as significant). As at Fig. 102 and Fig. 105, however, the claims of the 4+5 ‘quality’ collapse, in this case onto a much denser chord at the end of the wedge-like contraction (see Ex. 3.14 ii). While it can be barely heard, this chord lies within the ambit of a perfect fifth, with an inner

Ex. 3.14: STATIC 4, Fig. 106/bb. 1-2, brass bellows-like expansion and contraction



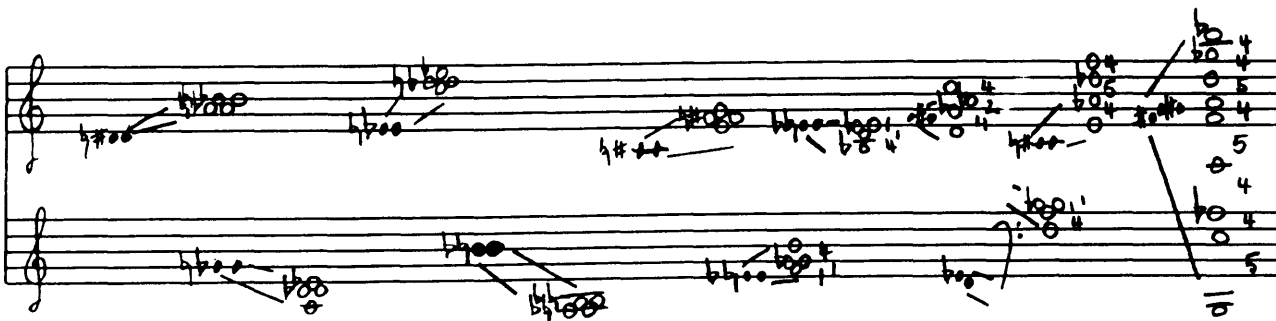
interval-class pairing of 1+3. The arrangement of the inner notes into a pair of dyads spanning wholetones around a central minor third, however, combined here with the outer perfect fifth, suggests a trace of the new ‘quality’ heard briefly during STATIC 3. This is just a passing moment which is almost certainly only ‘readable’ in the score as opposed to audible in performance, but it indicates another way in which this alternative ‘quality’ begins to encroach upon the organisation of the *1^{er} chapitre*.

A dismissive flurry of percussion (DYNAMIC 4, Fig. 106/b. 3) serves as a one-bar transition propelling the music into the limited-aleatory texture at Fig. 107. This *ad libitum* passage – the piece’s first – plunges the stream-like musical discourse into a torpid, arhythmic pool. This event must be labelled STATIC 5 due to its torpidity, even though it sounds like a developmental dead-end as far as the unfolding functional sequence is concerned. Even so, shards of previous ideas rattle around within its texture, fragments which follow STATIC 4’s outburst of i.c.s 4+5 with sounds (the contrabassoon’s minor-ninth leap, the piano’s interlocking 2+5 harmonies, the basses’ pizzicato exploration of a minor third) which, like the sonority to which the brass collapse in Fig. 106/b. 2, may also echo STATIC 3’s putative new ‘key idea’ and ‘quality’. Taken together with the percussion’s punctuation – DYNAMIC 4 is the first one hears of the percussion section in *Livre pour orchestre* – this is also a moment in

which Lutosławski may have expected listeners to draw breath and sum up the previous developments while trying to deduce what might follow.

At Fig. 107 the music bursts into a crotchet equals 160 conducted passage and embarks on DYNAMIC 5's rerun of the string and brass events leading up to the *ad libitum* at Fig. 106. This time just three bars of strings are heard 'continuing' the *pesante* thematic texture and articulating a heavily syncopated pattern of four-note chords with an inner mix of i.c.s 3, 4 and 5 (DYNAMIC 5a, Fig. 107/bb. 1-3). The brass, in turn, succeed the strings again at Fig. 108 (DYNAMIC 5b) with a texture that returns to the squirming patterns of STATIC 4, but which also sounds reminiscent of Fig. 103 and DYNAMIC 2a/2c, with trombone glissandi replacing the sliding strings. Here, however, there are just expansions (see Ex. 3.15) and no consequent contractions. Intensity also increases because of the rhythmic complexity generated by the gestural counterpoint (a lower sequence of expanding kernels imitates the upper part) and the movement's peak of tempo being re-obtained. The increasing dynamism could also be heard to affect the pitch developments. At first, the kernels expand to clusters spanning minor thirds; gradually, however, a new 'quality' starts to emerge, expanding the minor thirds into sonorities rich in i.c. 4s.

Ex. 3.15: DYNAMIC 5b (Fig. 108)/STATIC 6 (Fig. 108/b. 12, pause)



The rising intensity of DYNAMIC 5b peaks in a resplendent nine-note brass chord at Fig. 108/b. 12 (STATIC 6; see Ex. 3.15, final chord) pairing i.c.s 4 and 5. The sustaining pause and low tuba B add rhetorical weight to what may be read as the most determined attempt yet to resolve the functional sequence's opening enigma with the answer '4+5'. However, rather than acting as a springboard to a climactic twelve-note sonority built entirely from i.c.s 4+5 (and perhaps rooted on A or E) – the logical step within Lutosławski's mature musical language, given his reservation of twelve-note chords for significant moments in a form, would be to resolve a plot's enigma with a twelve-note chord emphasizing a particular 'quality' – STATIC 6 instead unleashes a hail of percussion and xylophone pitches (see Ex. 3.16) at Fig. 109.

It is worth briefly considering the xylophone gesture here, which is heard in tandem with unpitched percussion. Lutosławski uncharacteristically relinquishes full control over pitch in a space-time notated bar of xylophone writing for which only a pitch envelope is indicated. This could seem symbolic at this point in the piece. The opening enigma has not been resolved and so, when the climactic attempt to do so fractures, the music's intervallic essence is obliterated by the antithesis of a Lutosławski *akcja*'s primary content: 'meaningless' semi-random pitches.

At Fig. 109's *Lento*, a hushed string texture for *divisi* strings marked *ppp* emerges from behind the percussion. A harmonic pivot between this texture and the brass chord may be heard at this point in the form of another quasi-tonal progression in the bass, which moves from the tuba's B to the cellos' E at the root of the chord (hints of the I-II-V/IV-V-I manoeuvre in bb. 6-9). This further ghost of tonal thinking within Lutosławski's harmony suggests a reminiscence of E's earlier role as an alternative pitch centre to A and, indeed, the first note of the piece. More apparent, however, is

Ex. 3.16: *Livre pour orchestre*, Fig. 108/b. 8 to Fig. 109 (beginning)

109

trbe I
trbe II
trbe III
COR. I
COR. II
COR. III
trbni I
trbni II
trbni III
tuba

5 tom-toms
xil. II
gr. cassa
b. dura

Lento

vni I div.
vni II div.
vle div.
vc. div.

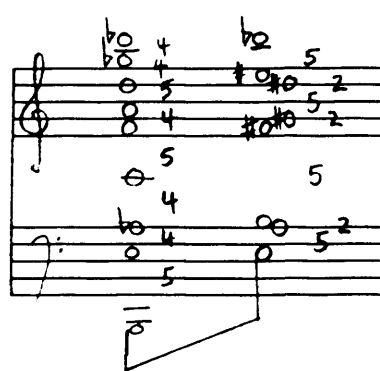
1) Perkusja gra niezależnie od dyrygenta (*ad libitum*). Ksylofon gra dowolne dźwięki, stosując się do graficznie zaznaczonych przybliżonych wysokości i wartości rytmicznych

1) The percussion plays independently of the conductor (*ad libitum*). The Xylophone plays arbitrarily, merely approximating the indicated pitch and duration.

the sudden change of 'quality'. With its pairing of i.c.s 2 and 5, one might retrospectively hear this progression of string chords as picking up on the hints of that

‘quality’ during previous events (e.g., in STATIC 3’s heavy-bowed *Più mosso* melody at Fig. 104/bb. 8-12, the final chord of the brass flurry at Fig. 106 and the *ad libitum*’s fragments at Fig. 107), as a subplot emerging from the fissures within the music’s main developments. The ‘quality’ (see Ex. 3.17), paired with this particular root (E)

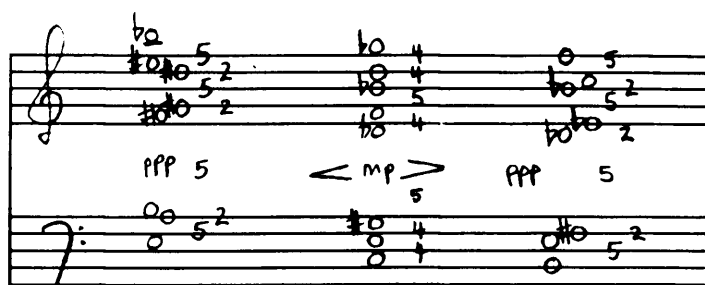
Ex. 3.17: STATIC 6, Fig. 108/b. 12 and DYNAMIC 6a (first chord), Fig. 109/b.1



and arranged as a symmetrically-constructed sonority, certainly anticipates significant sounds yet to come in *Livre pour orchestre*.

Lutosławski’s control of the harmony in the *chapitre*’s coda can be heard to add a final twist to the movement’s *akcja*, reminding one of its opening ‘key idea’ and its unresolved enigma while beginning to clarify a second question. DYNAMIC 6a (Fig. 109/bb. 1-12) is a sequence of string chords in which three points of articulation emphasize moments of significance: its first and last sonorities, and its twelfth chord (Fig. 109/b. 9), which is emphasized by a brief surge to *mp* (see Ex. 3.18). The outer chords of the progression pair i.c.s 2+5, but the surge chord pairs i.c.s 4+5, thereby forming an echo of the aborted attempts throughout the movement to establish that ‘quality’ as the resolution of its opening harmonic ambiguity. Here, however, as the *1^{er} chapitre*’s stream of development reaches the end of its journey, this small intervallic

Ex. 3.18: DYNAMIC 6a (Fig. 109, bb. 1-12), significant chords



island juts out of the now dominant i.c. 2+5 'quality'. In picking up on hints of that 'quality' earlier in the movement, this could be heard as an admirably logical and balanced conclusion in lieu of a resolution of the opening enigma; it may also lead one to wonder, however, if this sound will prove to be related to the '3+5 or 4+5' plotline later in the piece.

In DYNAMIC 6b (Fig. 109/bb. 13 to end), the music's hitherto distinctive i.c. constructions gracefully evaporate. The piano plays the role of thieving magpie here, snapping up pitches to strip the final chord of DYNAMIC 6a from top to tail (a favourite Lutosławski technique).⁷⁵ In its place, an all-interval halo materializes. This exquisite effect is created because the pianist, before picking out the crooked descent that gathers in the string chord, silently depresses every piano key from the F sharp below middle C down to its lowest A. Occasional dyads in the descent echo the deleted i.c. 2+5 sonority (and also, perhaps, the piano part at Fig. 107's *ad libitum*), while the upper partials of the depressed keys resonate to form the intervallic ambiguity into which the *chapitre* dissolves. While 'grey' in terms of its lack of intervallic 'quality', however, the resulting sonority can hardly be considered ugly. It is also a rhetorical gesture which, like the xylophone part at the start of Fig. 109, may seem to take on a

⁷⁵ The woodwind play a similar role, for example, during Fig. 52 of Symphony No. 4.

symbolic function. ‘Quality’, the driving force of this movement’s *akcja*, is hereby reduced to naught, as the stream of development that slowly built momentum in the first part of the movement, caroused through the rapids of the central passage and then became calm once again in the coda, finally disappears from one’s perception, like water escaping underground.

The close of the movement therefore offers sensuous and rhetorical, but not syntactical, closure. In terms of the music’s functional sequence, in fact, events may be heard to have come to an abrupt and frustrating (but thereby enigmatic) halt, just as the drama seemed poised to become even more interesting. The i.c. pairing 2+5 has begun to emerge as a second ‘key idea’ to rival the 3+5 or 4+5 enigma posed by the opening ‘static’ event. As such, the coda clarifies a further plot enigma: can these seemingly independent ‘qualities’ be related? If the piece had remained a ‘Livre’ as originally planned and this was the last one heard of these ‘qualities’ in a composition of only loosely connected movements, both of these questions would have remained – like the actively emplotting listener at the end of the opening *chapitre* – in a state of ‘suspense’. When the very nature of *Livre pour orchestre* begins to evolve in its finale, however, it is the 1^{er} *chapitre*’s developmental stream which resurfaces to carry the music towards its remarkable conclusion.

At the close of this analysis of the opening *chapitre*, some observations can be made which begin to consider it more generally as an instance of *akcja*. For starters, the music’s functional sequence of ‘static’ events catalyzed by ‘dynamic’ transitions can be more clearly adumbrated. Fig. 3.5 outlines this sequence of events and, in doing so, to some extent reformulates the preliminary segmentation of the movement in Fig. 3.4.

Fig. 3.5: 1^{re} *chapitre*, ‘static’ and ‘dynamic’ events

STATIC 1	DYNAMIC 1	STATIC 2	DYNAMIC 2	STATIC 3	DYNAMIC 3
‘Key idea’ 1: enigma	Catalyzing development of ‘key idea’ 1	‘Key idea’ 1: 2 nd functional unit	Catalyzing development of ‘key idea’ 1	i.c.s 1+2 idea	Catalyzing development of ‘key idea’ 1
String chords	Flowing strings	String chords	Flowing strings/ string chords	<i>Pesante</i> string ‘theme’ (start)	<i>Pesante</i> string ‘theme’ (end)
bb. 1-5	b. 6 to Fig. 101	Fig. 102	Fig. 103-104/b. 7	Fig. 104/ bb. 8-12	Fig. 105
A1/i	A2/i	A1/ii	A2ii-A1/iii	B1/i (start)	B1/i (end)

STATIC 4	DYNAMIC 4	STATIC 5	DYNAMIC 5	STATIC 6	DYNAMIC 6
‘Key idea’ 1: 3 rd functional unit (hint of i.c.s 1+2 idea)	-	1+2+5 idea	Catalyzing development of ‘key idea’ 1	‘Key idea’ 1: 4 th functional unit	2+5 idea (encapsulating last trace of ‘key idea’ 1)
Brass flourish	Percussion flourish	<i>Ad lib.</i> for basses, c’bassoon, piano, tuba	<i>Pesante</i> string ‘theme’ cont/brass flourish cont.	Pause at end of brass flourish	String chords and piano
Fig. 106/bb. 1-2	Fig. 106/b. 3	Fig. 107/b. 1	Fig. 107/bb. 2-4 to Fig. 108/b.11	Fig. 108/ b. 12	Fig. 109-end
B2/i (start)	B2/i (end)	B3	B1/ii-B2/ii (start)	B2/ii (end)	A1/iv

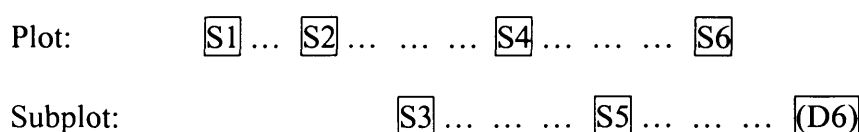
Certain elements shown in Fig. 3.5 were anticipated in Fig. 3.4’s initial segmentation, such as the emergence of an important new idea with the *pesante* string theme identified originally as the start of section ‘B’. Following the presentation and development of ‘key ideas’ and ‘qualities’ during the *chapitre*’s ‘static’ events, however, suggests a more nuanced reading of the entire ‘B’ section of the work, recognizes a crucial distinction between the coda and the earlier ‘A’ sections (the change in ‘quality’), and more generally permits one to begin moving beyond the mercurial fascinations of the piece’s surface detail in order to interpret what may be heard as the equally fluid unfolding of its musical plot.

In this regard, one can hear a plot emerging in ‘storeys’, to recall Barthes’s term, during the ‘static’ events in the *chapitre*. First, these events ‘rise above’ the ‘dynamic’

catalyzing events in the piece's hierarchy of significant and less significant passages.

Second, some of the 'static' events might be imagined to rise higher than the other 'static' events in this hierarchy. A top 'storey' of functional units appears to relate to the enigmatic first 'key idea'; a second and initially less prominent 'storey', however, begins to emerge at the start of the 'B' section, establishing a second thread of events (see Fig. 3.6). One might, in this regard, therefore think of a plot and a subplot emerging

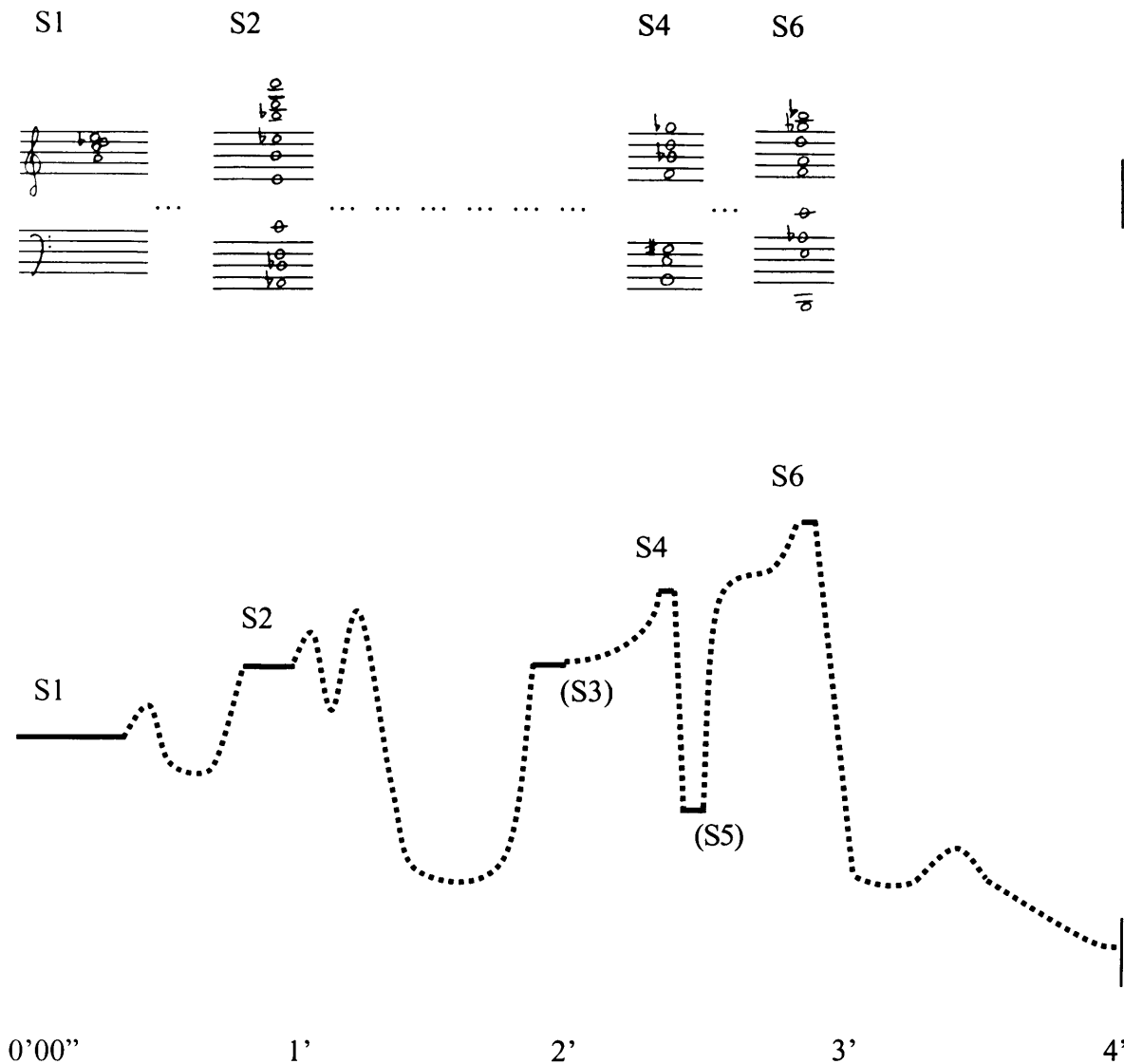
Fig. 3.6: 'Plot' and 'subplot' plotlines in the *1^{er} chapitre*



from the *1^{er} chapitre*'s musical discourse, with the main plotline developing the 'radioactive' implications of the piece's opening 'key idea' and the subplot emerging to establish a new 'key idea' and, with it, a second enigma regarding the potential for a relationship between the music's two 'key ideas'. If this had been the first movement of a symphony, one might feel that, in a strikingly novel way, Lutosławski has presented an exposition introducing two subject groups, but then cut the music off on the cusp of the development section – an idea which, given what happens later in the piece, may obtain a degree of credibility.

