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**Caught in the Web of Worlds II:
Postmodernist Wanderings through the ASC Labyrinths
in Kazuo Ishiguro's *The Unconsoled*: Philosophy, Emotions, Perception**

*It is not that there are many different UPs;
rather, verticality enters our experience in
many different ways and so gives rise to
many different metaphors.*

G. Lakoff and M. Johnson.
Metaphors We Live By.

1. Introduction. Changing the vector

The year of 2011 has witnessed a new wave of interest to Kazuo Ishiguro's 1995 *The Unconsoled* – not only the interest of readers, literary critics and literary scholars, but also that of linguistic community. Given that the novel is an alluring, often hallucinatory and nightmarish discourse of a pianist who aspires to live up to the image of world saviour but fails, at once *a monsterpiece* (Havskov 2009: 7) which, according to James Wood, invented "its own category of badness" (Patterson 2005) and an enigmatic work of art dealing with broad human themes (Havskov 2009: 9), such interest can be accounted for by several converging reasons. The core of it is what might be called *the affective turn* in humanities (Clough and Halley 2007; Athanasiou, Hantzaroula, Yannakopoulos 2008) as a natural extension of the *cognitive turn*, which has been largely provoked by the researchers' *cognition/emotion inseparability* stance (Damasio 1999, 2000/1994; Oatley 1992). For cognitive sciences, and cognitive poetics in particular, it does not only mean fostering the explorations of emotions and affect from a multidisciplinary perspective, through establishing new cross-area correlations and incorporating new areas of research, e.g., cognitive

musicology (Cross 2007; Kelley 2010; Mc Kevitt, P., S. Ó Nualláin and C. Mulvihill 2002; McParland 2006; Zbikowski 2005 et al.). It also entails a further shift from the study of *ordinary consciousness* to what is known as *altered states of consciousness* (ASC) viewed as a linguistically relevant neurophysiologic, psychological (Spivak 2004: 27-32), and aesthetic phenomenon, in the latter case traditionally related to composing and interpreting poetry (Tsur 1992: 411-430), frequently a sleeplike condition referred to as *trance*. However, not only poetry, but quite a few prosaic works, including modernist and postmodernist, can be regarded as ASC discourse manifestations where the protagonist/narrator displays the properties of *a liminal persona*, or the one in the transitional state, a state of being on the threshold of or in-between two different existential planes (see La Shure 2005 on the anthropological notion of liminality, elaborated by Arnold van Gennep (1960) and further Victor Turner (1974: 53-92), plunged into the ASC contexts. The intricate texture of such literary discourse as well as cognitive and emotional aberrations that underpin and configure its linguistic intricacies bring to the foreground the issue of revealing semantic and cognitive mechanisms behind ASC discourses being turned to aesthetic ends. Probing into these mechanisms envisages, on the one hand, elaboration of new methodological tools or, rather, modification of the available ones to fine-tune them to the analysis of such highly ambiguous, often palimpsestic texts, and, on the other hand, defining the key notions that might become instrumental in the interpretation of ASC literary discourses.

Methodologically, in literary analysis of *The Unconsoled* the prevalence has been usually given to psychoanalytical tools per se or those used in combination with other analytical techniques, e.g., psychiatric (see the overview in Havskov 2009: 10-20). An integrated approach to Ishiguro's novel might turn enlightening and heuristically significant when re-planted into the linguistic soil, as in Elżbieta Chrzanowska-Kluczevska's paper (see this volume) that combines a text-world analysis of the novel as oneiric discourse with the

emphasis on its stylistically relevant Freudian tropics and narrative modalities. However, insights into ASC literary texts that help to trace the narrative principles of their dream-like construction still leave undefined a specific "pleasure through pain" (Wurth 2005: 18) atmosphere of *The Unconsoled*, the magic the novel exercises on its readership, or at least a major part of it.

Hypothetically, such hypnotic magic is a cumulative subliminal phenomenon, grounded in the interlacing of multiple contential (semantic, conceptual, preconceptual) and narrative discourse layers or networks in their internal tension and rhythmical oscillations, which emotionally resonate with patterns of the readers' unconscious (Vorobyova 2006: 72-86), thus creating the effect similar to the listeners' response to music where pitch changes and fluctuations as well as rhythm play a crucial role.

