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Transparent Minds

Narrative Modes for Presenting Consciousness in Fiction

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6 The Autonomous Monologue

"Penelope" as Paradigm

Within the limited corpus of autonomous interior monologues the "Penelope" section of *Ulysses* may be regarded as a *locus classicus*, the most famous and the most perfectly executed specimen of its species. Given its position within the broader context of Joyce's novel, however, the question must be raised whether it is at all legitimate to consider "Penelope" as an example of an autonomous fictional form. Would it even be comprehensible to a reader unfamiliar with the preceding sections of the novel? A difficult question to answer empirically, since it would be very nearly impossible to find an experimental subject untainted by at least a hearsay acquaintance with Joyce's work. This much seems certain: Joyce's task of making the "plot" of an interior monologue text comprehensible to the reader despite the strict implicitness of reference demanded by the logic of the form was greatly eased by placing it at the end of his novel rather than at its beginning. The fact, moreover, that we know so much of what Molly knows before we hear her silent voice enhances our enjoyment of it by myriad cross-references to the rest of the novel. Even more important, the fact that we know much that Molly does *not* know (for example, the entire truth about Bloom's erotic experiences on Bloomsday) injects an element of dramatic irony into our reading experience that would be lost if "Penelope" were read as a separate novella.
Nonetheless, more than any of the other chapters of *Ulyss-*

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ses, and more than ordinary narrative units within other novels, "Penelope" stands apart from its context, as a self-generated, self-supported, and self-enclosed fictional text. Joyce himself stressed its extra-mural status when he commented on the ending of *Ulysses*: "It [the "Ithaca" chapter] is in reality the end as 'Penelope' has no beginning, middle or end."¹ The spherical image he used to describe "Penelope" in a well-known letter to Frank Budgen further underlines its self-enclosure: "It begins and ends with the female *Yes*. It turns like the huge earthball slowly and evenly round and round spinning."² Joyce's two self-exegetical schemas add yet another element that sets "Penelope" apart: in contrast to the numbered hours that clock all the other episodes, the "Time" marked for the ultimate episode is infinity (∞) in one schema, "Hour none" in the other.³ But surely the most important sign of "Penelope"'s formal independence is its form itself: the only moment of the novel where a figural voice totally obliterates the authorial narrative voice throughout an entire chapter.⁴ No matter how closely the content of Molly's mind may duplicate, supplement, and inform the fictional world of *Ulysses* as a whole, the single-minded and single-voiced form of "Penelope" justifies its consideration as an independent text, a model for that singular narrative genre entirely constituted by a fictional character's thoughts.

One of the most striking structural peculiarities of an autonomous monologue, classically illustrated by "Penelope," is the structure it imposes on the manipulation of the time dimension. Before we discuss this point, a brief glance at the over-all temporal sequence of Molly's thoughts will dispel a critical commonplace. Critics have tended to take Joyce's mythical image of the spinning earth-ball (in the letter cited above) so literally that they have overstressed the eternal return of the same in "Penelope," while neglecting its sequential unrolling in time.⁵ Yet the circularity of Molly's arguments (including the identity of its first and last words) is decisively counteracted by elements that underline its temporal

sequence. Prime among these is the fact that her monologue contains a central happening: the inception of her menses (769), on this account alone it seems to me impossible to maintain that "breaking into ["Penelope"] at any point does not upset the order or sequence."⁶ This event is more than incidental; it alters the direction of Molly's thoughts, clearly dividing them into a before and after: whereas her thoughts of Boylan and others concerning the immediate and distant past dominate before, Boylan almost disappears and all memories diminish after. They are replaced by thoughts of the future, largely in the form of scenarios for seducing Stephen and for re-seducing Bloom. Molly, in other words, enters a "new moon" in the course of her monologue—a decidedly temporal event, no matter how eternal its mythological overtones.⁷ It is an event, moreover, that strongly ties Molly to biological time, the time of a biological organism on its way from birth to death. If we can talk of the circular shape of Molly's monologue at all, then only in the modified sense of the coils of a spiral whose direction (upward or downward) is left ambiguous, but whose linear advance along the coordinate of time is never left in doubt.