The primacy of the main plotline over the emerging 'subplot', however, is not merely a question of which began first in the *chapitre*. This can be demonstrated by emplotting the crucial aspects of Fig. 3.5's segmentation in tandem with an 'intensity curve' (see Fig. 3.7). While such

Fig. 3.7: Intensity curve emplotting the *1^{er} chapitre*'s main plotline of 'static' events



graphs, as discussed in Chapter Two with reference to Berry and Rink's work, are ultimately too subjective to be of great critical value, in the present context the diagram does suggest further ways in which the rhetoric of Lutosławski's musical discourse shapes the articulation of an *akcja*'s functional sequence – especially in a piece so texturally fluid that, for the most part, the bolder juxtapositions which delineate important events in many other Lutosławski pieces cannot be utilized.

This diagram was plotted in response to Lutosławski's 1976 studio recording of *Livre pour orchestre* for EMI. The first step was to identify the timings of the music's 'static' events. These passages were then plotted onto the graph (they are numbered 1-6 in Fig. 3.3 and identified by solid lines) by deciding on the varying intensity levels at which their 'static' plateaux can be heard to occur. The 'dynamic' pathways between these points (indicated with the dotted lines on the graph) were then indicated. The precise levels of intensity represented here are, of course, only illustrative representations of the present writer's judgements; yet the general shifts identified as the music moves from one 'level' to another, the peaks and troughs in intensity, and the stretches of the graph where the intensity level does not appear significantly to rise or decline, do begin to suggest some potentially significant things supported, reflexively, by the above analysis.

First, as Berry and Lutosławski both argued, when a 'dynamic' section is underway intensity changes and when a 'static' section is presented intensity stabilizes. Fig. 3.7 therefore demonstrates one way in which Lutosławski paces the musical discourse's manipulation of 'suspense' in his musical narratives, while also indicating (remembering Rink's ideas) the role for performance in managing this pacing. Second, the events in the *akcja* relating to the main plotline's development of the opening enigma – S1, S2, S4 and S6 – could be heard to occur at successively rising peaks in the music's level of intensity. As well as differentiating the main plotline from the emerging subplot of S3 and S5 (and D6), which may be heard to occur at lower levels of intensity, this step-like pattern of rising plateaux will recur in the finale, albeit on a much grander scale, as the concerns of this movement's functional sequence become resurgent.

All in all, it can also be argued that the *1^{er} chapitre*'s developmental riches rigorously challenge insinuations that Lutosławski's mature music is all surface and no substance. Every harmonic and thematic element of this music sounds as if it has been derived, in one way or another, from the music's enigmatic first 'key idea' or the nascent second 'key idea' which starts to emerge over the course of the movement. If anything, one might question whether the music is almost too controlled (even the ostensible dead end of the *ad libitum* breather, from this perspective, is anything but a developmental blind alley). Arguably, however, this kind of control is only to be expected of a composer whose primary intent was to structure a musical *akcja* based around just such a harmonic and thematic discourse. The plot of Lutosławski's *akcja* in the first *chapitre* of *Livre pour orchestre* emerges as a quicksilver fusion of the sensuous and the schematic. The same will prove true when its unresolved concerns return, with revolutionary force, to invade the final *chapitre*.

Interlude

Part of the effectiveness of that eventual invasion, of course, relates to the efficiency of the preceding music's suggestion that nothing of the sort is likely to happen. *Livre pour orchestre*'s inner *intermèdes* and *chapitres* are designed to prevent any evocation of overarching narrativity, snapping the threads of *akcja* left hanging at the end of the first *chapitre* and in doing so implementing the 'Livre' model. In light of the work's eventual 'double movement', however, it is necessary to devote an analytical interlude to assessing the ways in which these inner sections seek to achieve their aims and the extent to which they succeed in doing so. Specifically, one must ask whether the diversity of elements involved in these sections is really so heterogeneous or if, in

retrospect, the threads that will ultimately link first to fourth *chapitre* continue to surface in the central sections of the piece, forming a dotted line of gone-but-not-forgotten narrativity. To this end, the following discussion examines Lutosławski's stated intentions for his *intermèdes* in the context of what he actually composed; the historical models to which the *intermèdes* relate; the construction of the second and third *chapitres*; their links to each other and to the 'key ideas' outlined in the 1^{er} *chapitre*; and the ultimate role of the three *intermèdes* and two *chapitres* separating the first and final movements.

Intermèdes, intermezzi, intermedii

In one of his letters to Lehmann, Lutosławski offered a description of the purpose of the *intermèdes* that he often repeated in later statements. It has been regularly paraphrased in the subsequent literature:

The three initial movements of the work are rather dense. After each of them a moment of relaxation is needed. The short interludes are to serve this purpose. They consist of quite insignificant music played *ad libitum*. The conductor's attitude should suggest that this is the moment for the audience to relax, to change their position, to cough... After about 20 seconds, the conductor raises the baton (to give the signal that the end of the relaxation has come) to interrupt the *ad libitum* playing and without letting up on the tension begins the next movement after a pause of five seconds. This is repeated after movements two and three.⁷⁶

Lutosławski's interludes are arguably the nearest his music ever came to music theatre.

The conductor's behaviour (the score instructs the conductor to adopt an attitude similar to that during a pause between movements) is designed to promote the idea that the *intermèdes* have 'no musical significance: you do not have to listen, the audience can cough and fidget in their seats... the movements of the conductor have to create that

⁷⁶ Quoted in Marek, 'Livre pour orchestre', p. 10.

impression'.⁷⁷ In terms of the music's eventual outcome, however, this proves to be an elegant deception. The music of the *intermèdes* is far from insignificant.

In this regard, the historical models to which the initial presentation and evolution of the *intermèdes* can be related may be more noteworthy than the modish contemporary theatricalisms aped by Lutosławski's prescribed conductor antics. The most obvious musical models for Lutosławski's *intermèdes*, in terms of the composers who influenced his musical development, are the intermezzi of Haydn, Brahms and Bartók. As Maurice J. Brown writes, certain movements in Haydn fit the intermezzo bill by providing sportive, grotesque or comic interludes between sections of more serious fare; the intermezzo of Brahms's Piano Sonata Op. 5 forms 'an integral part of the work, leading into the finale'; and the 'Intermezzo interrotto' in Bartók's Concerto for Orchestra, lampooning of Shostakovich aside, is a point of repose.⁷⁸ The Brahms provides an especially intriguing model because Lutosławski's third *intermède*, as discussed below, actually forms the start of *Livre pour orchestre*'s finale.

Given Lutosławski's knowledge of (and 'borrowings' from) the stage, however, and his experience as a composer for the theatre and dramatic radio productions (for which he had composed his own fair share of interludes), other resonances of the *intermèdes* can also be considered. The *intermedio*, David Nutter writes, was a 'form of musico-dramatic entertainment inserted between the acts of plays in the Renaissance and Baroque periods'.⁷⁹ Venetian eighteenth-century *intermedii*, for instance, sometimes 'introduced entirely new plots and characters, and very soon developed their

⁷⁷ Varga, *Lutosławski*, p. 28.

⁷⁸ Maurice J. Brown, 'Intermezzo (iii)', in Sadie and Tyrrell, eds, *The New Grove*, vol. 12, p. 490. Brown does not note that the movements of certain Haydn symphonies were originally composed as the *intermezzi* between the acts of theatrical productions. See Christopher Hogwood, 'Knives at the Opera', in 'Review', *The Guardian* (15 November 2003), p. 19.

⁷⁹ David Nutter, 'Intermedio', in Sadie and Tyrrell, eds, *The New Grove*, vol. 12, pp. 476-88.

own dramatic procedures'⁸⁰ with stock characters including 'the cunning servant girl... who, despite her humble station, through feminine wiles plays a *burla* (trick) on her male partner or ensnares him in matrimony'.⁸¹ In the sixteenth century, musical *intermedii* separating the acts of plays sometimes performed a *burla* of their own, ensnaring the audience's attention to the detriment of the main production. This was the case, Nutter writes, with the 'most costly and spectacular *intermedii* ever devised', which were performed at the wedding of Ferdinando de' Medici in 1589 and so lavish that they forced the comedy they accompanied into 'complete subservience'.⁸²

Such spectacles were at odds with the conventional role of *intermedii*, which, while forming a disconnected whole, were present primarily to clarify the divisions of the acts of a play 'without unduly diverting attention from the play itself' and 'to amaze and amuse the spectators, providing relief'.⁸³ This tallies with the basic role of Lutosławski's *intermèdes*. The Medici *intermedii* of 1589 and cunning servants of the Neapolitan *intermedii*, however, suggest a second resonance evoked by Lutosławski's *intermèdes*: a subversive reversal of a conventional situation and a move to a position of dominance for the initially sublimated material. As discussed below, Lutosławski's *intermèdes* subvert both the general convention for insignificance attached to such interludes and the specific role they initially seem set to perform within *Livre pour orchestre*, i.e., enforcing the divisions of the 'Livre' model by providing a moment of relaxation in which the audience should disregard the content of the previous movement while preparing to perceive the next *chapitre* as an self-sufficient whole.

⁸⁰ Charles Troy and Piero Weiss, 'Intermezzo (ii)', in Sadie and Tyrrell, eds, *The New Grove*, vol. 12, pp. 488-90.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, p. 489.

⁸² Nutter, 'Intermedio', p. 483.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, p. 476-77.

A clue to the nature of this subversion can be found in the sketches for *Livre pour orchestre*, or, more correctly, may not be found in the sketches. There are no pre-compositional sketches at the Sacher Stiftung relating to the *intermèdes*. This may not in itself be suggestive. There are notably few sketches for *Livre pour orchestre* compared, for example, to the massive folio of materials relating to his next piece, the Cello Concerto. It appears that most of the pre-compositional workings for *Livre pour orchestre*, if extant, have yet to be discovered. Perhaps more significantly, however, Lutosławski's *intermèdes* do not feature in the short score of the work (which is extant in Basel). Their first appearance appears to have been in the fair copy score. To be clear: the finale as it stands in the finished score is present in the short score, but not the first and second *intermèdes*, the materials of which relate to the start of the finale. This is important, as the question of what the *intermèdes* relate to is crucial to their *burla*.

The implications of the absence of *intermèdes* one and two are manifold. If Lutosławski finalised the music for the first two *intermèdes* after completing the work in short score – a plausible deduction given the present documentary evidence – then his precise choice of material for them raises significant doubts about the extent to which one can take seriously his suggestion that these were ever intended to be moments of 'no musical significance'. Were this the case, he could have chosen materials for the first and second *intermèdes* which were entirely unrelated either to each other or to the start of the presumably already completed finale. Instead, in choosing this precise material, he shapes a prolepsis, an anticipation of the start of the finale. One might even hear the first and second *intermèdes* as false starts to the final *chapitre* interrupted by the inner *chapitres*. Bearing this in mind, it may therefore be deemed unsurprising if a close reading of the inner movements suggests that, as well as shaping this anticipation,

the dividing lines between the first three chapters, rather than enforcing a strict ‘Livre’-like separation, are somewhat porous (musical ideas sneak through the apparent divides, as discussed below). Nor might it be such a shock to note that the *intermèdes* can be heard to evolve between their separate appearances and, in doing so, to suggest a subtly directed (if discontinuous) ‘dynamic’ progression towards the finale.

Rae’s analysis of the *intermèdes* is representative of the literature in that it adds little to Lutosławski’s publicly stated interpretation of the role of these limited-aleatory interludes, although he does provide a useful dissection dealing with pitch content, rhythm and instrumentation.⁸⁴ Rae notes, for instance, how the instrumentation changes. The first *intermède* is scored for the doodlings of three clarinets, the second for two clarinets and harp, and the third for harp and piano (the harp replacing one clarinet, then the piano replacing the other two clarinets; see Fig. 3.8). The effect of this shift in instrumentation over the course of the three *intermèdes* is gradually to bring the soundworld of the finale’s opening into focus.

Fig. 3.8: Scoring of the three *intermèdes*

<i>1^{er} intermède</i>	<i>2^{me} intermède</i>	<i>3^{me} intermède</i>
Clarinet 1	Clarinet 1	Piano
Clarinet 2	Clarinet 2	
Clarinet 3	Harp	Harp

Rae also observes that the pitch organisation of the overlapping instrumental parts (Ex. 3.19), while exploring the pitches of a twelve-note cluster spanning G to f

⁸⁴ See Rae, *The Music of Lutosławski*, p. 110-12. He also notes the similar pattern in *Partita* (1984), where intervening *intermèdes* interact with the main movements to form its five-part structure.

Ex. 3.19: *Livre pour orchestre*, 1^{er} intermède

1^{er} INTERMEDE

(110) AD LIB.

20'' 21 10 A/sec 1''

1) Przed rozpoczęciem tego taktu naciśnięć bezdźwięcznie wszystkie klawisze zawarte w podanych granicach.

2) W sekcjach granych *ad libitum* notacja oznacza .

1) Prior to the commencement of this bar all keys lying between the indicated notes are to be depressed soundlessly.

2) In the *ad libitum* sections the notation indicates .

sharp, forms ‘four complementary and overlapping tetrachords’ with the pattern ‘tone/minor-third/tone, although they are actually used horizontally with interval pairing 2+5 rather than 2+3’.⁸⁵ This leads to a rather different ‘quality’ from the twelve-note i.c. 1 cluster created by their complementary pitches (see Ex. 3.20).⁸⁶ However, Rae omits to mention the most striking local connection formed by this ‘quality’: its prominence at the close of the first movement (e.g., in the string chords of the coda).

Ex. 3.20: 1^{er} intermède, pitch complementation and organisation

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 111. The third clarinet doubles the second’s B flat and E flat, the second the first’s C sharp.

⁸⁶ Unlike the ‘spoiled march’ at the start of Symphony No. 2, as no extra instruments are added to the texture, the underlying cluster does not accrue to the same degree, because considerably fewer notes are able to sound simultaneously.

Nor does he mention similar correspondences between the end of the *intermèdes* and the start of the second *chapitre*. Most problematically, perhaps, he does not discuss the role of the ‘tone/minor-third/tone’ chord in the finale where, among other appearances, it forms the final harmony of the entire composition.

This pattern, a tetrachord familiar (like the major-minor chord of ‘key idea’ one) from other Lutosławski pieces, could be heard as a crystallization of *Livre pour orchestre*’s second ‘key idea’ (see Ex. 3.21). Its characteristic ‘quality’ emerges over

Ex. 3.21: *Livre pour orchestre*’s two ‘key ideas’



the course of the *1^{er} chapitre* in the subplot and forms the basis of most of the coda’s string chords. It is then prominently returned to in each of the *intermède*’s before its evolution in the finale, when what one might initially take to be another separate *intermède* is gradually revealed to be the opening of the final *chapitre*. This moment therefore plays the trick which in turn begins *Livre pour orchestre*’s ontological ‘double movement’, as the piece’s ‘Livre’ model begins its swing towards the symphonic.

The *intermèdes* do not, however, achieve this coup on their own. They act in tandem with the second and third *chapitres* during the first half of the piece to evoke the sense of each section having a ‘Livre’-like autonomy, thus making the finale’s reversal of expectations all the more surprising and thrilling. The effectiveness of that twist is also a testament, then, to the sophistication and attractiveness of the piece’s inner

chapitres – the piece’s true *intermèdes*, perhaps – which must therefore be discussed in order that the impact of the finale can be properly assessed.

Les 2^{me} et 3^{me} chapitres: a kaleidoscopic unity

If Lutosławski’s pre-compositional plan for a ‘Livre’ had been realised, each *chapitre* would have been a brief and unrelated *akcja*: a musical short story within a collection of similar miniatures. Whether or not they had been separated by *intermèdes*, there would have been no sense of a musical argument running through its four or more movements. This does not mean, however, that *Livre pour orchestre* would have lacked any kind of reflexivity of content. As Stucky notes, if Lutosławski’s plan had been realised in its original form, correlations between materials in different *chapitres* would have had to have been excised. Yet, Stucky observes, there are similarities between chords in the first *chapitre* and sonorities in the second and third *chapitres*, and texture types and characterful orchestrations which recur in the different movements.⁸⁷ The recurring textures and orchestrations might be expected as stylistic by-products of the same composer’s pencil. The chords, however, are a potentially different proposition, because their similarity is not merely a matter of the relevant sonorities being chords, but rather of the chords sharing particular ‘qualities’.