Without any global pretence for deciphering the workings of the novel's "postmodern sublime" (Wurth 2005: 12 etc.), this paper aims to outline some facets of its conceptual organization that contribute to such enigmatic aura. For this we suggest to shift the vector of analysis from examining the horizontal (modal and tropological) dimensions of the novel's worlds to scanning their vertical dimension linked to the narrative's conceptual and preconceptual rhythmic design associated with the idea of *verticality*. Following the 19th century English art and literary critic Walter Pater in his essayistic maxim that "all arts constantly tend towards the 'musical'" (cit. after Wurth 2005: 14) and accepting the links between postmodern literary texture and "non-representational ways of instrumental music" (ibid.), we intend here to try and account for at least some facets of the novel's hidden agenda, related to philosophy of self-identification and emotionally charged personality metamorphosis in the sensory context of contemporary music. It envisages a further risky journey into the altered-state-of-consciousness realm, involving other than modal (horizontal) dimensions of *The Unconsoled*, which accrete by way of anamorphosis into a series of

discourse worlds (Chrzanowska-Kluczevska 2012) – philosophic, emotional, and sensory, thus shaping the *vertical context* (Gyubbenet 2010/1991: 39) of the novel.

1.1. Key notions of the *Monsterpiece*

Retrospectively, the text-inscribed concept of VERTICALITY, of moving along the vertical scale that embodies the hidden rhythm of the narrative with its growing tension and suspense which release on Thursday night of the performance, comes to the surface as the initial hint (the title of a musical piece by a would-be contemporary composer) at the very beginning of the novel, when Ryder, the protagonist, having just arrived at the hotel to find no one to welcome him, suddenly realizes that there is some background music being played inside the building, e.g.,

Someone was playing a single short phrase – it was from the second movement of Mullery's *Verticality* – over and over in a slow, preoccupied manner
(Ishiguro 1996: 4).

Further on, VERTICALITY manifests itself as a background conceptual schema in the lengthy fragment (pp. 4-11) that depicts Ryder's ascent in the hotel elevator, accompanied by the elderly porter, Gustav (presumably, a mental double of the protagonist's father), and a young lady, Miss Hilde Stratmann, who was supposed to be in charge of the pianist's tour. The importance of the ascent, of moving up the vertical scale, is reinforced by some weird time-extension shifts that give the narrative a mild surrealist colouring that will later on, as the plot unfolds, get a much stronger emphasis.

Actually, Lakoff's and Johnson's (1980: 56) claim as to "the centrality of up-down orientation in our motor programs and everyday functioning" and their observation concerning a wide range of different "experiences on which the UP metaphors are based" (op. cit.: 19) – special, social, emotional, all of them being *cultural through and through* (op. cit.: 59, 57), seem to have been well-supported in the introductory part (pp. 3-17) of the book's

first chapter, which, generally, might be regarded as programmatic for the novel's design. To broaden the scope of *vertical experiences*, by the end of the book's initial fragment the UP is employed as a memory trigger, e.g.,

I was just starting to doze off when something suddenly made me open my eyes again and stare up at the ceiling. <...> All this came back to me as I continued to stare up at the ceiling (Ishiguro 1996: 16, 17),

in another surrealistically-laden scene of *déjà-vu*, when Ryder, seized by the sense of recognition, took the hotel room he was in for his bedroom in his aunt's house somewhere on the border of England and Wales, where he stayed as a child.

Other manifestations of the VERTICALITY schema, now in its inverted, TOP-DOWN format, show up in the novel's introductory part, getting more and more obtrusive further in the narrative. They are related to the protagonist's desperate attempts to fall asleep and relax, the descriptions of which imply a downward vector of motion, e.g.,

I collapsed fully clothed on the bed (Ishiguro 1996: 15),

I felt myself sliding into a deep and exhausted sleep (Ishiguro 1996: 17).

These attempts were mainly unsuccessful, because there always appeared someone to disturb Ryder – as, for instance, the sentence, opening the second chapter of the novel, reads: *I was woken by the ringing of the telephone on the bedside cabinet* (Ishiguro 1996: 155). To furnish the pattern, a similar statement, now opening chapter three, accentuates the idea of *verticality* in its visual mode, as if in passing, e.g.,

I awoke to find bright sunlight pouring in through the vertical blinds and was seized by the panicky feeling I had let far too much of the morning slip by
(Ishiguro 1996: 293).