This advance, even if we disregard the evolution of Molly's thoughts, is built into the very technique Joyce chose to express them: for a continuous interior monologue is based on an absolute correspondence between time and text, narrated time and time of narration.⁸ The single mark for the passage of time here is the sequence of words on the page. Whereas in ordinary narration time is a flexible medium that can be, at will, speeded up (by summary), retarded (by description or digression), advanced (by anticipation), or reversed (by retrospect), an autonomous monologue—in the absence of a manipulating narrator—advances time solely by the articulation of thoughts, and advances it evenly along a one-way path until words come to a halt on the page. Note, however, that this chronographic progress is associated only with the successive moments of verbalization itself, and not with their content: it remains unaffected by the a-chronological montage

of events that prevails in a monologist's mind, notoriously in Molly's helter-skelter references to different moments of the past and the future.¹⁰

This even-paced unrolling of time in an autonomous monologue is analogous to the temporal structure of a dramatic scene (or the uninterrupted rendition of dialogue in a narrative scene). The dramatic concept of unity of time, in the strictest neo-classical sense of identifying time of action with time of performance, could be applied here, except that the terms of the identity would have to be modified. For if monologue time flows evenly, there is no telling how fast it flows—unless the monologist explicitly clocks himself. Molly's sense of time being what it is ("I never know the time," 747), the exact length of her insomnia cannot be known.¹¹ But since it starts sometime after two and ends sometime before daybreak (four o'clock on a June day at Dublin's latitude?) Molly probably thinks faster than most readers read her thoughts, and certainly faster than anyone can recite them. The time of "Penelope" would thus correspond to the common view that thoughts move faster than speech.

The relentless continuity of Molly's text, reinforced as it is by the omission of punctuation, makes its division into eight paragraphs (or "sentences," as Joyce called them) stand out the more distinctly: even these brief interruptions in the print inevitably convey moments of silence, time passing without words. These instant pauses appear like a drawing of mental breath before a new phase of mental discourse; or, to use the analogy with drama again, a curtain quickly drawn closed and reopened between the acts of a play in which absolute unity of time prevails. The very fact that paragraphing calls for an interpretation of this kind in "Penelope" shows that pagenal blanks, regardless of their size, tend to carry much more than routine significance in interior monologue texts: they convey not only passage of time, but interruption of thought. For this reason lapse into sleep is the most convincing ending for a text of this sort, just as waking out of sleep is its most logical beginning. Molly's monologue, of course, ends in this opti-

mal fashion, but its beginning does not coincide with her awakening. Instead, "Penelope" begins in the only alternate way available to an autonomous monologue, namely *in medias res*, or, better, *in melian mentem*, casting the reader without warning into the privacy of a mind talking to itself about its own immediate business: "Yes because he never did a thing like that before as ask to get his breakfast in bed with a couple of eggs since the *City Arms* hotel when he used to. . . ." (738) This beginning is obviously meant to give the impression of being "no beginning" ("Penelope" has no beginning, middle or end"), not even a syntactical beginning. Both "Yes" and "because" (not to mention "he") refer to a clause antecedent to the text's inception, which the reader can only gradually reconstruct from clues that will eventually appear in the text. Not until one reaches the words at the very bottom of the first page ("yes he came somewhere") does it become entirely clear that the thought immediately antecedent to "Yes because" must have concerned Molly's suspicion of her husband's infidelity. But beyond this specific syntactic riddle, this beginning leaves unexplained whose voice speaks, where, when, and how.

The inception of "Penelope" points up the special limitations imposed on a fictional text if it is to create for the reader the illusion that it records a mind involved in self-address. Since it would be implausible for Molly to expound to herself facts she already knows, all exposition (in the usual sense of conveying information about past happenings and present situations) is barred from the text. The facts of Molly's life pass through her consciousness only implicitly, incidentally, by allusive indirection. And all that remains understood in her thoughts can be understood by the reader only by means of a cumulative process of orientation that gradually closes the cognitive gap.

