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Mind Reading: Unframed Direct Interior Monologue in European Fiction (review)

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Poetics Today, Volume 22, Number 3, Fall 2001, pp. 708-709 (Review)

Published by Duke University Press



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in Sukenick's book, it finally hit him that there was, since narrative contained all these possibilities within its own potential, absolutely no need for a partitioned, self-contained practice of criticism or critical theory" (73).

Brian McHale, West Virginia University

Vladimir Tumanov, *Mind Reading: Unframed Direct Interior Monologue in European Fiction*. Amsterdam: Editions Rodopi, 1997. viii + 142 pp.

Tumanov's book deals with the most "extreme" form of literary interior monologue, namely texts cast in their entirety as direct ("unframed") representations of the inner discourse of the protagonist (or "thinker," as Tumanov calls him or her) without any narratorial mediation. This category of texts is more or less identical with the one termed by Dorrit Cohn (1978: 217–65) "autonomous monologue," to which she has devoted a chapter in her well-known book *Transparent Minds*. The corpus of this literary form is rather limited, and the "Penelope" section of James Joyce's *Ulysses* may be regarded as its locus classicus. The four monologues Tumanov deals with in his book are seemingly even more autonomous than "Penelope," since the character's inner discourse is presented in them entirely "on its own," without any narratorial mediation in other parts of the text (whereas "Penelope" is framed within the overall narratorial context of Joyce's novel). These four texts are Vsevolod Garshin's "Four Days" (1877), Edouard Dujardin's *Les lauriers sont coupés* (1887), Arthur Schnitzler's *Leutnant Gustl* (1900), and Valéry Larbaud's *Amants, heureux amants . . .* (1921).

Tumanov's study focuses on the ways the unframed direct interior monologue (UDIM) constitutes "an attempt to create a realistic illusion that the reader is allowed to eavesdrop on someone else's private internal discourse" (5). Tumanov, however, is well aware that the UDIM merely gives an *illusion* of private communication and in fact constitutes the very communicative act that it supposedly tries *not* to imitate—that of writing. Therefore the UDIM exists in a state of constant tension between two different goals. Tumanov terms these goals the "quasi-mimetic," which reflects the relationship between the internal addresser and addressee in the self-communicating mind of the thinker, and the "informatory," which is the communicative act transpiring between the author and the reader.¹

Tumanov views the texts he analyzes as the outcome of compromises between these two goals. To what extent do the various writers, on the one

1. The existence of this communicative act in fact problematizes Tumanov's use of the adjective *unframed* to define the UDIM form (as well as Cohn's use of the adjective *autonomous* for the same purpose), since the interior monologue always remains rhetorically framed, even when it is formally unframed.

hand, try to distance the UDIM from familiar models of public communication and, on the other hand, make an effort “behind the scenes” to leave it sufficiently clear for the reader?

In his textual analyses Tumanov mentions a large number of techniques the authors employ to produce the illusion of eavesdropping on a discourse is immediate, unplanned in advance, and not directed to an addressee. Such techniques include the use of various kinds of syntactic and semantic ellipsis, the dominance of the present tense, making the discourse less reportorial and more emotional in character, and the organization of the text continuum according to an associative rather than a narrative logic. Throughout the book Tumanov also refers to experimental findings and theories from Soviet and American research on inner speech as well as to data from the linguistic study of real oral spontaneous discourse, and he compares these extraliterary texts with his selected literary texts, trying to account for similarities and differences.

The four literary texts are analyzed in their chronological order. According to Tumanov this order parallels a gradual increase in the relative intensity of realistic illusion these texts create, namely the degree of daring or sophistication the writers demonstrate in their attempts to distance the monologue from the traditional forms of narrative. This process reaches its highest point in Larbaud’s *Amants, heureux amants* . . . (which is significantly the only post-Joycean text among those Tumanov analyzes), “where the reader [feels] not only . . . unaddressed, but also clearly *unwanted*” (127).

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Reference

- Cohn, Dorrit
 1978 *Transparent Minds: Narrative Modes for Presenting Consciousness in Fiction* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press).