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| Interior Monologue |
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| One of the hallmarks of modernist style, interior monologue affords a prime opportunity for studying how writers ranging from James Joyce and Dorothy Richardson to Italo Svevo and Alfred Döblin innovated on conventions for speech and thought presentation to create effects of psychological immediacy. Gerald Prince, building on Dorrit Cohn's foundational account of techniques for presenting fictional minds, defines *interior monologue* as "the nonmediated presentation of a character's thoughts and impressions or perceptions" (45). In this usage, interior monologue is a cover term that applies to more or less extended passages of free direct discourse--in other words, discourse that, though stripped of quotation marks and tag phrases such as *she reflected* or *he wondered*, can be assumed to correspond to or quote the unvocalized thoughts of a character. The "Penelope" episode of James Joyce's *Ulysses* is often taken to be a prototypical instance of the form, though Joyce deploys interior monologue in less extended stretches throughout his novel, nowhere more movingly than at the end of the "Lestrygonians" episode. Here the text cross-cuts between reports of Leopold Bloom's outward conduct as he attempts to avoid Blazes Boylan and passages that can be taken as offering an unfiltered presentation of Bloom's perceptions and thoughts when he encounters his wife's lover (italics mark instances of interior monologue):  His heart quopped softly. *To the right. Museum. Goddesses*. He swerved to the right.  *Is it? Almost certain. Won't look. Wine in my face. Why did I? Too heady. Yes, it is. The walk. Not see. Get on*. (Joyce 150) |
| One of the hallmarks of modernist style, interior monologue affords a prime opportunity for studying how writers ranging from James Joyce and Dorothy Richardson to Italo Svevo and Alfred Döblin innovated on conventions for speech and thought presentation to create effects of psychological immediacy. Gerald Prince, building on Dorrit Cohn's foundational account of techniques for presenting fictional minds, defines *interior monologue* as "the nonmediated presentation of a character's thoughts and impressions or perceptions" (45). In this usage, interior monologue is a cover term that applies to more or less extended passages of free direct discourse--in other words, discourse that, though stripped of quotation marks and tag phrases such as *she reflected* or *he wondered*, can be assumed to correspond to or quote the unvocalized thoughts of a character. The "Penelope" episode of James Joyce's *Ulysses* is often taken to be a prototypical instance of the form, though Joyce deploys interior monologue in less extended stretches throughout his novel, nowhere more movingly than at the end of the "Lestrygonians" episode. Here the text cross-cuts between reports of Leopold Bloom's outward conduct as he attempts to avoid Blazes Boylan and passages that can be taken as offering an unfiltered presentation of Bloom's perceptions and thoughts when he encounters his wife's lover (italics mark instances of interior monologue):  His heart quopped softly. *To the right. Museum. Goddesses*. He swerved to the right.  *Is it? Almost certain. Won't look. Wine in my face. Why did I? Too heady. Yes, it is. The walk. Not see. Get on*. (Joyce 150)  Theorists analyzing such passages have debated the relationship between interior monologue and stream-of-consciousness technique, with commentators such as Dujardin equating these modes and others defining interior monologue as the superordinate category of which stream of consciousness constitutes a subtype. For her part, Cohn argues for the need to distinguish between interior monologue viewed as a narrative technique, used more or less frequently in a given text, and interior monologue viewed as a narrative genre, "constituted in its entirety by the silent self-communion of a fictional mind" (16). |
| Further reading:  (Cohn)  (Dujardin)  (Joyce)  (Prince) |