Yet Joyce could not have exposed Molly's inner life without exposition if he had not placed her in a highly pregnant moment, a crisis situation that brings into mental play the key conditions of her life (and of life). Though Molly's may be an

ordinary mind, Bloomsday is not—for Molly any more than for Bloom or Stephen—an entirely ordinary day. Its extraordinary events (the afternoon tryst, Bloom's tardy return) are necessary to awaken in her the thoughts that keep her awake, and thus to make what is implicit at least partially explicit. Though she does not tell herself the story of her day, nor the story of her life, both stories transpire through her agitated thoughts, or better, in spite of them.

Doubtless the most artful stratagem Joyce employed, however, is to set Molly's mind into its turbulent motion while setting her body into a state of nearly absolute tranquility. This obviates a major difficulty inherent in the autonomous monologue form: to present through self-address the physical activities the self performs within the time-span of the monologue. Molly, to be sure, does once rise from her bed (769-772), but her gestures during this brief interlude are so obvious and so elemental that they can be gathered without being directly recorded. As Dujardin's *Les Lauriers* and Schmitzler's *Fraulein Elise* show, when monologists become much more enterprising they begin to sound much less convincing; forced to describe the actions they perform while they perform them, they tend to sound like gymnastics teachers vocally demonstrating an exercise.

But Joyce not only places the monologizing mind in a body at rest; he also places that body in calm surroundings.¹² The sensations that impinge on Molly's consciousness are few and far between: the whistling trains (754, 762, 763), the chiming bells (772, 781), a lamp (763), a creaking press (771), the sleeping Bloom (771). Only minimally deflected by perceptions of the external world, her monologue is "interior" not only in the technical sense of remaining unvoiced, but also in the more literal sense: it is directed to and by the world within. The perfect adherence to unity of place thus creates the condition for a monologue in which the mind is its own place: self-centered and therefore self-generative to a degree that can hardly be surpassed.

The classic unity (and unities) in the over-all structure of "Penelope" are both matched and mirrored by its linguistic texture. Without intending a complete linguistic-stylistic description of the text,¹³ I will focus on three features of its language that spring directly from the autonomous monologue form, and at the same time contrast sharply with the language of retrospective narration: 1) the predominance of exclamatory syntax; 2) the avoidance of narrative and reportive tenses; and 3) the non-referential implicitness of the pronoun system. Note that my approach to Molly's language is different from the approach I took to Bloom's language in the chapter on quoted monologue: there the emphasis was on the contrast between monologue and dialogue, here it is on the contrast between autonomous monologue and narration.

The following excerpt from "Penelope" (769) will serve as the starting-point. I have divided it into thirty numbered segments, each of which corresponds to a "sentence" in the generally accepted sense of a syntactic unit of meaning, or (as one linguist defines it¹⁴) "a word or set of words followed by a pause and revealing an intelligible purpose":

1. I bet the cat itself is better off than us
2. have we too much blood up in us or what
3. O patience above its pouring out of me like the sea
4. anyhow he didnt make me pregnant as big as he is
5. I dont want to ruin the clean sheets
6. the clean linen I wore brought it on too
7. damn it damn it
8. and they always want to see a stain on the bed to know youre a virgin for them
9. all thats troubling them
10. theyre such fools too
11. you could be a widow and divorced 40 times over
12. a daub of red ink would do or blackberry juice
13. no thats too purplely
14. O Jamesy let me up out of this

15. pooh
16. sweets of sin
17. whoever suggested that business for women what between clothes and cooking and children
18. this damned old bed too jingling like the dickens
19. I suppose they could hear us away over the other side of the park till I suggested to put the quilt on the floor with the pillow under my bottom
20. I wonder is it nicer in the day
21. I think it is
22. easy
23. I think Ill cut all this hair off me there scalding me
24. I might look like a young girl
25. wouldnt he get the great suckin the next time he turned up my clothes on me
26. Id give anything to see his face
27. wheres the chamber gone
28. easy
29. Ive a holy horror of its breaking under me after that old commode
30. I wonder was I too heavy sitting on his knee