Interestingly, the idea of *verticality* materializes in Ishiguro's book not only verbally but also in a multimodal fashion. It is discernible in almost all (10 out of 14 available in the librarything website – see Covers) book cover designs of the novel in its different editions: from gloomy medieval gothic vaults in the current *Vintage books* publication to the steep

uphill road against the cityscape at dusk in the 2005 *Faber and Faber* one and back to the 1995 *Faber and Faber* edition with its complex surrealistic design where a faceless torso of a man (false identity?) in an immaculate jacket with a tower-shaped tie overhangs an empty labyrinth with a crowd of people at its backside, presumably symbolizing the protagonist's scattered mind. Such design matches the 'twisted fiction' label given to this category of books by the Faber Fiction editor Angus Cargill (2009).

The picture of conceptual multimodality would not be complete without commenting on some other book cover designs of *The Unconsoled* and its translations, where verticality becomes an essential part of the mis-en-scene. Here belong: (i) the 1995 *Knopf Canada* cover with a view of a half empty terraced conference hall; (ii) a weird tripartite sea-above-the-woods-above-the-buildings layered construction and a more traditional street-wall design (reminding of Ryder's wanderings in his desperate search of the Concert hall just before the Thursday night performance started) in two *De Troostelozen* Dutch editions, the 1995 *Atlas* and 1997 *Pandora* ones, respectively; (iii) another very strange Lego-like upstanding construction in the cover of the 1996 *Die Ungetrösteten* German *Rowolt-Reinbek* edition; (iv) two close-ups of a pianist playing, differing in their zooming-in/out degree, in *L'inconsolé* published by *Calmann-Lévy* in 2002 (with an accentuated verticality of the pianist's stature) and *The Unconsoled* published by *Knopf Doubleday* at 1999, where the effect of verticality is achieved due to the pianist's hand drawn as pending over the keyboard; (v) a funny, somewhat erotic picture of a slender female leg in a lace stocking in *Die Ungetrösteten: Roman* cover of the 2009 *Verlag* edition; (vi) trees against the setting sun (a non-identified publisher); (vii) a fragment of a labyrinth, positioned in such a way that it might be taken for a vertically (bottom-up and top-down) arranged pattern in the 1999 Paris *Calmann-Lévy* edition book cover of *L'inconsolé*.

Similarly, the idea of *verticality* is manifested in the cover design of the 2008 *Eksmo-Domino* Russian edition, where the uphill street of a residential area, lined with greyish apartment houses that are decorated with stylish street lamps, opens a view of a cathedral spire that is made more salient due to the upward pas of two ballerinas dancing in the street. The picture foregrounds an upright piano with an open keyboard, played by an adult and a child, which creates a kind a balance between the two dimensions of the design – vertical and horizontal.

This intermedial digression illustrates the way the key motives of Ishiguro's novel – the search for *identity*, wandering the endless *labyrinths* of human relations, *claustrophobic anxiety*, *music* in its social and personal significance, and some others – are highlighted non-verbally. Practically all of these motives are also punctuated verbally in the very first pages of the book, and even in its opening paragraph (the protagonist's bewilderment and the taxi driver's embarrassment on finding no one to meet the long-awaited guest, the driver's wandering the deserted lobby in search of anyone). However, bringing these verbal markers together needs some interpretive effort, as they are mostly scattered all over the narrative, more often than not lacking stylistic foregrounding, and thus might be taken as textually important mainly in retrospect. It can be illustrated by the examples below, presenting different degrees and formats of claustrophobia, distantly located in the *emotive crescendo* (Tsur 1992: 446) manner,

The lobby was reasonably spacious <...> But the ceiling was low and had a definite sag, creating a slightly claustrophobic mood, and despite the sunshine outside the light was gloomy (Ishiguro 1996: 3),

I had certain plans then, such as you do when you are young, when you don't realise how limited time is, when you don't realise there's a shell built around you, a hard shell so you CAN'T – GET – OUT! (Ishiguro 1996: 348).

The way such *delayed categorization* (Tsur 1992: 415) works is exemplified in the novel's opening by the protagonist's reaction to music he has been previously oblivious of, e.g.,

'<...> And listen to him now! Still hard at it, working thins out by himself.'

He indicated the rear of the lobby. Only then did I become aware that a piano was being played somewhere in the building, just audible above the muffled noise of the traffic outside (Ishiguro 1996: 4).