Given the significance of i.c. ‘quality’ in the formation of Lutosławski’s plots, these are precisely the kind of connections one might expect the composer to have most stringently sought to avoid between movements in a ‘Livre’ holding true to its anti-narrative model. This is far from being the case, though, and as the following brief analyses of the piece’s inner movements make clear, there are actually many such

⁸⁷ Stucky, *Lutosławski*, p. 168.

associations, a large proportion of which stem from reconfigurations of the piece's 'key ideas'. To describe these similarities as connections, however, may be misleading if one takes this to imply a plot-like thread of development moving through the first three *chapitres*. What Lutosławski does avoid is evoking a sense of a continuing discourse regarding one or more musical matters arising from his opening *chapitre*. How, then, to conceptualize the correspondences which do persist – correspondences of a kind which, if *Livre pour orchestre* had turned out as originally planned, might have represented the full extent of the connections between its movements?

Discussing the coherence created by the network of intervals, rhythms, textures and motifs which recur throughout his *Ten Pieces for Wind Quintet* (1968), Ligeti coined the phrase 'kaleidoscopic unity'.⁸⁸ The distribution and refraction of this network of ideas throughout the ten miniatures reminded Ligeti of the ways in which a kaleidoscope forms different yet not unrelated patterns by presenting ever-changing perspectives on a single set of crystals. This useful analogy – which may remind one of Pasler's claims about types of narrativity in twentieth-century music which evoke coherence but not a plot-like sense of causation and transformation – can be borrowed to describe the connections formed by ideas in the inner *chapitres* of *Livre pour orchestre*. Rather than suggesting a musical *akcja* coursing through these sections, 'kaleidoscopic unity' evokes a sense of coherence provided by old ideas recurring in unfamiliar guises.

What ultimately emerges from the totality of *Livre pour orchestre* is a kaleidoscopic reorientation of this mode of formal organisation. In the central movements, however, this has yet to occur, and much of the charm of these *chapitres*

⁸⁸ See György Ligeti, *Ligeti in Conversation with Péter Várnai, Josef Häusler, Claude Samuel and Himself* (London: Eulenburg, 1983), p. 137.

resides in their self-contained nature. If one seeks the character of the *Livre pour orchestre* that never was, one probably finds it here in rumbustious, playful music where the degree of coherence present does not weigh down a buoyant sense of inconsequentiality. Given the fate of the *intermède* material later in the work, *chapitres* two and three form *Livre pour orchestre*'s truest moments of détente, making the stretch from the close of its first *chapitre* to the start of the finale a sort of mega-*intermède*. Fittingly, therefore, musical characters which occurred in the first *chapitre* (and will recur again later) don new masks herein and perform somewhat different roles.

The scherzo-like second *chapitre* is built from two contrasting and approximately equally-weighted sections whose ABAB formal pattern is followed by a codetta-like reminiscence of its opening (see Fig. 3.9). The 'A' sections present a twelve-note pointillistic backdrop of pizzicato strings against which a series of harp, piano, celesta and tuned percussion fragments articulate smaller pitch combinations. This memorable effect is like viewing a Seurat painting in an online gallery where one can view the entire picture as if from a distance, but also open pop-up windows in front of that view

Fig. 3.9: 2^{me} *chapitre*, structural overview

A1	B1	A2	B2	A3 (codetta)
Start to Fig. 204/b.3	Fig. 204/bb. 4-7	Fig. 205	Fig. 206 to Fig. 215/b. 4	Fig. 215/bb. 5-6
4'24"	5'22"	5'27"	5'46"	7'10'-7'20"

which zoom in to focus on certain details. A more Lutosławskian way of conceptualizing the music would be to think of it as a background ‘dynamic’ texture (the strings quickly depart from their initial harmonic field) against which a sequence of ‘static’ events is foregrounded. The novelty of the texture, however, does not entirely dispel the correspondences between these sounds and others already heard in the piece.

Stucky notes, for example, the predominance of i.c.s 2 and 3 in the *chapitre*’s opening string harmony (Ex. 3.22 i) and in the initial foreground fragments played by the harp, piano and celesta (Ex. 3.22 ii), which also add i.c. 5 to the music.⁸⁹ He does

Ex. 3.22: 2^{me} *chapitre*, start, limited i.c. constructions

The image shows handwritten musical notation for three instruments: Harp, Piano, and Celesta. The notation is divided into two parts, i) and ii). Part i) shows the initial string harmony. Part ii) shows the initial foreground fragments played by the harp, piano, and celesta. The notation includes various intervallic constructions (i.c.s) and fingerings (1, 2, 3, 5) for each instrument. The harp part is labeled 'HARP' and includes '201/b.1' and '201/bb.2-3'. The piano part is labeled 'PIANO' and includes '201/bb.2-3' and '201/bb.3-4'. The celesta part is labeled 'CELESTA' and includes '202/b.1' and '202/b.2'. The notation is written on a grand staff with treble and bass clefs.

not, however, note the familiarity of this ‘quality’. There are also more subtle connections within the ‘pop ups’. The falling and rising minor thirds and overall shape of the harp’s opening gesture (with its stress on pitches a’ and e’), for example, hardly seem coincidental in light of the piece’s opening. Gradually, however, dynamism spreads to the ‘pop ups’ too, as the intervallic focus on i.c.s 2, 3 and 5 blurs (e.g. Fig. 204/bb. 1-3; see Ex. 3.23). In this respect, support can be found for Homma’s

⁸⁹ Stucky, *Lutosławski*, p. 168.

Ex. 3.23: *Livre pour orchestre*, Fig. 204/bb. 1-3

204

timp.

vibr.

c-ne

campanelli

cel.

ar.

pf.

vni I

vni II

vle

vc.

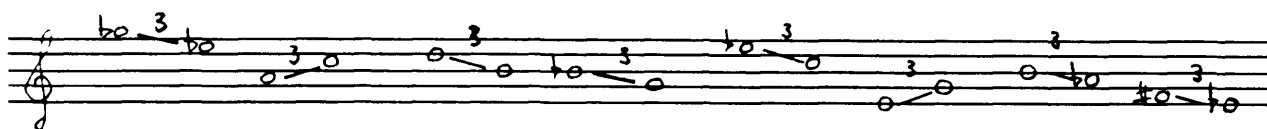
observation of a harmonic underpinning of ‘centripetal’, major-seventh rich chords shifting to ‘centrifugal’, minor-ninth rich chords in the string texture:⁹⁰ the sense of increasing harmonic instability (dynamically altering and thus intensifying the music in tandem with the sensuous ‘piling up’ of foreground fragments and the texture’s rising registral cadence) gathers an impressive momentum which sweeps the music towards the first incursion of the *chapitre*’s ‘B’ material.

B1’s chattering intervention from the oboes, clarinets and trumpets, counterpointed by pizzicato gestures in the strings (augmented by xylophone) at Fig. 204/bb. 4-7 (see Ex. 3.24), is a typical Lutosławski device: an intriguing new idea that is

⁹⁰ Homma, *Witold Lutosławski*, p. 487.

the connection of which to the piece's opening is further suggested by the first rising gesture, which spans the minor third from a to c' (Ex. 3.25). An even more subtle

Ex. 3.25: Intervals outlined by the brass at Fig. 204/bb. 4-7



reminiscence of earlier material is formed by the pitches of the string and xylophone gestures, which are flecked across the music like paint from an artist's brush. Each group of string pizzicatos that decrescendos from *poco f* to *p* (e.g., the violas, cellos and basses at Fig. 204/bb. 4-5) outlines a cluster spanning i.c. 4. The conflicting i.c.s of the first 'key idea' (3 and 4) are therefore superimposed by the 'B' material.

At Fig. 205, C sharp, scored across five octaves, jolts the music back to Tempo I and material derived from the second 'key idea'. The tritone it forms with the G in the bass of the pizzicato texture immediately sows a seed destabilizing the 2+3+5 pitch field, however, the 'quality' of which disintegrates more rapidly than before across both foreground 'pop ups' and background pointillism. This evolution builds momentum towards the second incursion of the 'B' material (Fig. 206), which now enjoys a vigorous and prolonged development. Just as the A2 section began like a rerun of the first, the first three bars of B2 initially look back to B1's chattering minor- and major-third spanning clusters. Here, the kaleidoscopic refractions of the piece's opening are perhaps slightly clearer, thanks to the interlocking a to c and e' to d-flat' gestures (Fig. 206/b. 1) shaped by the brass and woodwind. The fact that the next segment, an expanding and ascending braid of intertwining woodwind, begins on e and eventually

contracts to a blur of *e''/f''* also impresses on one the continuing pertinence of the piece's harmonic and thematic touchstones as building blocks for the second *chapitre*'s inventions.

The woodwinds plunge from their high point in a gesture which detonates in the harp, piano and string texture at Fig. 207 and thereby inaugurates the movement's climactic sequence. The overlapping germination of ideas in the rapid-fire exchanges of Fig. 207-209 anticipates Lutosławski's chain technique, particularly when the development of an idea crosses between strands (for example, the exchange between brass and *col legno* strings three bars into Fig. 208). There is also a sense of the manner of textural organisation in the initial 'A' section ('static' foreground, 'dynamic' background) being permuted at this point: dynamism is accrued as 'pop up'-like foreground ideas are tiled, cumulatively intensifying the texture.

Even though ideas are expanding, overlapping and collapsing at a rapid pace here, some continue to be derived from manipulations of the intervallic content of the two 'key ideas'. At Fig. 207, for example, the piano plays chords built from i.c.s 3 and 4; from Fig. 207/b. 4 and at Fig. 210 the brass textures are constructed principally from i.c.s 4 and 5 (Stucky rightly notes the latter's similarity to the chord before Fig. 109 in the first movement);⁹¹ from Fig. 208/b. 2 the piano's frenetic left-hand/right-hand leapfrogging spans minor-third (1+2/2+1) and major-third (2+2) trichords; and the clarinets and harp at Fig. 209 disembark from a set spanning a minor third. Yet the thrilling effect here is not of a plot-like chain of causational development: the music is more like an out-of-control slide projector, flashing up semi-familiar images so rapidly that one has no opportunity to locate them in the context of one's earlier experiences.

⁹¹ Stucky, *Lutosławski*, p. 168.

The second *chapitre*, Rae writes, ‘ends with a masterstroke’ in the form of the twelve-note symmetrical chord at Fig. 215/b. 5 (see Ex. 3.26 ii), which is constructed from i.c.s 2 and 3, centred around a perfect fourth or i.c. 5, and scored for the ‘foreground’ instruments (vibraphone, tubular bells, celesta, harp and piano) of the other ‘A’ sections.⁹³ Rae is surely correct to state that technical description cannot do justice to this ‘enchanted’ sound. Its construction is nonetheless intriguing. By forming a codetta-like reminiscence of the Tempo I material, the ‘quality’ of the chord relates to the second ‘key idea’. As the sonority fades above a sustained viola C, however, one might also be aware of the absence of a centring on either A or E. The musical turning points in the central movements, while reflecting earlier ideas, seem to avoid combining too many obvious references back to the first *chapitre*. By the same token, however, one might be tempted to note that the chord’s root, C, like the sustained viola C which succeeds it and, indeed, the C/C-sharp dyad heard just before the codetta chord, can be related to the semitonal kernel at the centre of ‘key idea’ one and thus to the ‘major-minor’ chord (A, C, D flat, E) which began the piece.

Livre pour orchestre’s most playful movement, its 3^{me} *chapitre*, might not have felt out of place as the third movement of a considerably more classicist four-movement Symphony No. 3. Gesturally spirited and rhythmically fleet of foot, the *chapitre*’s melodically-inflected ideas foreshadow some of Lutosławski’s most charming later music, such as his Robert Desnos settings *Chantefleurs et Chantefables* (1989-90). This is especially true of the second half of the movement which, as Stucky notes, could be

⁹³ Rae, *The Music of Lutosławski*, p. 113.

heard as a variation developing the materials of the first half of the *chapitre*⁹⁴ (see Fig. 3.10). By luck or by judgement, the character of the movement therefore turns out to be

Fig. 3.10: 3^{me} *chapitre*, structural overview

A1	A2	A3 (codetta)
Start to Fig. 304	Fig. 305 to Fig. 313/b. 1	Fig. 313/b-2 to end
7'41"	8'22"	9'22"-9'34"

as perfectly judged for this stage in the work's eventual form as it would have been had Lutosławski stuck to his original 'Livre' plan and this had been but one treasure in a larger trove of musical gems. In the finished score, the 3^{me} *chapitre* becomes a sparkling aperitif to cleanse the palette before the arrival of more substantial fare.

As in the previous *chapitre*, refractions of the piece's 'key ideas' occur in both halves of the movement. A1 (start to Fig. 304) can be divided into two subsections, a string texture interrupted by the brass (at 302), followed by a slower mini-variation of the opening string idea as an accompaniment to the leaping woodwind and brass gestures at Fig. 303; these gestures, in turn, spark the modest wind and brass high point at Fig. 304. Rae observes a sense of non-attainment here, making the perceptive criticism that the experience of this music, and particularly of string textures striving towards a continuously thwarted climax, plants a seed in the listener's mind which germinates during the sensuous peaks of the finale.⁹⁵ This can also be linked to Wilby's suggestion that sensuous 'spoiling' forms a link between all of the first three movements. Particularly prevalent in the third *chapitre*, though, is a sense of the music

⁹⁴ Stucky, *Lutosławski*, p. 169.

⁹⁵ See Rae, *The Music of Lutosławski*, p. 113.

reaching for something but falling short, an attribute intensified during the second half of the movement (Fig. 305 to end).

There may be other reasons why this music evokes a failure to resolve. The *chapitre*'s main string idea is the most direct evocation anywhere in the inner movements of the opening of the entire piece (see Ex. 3.27) and thus of the enigma

Ex. 3.27: *Livre pour orchestre*, 3^{me} *chapitre*, opening

3^{me} CHAPITRE
3/4 ♩ = 160

The score shows the following parts and markings:

- vni I div. in 3**: Violin I, divided in 3. Markings include *fp* and *c. s.*
- vni II div. in 3**: Violin II, divided in 3. Markings include *fp*, *c. s.*, *pizz.*, and *mf*.
- vle div. in 3**: Viola, divided in 3. Markings include *fp*, *c. s.*, *pizz.*, and *mf*.
- vc. div. in 3**: Violoncello, divided in 3. Markings include *fp*, *c. s.*, *pizz.*, and *mf*.

The score includes various musical notations such as triplets, sixteenth notes, and dynamic markings (*fp*, *mf*, *pizz.*, *arco*).

inaugurated by 'key idea' one and left unresolved by the main plotline of the 1^{er} *chapitre*. Rae notes this similarity, suggesting that the composed-out quartertonal

glissandi in the strings allude to the opening of the work.⁹⁶ The first six bars of the 3^{me} *chapitre* could be heard as a variation of the piece's opening arc-like gestures, due to their sliding glissandi and slinky ascents. Fig. 302/bb. 3-7, furthermore, is somewhat reminiscent of the elongation of the opening's glissando gestures in Fig. 103's *meno mosso* segments.

As both Stucky and Homma demonstrate, the start of A1 in the 3^{me} *chapitre* is carefully crafted by Lutoslawski. Stucky analyses the isorhythmic underpinning of the string patterns, focusing attention on its suggestion not of precision but rather of a delicately 'blurred pointillism'; Homma, in turn, identifies the twelve-note row and inversion guiding the music's *color*.⁹⁷ Neither scholar notes, however, the connotations of the intervallic pattern-making structured by the strong pulse and phrasing of this music. Within each bar, every shift between the start of a string slide or punctuating *pizzicato* transposes an underlying 2+2 dyad (spanning i.c. 4) by either i.c. 3 or 5, in a reconfiguration of the intervals contained within both of the music's 'key ideas' (see Ex. 3.28).

The pattern-making is interrupted at Fig. 302 by another strong reminiscence, in the form of a brass texture Stucky identifies as making a connection back to Fig. 108/bb. 1-2 in the first movement.⁹⁸ This reflection of earlier material is curiously obvious (compared at least to the movement's delicate reinvention of the piece's opening) and Stucky is right to note the gesture's challenge to the 'Livre' model's

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 113.

⁹⁷ Stucky, *Lutoslawski*, p. 168-9; Homma, *Witold Lutoslawski*, p. 551.

⁹⁸ Stucky, *Lutoslawski*, p. 168.

Ex. 3.28: 3^{me} *chapitre*, opening, evocation of 'key ideas'

The image shows handwritten musical notation for the opening of the 3rd chapter. It is divided into two systems. The first system contains four measures, and the second system contains three measures. The notation is written on staves with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). The first measure of the first system features a triplet of eighth notes in the treble staff and a single eighth note in the bass staff. The second measure has a triplet of eighth notes in the treble staff and a single eighth note in the bass staff. The third measure has a triplet of eighth notes in the treble staff and a single eighth note in the bass staff. The fourth measure has a triplet of eighth notes in the treble staff and a single eighth note in the bass staff. The second system has three measures. The first measure has a triplet of eighth notes in the treble staff and a single eighth note in the bass staff. The second measure has a triplet of eighth notes in the treble staff and a single eighth note in the bass staff. The third measure has a triplet of eighth notes in the treble staff and a single eighth note in the bass staff.

intended sense of non-relation between its movements (see Ex. 3.29). Even in the context of the kaleidoscopic coherence created within the inner *chapitres*, such a direct repetition comes as a surprise, leading one to ask what this brief tear in the fabric of the 'Livre' model might portend. The churning brass texture spans a tritone cluster, as did the first two bars of Fig. 108. However, whereas the brass there seethed and then expanded, spurring on the climax of the first movement, Fig. 302 lasts for just two bars before a return to the gliding string texture. One might hear this gesture, therefore, as another symbol of thwarted climax, through its link to a sonority which inaugurated a culmination in the first movement, but which is not permitted to perform the same function in this context.