The most immediately apparent aspect of this language is its agitated, emotional tone. Leaving aside for the moment the several interrogatory sentences (2, 17, 20, 25, 27, 30), almost every sentence would, in normal punctuation, deserve—and some would require—a final exclamation mark; most obviously the seven sentences that are, or contain, interjections (3, 7, 14, 15, 16, 22, 28). But since the essence of exclamations is that “they emphasize to the listener some mood, attitude, or desire of the speaker,”¹⁵ almost all the other sentences could be classed as exclamations as well. The passage abounds in emphatically expressive forms: wishes (5, 26), fears (29), disparaging generalizations (9, 10). A highly subjective tone pervades even those sentences that come closest to statements of fact. They are either marked by introductory verbs of conjecture: “I bet” (1), “I suppose” (19), “I think”

(21, 23); or by patent overstatement: “divorced 40 times over” (11); or by omission of the copula (18); or by emphatic adverbs and conjunctions: “and” (8), “anyhow” (4), the thrice-uttered “too” (6, 10, 18). No sentence, in short, takes the form of a simple statement; all contain emotive, expressive signals, whether they concern past events or present happenings.

If we remember that interior monologue is, by definition, a discourse addressed to no one, a gratuitous verbal agitation without communicative aim, then this predominance of exclamatory syntax appears perfectly in keeping with the nature of monologue. As the form of discourse that requires no reply, to which there is no reply, exclamation is the self-sufficient, self-involved language gesture par excellence.¹⁶ Since interrogation, by contrast, is uttered in the expectation of a reply, and thus dialogic by nature, it at first seems surprising that this passage contains so many questions. But Molly’s questions are of a kind fitting easily into a monologic milieu: they are themselves essentially exclamatory. This is most obvious where they are rhetorical, either implying their own answer (“wouldnt he get the great suckin the next time he turned up my clothes on me,” 25) or uttered without the expectation of an answer (“whoever suggested that business for women,” 17, “have we too much blood up in us or what,” 2). The latter type is particularly characteristic for Molly: existential questions abound in her monologue, questions pleading against the absurd order of the universe, especially its division into pleasure-seeking males and long-suffering females: “whats the idea making us like that with a big hole in the middle of us” (742); “clothes we have to wear whoever invented them” (755); “why cant you kiss a man without going and marrying him first” (740); “where would they all of them be if they hadn’t all a mother to look after them” (778); and many more. But also when Molly asks herself genuinely interrogatory questions, she asks them in an exclamatory fashion, usually by introducing them with the phrase “I wonder”: “I wonder is it nicer in the day” (20), “I wonder was I too

heavy sitting on his knee" (30). A kind of pathetic anxiety or insecurity comes to the fore in this form of query, especially when the unknown is the impression she made on Boylan (cf. "I wonder was he satisfied with me"; "I wonder is he awake thinking of me or dreaming am I in it" 741). In this sense self-interrogation seems the natural complement to exclamation in the turbulent syntax of language-for-oneself, counterpointing attitudes toward the known with attitudes toward the unknown.

But even as exclamation and interrogation stamp Molly's discourse with subjectivity, these sentence forms also orient it away from a neutral report of the present moment, and away from the narration of past events. Since language-for-oneself is by definition the form of language in which speaker and listener coincide, the technique that imitates it in fiction can remain convincing only if it excludes all factual statements, all explicit report on present and past happenings. The various tenses in Molly's monologue further determine its anti-narrative, anti-reportorial orientation.

I have intentionally chosen my sample passage from the section of Molly's monologue where she begins her most ambitious physical activity of the night—the excursion to the "chamber"—in order to show how Joyce manages to convey Molly's bodily gestures without a single direct statement of the I-am-doing-this-now type. If her activity becomes clear to an attentive reader, it is not because she explicitly reports what she does, but because what she does is implicitly reflected in her thoughts, roughly as follows: "O patience above its pouring out of me. . . I dont want to ruin the clean sheets" (she decides to get a sanitary napkin); "O Jamesy let me up out of this" (she strains to raise her body); "this damned old bed too jingling" (she moves her body out of bed); "I think Ill cut all this hair off me" (she lifts her night-gown); "wheres the chamber gone" (she decides on the interim stop, and reaches for the needed object); "easy Ive a holy horror of its breaking under me" (she lowers herself