All this makes the narrative a kind of readers' interpretation guide, suggesting a possibility of reshuffling the focus of attention from salient to seemingly insignificant background details which later might be conceptualized as semantically important, due to anamorphosis that envisages taking a specific vantage point to reconstitute a distorted or diffuse image (Anamorphosis). Delayed anamorphic conceptualizations grounded in "turning into figure what is usually perceived as ground" (Tsur 2009: 237) are reminiscent of the way *a megametaphor* as "a conceptual feature that runs throughout the text", contributing "to the reader's sense of the general meaning or 'gist' of the work and its significance" (Stockwell 2002: 111; see also Chrzanowska-Kluczevska's paper in this volume), is processed. Unlike the established approach to megametaphors as accumulating numerous micrometaphors that occur in a text (ibid.), bringing together "the metaphors in a text into an overarching structure" (Werth 1999: 324), we rely upon its somewhat wider interpretation as "quintessentially discursive" "metaphorical undercurrents" "that express fundamental cultural frames" (op. cit.: 328, 324, 329) and accumulate in their global discursive sense the meanings of both metaphorical, including *sleeping metaphors* (Goatly 1997: 31-35), and non-metaphorical linguistic expressions.

Accordingly, we proceed from the assumption that construing the VERTICALITY megaschema as a constituent of the conceptual framework pertaining to Ishiguro's narrative might go along similar anamorphic, megametaphorical lines, drawing upon the narrative texture of the novel and image-schematic properties of the UP, UP-DOWN, and DOWN-UP sensory-motor representations.

1.2. Key terms and techniques of analysis

From the list of terms employed in this paper (discourse worlds, altered states of consciousness, liminality, anamorphosis, multimodality, etc.) three key terms seem to require a more detailed comment – *vertical context*, *image schema*, and *emotional resonance*.

The notion of *vertical context* in its philological interpretation was introduced by Russian scholars O. Akhmanova and I. Gyubbenet to denote an extratextual context that accumulates in its structure additional information necessary for a full-fledged readers' literary response. Such information is being built up through implying the literary work's chronological and historical background, world and national cultural specificity, the author's psychological idiosyncrasies, confessional and philosophic intertextuality, literary trend the text belongs to, and so on (Gyubbenet 2010/1991: 39). This semantic category is implicative by default, but in case of its even less than minimal textual explication it might generate a huge array of associations, thus exercising an enormous impact on the readers' interpretation of the literary work, sometimes verging on its *overinterpretation* (Eco 1994/1992: 45-66).

The vertical context of *The Unconsoled* is to a great extent shaped by Confucian motifs, whose in-depth analysis in the "third wave Confucianism" terms, focussing on its dialogue with the postmodernism worldview, was suggested by John Rothfork (2008). He refers to the Confucian conception of Ideal/Perfect person/man (*Junzi*) in the explanation of Ryder's failure in his "psychoanalytical quest for self-discovery" (ibid.). All in all, Rothfork's assumption that "Japanese Confucianism provides the vocabulary and scheme to explain the novel" (ibid.) seems well-grounded, disregarding the fact that "Ishiguro has frequently expressed annoyance with the reviewers' tendency to let all explanatory roads lead to Japan in discussing his works, having mistaken his last name for a road sign" (Havskov 2009: 11). In fact there are no explicit textual clues in *The Unconsoled*, that might evoke any direct associations with the Confucian teaching, except for Ryder's mental picture of a possible

pleasant talk with an electrician on a "tram running a continuous circuit" (Ishiguro 1996: 534) in the last pages of the novel, where the latter is referred to as an ideal person, e.g.,

<...> I began to picture myself, already back in my seat, exchanging a pleasant talk with the electrician, glancing out between mouthfuls at the early-morning streets. The electrician was in many ways the ideal person for me to talk to at this moment. He was clearly kind-hearted, but at the same time careful not to be intrusive

(Ishiguro 1996: 534).

Notwithstanding the lack of explicitness in manifesting the philosophical ingredient of the novel's vertical context, it can be made more tangible through identifying some conceptual peaks of the story, while following the dramatic narrative turns and/or salient stylistic aberrations of the novel's texture. Such a peak occurs in the description of Ryder's long-awaited speech at the municipal reception, which eventually turned into an undecipherable haiku, e.g.,

I saw I would have to take control of the situation before it disintegrated into chaos. With so many already on their feet, I decided the best course would be to elevate myself above them on some pedestal. <...> I clambered up onto my chair.