Such a blatant intrusion of earlier material may also lead one to speculate as to when, precisely, Lutosławski became consciously aware of his 'Livre' model's evolution in the direction of something more symphonic. The third *chapitre*'s initial reminiscence of the piece's opening, like the transposed repeat of Fig. 108, can surely

Ex. 3.29: Similar brass gestures in the first and third movements (Fig. 108 and 302)

The image displays two musical staves for brass instruments, labeled 'trbe' (trumpets) and 'cor.' (cornets). The top staff is for measure 103, and the bottom staff is for measure 302. Both staves show a similar rhythmic pattern of eighth notes, with a 'mf' (mezzo-forte) dynamic marking. The notation includes various accidentals and articulation marks, such as slurs and accents, indicating specific phrasing and dynamics. The staves are numbered I, II, III, and IV, corresponding to the individual instruments in the section.

not have gone unrecognised by the composer of textures as meticulous as these. These might merely, of course, have been intended as playful gestures pushing gently at the boundaries of his intended 'Livre' plan. Following Lutosławski's depiction of the music becoming 'much too organized, against my will', however, one might also be tempted to imagine that, having composed the start of the third *chapitre* and then Fig. 302, he became aware of his hitherto unconscious designs on making the music more connected, thus triggering a reassessment of the music's goals which led, ultimately, to the change of direction evident in the finale. One might even wonder if the paramusical discourse within which Lutosławski subsequently encompassed *Livre pour orchestre* (his apparent bemusement at its symphonism and use of terms like 'against my will')

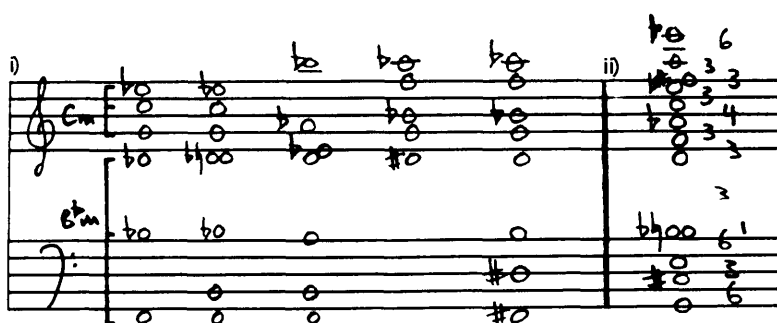
was partly a playful extension of the music's artful deceit. It is even possible that the *intermèdes* were composed last and designed to serve an intriguing dual purpose as, on the one hand, the dividing lines of his 'Livre' model's grid-like structure but also, on the other, as the means by which the music's symphonic trick will be revealed. Certainly, one can ask what the stronger connections forged by the 3^{me} *chapitre* begin to evoke for the 'active' perceiver. Why, at this point in the music, were near copies of earlier ideas permitted to enter (or, once noticed by Lutosławski, remain in) the music, if not to suggest a wave of developmental connectivity building in the direction of the emergence of longer-range musical narrativity?

The rest of A1 continues to allude to familiar ideas. After the brass's incursion at Fig. 302, the drawn-out string glissandi (Fig. 302/b. 2 onwards), as already noted, recall the *meno mosso* sections of DYNAMIC 2. The woodwind gestures from Fig. 302/b. 6 can also be conceived as a reflection of the opening of the third *chapitre* (and thus the start of the first). Similarly, the close of the first half of the movement (Fig. 304) can be heard to revise earlier material while altering the music's intervallic 'quality'. The unfurling stepwise lines accrue sustained sonorities in which note-to-note movement is by i.c. 1 or 2. The sustained harmonies thereby progress from a thirds-rich texture to a more tightly clustered pitch field, a shift in 'quality' shortly to be repeated with greater rhetorical zeal.

The variation formed by A2 more swiftly departs from reconfiguring familiar intervallic patterns as it moves towards a stronger climax. Its accruing dynamism harnesses the rumbling undercurrent created by the piano, harp and bass at Fig. 305 (a characteristic Lutosławski intensification) which accompanies but also darkens the mood of the brief return at Fig. 306 to the gliding strings from the movement's opening:

something different, this undercurrent implies, is now afoot. Ideas are then chained together, as in the second movement, their overlaps aiding A2's intensification. Some of these interlocking ideas continue to reflect familiar sonorities. The chord built up in the strings from Fig. 307/b. 3, for instance, contains piled-up triads in the manner of the climax at Fig. 212 (B-flat minor second inversion, C-minor second inversion, see Ex. 3.30 i) and, through substitution, evolves to form a chord including B-major second inversion and G-minor second inversion by Fig. 309/b. 2. The climactic woodwind and brass sonority to which the string chords lead, however, is too rich in intervals to reflect either 'key idea' (Ex. 3.30 ii). Constructed partly from diminished-seventh triads,

Ex. 3.30: i) string chords from Fig. 307 and ii) climactic sonority at Fig. 310



the chord contains i.c.s 1, 3, 4 and 6 (as do the repetitions of it which follow). As in the second *chapitre*, Lutosławski's move towards the climax includes a shift away from familiar constructions and 'qualities' to other, more dissonant regions. Neither 'key idea', as such, is permitted to mark a climax in the central movements.

Recalling certain criticisms of Lutosławski outlined in the Introduction to the present study, this is therefore a movement which could fairly be argued to attain a certain 'statistical' climax (if hardly a definitive one) without resolving any weighty 'syntactical' issues. If this observation applied across the board to all of the movements

in *Livre pour orchestre* it would be grist to the mill of Lutosławski's harsher critics.

However, the developmental levity here can be heard as part of the individual charm of the inner *chapitres* and also, equally significantly, as a factor contributing to their ultimate structural function within the completed composition.

In this regard, the brief recapitulation of the opening of the 3^{me} *chapitre* in A3, while providing a structural parallel to the codetta at the end of the 2^{me} *chapitre*, may take on added importance. Its intervallic content offers a final reminiscence of the piece's opening and of the two 'key ideas', sounds which have subtly dominated *Livre pour orchestre*'s central movements. Even the final plucked sonority of the 3^{me} *chapitre* may seem noteworthy in this context, as it is rooted on a pitch (E) that will shortly re-emerge as central to the piece's structure. The 'kaleidoscopic unity' of connections formed between and within the inner movements of *Livre pour orchestre* and its *intermèdes*, while providing 'loose connections' between the *chapitres*, also serve to remind the perceiver of the key components of the 1^{er} *chapitre*'s plot. At no point, in other words, can the opening movement's concerns entirely be forgotten by the 'active' listener, whatever a conductor's antics between the *chapitres* or Lutosławski's statements about the purpose of his *intermèdes* might imply. Instead, elements of the piece's 'key ideas' are glimpsed often enough to suggest, once one has heard the entire piece, a dotted line of gone-but-not-forgotten narrativity linking the first *chapitre* and events yet to come. What remains is for Lutosławski to join the dots.

4^{me} *chapitre*

The most obvious sense in which one might regard the finale of *Livre pour orchestre* as the solution to an earlier 'spoiling' is in terms of expressive shape. As Wilby's graph

indicates, the finale scales the piece's highest peak of intensity at Fig. 445 and can therefore be heard to attain something which the first, second and third movements all failed to achieve: a large-scale peroration with the rhetorical potential to act as a gesture of closure. From the perspective of the piece's *akcja*, however, one might also read the climax as a schematic culmination which achieves its impact by marking the completion of a functional plot sequence (the plotline relating to 'key idea' one that was left unresolved at the end of the opening *chapitre*) in tandem with the composition's highest peak of expressive intensity. Following this, the coda may also be heard to serve a dual purpose, on the one hand moving towards a well-shaped and satisfying close, on the other suggesting a relationship between 'key ideas' one and two, and thereby resolving the second enigma formed by the divergence of plot and subplot at the end of the *I^{er} chapitre*.

What is striking about this is that, up until these moments, the music has not implied that long-range developments will be a factor. Quite the opposite: the first half of *Livre pour orchestre* has corresponded to the 'Livre' model. Consequently, when the unresolved tensions of the opening *chapitre* invade the finale and the latter movement begins to seek the resolution of earlier enigmas, there is a twist in the very nature of the piece. The ontology of *Livre pour orchestre* starts to buckle in the finale: on the one hand, the resurgent plotlines seek resolution and, on the other, some events in the music appear to resist such processes, perhaps in an attempt to bolster the anti-narrative 'Livre' model. Both of the debates are resolved at Fig. 445 when the piece embraces the pull of overarching musical narrativity. If one is therefore tempted to conceive of the *I^{er} chapitre* as being somewhat like an exposition section, and of the inner

movements as being insertions in a large-scale ‘sonata deformation’,⁹⁹ then the finale could be taken to represent the continuation, development and conclusion of the symphonic narrative that was suspended at the end of the opening movement.

The finale’s ontological twist is intimately connected to a trick much discussed in the Lutosławski literature. Lutosławski informatively titles his finale ‘3^{me} intermède et chapitre final’, presumably to reflect the fact that there is no distinct break between last *intermède* and final *chapitre*. Instead, the finale evolves from the third *intermède*. Stucky follows Lutosławski closely when he states that ‘the listener is taken unawares and only slowly returns to concentrated listening’, as what may initially be heard as being just another *intermède* continues for long enough to suggest that something different is actually starting to happen; he also follows Lutosławski’s guidance when he implies that listeners will automatically judge this change to imply the onset of material of more serious musical consequence in comparison to the lack of ‘any real psychological involvement’ demanded by the previous three *chapitres*.¹⁰⁰

Accepting the emergence of a *chapitre* from an *intermède* as wholly surprising, however, requires a rather strict adherence to Lutosławski’s stated intentions, given the evolving orchestrations of the *intermèdes* and their links to material at the ends and beginnings of the first three *chapitres*. The denarration of one’s expectations in the finale, to recall Richardson’s useful term, has arguably been well-prepared long before one is led to question precisely where the last *intermède* ends and the finale begins. The irony of this modernist denarration, however, is that it is the establishment of long-range

⁹⁹ This is James Hepokoski’s term, as discussed in *Sibelius Symphony No. 5* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), pp. 5-9. Hepokoski’s observation that a significant aspect of the content of a sonata deformation is its ‘dialogue with the generic expectations’ (p. 5) makes the potential for developing a view of *Livre pour orchestre* along the lines of a ‘multimovement form in a single movement’ (p. 7) encompassing aspects of a symphony and a ‘Livre’ all the more intriguing.

¹⁰⁰ Stucky, *Lutosławski*, p. 169.

musical narrativity which undermines aspects of the piece's 'story' up until these moments. It does not undermine previous plot events and thus a closed narrative; rather, it undermines the music's ostensible anti-narrativity, opening the possibility of its development into something more symphonic.

Instructions in the score indicate that the conductor should adopt the same attitude at the start of the finale as during the other *intermèdes*. Yet the change of instrumentation – the pairing of piano and harp – immediately indicates a different musical character. The new musical situation is then signalled more definitively by changes to the *intermède* material itself, changes which become even clearer when (at Fig. 402 and 403) the conductor does not end the texture for harp and piano, but instead cues new instruments (respectively, tubular bells and cellos playing pizzicato – a strong hint of connection back to the start of the 2^{me} *chapitre*). Consequently, the music does not stop after about twenty seconds. This *intermède* evolves, expanding and metamorphosing to become the pointillistic backdrop to a pair of *arco* cello lines at Fig. 404. These entwined lines, which explore a plangent semitonal knot of As and B flats (bowed pitches anticipated by the cellos' A flat and B flat pizzicatos at Fig. 403, which contract onto the semitonal dyad at Fig. 404), signal the final *chapitre*'s 'actual' starting point. Fig. 3.11 therefore reconfigures Fig. 3.1 in order more accurately to represent this aspect of the '3^{me} *intermède* et *chapitre* final'; Fig. 3.12 then gives an overview of the finale's structure.

As the string cantilena initiated by the two cellos begins to unfold and other instruments are added to its mass, its limited-aleatory textures, as Lutosławski stated, 'acquire more and more meaning' by developing more harmonically complex sonorities. As part of this process the cantilena leeches distinct pitches out of the

Fig. 3.11: *Livre pour orchestre*, revised representation of structure and timings

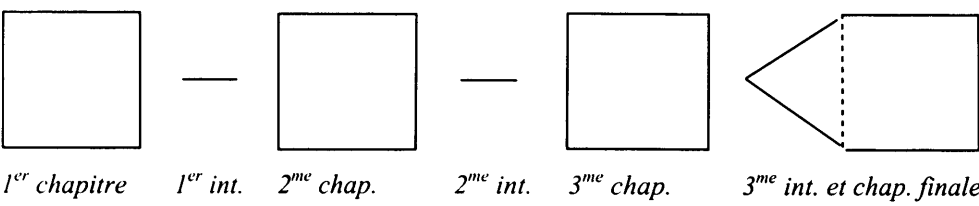


Fig. 3.12: *3me intermède et chapitre final*, structural overview

Introduction	A	B	Coda
'3 ^{me} intermède'	'Chapitre final'	'Chapitre final': cont.	'Chapitre final': cont.
Harp, piano, bells and pizz. 'intermède'	<i>Cantabile</i> cantilena (strings then full orchestra)	<i>Ad libitum</i> blocks, macrorhythmic accel. and climax (tutti)	String chords (with brass, then with flutes, then alone)
Fig. 401 to Fig. 403	Fig. 404 to Fig. 418c	Fig. 419 to Fig. 445	Fig. 446 to end
9'37"	10'51"	16'03"	18'08" to 21'10"

backdrop until only untuned percussion and piano clusters remain in the *intermède* layer, which vanishes entirely when, as Lutosławski put it, ‘we reach the orchestral *tutti* [at Fig. 410], which can’t possibly be taken for a moment of relaxation. On the contrary, we are at the height of the musical action’. Several noteworthy developments have occurred before this point, however, and each helps to prepare the way for the onset of the *akcja*’s climactic sequence.

Initially the i.c. ‘quality’ of the work’s second ‘key idea’, as encapsulated by the tone/minor-third/tone chord and heard in each of the *intermèdes* (including the start of the finale), dominates both layers of the music. It can be heard in the individual voices contributing to the pointillistic *intermède* texture (see Ex. 3.31; the early D natural in the piano part, marked with an *, may be a misprint for D sharp)¹⁰¹ and it is then taken up,

¹⁰¹ Comparable discrepancies to this and the ‘errant’ pitch at Fig. 105 are noted in Thomas, ‘*Jeux vénitiens*’, p. 231.

Ex. 3.31: Harp and piano tone/minor-third/tone chords at Fig. 401



more significantly, by the harmonies of the cantilena's limited-aleatory chorus, as the strings' song of rising intensity comes to prominence (Ex. 3.32). The knot of As and B

Ex. 3.32: Harmonies articulated by the string cantilena, Fig. 404-410

flats at Fig. 404 might suggest the i.c. 1 at the centre of the piece's opening sonority, or remind one of the note A's role in the opening chapitre, but more locally it functions as a dissonance resolved at Fig. 405 by the tone/minor-third/tone sonority (the first of two prominent presentations of this chordal encapsulation of 'key idea' two in the finale)

when the two cellos are augmented by violas to form the second event in the movement's emerging functional sequence.

These moments begin to reveal the extent of the denarrating trick played by the final *chapitre*. When the 'Livre'-enforcing *intermède* material associated with 'key idea' two begins unexpectedly to develop here, as the harmonies of Fig. 404-409 reformulate the i.c.s of the tone/minor-third/tone (i.c.s 2+3+5) pattern, the *intermède* music is not only going against the grain of the anti-developmental musical model it has so far helped to define, but in doing so it can be heard to be picking up the subplot thread crystallized by the emergence of the second 'key idea' and its quality at the end of the *1^{er} chapitre*. By developing the *intermède*, the finale forges a link which runs back to the opening movement's coda and invites one to read the last movement's musical plot as picking up where the *1^{er} chapitre* ended. These are no longer wholly independent short stories: an overarching *akcja* is beginning to form, as if the outer movements might be a single narrative separated by the 'mega-*intermède*' of the inner sections. Other developments will shortly strengthen this sense of connection.

Encouraged by the gradual expansion of the texture's density, volume and bandwidth (which could be heard as the piece's most massively elongated variation of the registral expansion gesture first heard in bb. 6-9 of the *1^{er} chapitre*), one can easily think of the limited-aleatory string textures in Fig. 404-409 as a functional plot sequence (see Ex. 3.33). Each harmony in this chain of events, while different, is close enough to its predecessor and successor harmonies to suggest a quasi-logical linear progression of causation and transformation. Indeed, one could hardly hope for a clearer example of how successively juxtaposed non-tonal musical blocks, if their content is patterned appropriately (i.e., their materials are neither too heterogeneous nor too repetitive), will

Ex. 3.33: *Livre pour orchestre*, Fig. 404, start of cantilena

Tempo: 45 /min.

arco

poco cantabile

V

1) Na ten znak dyrygenta dzwony, harfa i fortepian dogrywają swe frazy do znaku powtórzenia i przechodzą dalej; I wiolonczela rozpoczyna następną sekcję bez dogrywania poprzedniej do znaku powtórzenia; II wiolonczela przerywa natychmiast i czeka na następne wejście zgodnie z repliką wpisaną w głosie. Dyrygent może wskazać I wiolonczeliście właściwe tempo, dając lewą ręką dwa dodatkowe znaki (które nie powinny być widoczne dla innych członków orkiestry).

1) For Bells, Harp and Piano this beat is the signal to complete the previous section up to the repeat sign and then carry on; for Cello 1 it is the signal to commence the next section without completing the previous one up to the repeat sign, and for Cello 2 to pause without completing the previous section up to the repeat sign, then to wait for the entry marked in the part by the indicated cue. The conductor may assist Cello 1 in finding the right tempo by giving the player two additional beats (which should not be visible to the other members of the orchestra).

invite emplotment and therefore evoke musical narrativity. Each expansion and enrichment of the cantilena's harmony can be heard to advance the continuation of the opening *chapitre*'s subplot because each limited-aleatory block is presented for long enough that its pitch content can be heard as a 'static' event inviting emplotment in a functional sequence.

The six-note symmetrical harmony at Fig. 406, for instance, is formed of whole tones and a semitone spanning an i.c. 3 boundary interval; Fig. 407's nine-note chord sounds like a doubling (literally in numbers of pitches, but also in richness of tone) of the tone/minor-third/tone chord; the ten-note sonority at Fig. 408 is built entirely from adjacent i.c. 2s, save for the semitone about which its symmetry pivots; and Fig. 409's twelve-note sonority also feels like an expansion of the tone/minor-third/tone chord.

One might therefore again be led to expect, given the principles of Lutosławski's approach to harmony in his mature style, the imminent arrival of a twelve-note *ad libitum* texture, rhetorically securing the ascendancy of the second 'key idea'.