onto it). Her subsequent performance—"O Lord how noisy" (770), its conclusion—"Id better not make an all night sitting on this affair" (771), the activity with "those nappkins"—"I hope theyll have something better for us in the other world . . . thats all right for tonight" (772), and finally the return to bed—"easy piano O I like my bed" (772), are all rendered by exclamatory indirection as well. In sum, we search in vain through "Penelope" for a first-person pronoun coupled with an action verb in present tense—precisely the combination that creates the most jarring effect in less well-executed interior monologues (like *Les Larriers sont coupés*), because it introduces a reportorial dimension of language into a nonreportorial language situation.

The first-person, present-tense combination in Molly's monologue occurs exclusively with verbs of internal rather than external activity. She supposes, thinks, wishes, hopes, and remembers many times over on every page, so that the punctual present of her inner discourse continuously refers to and feeds on the very activity she literally performs at every moment of her monologue.¹⁷ It is in this present moment of mental activity that all Molly's other verbal tenses and moods are anchored. And she uses them all: past, future, indicative, conditional, and quite prominently the present of generalization. This constant oscillation between memories and projects, the real and the potential, the specific and the general, is one of the most distinctive marks of freely associative monologic language. Our sample passage contains it in motley display, especially toward its end, when we get in rapid succession past (19), present (20-21), future (22), conditional (24-26), and again present (27-29) and past (30). Note how the punctual present of the mental verbs in turn subordinates the past ("I suppose they could hear us"), the generalizing present ("I wonder is it nicer in the day I think it is"), the future ("I think Ill cut all this hair") and the reversion to the past ("I wonder was I too heavy").

There are moments in Molly's monologue when she adheres more extensively to one or another of these tenses and

moods. Since she is not much of a planner,¹⁸ her looks into the future verge on the imaginary: whether she uses the conditional or the indicative; thus "supposing he stayed with us" introduces the wish dream of the *menage à trois* with Stephen (779-780), whereas her dreams of glory as a poet's muse (776) and the alternate scenarios for seducing Bloom (780) are cast in future tense. Her fantasies—"the cracked things come into my head sometimes" (779)—cluster in the last third of "Penelope," whereas memories are denser in the first two-thirds.

In the earlier sections the recalls are so extensive that the past tense actually predominates over the present, with the past sentences at times in straight narrative form, unbordered by thinking verbs. Yet even where a consecutive sequence of events takes shape in her mind, the narrative idiom rarely prevails without being interrupted by opinionated comments. The following samples from the courtship scene alternate typically:

he was shaking like a jelly all over they want to do every-thing too quick take all the pleasure out of it . . . then he wrote me that letter with all those words in it how could he have the face to any woman after . . . dont understand you I said and wasnt it natural so it is of course . . . then writing a letter every morning sometimes twice a day I liked the way he made love then . . . then I wrote the night he kissed my heart at Dolphins barn I couldn't describe it simply it makes you feel like nothing on earth . . . (746-747)

I have italicized the sentences that regularly turn a reflective gaze back on each narrative sentence—generalizing, questioning, evaluating; and this discursive language rewards, and eventually displaces, the narrative language, as the concern for the present moment again prevails. In this fashion even the moments of Molly's monologue when she comes closest to narrating her life to herself—see also the recall of the Mulvey affair (759-761) and the love-scene on Howth Head (782-783)—never gain sufficient momentum to yield more than briefly suggestive vignettes.

Molly's memories occur to her in thoroughly random order, her mind gliding ceaselessly up and down the thread of time, with the same past tense now referring to the events of the previous afternoon, now reaching back to her nymph days in Gibraltar, now again lingering on numberless intervening incidents. This a-chronological time montage—as Robert Humphrey calls this technique¹⁹—provides the data for a fairly detailed Molly biography; but her monologue itself is autobiographical only in spite of itself.