The clamour ceased instantly, people freezing where they stood to stare up at me. From my new vantage point I saw that over half the guests had left their tables and I decided to begin without delay.

'Collapsing curtain rails! Poisoned rodents! Misprinted score sheets!'

(Ishiguro 1996: 145).

Here, the mandarin position Ryder has been unjustly ascribed to by the town people, embodied in the conceptual metaphor CONTROL IS UP, is shown as a rather unstable one due to the constant narrative shuttling along the *verticality* scale, thus *switching on* the megaconcept of VERTICALITY which incorporates the respective orientational image schemas – UP-DOWN, BALANCE, and CENTRE-PERIPHERY (*disintegrated into chaos*).

The notion of *image schema* defined by Johnson (1987: xvi) as "a recurring dynamic pattern of our perceptual interactions and motor programs that gives coherence and structure to our experience" integrates information from multiple modalities (Hampe 2006: 1) at different linguistic and discursive levels – from locative expressions of place (Stockwell

2002; 16) to narrative structures (Talmy 2000: 417-482) and media discourse (Potapenko 2007: 204-205). For all I know, there have been little done so far to accommodate this notion, either as a heuristic device or as a research tool, to the analysis of big pieces of fiction. Although "image schemata do not work wonders by themselves" (Tsur 2009: 260), they fit well into the linguistic theory of *emotional resonance* in literary communication (Vorobyova 2006), with its key assumption that readers subconsciously react to some schematic gestalts (Hampe 2006: 1), simple iconic images inscribed in the multilevel literary structure (Vorobyova 2006: 75-77).

Eliciting such images requires a combination of disentanglement techniques, as procedures of literary text conceptual analysis, which, relying upon linguistic anchors in literary texture, help to construe a network of conceptual models related to a specific domain, here *philosophic*, *affective*, and *sensory*.

2. Facets of analysis

2.1. Philosophy: in search of identity

As it has been mentioned earlier, the *philosophic* domain of *The Unconsoled* can be traced back to the Confucian conception of Ideal person with its *five human, or filial relationships* (ruler to ruled, father to son, husband to wife, elder brother to younger brother, friend to friend) (Rothfork 2008), outlining in a rhizome-like way the protagonist's protean identity through his narrative avatars (Boris → Stephan → Ryder → Brodsky) framed by different social contexts at various times of life (ibid.).

The search for redefining one's self, world, and values testifies to Ryder's disorientation of a liminal persona who, according to Victor Turner, is "neither here nor there; <...> between and betwixt the positions assigned and arrayed by law, custom, convention, and ceremony" (cit. after La Shure 2005). Thus, the Confucian model of the perfect person

possessing kindness/humanness, propriety, filial piety, sincerity, and wisdom (Rothfork 2008) undergoes a profound deconstruction in the novel. In his quest for unattainable goals, being charged on unmanageable demands, Ryder, practically an imitator, completely fails to be the perfect person he has been prior held for, remaining anxious of *seeming to be* rather than actually *being*, and relaxing a bit only when he is *no longer caring what sort of impression he created* (Ishiguro 1996: 528).

The idea of *verticality* that had accompanied Ryder's attempts to cope with his numerous commitments (climbing the steep hill together with the journalists who simply abused him – p. 179-181; descending a risky staircase, while following Mr. Christoff, a dethroned musical authority of the town people – p. 183-184; driving in his company along a steeply curving road – p. 187-190; wandering, up and down, the walkways with Boris and his grandfather, Gustav, in search of the family's former apartment – p. 217 and on; climbing a footpath to a little wooden hut where he could rehearse before the performance – p. 356, and other episodes) surfaced anew in another culmination peak of the story, in the morning after the phantasmagoria of the Thursday night performance, which blurred in Ryder's afflicted psyche with its eve, e.g.,

Whatever disappointments I had just suffered did not, I realised, reduce my responsibility to all those who had waited many weeks for the moment I sat before them in front of a piano. In other words, it was my duty to perform on this evening at least to my usual standards. To do anything less – I suddenly sensed it strongly – would be to open some strange door through which I would hurtle into a dark, unknown space (Ishiguro 1996: 518),

Not only there was the audience absent in it [the auditorium] entirely, all the seating had vanished as well. <...> before me now was a vast, dark, empty space
(Ishiguro 1996: 519).