The ramifications of Fig. 410, however, are more complex (see Ex. 3.34). The cantilena alights on a twelve-note sonority which, in pairing i.c.s 3 and 5, could possibly be heard as a culminating development of the second 'key idea' (i.e., as being derived from its kernel chord's inner and boundary intervals) and the functional plot sequence begun at Fig. 404. Given the lack of i.c. 2s, however, a change in 'quality' is immediately perceptible, not least because it appears to return the music to the concerns left unresolved by the main plotline of the opening *chapitre*, i.e., the search for a resolution to the piece's first 'key idea' and its i.c. 3+4 or 4+5 (over A or E) 'quality' enigma. The effect is enthralling. Over the coming minutes, questions over *Livre pour orchestre*'s nature (i.e., whether it is to be a 'Livre' or a 'symphony') begin to evolve in parallel with its now apparently not only overarching but also dialectical *akcja*, as the stream of *akcja* which coursed through the opening *chapitre* fully resurfaces in the finale. Furthermore, in a series of increasingly impressive musical waves (at Fig. 410, Fig. 413 and Fig. 445; see Fig. 3.13) paralleling the rising steps of intensity in the *1^{er} chapitre*, it will wash away the 'Livre' model and reshape the nature of the composition.

Ex. 3.34: *Livre pour orchestre*, Fig. 410 (cont.) to Fig. 410a

410a¹⁾

The musical score is for an orchestra and includes parts for Flutes (Fl.), Clarinets (Cl.), Bassoons (Bsn.), Horns (Cor.), Trumpets (Trbn.), Tubas (Tuba), Violins (Vni), Violas (Vle), and Cellos (Vc). The music is written in 2/4 time and features a 'cantabile' tempo. The score is divided into two systems. The first system includes parts for Flutes, Clarinets, Bassoons, Horns, Trumpets, and Tubas. The second system includes parts for Violins, Violas, and Cellos. The music is characterized by a 'cantabile' tempo and a 'f' (forte) dynamic. The score is marked with '1'' and '2'' indicating first and second endings. The first ending is marked with '1'' and the second ending with '2''. The score is marked with 'f cantabile' and 'p' (piano) dynamics. The score is marked with 'cresc.' (crescendo) and 'f cantabile' dynamics. The score is marked with '1'' and '2'' indicating first and second endings. The first ending is marked with '1'' and the second ending with '2''. The score is marked with 'f cantabile' and 'p' (piano) dynamics. The score is marked with 'cresc.' (crescendo) and 'f cantabile' dynamics.

Fig. 3.13: 'Subplot' leading to 'plot' in the final *chapitre*

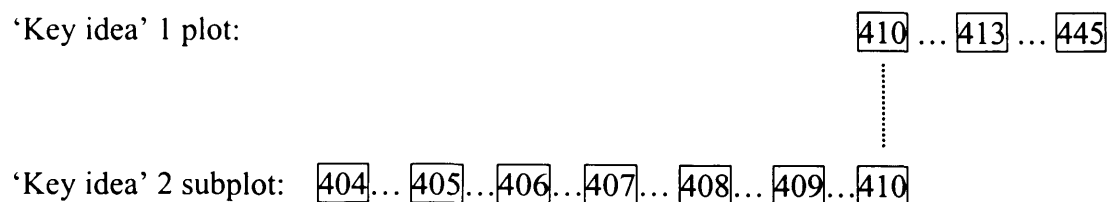


Fig. 410 owes much of its magic to Lutosławski's beautifully sculpted enrichment and broadening of timbre and texture, which introduces *cantabile* flutes and brass tones into the cantilena's hitherto string-based sonority. The cantilena has also been rising upwards by a series of i.c. 1 and 3 steps in the 'bass', transferring it into a higher tessitura against the panoramic backdrop of the now percussive background layer (although this texture has also come to be dominated by the high-pitched sheen of metallic cymbals and gongs). After Fig. 410, however, the cantilena expands downwards to employ the orchestra's lower registers as well, and the musical foreground, so to speak, expands to fill the breadth and depth of one's perceptions. Both of these devices – the change of orchestration and the control of register – remind one of the attention Lutosławski paid in his lectures about musical form to different ways of using timbre and register rhetorically to articulate and accentuate a piece's moments of intense musical significance.

Another way in which this turning point is marked as significant forms the piece's strongest parallel to McCreless and Novak's 'semic' events in their Beethoven and Janáček analyses. In the later instalments of the musical narrative Novak traces in Janáček's *The Fiddler's Child*, a 'semic' texture first heard at the start of the piece reaches a parallel point of developmental predication to events concerning that piece's

‘hermeneutic’ enigma, thereby accentuating that pivotal plot development. Similarly, Fig. 410-410a in *Livre pour orchestre* could be heard to be overcoded with a textural or motivic effect reminiscent of the very start of the *1^{er} chapitre*. The languorous sighing gestures articulated by the falling and rising quartertonal glissandi at the start of the piece return at this crucial juncture, magnified in the rising and falling *cantabile* arpeggiations of the texture’s individual lines. The combination of brassy sonorities and string sound at this point may also feel significant here for ‘semic’ reasons, as these two ‘opposing’ timbres blend – which they failed to do during the opening movement – within the developmental alchemy of the final *chapitre*’s search for resolution.

Uncertainty follows Fig. 410a as its plot revelations give way to a ‘dynamic’ sequence of subtly changing harmonies. The progression from the end of Fig. 410a to Fig. 412b is a sophisticated effort to overcome the inherent harmonic stasis of limited-aleatory textures. The blocks are coordinated with great care and subtlety in order to create the impression of dynamism. The changes, in other words, are smoother and more homogeneous (not least in terms of ‘quality’) and do not encourage emplotment (thereby providing an exception which may help to prove the rule of narrativity in post-tonal music, especially when compared to Fig. 404 to 410). Change is therefore gradual and intensity accrues slowly through statistical means, building towards a second peak in the *chapitre* through a layering of increasingly frenetic woodwind, brass and string textures, an *accelerando* and the hastening alternation of limited-aleatory blocks. The dynamism, however, while leading one to expect an arrival at another ‘static’ event – an expectation intensified by the stammering brass at Fig. 412 – leaves one unsure as to where the music will arrive or, rather, within which functional sequence (resurgent plot or resurgent subplot) the anticipated event will fall.

In the event, the intervallic concerns of the first ‘key idea’ and the piece’s main plotline are reasserted shortly after Fig. 413, as the music reaches a new plateau in expressive intensity and returns to the *cantabile* playing and tempo which marked Fig. 410-410a (spurred on by another salvo from the brass). This twelve-note sonority, furthermore, is rooted on E and, while it might be fanciful to map a ‘bass’ line journey from the A of Fig. 404 to this E at the root of the Tempo I *cantabile* after Fig. 413, the potential significance of this pitch is clear, not least as the note from which ‘key idea’ one, and indeed the entire piece, first emerged, but also because this is not the first time that A might be heard to have yielded to E. The purity of the i.c. 3 and 5 pairing at Fig. 410a has, however, been usurped here by added i.c. 4s. Consequently, while the arrival on E and addition of ‘key idea’ one’s other main i.c. mark Fig. 413’s twelve-note chord as the next instalment in the piece’s resurgent main plotline, the chord’s ‘quality’ returns to intervallic ambiguity (3+4+5). Neither Fig. 410 or 413, therefore, has combined a twelve-note chord pairing i.c.s 3 and 5 – a solution to the ‘quality’ enigma of the first ‘key idea’ not presented in the *1^{er} chapitre* – with an E in the bass.

From Fig. 414 the music is again sculpted to suggest momentum slipping away from the resurgent plotline. In this increasingly ‘dynamic’ and unstable music, the relative purity of the Fig. 410 and 413 ‘qualities’ is superseded by richer intervallic combinations which, in effect, suspend the debate. They do not refer back to ‘key idea’ two’s ‘quality’ either; that thread of development has been woven back into the musical fabric for the time being. In this regard, Homma’s contrasting of the ‘centripetal’ and ‘centrifugal’ qualities of the chords at, for example, Fig. 410 and 417, is constructive.¹⁰² The first suits the stability of a ‘static’ event bearing significant information, the second

¹⁰² Homma, *Witold Lutosławski*, p. 489.

tallies with the momentum after Fig. 413. More immediately affective, however, in terms of sensuous impact, from Fig. 414 to Fig. 418c juddering woodwind and (eventually) string patterns grind the music into tiny filaments of sound which, in realizing the fragmentary seed sown by the brass salvos at Fig. 412 and the start of Fig. 413, seem to bristle with the music's unresolved tensions.

The change of gear at Fig. 419 which inaugurates the start of the *chapitre's* second main section may tempt one to frame one's reading of the ensuing events not merely using musical narratology's experiencing consciousness hypothesis, as developed for instance by Karl, but also with reference to Hatten's idea of a shift in discourse level evoking the existence of an authorial entity controlling (or in this case seeking to re-exert control over) a piece's narrative. The ensuing macrorhythmic drive to climax, while sculpting 'dynamic' expectations of an eventual arrival at a more stable and significant plot instalment, centres on a process of cutting between cells of foreshortening and apparently fresh material. Consequently, it could be heard as an attempt (by 'the composer') to wrest back control of the work from its emerging narrative tendencies, as if to reinforce the anti-narrativity of the by now beleaguered 'Livre' model.

These blocks of material (from Fig. 419 onwards) are like the 'slides' of Lutosławski's 1988 chamber work of the same name, in part due to the intricately constructed (and in the literature more than adequately analysed) series of brass chords providing the mechanism that shuttles each new texture into 'view' (a mechanism performed, in *Slides*, by the percussion). Gesturally, each fragment has such individuality, verve and character – the percussive chattering that sets the section in motion at Fig. 419, for instance, or the glimmering string texture at 420 (see Ex. 3.35) –

Ex. 3.35: *Livre pour orchestre*, Fig. 419 (end)/Fig 420 (start)

The musical score is divided into two parts by a vertical dashed line. Above the line, the tempo is marked 'ca 10\"/>

1) Violins and Celli do not commence on the beat, but immediately afterwards

1) Geigen und Cellos beginnen nicht mit dem Schlag, sondern gleich danach.

that one may be reminded of Kraus's suggestion that modernism's grid-like structures reveal a will to narrative silence and the concomitant possibility that new voices might emerge to be heard once an artwork is freed from narrative concerns. These rapidly changing blocks of apparently unrelated material might even be taken as an icon of *Livre pour orchestre*'s more overtly modernist or anti-narrative tendencies (unlike Fig.

414-18, the anti-narrativity here relates to there being too much heterogeneity) – an icon represented previously by the grid-like juxtaposition and delineation of its ostensibly hermetically-sealed movements.

Gradually, though, this token of Lutosławski's original intentions is subverted too, as ensuing blocks streamline into the 'dynamic' macrorhythmic *accelerando* propelling *Livre pour orchestre* towards its apotheosis at Fig. 445. The momentum intensifies as this mechanistic process settles, from Fig. 423 and Fig. 424, into an alternation of two textures scored respectively for chattering woodwind and burgeoning string sonorities (shades of the 2^{me} *chapitre*'s 'B' sections). The foreshortening *ad libitum* blocks then merge at Fig. 439 into a conducted and metred loop of eight-note sonorities scored for virtually the entire orchestra and accelerating towards the music's final climax. This music is pure dynamism (it accelerates, there is a *crescendo*), yet much its accruing intensity comes, paradoxically, from its almost ritualistic repetition of the same set of chords.

As Stucky notes, these *sempre staccato* sonorities are constructed to yield a 'quality' rich in i.c.s 1, 5 and 6. This places them at the 'dissonant' or 'ice-cold' end of Lutosławski's harmonic spectrum in comparison to the 'quality' of either 'key idea' (both are more 'mild' or 'consonant'). This therefore relates this passage to the climaxes of *chapitres* two and three, which explored similar 'qualities'. The major difference here, however, is that this 'dissonance' will find its resolution in a shift to a 'warmer' or more consonant 'quality'. The 'ice-cold' chords thereby play a role in the scene being set for *Livre pour orchestre*'s climactic fusion of the sensuous and the schematic.

Writing on Fig. 440 to 444, the last few moments which propel the music to its culmination, Homma notes how the silences separating Fig. 440, 441, 442 and 443 form the maximum contrast possible to the preceding macrorhythmic *accelerando*.¹⁰³ This is a keen observation to which one might add that the silences lengthen and thus subtly smooth the transition from the preceding headlong *a battuta* to the *ad libitum* texture at Fig. 445, not merely by slowing the pace but by simultaneously suspending the music's sense of pulsation.¹⁰⁴ Looking further forward, however, these elongating pauses and the rising chords which punctuate them also form a prolepsis anticipating the end of *Livre pour orchestre* and thus a 'semic' connection (if silence can be considered a texture of sorts) between the resolution which is about to occur (which relates most strongly to 'key idea' one) and the closing sonority of the piece (which relates more closely to 'key idea' two).

After the 'once-only convention' of the 'dynamic' macrorhythmic *accelerando*, which shape one's expectation of the impending climax, one is also reminded in these moments of another of Lutosławski's adapted conventions: a hiatus inserted to invite the perceiver to sum up everything that has already been experienced while preparing for what is about to happen. These are, obviously, highly theatrical gestures – one is almost tempted to hold one's breath during the pauses – but they are also prime examples of Lutosławski's use of musical rhetoric to shape a piece's presentation of an *akcja*. The final electrifying silence then gives way to the percussion flurry that ignites the climax. This outburst is reminiscent of the climax of the *1^{er} chapitre*, in which a similar percussion gesture was met not with resolution but a further enigma (i.e., the emergence

⁹⁸ Homma, *Witold Lutosławski*, p. 186-7.

¹⁰⁴ Not all conductors pull off this shift convincingly – including, arguably, Lutosławski in his 1976 recording, although the richness of the sound he produces from the orchestra at Fig. 445 and the duration he gives to the climactic texture, in comparison to the Berlin Philharmonic recording mentioned in Chapter Two, more than makes up for any initially anticlimactic sense of a misjudged high point.

of the 2+5 ‘quality’ in the coda’s string chords). What occurs in the finale is different. The work’s climactic twelve-note chord at Fig. 445 sings out, *tutta forza ma cantabile*, a resplendently scored solution to the enigma which has propelled the piece’s main plotline (see Ex. 3.36).

As Stucky notes, the ‘wonderfully “consonant”, affirmative sound’ of this sonority relates, in part, to the solid grounding of its lowest perfect fifth and to the registrally and timbrally distinct triadic harmonies resulting from its i.c. content.¹⁰⁵ Rae also stresses the sonority’s importance, reminding his readers that Lutosławski’s choice of ‘climactic harmony is a matter of significance’ in every piece.¹⁰⁶ Neither analyst, though, discusses the significance of this harmony in terms the music’s resurgent plotline. The climax chord can be emplotted as the resolution, at the piece’s peak of sensuous intensity, of the schematic ‘suspense’ generated by its opening question of ‘minor or major?’ or, more accurately, ‘i.c. 3 or 4 with 5 (and centred on A or E?)’. The matter is settled here, with rhetorical definiteness and compelling musical logic, by a symmetrical twelve-note sonority firmly rooted on E and in which only i.c. 3s interlock adjacently with the perfect fourths and fifths of i.c. 5. There is even a boundary i.c. 1 (E to E flat), which means that the climax could also be heard to contain the other intervallic component of the opening’s major-minor chord.

¹⁰⁵ Stucky, *Lutosławski*, p. 118.

¹⁰⁶ Rae, *The Music of Lutosławski*, p. 114.

Ex. 3.36: Livre pour orchestre, Fig. 444-5

444
▽ 2*

fl. I
fl. picc.
ob.
cl.
tbe I
tbe II
cor.
trbni
5 tom-toms
al labbra
tmb. S.C.
al centro
10/sec
ff
ff

445¹⁾ 10-15"
▽ *tutta forza ma cantabile*

a2
fg I
cfg.
trbne III
tuba
ff
ff

tutta forza ma cantabile

gr. cassa
f
b dura
p

tutta forza ma cantabile


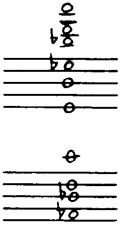

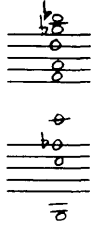
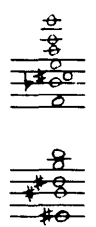
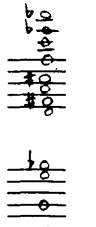
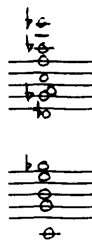
vni
vle
vc.
cb.

1) It is desirable that the duration of the fermatas should not be the same.

1) Es ist erwünscht, dass die Länge der Fermaten nicht gleich sei.

Ex. 3.37 emplots the chords at Fig. 410, 413 and 445 as the final ‘static’ events in the functional sequence inaugurated by the piece’s opening ‘key idea’. Recalling the

Ex. 3.37: ‘Key idea’ one’s functional sequence

Start	102	106	108/b. 12	410	413	445
						
3/4+5? (A or E?)	4+5 (A)	4+5	4+5	3+5	3/4+5 (E)	3+5 (E)

intensity curve plotted in relation to the *1^{er} chapitre* in Fig. 3.7, one might also note that Fig. 410, 413 and 445 can similarly be heard to coincide with successively rising peaks of intensity, thereby continuing the step-like pattern which accentuated the unfolding of the music’s main plotline in the *1^{er} chapitre*.

What follows, however, is not merely empty rhetoric in the form of a coda telling the listener that which is already known, i.e., that the main plotline in this musical narrative has been resolved and the piece can now close. The *furioso, pavillons en l’air* brass retort which shouts the climax down (a dissonant cluster spanning a boundary i.c. 5 between A’ and e’) may initially reinforce the idea that the upsurge of narrativity in the finale went against the authorial intentions of ‘the composer’, not least because of its links to earlier moments of doubt – a last gasp of despair, perhaps, as the best laid plans go awry. What the brass initially drown out is revealed as their fragments subside: a sustained chord for *sol*i strings held at *ppp*. This gesture, also

heard at the climax of the *1^{er} chapitre*, has an even more otherworldly effect here, the genuine uncanniness of which permits one only gradually to focus one's attention on the progression initiated by this chord – a progression which will tie together the plot threads relating to 'key ideas' one and two by connecting the climax chord at Fig. 445 to the similarly significant final chord of the piece.