A further, and perhaps the most telling, symptom for the non-narrative and non-communicative nature of Molly's language is the profusion and referential instability of its pronouns.²⁰ This initially bewildering system puts the reader into a situation akin to that of a person eavesdropping on a conversation in progress between close friends, about people and events unknown to him but so familiar to them that they need not name the people or objects to which they refer. In this sense Molly's pronominal implicitness combines both traits of language-for-one-self discussed earlier in connection with Bloom's monologic idiom: grammatical abbreviation and lexical opaqueness—traits in other respects far less prominent in Molly's than in Bloom's language. But even as Joyce creates this impression of cryptic privacy, he plants just enough signposts to guard against total incomprehensibility.

The only pronoun that has an invariant referent in "Penelope" is the first person singular. Since "I" is by definition "the person who is uttering the present instance of discourse containing I,"²¹ and since an autonomous monologue is by definition the utterance of a single speaker, this fixity of the first person is endemic to the genre. So, of course, is its frequency. In the sample passage more than half the sentences contain a self-reference, and several contain more than one. This egocentricity is typical of Molly's entire monologue.

All her other pronouns confront the reader with more or less unknown quantities, mostly without immediate antecedent, identifiable only from the broader context. Third-person pronouns—particularly in the masculine gender—display the

most obvious referential instability, and may contain significant equivocation as well. Molly presumably always knows the who-is-who of her pronouns, but the reader is sometimes left guessing as to which *he* is on her mind at any moment. The *he* who "didn't make me pregnant as big as he is" (4) is clearly Boylan (who must also be the owner of the knee in 30)—even though his name has not been mentioned for three pages. But the *he* whose face she wants to see "the next time he turned up my clothes" (25-26) could be either Bloom or Boylan. And watch the rapid shuffling of the *he*-reference (between Bloom and Stephen) in the following passage:

he [Stephen] could do his writing and studies at the table in there for all the scribbling he [Bloom] does at it and if he [Stephen] wants to read in bed in the morning like me as hes [Bloom] making the breakfast for I he can make it for 2. . . . (779)

On the larger scale of her monologue, a slower relay of he-men can be observed as the Bloom-Boylan alternation gives way to the Bloom-Stephen one, an evolution that coincides with the decreasing past and mounting future and conditional tenses. But the "he" of the exact mid-pages of "Penelope" (759-762) is the explicitly introduced "Maivey was the first," who will return only pronominally to fuse with Bloom at the very end: "and how he kissed me under the Moorish wall and I thought well as well him as another and then I asked him with my eyes to ask again yes and then he asked me would I yes" (783). As Richard Ellmann has remarked, this is the point when "her reference to all the men she has known as 'he' has a sudden relevance";²² for here the undifferentiated reference at the point of sleep underlines the contingency of the erotic partner. But this ultimate indifference is counterpointed by an overarching constancy, Bloom being the referent for the first "he" she uses in her monologue, as well as for the last.

In his play with the male pronoun, then, Joyce makes symbolic and amusing use of a realistic feature of speech-for-

oneself. Other pronominal games attain their effect more by pointing to Molly's fixed ideas than to her fickle feelings. Their key lies in the discovery not of her past, but of her private logic and its system of notation. The neuter pronoun refers with comic constancy to her favorite unmentionable, most densely on the first pages:

anyway love its not or hed be off his fed thinking of her so either it was one of those night women if it was down there he was really and the hotel story he made up a pack of lies to hide it planning it . . . or else if its not that its some little bitch or other . . . and then the usual kissing my bottom was to hide it not that I care two straws who he does it with. . . . (738-739)

The plural pronouns are equally specific in their generality: they express Molly's sexual polarization of the world. "We," whenever it does not signify the self and a specific partner (as in 19), signifies the genus women, as in "I bet the cat itself is better off than us have we too much blood up in us or what" (1-2).²³ The pronominal enemy of this female kinship group is *they*, the genus men: "they always want to see a stain on the bed . . . all thars troubling them . . . theyre such fools too" (8-10). This meaning attends the third person plural in the clichés Molly coins: "they havent half the character a woman has" (761), "I woman is not enough for them" (739), "arent they thick never understand what you say" (757), "grey matter they have it all in their tail if you ask me" (758), etc. But when Molly's kinship with other women turns to venom, *they* turns into a feminine pronoun: "lot of sparrowfarts . . . talking about politics they know as much about as my backside . . . my bust that they havent . . . make them burst with envy," etc. (762-763). Our passage also shows Molly's feminine perspective on the second person pronoun in the impersonal sense of *one*: "to know youre a virgin for them" (8) or "you could be a widow" (11).²⁴