Here, the vision of falling out through some strange door into a dark empty space, presumably symbolizing death, evokes a cluster of concepts – DARKNESS, EMPTINESS, VASTNESS, UNKNOWN / STRANGE, FALLING INTO, TRANSITION, relegated not just to the protagonist's

ontic anxiety, caused by the relative threat to self-preservation and self-enhancement, but also to his ontological anxiety, the fear of annihilation (Hendrix 1967: 46). This definitely points to what might be called a cross-domain interaction, where the philosophic and emotional ingredients of the novel's vertical context interpenetrate.

2.2. Emotions: in search of harmony

The *affective* domain of *The Unconsoled*, closely linked to the Kafkaesque motifs of anxiety, unfolds in a wave-like fashion from the protagonist's weariness as a result of imposed insomnia to his despondency, fear and panic (verbally marked by the respective emotional labels – see the list below), only rarely punctuated by relaxation and emotional release (markers italicized), e.g.,

Preoccupied (manner, air etc.) (p. 4, 13, 14, 21, 35, 81, 109, 119 et al.) → worry (p. 13, 19, 20, 23, 53, 124, 169), trouble (p. 14, 26, 37, 133) → terror (p. 66) → anguish (p. 71) → *for the first time in hours began to feel a sense of relaxation coming over me* (p. 79) → an intense rage (p. 80) → frustration and anger came flooding back (p. 87) → a lot of pressure (p. 89) → the panic mounting further (p. 90) / retreating in panic (p. 127) → anger rising (p. 91) → anguish mounting within me (p. 92) → despondency (p. 109) → the growing annoyance (p. 115) → an intense irritation (p. 115) → growing increasingly tense (p. 120) / tense with worry (p. 126) / new tension in the air (p. 135) / the underlying tension was increasing (p. 135) → confusion (p. 129) → a huge embarrassment steadily engulfing him (p. 129) → a despairing talk (p. 126) / a desperate sadness starting to engulf me (p. 155) → growing increasingly emotional again (p. 156) → a powerful sense of loss welled up inside me (p. 157) → *I was in something approaching a tranquil mood* (p. 159) → *feeling more contented than ever* (p. 161) → suppressing a sense of panic (p. 170) → I felt a panic beginning to seize me (p. 172) / the feeling of panic had grown rapidly (p. 172) / the growing fear and panic (p. 172) / I felt a panic beginning to seize me (p. 176) → fighting off my emotions (p. 172) → something of a shock (p. 176) → an intense sense of irritation (p. 179) / to fuel my irritation (p. 181), etc.

Though the above inventory of emotional labels embraces only one third of the novel's scope, it still allows tracing a kind of emotional narrative rhythm, a sort of affective pulsation (Vorobyova 2006: 74) that adds to the synergy of emotional resonance evoked by the textual fabric. Such rhythm is additionally maintained by a cluster of conceptual metaphors centred around the idea of *verticality*, associated with falling down or sliding into a CONTAINER and

involving such concepts as WATER / FLOOD and SEIZURE / ENGULFMENT that regularly reiterate in the novel's conceptual design, cf.,

I felt my weariness engulfing me and decided there was little point in worrying myself further until I had had a little sleep (Ishiguro 1996: 15),

I felt myself sliding into a deep and exhausted sleep (Ishiguro 1996:17),

An intense urge of weariness came over me so that it was virtually all I could do to stagger back to my bed and collapse on top of it, sinking at once into a deep sleep
(Ishiguro 1996: 116).

Paradoxically, unlike the conceptual pattern of *The Unconsoled*, which is predominantly metaphorical, the linguistic texture of Ishiguro's novel is rather meagre in its metaphorical connotations. Metaphors that are used to describe the emotional state of the characters and the overall atmosphere of the depicted events can be generally categorized as *sleeping* or even *tired* ones (Goatly 1997: 31-35). Contrarily, the aggregate synergetic effect of the novel's affective design, grounded in the in-built diagrammatical WAVE icon with its *verticality*-dominated peak coinciding with the Thursday concert embarrassing finale,

But just at that moment something else occurred which perhaps had been on the cards for some time. Brodsky swung his baton in a large arc, almost simultaneously punching the air with his other hand. As he did so, he appeared to become unstuck. He ascended a few inches into the air, then crashed down across the front of the stage, taking the podium rail, the ironing board, the score, the music stand, all with him
(Ishiguro 1996: 496),

also appears to be crashing due to the semantic accretion eventually standing out in relief as the anamorphic metaphor of EMOTIONAL ZUNAMI, gaining force, raging fiercely for some time and then slowly going out, as in the concluding paragraphs of the novel, e.g.,

Then, as the tram came to a halt, I would perhaps give the electrician one last wave and disembark, secure in the knowledge that I could look forward to Helsinki with pride and confidence (Ishiguro 1996: 528).