The twenty-eight-note string chord which emerges at Fig. 446 is a version of the climax chord at Fig. 445, reinforced by octave doublings which eradicate the climax's intervallic 'quality' (see Ex. 3.38). This is a characteristically elegant solution

Ex. 3.38: Reworking of Fig. 445's harmony to yield a different chord at Fig. 446

from Lutosławski, reconfiguring the familiar to produce an utterly different effect through fastidious organisation (the sonority is symmetrically wrapped around a central minor third, mixing semitones and wholetones with an outer pair of tritones, but created by overlapping different transpositions of the Fig. 445 chord's four-note segments).

After the held chord, a cyclical pattern begins (an echo, perhaps, of the mechanism which drove towards the climax at Fig. 445) in which the first twenty-eight-note chord is exchanged with two other sonorities, one initially rooted on F, the other on E-flat.

Each of these 5/4 bars presents a different ordering of the chords – e.g. E-F-E \flat -E-F, F-

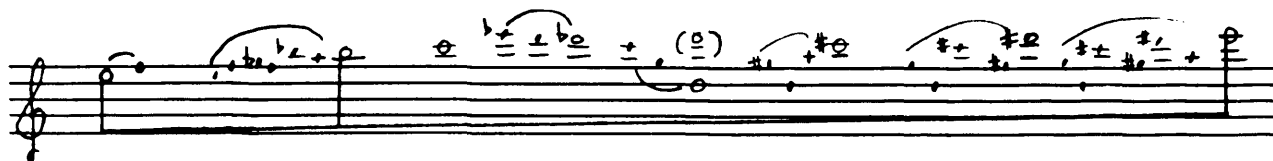
Eb-E-F-Eb, Eb-E-F-Eb-E – as the brass peter out. The ‘bass’ line, as Rae notes, therefore encircles the pitch centre E via its semitonal neighbours (while temporarily unlocking the sense of that pitch’s centrality).¹⁰⁷ This is noteworthy, as part of the coda’s closural function relates to its affirmation of the structural centrality of this pitch which, having helped to secure the close of the *akcja*’s main functional sequence, will now lend its weight to the piece’s final plot revelation, tying together the closing moments in the piece’s plot and subplot. At the same time, it may be regarded as another of Lutosławski’s tonal ghosts, grounding the coda in closural stability by borrowing the convention of statement, departure and return.

Starting at the 3/4 of Fig. 446, the strings lock into a single repeating pattern – the roots are E-F-Eb, E-F-Eb, etc. – as their texture begins to taper from the lowest note up, gradually shaving off pitches until, at the repeated bar in Fig. 446a, three twelve-note chords scored for twelve solo violins cycle continuously. The stress on E created by the wedge-like contraction leading to the repeated bar is one further way in which the coda focuses on the stability of that pitch. Another relates to the limited-aleatory flute duet which forms a skeletal ornamentation of the passage from Fig. 446a. The flutes’ ascent from e’ to e’’ emphasizes a progression towards the upper pitch with stepwise voice-leading which invokes, perhaps, a hint of a tonic-dominant-tonic progression (see Ex. 3.39); it also forms a parallel line to the ‘shaving off’ of the chordal texture’s bass notes. The flutes are finally, however, a ghostly reminder (Homma is right to note their distracting quality)¹⁰⁸ of the earlier string cantilena, thereby making conducted and *ad libitum* materials sound concordantly – a noteworthy layering given what is about to occur.

¹⁰⁷ Rae, *The Music of Lutosławski*, p. 115. Rae focuses on the progression’s upper pitches, not the bass.

¹⁰⁸ Homma, ‘Lutosławski’s Studies in Twelve-Tone Rows’, in Skowron, ed., *Lutosławski Studies*, p. 216.

Ex. 3.39: Fig. 446a (flute duet)



The *poco meno mosso* for the strings seven bars before Fig. 447 is sculpted in a manner which may suggest a contracting texture heading for a unison e". The tapering and contraction is shaped by the 'bass' voice rising up to meet the more slowly ascending upper violins – an ascent which, as Ex. 3.40 illustrates, halts when the upper note of the texture fixes on b" at Fig. 447 (having moved towards it by way of tone-semitone turns similar to those heard throughout the flute duet and in the cycling E-E flat-F chords of Fig. 446.) The lower parts then compress the sonority at Fig. 447 into the space between c" and b". Four held chords, then a fifth demarcated before and after by a general pause (the ending's echo of the silences after Fig. 440), and quartertonally compressed still further, finally yield a sixth pause chord and the sonority on which the music closes.

Ex. 3.40: Outer pitches, *Poco meno mosso* before Fig. 447 to end

Handwritten musical notation for 'Poco meno mosso' before Fig. 447 to end. It consists of two staves. The top staff has a treble clef and contains several measures of music with notes, rests, and dynamic markings like 'p' and 'f'. The bottom staff has a bass clef and contains similar notation. There are various accidentals (sharps, flats, naturals) and slurs throughout the piece. A box labeled '447' is placed above the top staff, indicating the end of the section.

The quartertonally-inflected penultimate chord of the piece, as Petersen points out,¹⁰⁹ may remind one at this framing moment of the quartertones at the opening of the piece. The E at the bass of the concluding sixth sonority, when it arrives, also links back to the start of the work. The final sonority of *Livre pour orchestre* is not, however, a tetrachord rooted on E and built from interlocking interval-classes 3 and 5 (the ‘quality’ one might expect to hear at this point as a summary of the climactic chord); nor is it a repeat of the major-minor chord now rooted on the ‘correct’ pitch, E. Instead, the final sonority, consisting of E, F-sharp, A and B, reveals a version of the tone/minor-third/tone chord at the heart of the second ‘key idea’ (see Ex. 3.41).

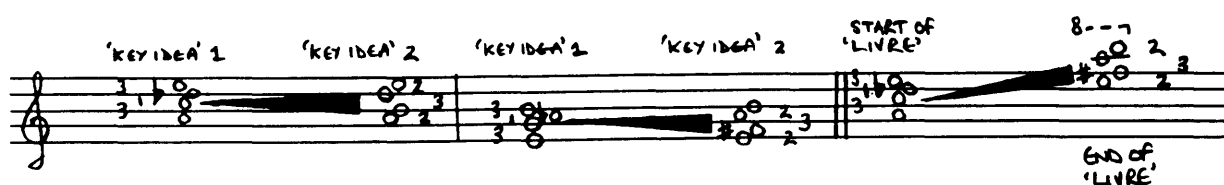
Ex. 3.41: *Livre pour orchestre*, close

The musical score for the close of *Livre pour orchestre* features two main sections of staves: 8 vni I soli (staves 1-8) and 4 vni II soli (staves 9-12). The score is divided into measures, with a boxed measure number '447' at the top. The dynamics are marked as follows: *mf* (mezzo-forte), *dim.* (diminuendo), *p* (piano), *pp* (pianissimo), and *ppp* (pianississimo). The final sonority is marked 'P.G.' (Petersen's key idea) on staves 7 and 8. The score is published by PWM - 6887.

¹⁰⁹ Petersen, 'Microtones', p. 341.

Scored for a delicate tissue of ethereal strings and rooted on E, this chord can be heard to close *Livre pour orchestre*'s subplot's enigma, not merely by revealing its four-note essence at a moment symmetrical to the first presentation of 'key idea' one's 'major-minor' chord, but also by suggesting an answer to the piece's second enigma: how, in this increasingly symphonic music, is one to relate the piece's two 'key ideas', the twin poles of the piece's *akcja* during the opening and closing *chapitres*? The proximity of the i.c. content of the two 'key ideas' was noted above with regards to Fig. 410 and the switch in focus from subplot to main plotline. The kaleidoscopic unities of the inner movements also hinted at overlaps between the piece's two harmonic and thematic kernels. Hearing this chord at the opposite moment in the piece to its unforgettable opening, however, might one even conceive of a final expansive 'motion pattern' linking the two sonorities? The semitone at the heart of the first 'key idea' and its major-minor chord could be imagined to expand and form the central minor third within the tone/minor-third/tone pattern of the chord which has come to symbolize the piece's second 'key idea' (see Ex. 3.42). *Livre pour orchestre*'s two 'key ideas' could thus be heard as two sides of the same musical thought.

Ex. 3.42: Conceptual expansion relationship between 'key ideas' one and two



This abstract possibility may be enhanced by the shared otherworldly timbres of the piece's opening and closing chords; by the way the opening chord could be imagined to resolve onto the final chord in a post-tonal manipulation of a IV-I cadence

moving from an A ‘major-minor’ chord to a neutral substitute for either E minor or major; by the procession of string chords linking the resolution of one plotline to the end of the other; and by the fact that an idea (‘key idea’ two) which came to be associated with *ad libitum* textures (in the *intermèdes*) reaches its developmental fulfilment in conducted music just as an idea (‘key idea’ one) initially associated with conducted material (in the *1^{er} chapitre*) closes its functional sequence in a climactic *ad libitum*. As Lutosławski’s own analytical comments on *Livre pour orchestre* suggested, conducted and unconducted materials may ‘facilitate the process of listening and in a sense organise this process’, and in doing so lead one towards a fuller appreciation of a piece in which interlocking gestures, dualities and ‘double movements’ would appear to be a key to the revelations at the heart of its musical narrative.

***Livre pour orchestre* or Symphony No. 3?**

It is possible to read *Livre pour orchestre* as a polemical extension of Lutosławski’s poetics of musical narrativity. In this view, it is a composition that, like its opening gesture, turns the tables: its anti-narrative ‘Livre’ model is ultimately subjugated by the musical narrativity of an emergent symphonism. *Livre pour orchestre* channels the ‘manifesto’¹¹⁰ of Symphony No. 2 and all of Lutosławski’s theorizing, writing and lecturing of the earlier 1960s into an act of artistic resistance to the high modernist structures he viewed as catastrophic to music’s communicative power. The ‘Livre’ model is toyed with but ultimately undermined, as the book of high modernism is rewritten to produce a triumphant re-imagining of symphonic narrativity in Lutosławski’s post-tonal idiom. *Livre pour orchestre*’s eventually overarching *akcja* is

¹¹⁰ Composer Magnus Lindberg told the present writer that, to him and many colleagues of his generation, Lutosławski’s Symphony No. 2 sounded like a manifesto, in the late 1960s/early 1970s, petitioning renewed attention to the possibilities of constructing large-scale symphonic forms in a modernist idiom.

therefore part of an encapsulating musical narrative concerning a triumph of ‘symphony’ over ‘Livre’. This in turn symbolizes aspects of a meta-narrative of twentieth-century compositional aesthetics relating to the opposition between two musical ideologies.

A view along these lines tallies with the idea that many of the most productive tensions within Lutosławski’s music of the 1960s and thereafter originate in the composer’s orchestration of a creative confrontation between classicist and modernist tendencies. It is hard to imagine the tensions encapsulated by Whittall’s ‘modernist paradigm’ being more clearly spelt out than in *Livre pour orchestre*’s titular vacillations between the anti-narrative ‘Livre pour orchestre’ and narrative ‘Symphony No. 3’ – even if, in this particular case, one might feel that classicism outweighs modernism. In these respects, the piece could even be located as an unlikely companion piece (unlikely if one is not used to granting Lutosławski’s music such esteemed company) to another not-quite-a-symphony composed shortly after *Livre pour orchestre* and exploring similar tensions.

Luciano Berio’s *Sinfonia* (1968-9), Whittall writes, has achieved ‘the status of an exemplary modernist manifesto’ thanks to its political references (most prominently to Martin Luther King) and its famous third movement’s confrontation between Mahler and Beckett – ‘a confrontation itself fragmented around a whole host of other musical references, a celebration of disconcerting diversity that creates a corresponding need to search for synthesis’.¹¹⁰ Berio’s *Sinfonia* therefore inaugurates a powerful centrifugal momentum requiring an equally forceful centripetal response; and Berio did indeed add a fifth movement to *Sinfonia* (after its first performance), in order to follow the fourth

¹¹⁰ Arnold Whittall, *Musical Composition in the Twentieth Century* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), p. 302.

movement (the quiet aftermath of the Mahler-Beckett complex) with a finale that forges connections between materials heard in the earlier movements.

The work therefore ends on an even more impassioned note of expressive and structural fervour than the heights achieved in its celebrated third movement. As David Osmond-Smith writes, the ‘search for similarities and common elements’ demonstrated by the third movement’s explorations of relationships between a Mahler scherzo, Beckett radio play and a wealth of other materials ‘takes over as an autonomous principle’ in *Sinfonia*’s finale.¹¹² It is thus the exploration of the principle of seeking to resolve tensions, as opposed to the actual *achievement* of an unambiguous resolution, which is a key to the finale’s power.

Berio fuses together materials from all the previous movements into a new and vitriolic synthesis. The gesture seems deeply indebted to the nineteenth-century cult of organic completion. In practice it offers neither apotheosis nor resolution, but rather an explosion of raw energy.¹¹³

‘In this way’, Whittall adds, ‘*Sinfonia*’s essential modernism is reaffirmed’ rather than dissolved in a wash of classicism.¹¹⁴

Livre pour orchestre’s search for synthesis (albeit in the face of less flamboyant fragmentations) is also indebted to earlier paradigms of organicism and formalism (not for nothing, perhaps, was Lutosławski’s favourite music critic Eduard Hanslick).¹¹⁵ As in Berio’s *Sinfonia*, though, one could argue that it is the confrontation between the

¹¹² David Osmond-Smith, *Playing On Words: a Guide to Luciano Berio’s Sinfonia* (London: The Royal Musical Association, 1985), p. 74.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, pp. 74-5.

¹¹⁴ Whittall, *Musical Composition*, p. 303.

¹¹⁵ The bookmark in Lutosławski’s copy of Hanslick’s *Music Criticisms 1846-99*, trans. and ed. Henry Pleasants (London: Peregrine Books, 1963) and located by the present writer in the library of the composer’s former Warsaw home, marks Hanslick’s review of Brahms’s Second Symphony (p. 157), which includes the following remarks: ‘Nor are there any furtive glances in the direction of foreign artistic fields, nor any begging from poetry or painting. It is all purely musical in conception and structure, and purely musical in effect’. It is not hard to imagine the potential appeal to Lutosławski of such a statement and thus his reasons for marking it.

competing musical possibilities of disintegration and connectivity which generates this music's most impressive effects. In the Berio, such confrontations fuel the vitriol of the finale's search for synthesis; in the Lutosławski, similar tensions inflame the surging symphonic narrativity of *Livre pour orchestre*'s finale and its quest not only to resolve the first *chapitre*'s enigmas but, in doing so, to tackle the issue of symphonic narrativity's potential as a means of musical structuring in the late 1960s. The power of *Livre pour orchestre*'s climax, as such, is that it marks the music's resolution of both plot and the very question of plot. By engaging with those questions, it also achieves a feat of transformation as powerfully moving, in its own way, as the finale of the Berio.

Livre pour orchestre can therefore be interpreted as a structure symbolizing the potency of change. It has none of *Sinfonia*'s politically-charged cultural cachet, of course, and its *akcja* can hardly be likened to the highly politicized 'actions' of the 1960s and 1970s that were performed, for instance, by the Viennese 'actionist' Otto Mühl, Joseph Beuys or the London-based Destruction In Art Symposium. Lutosławski, furthermore, steered clear of publicly linking his music to real-life events (as in the case of the question of Symphony No. 3's possible links to Solidarity), preferring, if anything, to direct attention away from the very possibility.¹¹⁶ As with the ultimately deceptive attitude struck by the conductor during *Livre pour orchestre*'s *intermèdes*, however, one might be tempted to read Lutosławski's position on such matters as an elegant (and no doubt politically judicious) deception, especially if one feels that the piece's transformative structure, in struggling to achieve change and forge agreement in the face of apparently unbridgeable oppositions, is echoed in other Lutosławski pieces of the period, such as the String Quartet and Cello Concerto. One might, in other

¹¹⁶ On the other hand, Lutosławski did tell Nikolska that 'the act of constructing a musical form can be prompted by life experience'. See Nikolska, *Conversations*, p. 90.

words, be tempted to speculate about the subversive undertow of artistic statements concerning the power, or even just the possibility, of transformation – of being able to envisage and symbolize ways of doing things differently by bringing disparate ideas into powerful new syntheses – from an artist working in communist Poland in the late 1960s and early 1970s.

Alternatively, one might respond more spiritually to the impact of Lutosławski structures which, Casken proposes, can be heard to transcend to a new level at their climaxes, opening ‘new windows onto imaginary worlds’.¹¹⁷ Discussing the way in which the ‘vehemence’ of the ‘rasping brass’, shouting down the ‘obviously joyful explosion’ of *Livre pour orchestre*’s climax, gives way to the ‘plaintive tread’ of the string chords in the coda, Casken hears ‘discreet and relative consonance revealing itself behind a block of rather terrifying dissonance in an episode of what we might call visionary reflection’ and likens this moment, tellingly, to the ending of Ives’s ‘The Housatonic at Stockbridge’ from *Three Places in New England* (1903-14).¹¹⁸ During such moments in Lutosławski’s music, Casken writes, one might experience ‘a visionary intensity’ followed by ‘a mysterious evocation of the Unknown, a dreamlike vision... or a moment of intense introspection’.¹¹⁹ He consequently suggests that invoking such moments may be the purpose of Lutosławski’s music, and it is certainly appealing to imagine that offering listeners access to an experience of transcendental introspection was one of the composer’s ways of letting them experience something of his ‘ideal world’.

¹¹⁷ Casken, ‘The Visionary and the Dramatic’, in Skowron, ed., *Lutosławski Studies*, pp. 36-56.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 40. Elsewhere, Casken has asked whether the coda of *Livre pour orchestre* – with specific reference to the flute duet floating over the conducted string texture – might represent Lutosławski’s ‘Unanswered Question’. See John Casken, ‘Programme Note [*Livre pour orchestre*]’, <http://www.chester-novello.com/work/8463/main.html> (accessed 7 July 2005).

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 53.