"You" as the pronoun of address, finally, is used very sparingly by Molly, and in this she differs from most other

monologists. If we leave aside an occasional rhetorical phrase ("if you ask me," 758; "I tell you," 751), imagined interlocutors are almost entirely absent. I find only three exceptions: one is the "O Jamesy let me up out of this" (14) in our passage—with Molly perhaps calling on her creator-author in a spirit of Romantic irony;²⁵ "give us room even to let a fart a God" (763) is her only address to another higher power; and "O move over your big carcass" (778) her only address to a fellow human being. Molly also occasionally uses the second person for self-address, but only in brief admonishments: "better lower this lamp" (781), "better go easy" (763), "O Lord what a row youre making" (770), "now wouldnt that afflict you" (769). The extended inner debates that feature second- and even third-person self-references in some of her fellow monologists would be out of character with the single-minded monologist who spins her yarn here.

Variations of the Form

Among the works (or separate sections within works) presented as autonomous monologues, "Penelope" is the only text that has attained universal celebrity. But there are a number of others that conform to the same essential norms. I have selected six texts of this kind for comparative analysis, with a view to establishing the range of possibilities, as well as the limitations inherent in this form: Dujardin's *Les Lauriers sont coupés*, Schmitzler's *Leinham Gustl* and *Fräulein Else*, Larbaud's "Amants heureux amants," Simone de Beauvoir's "Monologue," and "The Seventh Chapter" (the Goethe monologue) from Thomas Mann's novel *Lotte in Weimar*.

Schmitzler's *Leinham Gustl* (1901), though less well-publicized than Dujardin's work, shares with it the historical precedence to *Ulysses*. It also displays many (perhaps not entirely coincidental) parallels to *Les Lauriers*.²⁶ Both render the thoughts of *homines moyens sensuels*, typical representatives of their cultures—respectively Parisian and Viennese—during typical episodes: Dujardin's Daniel Prince endures a frustratingly indecisive evening as would-be lover of a venal demit-

mondaine; Schmitzler's Gustl spends a night contemplating suicide in response to an insult from an aggressive civilian. Both monologists roam about a good deal, perceive the changing scene, and engage in conversations with other characters. Schmitzler repeated this basic scheme in his much later monologue novella *Fräulein Else* (1924), but with a psychologically more complex protagonist, a more dramatic plot, and a tragic ending. The titular heroine is a young girl whose neurotic-erotic turmoil, intensified by an indecent proposal, leads to a psychotic crisis in the course of which she disposes in public and ultimately commits suicide. A kind of case study in psychopathology, this text relates far more complicated and dramatic happenings than other autonomous monologues.

Most post-joycean autonomous monologues simplify the outer scene. Larbaud's "Amants, heureux amants" (1921)—probably written under the direct impact of "Penelope" and dedicated "To James Joyce my friend and the only begotter of the form I have adopted in this piece of writing"²⁷—voices the consciousness of a young dilettante (France) during three solo scenes that interrupt his amorous trifling with a pair of girls. Beauvoir's much later "Monologue" (1967) is spoken by a far more cantankerous woman than Molly, but in similarly static nocturnal isolation, except when she harangues her estranged husband on the telephone toward the end.

In contrast to all these monologists, who belong to Northrop Frye's low-mimetic, or even to his ironic, mode, Thomas Mann in his Goethe monologue ventured to present a high-mimetic mind—even one that verges, at least for Germans, on the mythical. It depicts the sexagenarian Goethe waking from an erotic dream, and thinking about his life and works as he moves from bed to washstand to barber chair to working table. The monologue is interrupted by conversations with several intimates, one of which (with his son) ends the chapter. Only here does he learn of the visit to Weimar of Charlotte Buff—the woman on whom he had modeled Werther's Lotte forty years earlier. The event that gives the novel its title is thus not known to Goethe at the time of his