Such development of the plot correlates with Victor Turner's scenario of liminality as a temporary state "that must eventually dissolve, for it is a state of great intensity that cannot exist very long without some sort of structure to stabilize it" (cit. after Homans 1995/1979:

207). The harmonizing structure that contributes to the dissolution of Ryder's psychological and emotional liminality is tightly attached in the novel to the domain of music.

2.3. Perception: in search of revelation

The prevalence of auditory effects in the *sensory* domain of *The Unconsoled* looks natural not only because of the protagonist's profession or the immense importance of music among the virtues of Confucian thinking, who preached: "Let a man be stimulated by poetry, established by the rules of propriety, perfected by music" (Confucius). The presence of music in the novel in its multifarious functions – as a counterpart to silence, e.g., *There may have been silence, but inside his [Brotsky's] head, there'd been the whole universe of music* (p. 59); as a chain of recitals, accomplished, failed and missed; as magic, e.g., *Within minutes music cast a spell over us all* (p. 113); as a consolation, e.g., *She'll be like the music. A consolation. A wonderful consolation* (p. 313), and as a challenge, e.g., *The modern forms, they're so complex now. <...> To them [people of the town] it's just crashing noise, a whirl of strange rhythms* (p.185) – helps to create the undercurrent rhythm, similar to that of contemporary music, which is crucial for fictionalization of the altered states of consciousness.

Out of several music-fictionalizing devices used in the novel two struck us as most effective in miming and conceptualizing music in its modern form: a *silence↔sound* narrative pulsation and inscribed *verticality* exercising both an irritating and therapeutic impact on the reader (see Aigen 2009: 238-267 for details of the latter).

The texture of Ishiguro's novel abounds in *silence↔music* auditory fluctuations. It is not only that the word *silence*, its synonyms, including periphrastic ones (as in *I'd come in, hardly say a word, just go to the piano, lift the lid, start playing* – p. 76), and derivatives crop up in every other page of the book; silence is used here in its phenomenological sense – as a weird mode of communication once chosen by Gustav, the porter, and his daughter, Sophie,

which caused them both much pain, affected badly Sophie's son, Boris, but could hardly be overcome.

Such emphasis on silence can be accounted for by at least two reasons: (i) hidden links to Japanese music that has no specific beat but depends much on the so called *ma* – an interval in time and space, close to a dramatic pause, which is not just an empty space but "a concept related to commenting on or engaging in" (Ma); and (ii) an intrinsic connection of silence and contemporary music. It is common knowledge, for instance, that John Cage's famous three-movement composition *4'33"* (1952) is based solely on silence as it "purports to consist of the sounds of the environment that the listeners hear while it is performed" (*4'33"*) by the orchestra without playing any instrument during four minutes and thirty-three seconds.

The in-built VERTICALITY, generally pertaining, as a static phenomenon, a hierarchy, to Western music whose pitch relations are conceptualized and described as RELATIONSHIPS IN VERTICAL SPACE (Zbikowski 2005: 66), in modern musical forms acquires a special dynamic significance as an after-effect of its atonality and the resulting dissonance, making such music, as some composers claim, *soulless* (Atonality). In the culmination of *The Unconsoled*, which depicts Brodsky's long-awaited performance as an orchestra conductor, this lack of soul turns from dissonant to grotesque, almost perverse, producing an effect that *was unnerving, but compelling* (p. 492), both due to grotesqueness of his appearance and behaviour while using an ironing board, *vertically and folded*, as a crutch (455) and due to *ignoring the outer structure of the music*, Mullery's *Verticality* (p. 491, 492).

All this leaves the sensation of confusion, of chaos which has scared Ryder so much – chaos that, according to Confucius, could only be surmounted by music that moulds man's character (Confucius). The circle is locked; we are back to the beginning of the labyrinth, caught in the web of the novel's worlds. Unconsoled?

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