Rae hears in such shifts the reflection of another aesthetic at the heart of Lutosławski's music: the beautiful and the sublime, an alternative nineteenth-century preoccupation one might locate (as Rae does) in a range of Lutosławski works including *Livre pour orchestre*.¹²⁰ Trochimczyk, on the other hand, hears in these closural transfigurations a symbol of religiosity, a journey into paradise and thus another ideal world beyond the reach of human conflict and struggle.¹²¹ Reflecting on the specific tensions powering the structure and climax of *Livre pour orchestre*, one might feel a good deal of sympathy for all of these views, which seem profitably aligned around a more abstract core. In the imagination of the present writer, for example, the denouement of *Livre pour orchestre* forms an intertextuality with a series of questions asked by Salman Rushdie's mysterious author-narrator in the *Satanic Verses* (1994):

How does newness come into the world? How is it born? Of what fusions, translations, conjoinings is it made? How does it survive, extreme and dangerous as it is?¹²²

Similarly, I am led to wonder about the extent of the impact on Lutosławski's creative output of his life-long fascination with Greek theatre and philosophy and, in particular, his plans to compose an operatic tragedy around the time he created his masterpieces of the late 1960s and early-to-mid 1970s. Do these pieces yield catharsis, as Aristotle theorized in the *Poetics* in response to tragic dramas, at the climaxes of musical plots structured after the model of Attic tragedy (or alternatively, remembering the transcendent abnegation in the face of tragedy Hatten reads into the 'Hammerklavier' sonata, after the example of late Beethoven)?

Rather than asserting the claims of any one reading, however, it may be more significant to explore that more abstract core and ask – with Nikolska, Pociąg, Rae,

¹²⁰ Rae, 'Lutosławski's Sound World', in Skowron, ed., *Lutosławski Studies*, pp. 16-35.

¹²¹ Trochimczyk, ' "Dans la Nuit" ', in Skowron, ed., *Lutosławski Studies*, pp. 96-124.

¹²² Salman Rushdie, *The Satanic Verses* (Vintage: London, 1998 [1994]), p. 8.

Stucky and other scholars whose views on Lutosławski and meaning were discussed in the Introduction – how Lutosławski’s musical narratives are capable of invoking such conjecture in the first place, as listeners seek to feel and understand something in response to the interwoven signifiers in his pieces and to the plot-like progressions evoked by the large-scale formal patterning of their signs. This may, in fact, be among the more widely pertinent theoretical lessons to be drawn from a study of *akcja* as an example of musical narrativity. In fusing codes of signification ranging from musical topics and theatrical ‘borrowings’ to those implying a post-tonal re-imagining of harmonic and thematic discourse – and by articulating their interactions with rhetorical musical conventions old, borrowed and new, plus a consummate grasp of musical expressivity, pacing and design – a Lutosławski *akcja* may ultimately best be regarded as a metaphorical structure. Beautiful in its own right, yet with tantalizing resonances which tempt one to short-circuit the gap between its somewhat ambiguous, plot-like signs and a host of potentially more concrete signifieds, a Lutosławski musical narrative seems designed to invoke reader-response acts of narrativization that search for meanings akin to Woolf’s enduring forms of life.

It is not necessary to seek Lutosławski’s poietic permission to develop these ideas on his music’s meanings and artistic motivations (even if, like Casken, one might feel that he would have at the very least given the impression of disapproving of suggestions such as these).¹²³ In an article discussing narrative and drama in Lutosławski’s text settings, however, Aubigny quotes a statement by the composer about his music’s semantic multivalency that seems relevant in this context:

¹²³ See Casken, ‘The Visionary and the Dramatic’, p. 52.

If one absolutely insists on speaking of the *meaning* of a piece of music, of its content, the only thing one can say is that music is an art of *many meanings*. Even at a moment when it is possible to believe that it signifies one thing, it always means something else at the same time, even contradictory things.¹²⁴

It would be easy to read this as another evasion akin to Lutosławski's response to Kaczyński's reading of the Cello Concerto's climax. Yet perhaps the truth of the matter is more complex. As a setter of texts, for example, Lutosławski was attracted to subtly surreal poetry open to a plurality of readings (as opposed to poetry in which no plot, however abstract, could be found) in a manner akin, as he saw it, to music. Concerning Michaux's poems for the *Trois poèmes*, for instance, he told Kaczyński that the

outward appearance of these poems hides a wealth of meaning, imagery, thought and emotion which allows us to live through the poems and to interpret them subjectively. That complexity of meaning brings some poems very close to music, which contains more meaning than any other art, or – to be more precise – has *no* definite meaning, which comes to the same thing.¹²⁵

A more abstract general meaning may nonetheless emerge as the core of a work. As Lutosławski said of the Chabrun poetry he adapted in *Paroles tissées* (1965):

It's difficult to talk about the content of Chabrun's poem because there's no definite action. But there is a hidden inner logic in the sequence of apparently disconnected images. It's certainly not the logic of realistic events, but rather the logic of dreams. Even though the work seems absurd from a realistic point of view, one can detect the outline of some action, some dramatic conflict and a catastrophe.¹²⁶

Lutosławski expressed a similar view to Nikolska about the possibility of stable readings open to a range of more specific interpretations emerging from his own music:

¹²⁴ Couchoud, *La musique polonaise*, p. 143, quoted and trans. in Benoît Aubigny, 'Poetic and Dramatic Schemes in Lutosławski's Vocal-Instrumental Works', in Skowron, ed, *Lutosławski Studies*, p. 71.

¹²⁵ Kaczyński, *Conversations*, pp. 21-2.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 46.

There may be diametrically opposite views on one and the same musical work, though a generally accepted view may establish itself. Eventually. 'This piece of music is dramatic'; that, 'serene', or 'wistful'... And so forth.¹²⁷

Like the poetry he most admired, it can be argued that a Lutosławski *akcja* attains meaning by enmeshing intertextually with the individual perceiver's capacity to find meaning within it. Life and art, after all, are replete with comparable structures of feeling and form, and listeners draw on such experiences (in their lives, in Lutosławski's life, as symbolized in other artworks, etc.) when reflecting on a musical *akcja*. An *akcja*'s potential for meaning only stops, therefore, at the lines drawn by an individual's tastes or experiences. One perceiver might hear formalist architecture involving i.e. 'qualities' and post-tonal pitch centres; another an abstract drama of tragedy and/or transfiguration; yet another an allegorical representation of Poland's political struggles or the conflict between alternative musical ideologies. At the heart of many different interpretations of a single composition, however, one might still be able to locate the same abstract, but far from meaningless, structure: a Lutosławski *akcja* that can be analysed and interpreted in its own right.

Analysing and interpreting *Livre pour orchestre* in this manner, as implied above, can permit a productive diversity of narrativizations. It also reveals Lutosławski's expert coordination of a vast range of invented and re-invented musical devices to create, through the interacting layers of his musical language, one of his richest and most conflicted musical narratives. Out of that conflict arose the nexus of tensions reflected in Lutosławski's uncertainty about the piece's title. There can be little doubt, one could argue, that a piece of such scope and accomplishment would have served the title 'Symphony No. 3' with distinction. Alternatively, one might judge that

¹²⁷ Nikolska, p. 94.

the more original title 'Livre pour orchestre' befits the music's individuality. Yet *Livre pour orchestre*, finally, is neither a 'Livre' nor a symphony, but a once-only musical achievement that is unique and, as a result, uniquely powerful. In this respect, a dualistic title may suit it best of all. It could be time, in other words, to begin thinking of this piece as his Symphony ('Livre pour orchestre').

AFTERWORD

The final section of this thesis is an Afterword, as opposed to a conclusion, because this study is hardly in a position, having presented an analysis of only one Lutosławski composition, to argue that it has uncovered the ‘total semiotic fact’ (to recall Nattiez’s phrase) of either *akcja* or musical narrativity. It is hoped, however, that this study’s examination of the traces of Lutosławski’s poetics, consideration of narrative theory, and analysis of *Livre pour orchestre* have proved both independently useful and reflexively illuminating, and that it has inaugurated constructive dialectical oscillations between each strand of its investigation while contributing towards the development of a fuller understanding of *akcja*. Those oscillations, however, must be sustained and amplified by future research if their implications are to be more fully realised. The function of this Afterword, therefore, is to indicate a number of ways in which the present study’s propositions might be developed and taken forward.

This thesis contends that the traces of Lutosławski’s poetics of *akcja*, as outlined in Chapter One and then explored through Chapters Two and Three, have the potential to transform a number of aspects of current thinking on the composer’s music. On the one hand, notions such as ‘key ideas’, ‘static’ events and ‘borrowings’ offer new insights into the composer’s kitchen, as Lutosławski described it; on the other, they afford a valuable opportunity to move beyond the kitchen and towards the kitchen table, and thus between the making and the consumption of Lutosławski’s music. It is hoped

that the field of Lutosławski studies will find it useful critically to examine and adapt the ideas proposed in this study concerning Lutosławski's poetics of *akcja*. It is particularly hoped that this will contribute to the field's efforts to move beyond tightly-focussed analytical dissections aimed at codifying the elements of his mature language and towards a hermeneutics of Lutosławski's music.

If the proposition that Lutosławski's concept of *akcja* represented his means of creating music of substance is to be more robustly contended, however, and the gains made by the present study's historical, theoretical and analytical work consolidated, there is clearly a need for more analyses demonstrating that *Livre pour orchestre*'s musical narrative, as interpreted in Chapter Three, is not a one-off affair. This has already been intimated with reference to a range of other Lutosławski compositions, but the final section of this Afterword discusses a number of other Lutosławski *akcje* – *akcje* being the plural of *akcja* – in order further to demonstrate the applicability of the ideas outlined in this thesis and their potential value as a fresh approach to the understanding and enjoyment of Lutosławski's music. Considerably more analysis was undertaken in the preparation of this thesis than it has been possible to present in detail in this document. The final section of this Afterword gives a flavour of some of that analysis and its indications for the applicability of this thesis's findings not only to other compositions from Lutosławski's middle period, but also to music composed during his early and late periods.

Additional historical and theoretical avenues for further research into Lutosławski and *akcja* that could form useful adjuncts to the present study are plentiful, and some have already been signposted. The investigation of *akcja* could benefit, for example, from new work on primary sources. Examinations could be made of the

verbal narratives Lutosławski sketched about individual pieces as a first step in his pre-compositional process, in order to assess the extent to which these early plans connect to the musical plots of the relevant pieces. Research into the radio and theatre scores, plus recordings held in the archive of Polish Radio, should reveal a goldmine of *akcja*-related material. A detailed study of Lutosławski's operatic plans (for example through his correspondence with various opera companies), and particularly his ideas for a tragedy in the late 1960s and early 1970s, could yield insights into his artistic concerns around the time of his *akcja* epiphany and, more generally, regarding his approach to drama, plot and meaning in more literally narrative musical works. In all of these cases, existing scholarship points the way towards carrying out such investigations prudently and effectively,¹ while also indicating the potential value of historical musicological research taking place in parallel with investigations of theoretical and analytical issues.

Regarding theoretical work other than that directly pertaining to narrative theory (which is discussed separately below) one could also seek to consider Lutosławski's music and *akcja* within a number of further theory contexts. A detailed study of his use of intervallic 'qualities', for example, could seek to consider his continuum of 'qualities' and other iconoclastic constructions as they function in his music (i.e., as opposed merely to cataloguing their appearances), perhaps in connection with a detailed look at his use of tonal 'borrowings'. Joseph N. Straus's work on post-tonal prolongations and, more generally, remakings of past musical idioms could provide

¹ See, for example, Homma's account of the relationship between work and sketches in 'Witold Lutosławski's *Trois poèmes d'Henri Michaux*: The Sketches and the Work', in the *Programme of the Gala Inauguration of the Witold Lutosławski Studio at Polish Radio* (Warsaw, 27 September 1996), pp. 14-31; Thomas's engagements with archival material in, for instance, 'Your Song is Mine', *Musical Times* 136 (August 1995), pp. 403-9; and Będkowski's forthcoming work drawing on his archival research into Lutosławski's correspondence, as discussed in his paper 'The Lutosławski Correspondence Collection at the Paul Sacher Stiftung, Basel', presented at the Third Biennial International Conference on Twentieth-Century Music, University of Nottingham (28 July 2003).

obvious starting points for a theoretically-engaged discussion of these matters.² One might also wish to consider evidence on the perceptibility of different i.c. structures, as discussed in Art Samplanski's multidimensional scaling analyses, which explore the validity of the idea of interval-class as a psychological construct.³

Work along these lines might also seek to contrast Lutosławski's concept of 'key ideas' (given that these harmonic and thematic ideas are so closely associated with his deployment of i.c. 'qualities') with existing thematic theories. The stress of certain approaches on the unity provided by a single generative cell might be less informative,⁴ in this regard, than approaches such as Schoenberg's notion of 'the musical idea' and, more generally, its role in the development of pieces demonstrating what he understood to be musical logic and musical thought.⁵ In spite of Lutosławski's reservations about Schoenberg's music and, particularly, his approach to harmony, he spoke knowledgeably of Schoenberg's theories.⁶ A study of this kind might therefore bring to light unexpected but, when one considers the two composers' deep-seated connections to the Viennese classics, not wholly surprising parallels between different aspects of their music and thought.

² See, for example, Joseph N. Straus, 'The Problem of Prolongation in Post-Tonal Music', *Journal of Music Theory* 31/1 (1987), pp. 1–21 and Straus, *Remaking the Past*.

³ See Art Samplanski, 'Interval-Classes and Psychological Space', *Music Theory Online* 10/2 (June 2004): <http://www.music-theory.org:16080/mto/issues/mto.04.10.2/mto.04.10.2.samplanski.html> (accessed 11 August 2004)

⁴ Such as, for example, the ideas expressed in Rudolph Réti, ed. D. Cooke, *Thematic Patterns in Sonatas of Beethoven* (London: Faber, 1967) or Hans Keller, 'KV503: the Unity of Contrasting Themes and Movements', *The Music Review* 18 (1957), pp. 48 and 120.

⁵ See Arnold Schoenberg, *The Musical Idea and the Logic, Technique and Art of Its Presentation*, Patricia Carpenter and Severine Neff, eds (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995). The kind of themes, harmonies, motives, rhythms and textures Schoenberg deemed suitable as a musical idea had to contain problems that clash with one another, thereby promulgating a variety of musical thought which consisted, Patricia Carpenter and Severine Neff comment, 'essentially in bringing things (concepts, etc.) into relation' and searching out coherences. See Patricia Carpenter and Severine Neff, 'Commentary', in Schoenberg, *The Musical Idea*, p. 15.

⁶ See, for example, Nikolska, *Conversations*, p. 107.

Narrativities

Further considerations arising from this thesis's investigation into musical narrativity could follow many paths. The most productive of them, however, might seek to use the ideas raised herein as a prompt to the development of theoretical ideas applicable beyond the field of Lutosławski studies. While Chapter Two helped to turn Chapter One's traces of *akcja* into a theoretically-grounded strategy for analysing *akcja*, for example, that process and its ensuing analytical applications have begun to suggest, to the present writer, a sketch for a new theory of musical narrativity: a reader-response (or rather listener-response) theory of musical plot, emplotment and interpretation.

Crucially, this theory would engage seriously with the possibility that musical plots and narratives are, to recall Bent and Pople's terms, asserted (rather than being passively received from musical texts deemed somehow capable of narrating or otherwise representing their own plots) through the active creative involvement of individual perceivers. The following description sketches the form that this theoretical approach might begin to assume.

As a first step, functional events in a musical plot would need to be recognized as being read into a piece's discourse by the perceiver in response to musical and narrative conventions within particular listening communities. As part of that response, events are emplotted to reveal a logic of succession and thus a musical plot. The emplotted structures may concern developments of the implications of enigmatic 'purely musical' ideas, such as the harmonic and thematic enigmas that McCreless and Novak locate in Beethoven and Janáček, or which this thesis posits in relation to Lutosławski's 'key ideas'. Alternatively, the events may be primarily 'expressive' and thus 'extra-musical', as in Hatten and Klein's work on topics and other intertextually-defined

signifiers, or Kerman's work on drama and gesture in concerto 'relationship stories'.

Most likely, it will prove beneficial to combine aspects of both.

That schematic structure forms not a story but rather a metaphorical story-like structure open to a multivalency of individual yet interconnected interpretations or, rather, narrativizations. As Nattiez and other musical narratologists (Karl and Maus, for instance) have argued, the idea of narrativity in music is a meaning-making response to music's temporality (its tick-tock intimation of causality) and to its allusive yet inexplicit means of signification. Yet this response is not so far removed from the interactions of music and a multitude of other surrounding interpretative discourses, nor for that matter from Iser's thinking on the way in which the specific signifiers of more literal narrative texts are made to yield a story-like 'gestalt' by the perceiver and, in turn, to produce symbolic resonances akin to Woolf's more enduring forms of life. Analytical work seeking to apply these ideas could thereby seek to engage with recent writings on music, metaphor and meaning.⁷

Musical narrativizations, however, as well as responding to the signs of the emplotted musical story structure, will to varying degrees also account for factors more properly assigned to the discourse level of musical narratives. A new theory of musical narrativity arising from this study would also, therefore, have to take discursive factors into account, including a composer's use of conventions, 'borrowings', generic forms and rhetorical gestures (Agawu's and McCreless's work may provide useful touchstones

⁷ Even more so than the issue of musical narrativity, the literatures and arguments concerning metaphor and meaning in music are, obviously enough, gargantuan in both scope and intensity. Recent treatments which may light the way for such an investigation include Leo Treitler, 'Language and the Interpretation of Music', in Robinson, ed., *Music and Meaning*, pp. 23-56; Robert Adlington, 'Moving Beyond Motion: Metaphors for Changing Sound', *Journal of the Royal Musical Association*, 128/2 (2003), pp. 297-318; Arved Ashby, ed., *The Pleasure of Modernist Music: Listening, Meaning, Intention, Ideology* (Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 2003); and Michael Spitzer, *Metaphor and Musical Thought* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004).

here) to structure and accentuate significant plot events.⁸ Disruptions, dialogisms and other potential shifts in discourse level (for which McClary and Hatten's examples could prove helpful) would need to be accounted for, and the sensuous ebb and flow of musical intensity which paces and accentuates a musical narrative's presentation of its plot and, indeed, all of its other discursive factors (as indicated by Berry and, particularly, by Rink) will also need to be addressed.⁹ In this regard, the role of performers in musical narratives could be more fully recognized. Musical performers, like the director, actors and production crew in a play, reshape a piece's narrative discourse in more or less subtle ways every time it is presented, thereby altering the significations of story and discourse with which perceivers come into contact. In this manner, work on musical narrativity might productively form stronger connections with work on the analysis of performance.¹⁰

Ultimately, in this regard, it may be deemed beneficial to reorient the outlined model entirely to deal, in the first instance, with the most immediately perceptible sensuous and discursive events of performances of a musical narrative, and only then to work towards the more complex systems of signification which may also be emplotted. This might seek to overcome what Robert Fink has recently called 'the fear of the

⁸ See Agawu, *Playing with Signs* and McCreless, 'The Hermeneutic Sentence'.

⁹ Rink has indicated the need to find more empirically verifiable models for analysing musical intensity if such research is to progress significantly. He mentions, in this context, Neil Todd's work on 'integrated energy flux', which synthesizes tempo, dynamics, and other expressive elements to produce 'a hierarchy of integrated energy profiles in the form of "rhythmograms"', plus Manfred Clynes' 'pressure curves', which measure listeners' rhythmic responses to music (his subjects press rhythmically on a stenograph of sorts to register their physical responses to a work's 'expressive' progress). See John Rink, 'Translating Musical Meaning', in Cook and Everist, eds, *Rethinking Music*, p. 235, n. 68. See also Eric Clarke, 'Expression in Performance: Generativity, Perception and Semiosis', in Rink, ed., *The Practice of Performance*, p. 21 (discussion of Todd) and Patrick Shove and Bruno Repp, 'Musical Motion and Performance: Theoretical and Empirical Perspectives', in Rink, ed., *The Practice of Performance*, pp. 72-5 (discussion of Clynes).

¹⁰ In this case, Berry and Rink again light parallel paths open to such an investigation through studies like Berry's *Musical Structure and Performance* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989) and Rink's edited collection *The Practice of Performance*.

surface' in a musical narratology context.¹¹ Such an approach might start by noting the most obvious and prominent features of a musical narrative, such as the ebb and flow of its pacing of events. It could then consider the piece's main rhetorical flourishes, its expressive states, topics and other gestures, and only then the more formalist plots one might assert as the story structure presented by a musical discourse. This reorientation would not necessarily depose the significance of the essentially plot-related ideas on which this thesis's attentions have been primarily focussed. It might, however, provide a more realistic account of how music is encountered, emplotted and narrativized by perceivers responding not to the signs of one particular system of signification within a piece, but rather to a pick and mix of concatenated signs from across the different levels and interacting codes of a musical narrative.

Akcje

In seeking to extend the view of *akcja* outlined in this thesis to encompass further Lutosławski pieces, the obvious first step is to look at the sequence of works (one concertante, one chamber, one for voice and orchestra) that Lutosławski composed after *Livre pour orchestre*: his Cello Concerto, *Preludes and Fugue* and *Les espaces du sommeil*. In doing so, the analytical portability of concepts such as 'key ideas', 'static' and 'dynamic' events, 'borrowings' and so forth quickly becomes apparent.

The cello's solo introduction to the Cello Concerto, for instance, and the brass intervention which silences its initial progress, might be considered in terms of theatrical 'borrowings' akin to the opening of the String Quartet. The start of the concerto might also be considered, however, as a compositional meditation on

¹¹ See Robert Fink, 'Going Flat: Post-Hierarchical Music Theory and the Musical Surface', in Cook and Everist, eds, *Rethinking Music*, pp. 102-37.

Lutosławski's understanding of stasis and dynamism. The repeated Ds with which the cellist marks time, in this regard, are no more 'static' in his meaning of the term than the scrabbling diversity of materials which separate them are 'dynamic'. It is only when the cello line begins to deconstruct its repeated 'static' Ds some way into the concerto's introduction that the music becomes directed and 'dynamic' in the composer's more specific sense. In doing so, the cello generates the series of harmonics above its repeated pedal – like sparks struck from a flint – which illuminate the music's first 'key idea'. The radioactive implications of this 'key idea' – D, E, A, C sharp – can be gauged, as a first step, by considering the piece's most prominent pitch centres (D at the opening of the piece, shifting to E in the concerto's central lament, and finally arriving on A in the cello's defiant repeated notes at the piece's end).

Preludes and Fugue could be interpreted, in turn, as an even more radical polemical response to narrative and anti-narrative musical structuring than *Livre pour orchestre*. The piece can be played from start to finish in the order given in the score. If the shorter version of the fugue is performed, however, or the fugue is omitted entirely, the seven preludes can be rearranged and played in any order. On the one hand, therefore, the piece could be considered Lutosławski's most 'open' formal experiment (and the closest he came, consciously or otherwise, to realizing a structure akin to Mallarmé's *Le Livre*); on the other, when the piece is performed with the entire fugue, the work becomes a 'closed' polar opposite to its more flexible performing options. Elements of this music, however, may not be as polarized as this disparity would initially suggest. As Casken has demonstrated, the ostensible discontinuity of the 'open' form of Lutosławski's preludes-only performing option is permitted by a meticulous organisation of the transitions between the endings and beginnings of each

prelude.¹² The fugue, furthermore, might be read to reflect similar tensions in its *akcja*, not least through the initial juxtaposition of, and eventual interference between, its ‘dynamic’, goal-directed, metered episodes (with the ‘consonant’ i.c. pairing 2+5) and its ‘static’, *ad libitum*, fugal subjects (with the ‘dissonant’ i.c. pairing 1+6). Casken notes that ‘a blurring of identity occurs’ between the subjects and episodes in the fugue as the piece develops¹³ – a blurring between tradition and innovation which, as well as creating the music’s most profound developmental momentum, could also be heard to reflect aspects of its dualistic conception and identity.

Les espaces du sommeil could then be utilized to explore Lutosławski’s approach to using ‘key ideas’ to highlight aspects of a text being set by a composition including a voice. Two key refrains in Desnos’s text, ‘Dans la nuit’ and ‘Il y a toi’, become attached, for instance, to contrasted ‘key ideas’ – one pairing i.c.s 1+3 and used to generate tightly clustered sounds (for example Fig. 5/b. 10 to Fig. 9), the other pairing the more consonant i.c.s 2+5 (at, for example, Fig. 10). Lutosławski’s ‘key ideas’ thereby help to clarify the oppositional nature of these repeated facets of the text and their structural roles in the form of the piece.

One should not be surprised if such ideas can be explored through these pieces, given that they come from the same period as *Livre pour orchestre* and, indeed, Lutosławski’s development of his poetics of *akcja*. What may seem surprising, however, is that similar ideas can be explored in music from both the earlier and later periods of his career. By returning to a pair of compositions already mentioned in the earlier parts of this thesis, and more specifically by augmenting readings by Rust (the other scholar to have given sustained and rigorous theoretical attention to the specific

¹² See Casken, ‘Transition and Transformation’, p. 11.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 12. Casken actually uses the terms ‘static’ and ‘dynamic’ to describe, respectively, the fugue’s subjects and episodes.

question of *akcja*), the following thumbnail analytical sketches seek to demonstrate the potential benefits of carrying out such extensions of the present study's arguments, both in order to provide new readings of important compositions and also to demonstrate ways in which this thesis's propositions can challenge, but also enrich, existing work on Lutosławski's music.

In Chapter One, Rust's discussion of the Concerto for Orchestra was mentioned as an example of a piece in which, in his view, texture begins to dominate Lutosławski's compositional thinking, thus preparing the ground for the conception of *akcja* that Rust believes to operate in Lutosławski's mature music. Treating the harmonic and thematic ideas in this composition as more than just the raw stuff of texture types – listening, for example, for a 'key idea'-like musical thought with ramifications for the development of the entire piece – yields interesting results. Stucky, for instance, notes a 'systematic tonal scheme' linking all three movements of the Concerto for Orchestra 'in a chain of third-relations'.¹⁴ Can a 'key idea' clearly related to this structure be heard at any point during the composition? Lutosławski's driving development of the Mazovian folk tune 'A czyje to kuniki' at the start of the 'Intrada' is a strong candidate (see Ex. A.1).

The accented pitches in the cellos and basses' opening statement of Lutosławski's development of 'A czyje to kuniki' do not merely initiate the compelling syncopations of a propulsive introductory texture: they also accent elements of the piece's tonal scheme (D, E flat, F sharp, B flat) as outlined by Stucky. Furthermore, prominent intervals formed by the theme's accented pitches anticipate the scheme's

¹⁴ Stucky, *Lutosławski*, p. 51.

Ex. A.1: Concerto for Orchestra, opening

9
8 Allegro maestoso (♩ = 80)

Fagotti

Tromboni

Tuba

Timpani

Gran cassa

Arpe I & II

Pianoforte

Violoncelli

Contrabassi

1

Trap.

Ar.

Vle.

Vc.

Cb.

tonal progress by i.c. 3 and 4 steps (see Ex. A.2 ii; Ex. A.2 i reproduces Stucky's illustration of the 'principal tone centers' of this scheme) as does the minor sixth (i.c. 4) formed between the sustained F sharp of the basses' pedal note and the cellos' repeated Ds. The rising i.c. 5s of the cello theme can also be related to the theme's transposition

Ex. A.2: (i) Pitch centres in Concerto for Orchestra (ii) accented pitches in first theme

Handwritten musical notation for Example A.2. Part (i) shows three measures labeled I, II, and III on a single staff. Measure I starts with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). It contains a half note G4, a quarter note A4, and a quarter note B4. Measure II contains a half note C5, a quarter note D5, and a quarter note E5. Measure III contains a half note F#5, a quarter note G#5, and a quarter note A5. Part (ii) shows two staves. The top staff has five measures, each containing a half note and a quarter note, with various accidentals and fingerings. The bottom staff has one measure with a half note and a quarter note, followed by 'etc.'

by rising perfect fifths during the movement's introduction. Rust's approach to the Concerto for Orchestra, which would encourage one to read this section primarily as an event whose texture's 'dominant-like' function leads dynamically to a point of 'tonic-like' repose at Fig. 5, would divert attention away from thematic and harmonic elements germane to a more variegated understanding of the composition's expressive and formal structure. The music does build dynamically towards a point of arrival at Fig. 5. That theme, in turn, is the next event that an 'active' listener might be expected to emplot with regard to the music's unfolding plot, and not least because much of the drama played out in this movement concerns the interaction of the opening theme and the melody first heard at Fig. 5. As with the start of Symphony No. 1, however, the material of the introduction is far from being merely a rhetorical preparation for a more important moment of arrival. The cello and bass statement at the start of the Concerto

for Orchestra can be heard as an opening ‘key idea’; or, rather, as the type of idea that Lutosławski would shortly theorize in those terms.

The above analytical sketch suggests the possibility of considering new relationships between the music of the early, middle and late periods, not least because strongly melodic writing re-emerged in Lutosławski’s later style. In this respect, there may therefore be links to be made between the prototype ‘key ideas’ of the early period (the chord at the start of Symphony No. 1, the opening theme of the Concerto for Orchestra), via the ‘independent complex[es] of sounds bounded in time’ in mature works like *Livre pour orchestre*, to later pieces in which ‘key ideas’ may once again be articulated in more straight-forwardly thematic guises, as Lutosławski’s language evolved to readmit clearly articulated melodies. One might even question whether permitting the formation of more traditionally thematic ‘key ideas’ was among Lutosławski’s motivations in re-imagining melody during his late period.

Given the centrality of ‘ice-cold’ and ‘warm’ i.c. ‘qualities’ to Rust’s reading of *Chain 2* (the opening of which is shown in Ex. A3), and particularly the persuasive analytical point he makes concerning the ways in which Lutosławski switches between those ‘qualities’ both to generate intensifying expressive effects and to forge structural associations between climactic moments in the score, one might expect to find ‘key ideas’ presented early in the piece that are connected to these two harmonic types and their opposing roles. And this is precisely what one finds. Ex. A.4 illustrates the i.c.s formed by the violin’s ascending and descending gestures in the piece’s opening passage. The soloist’s initial gambit in *Chain 2* includes both a nimble ascent of interlocking i.c.s 1, 5, and 6 (‘ice-cold’) and a falling chain of spiky thirds and fifths or

Ex. A.3: Chain 2, opening

Musical score for "Chain 2, opening". The score is written for the following instruments:

- fl.** (Flute): Two staves, 1. and 2., both marked *pp*.
- campane** (Campana): One staff, marked *pp*.
- vno solo** (Violino solo): One staff, marked *f* and *p*, with a tempo marking $\text{♩} = \text{ca } 100$.
- vni** (Violini): Two staves, I and II, both marked *pizz.* and *f*.
- vle** (Viola): One staff, marked *pizz.* and *f*.
- vc.** (Violoncello): One staff, marked *f*.

 The score includes various musical notations such as dynamics (*pp*, *f*, *p*, *poco f*), articulation (*pizz.*), and tempo markings (*rit.*, *a tempo ma poco meno mosso*). A diagram at the top right shows a sequence of notes with a circled "1" and a downward arrow, indicating a specific musical structure. A dashed line labeled "rit. 1)" connects the flute and campana staves to the violin solo staff. A dashed line labeled "(2)" connects the flute and campana staves to the violin solo staff.

Ex. A.4: *Chain 2*, i.c.s in opening violin line

Handwritten musical score for the opening violin line of *Chain 2*. The score is written on two staves. The top staff is in treble clef and the bottom staff is in bass clef. The key signature has one sharp (F#). The tempo is marked "♩. = ca. 100". The first measure of the top staff is marked "p" and the first measure of the bottom staff is marked "(1+5+6)". The second measure of the top staff is marked "< p" and the second measure of the bottom staff is marked "(3+4+5)". The third measure of the top staff is marked "(p)" and the third measure of the bottom staff is marked "(3+4+5)". The tempo is marked "(a tempo ma poco meno mosso)".

i.c.s 3, 4 and 5 ('warm'), thereby initiating the 'quality' contrast central to the development of the piece's *akcja*.

The idea of something like *akcja* being the basis of Lutosławski's entire output is not new. Stucky, for instance, views an approach to form as psychological narrative¹⁵ as one of the constants of Lutosławski's oeuvre. Stucky's focus on Maliszewski's thinking permits this argument, as expressed in the following statement:

Thus I contend that a fresh look at all [Lutosławski's] music, early to late, bearing in mind his conservative, classically-oriented, Maliszewski-influenced formal tastes, is bound to reveal a high degree of continuity in this domain.¹⁶

Following the ideas laid out in this thesis, one might prefer to think of the 'constant' being Lutosławski's commitment to the idea of musical narrativity, as learned in part from the Viennese classics via his studies with Maliszewski. Stucky's central sentiment, however, holds true. The findings of this thesis suggest that the reason why even the middle and late period works can be made to yield to a Maliszewski-inspired analytical approach is Lutosławski's underlying attachment to the idea of musical

¹⁵ See Stucky, 'Change and Constancy', pp. 161-2.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 162.

narrativity (an attachment also underlying, one might suppose, Maliszewski's 'psychological' approach).

This chameleon-like constant may ultimately prove to be locatable at the heart of Lutosławski pieces from throughout his career, changing its camouflage from the neo-classical stylings of the early period to adapt to the more innovative surroundings of its manifestation as the concept of *akcja* during the middle period, and then evolving again in a later development which, in light of Lutosławski's more traditional approach to the articulation of thematic materials post-1979, may in turn represent a rapprochement between the early and middle periods. Skowron writes, in the introduction to *Lutosławski Studies*, that a principal aim of that collection

was to verify a hypothesis that Lutosławski created his own *equivalents* of the musical qualities and aesthetic values stemming from the tonal tradition. These equivalents, which reveal themselves mainly in the area of form and pitch organisation, correspond to the idea of a congruent, goal-directed formal process, and to the sonorous aspects of tonal harmonic structures.¹⁷

Serious consideration must now be given, this thesis proposes, to the possibility that this 'congruent, goal-directed formal process' was what Lutosławski came to call *akcja*.

If Lutosławski is deemed to have successfully transposed tonal musical narrativity into his mature style and beyond, one might therefore formulate the means to challenge those who find his music lacking in musical substance. One must surely regard as an achievement of some distinction the increasing finesse with which the elements of his music combine post-1956 to articulate 'static' and 'dynamic' events and thus move sensuously and schematically, in what can be emplotted as a goal-directed fashion, between pivotal musical moments developing 'key ideas' and their 'quality'-based implications. *Akcja* does not, of course, replace functional tonality in

¹⁷ Skowron, 'Preface', in Skowron, ed., *Lutosławski Studies*, p. vii.

Lutosławski's mature music, but the composer's solutions surely place him among the ranks of those twentieth-century composers who confronted both the compositional and conceptual issues raised by the dissolution of tonality in search of alternative ways of evoking, amongst other things, musical narrativity.

As J. Kramer argues, in response to the loss of *a priori* continuity in twentieth-century music,

early post[-]tonal composers were forced to extreme lengths to create contextually a sense of goal-directed motion, since continuity was no longer a given of the system. The solutions of Schoenberg, Berg and Bartók, for example, are often powerful and convincing, but they are nonetheless constructs.¹⁸

The emancipation of discontinuity, in turn, was embraced by many other composers (from Stravinsky's *Symphonies of Wind Instruments* to Stockhausen's *Moment-forms* and beyond) as the century progressed. Some figures, however, continued to wrestle with the 'consequences of deposing' musical continuity and 'the assumption that one event leads to another, that there is implication in music'¹⁹ by seeking to create their own continuity constructs, albeit within increasingly idiosyncratic post-tonal idioms.

As Kramer writes,

the struggle against the crumbling of continuity lends great strength to the most successful of these pieces. I have in mind such composers as Sessions, Carter, Gerhard, and Henze.²⁰

On the proviso that the struggles for continuity which Kramer describes can be thought of as being, in Lutosławski's case, a struggle against the crumbling of musical narrativity, it seems reasonable to suggest that Lutosławski could be added to Kramer's list and thus, in some quarters, critically reappraised as a composer of similar standing.

¹⁸ Kramer, 'Moment Form', p. 177.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 178.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 178.

Lutosławski did not, this thesis proposes, create a vacuous simulacrum of tonal narrativity, merely giving the impression of one event leading to another through ‘statistical’ means without simultaneously re-imagining tonality’s intimations of ‘syntactical’ harmonic and thematic logic. His music is not all discourse and no story. Rather, through his conception of ‘key ideas’ (plus an armature of supporting expressive and rhetorical devices), the working through of which at nodal points in an *akcja* guides and structures his goal-directed constructs (and thus the emplotment and interpretation of those constructs by ‘active’ perceivers), Lutosławski sought to re-imagine tonal musical narrativity without compromising the individuality of his mature post-tonal style. That some of his most effective pieces can be heard to question even as they struggle to recreate the idea of plot in music – in reflections of the complicated but potent relationship to modernism which generates some of his music’s most profound and provocative moments – should only hasten the ushering in of a fuller assessment of his achievements in this area. By analysing potential instances of *akcja*, the field of Lutosławski studies can contribute to this process, while continuing to develop its understanding of what may eventually come to be recognized as the fundamental achievement of Lutosławski’s powerfully expressed and adroitly constructed music: its musical narrativity.

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