This study focuses on James Joyce and Menippean satire, a literary mode developed during the Hellenistic period. The Menippean mode can be defined as a subversive and anti-authoritarian mode that emerged in late antiquity and in the dark ages, and includes authors such as Macrobius, Capella, and Fulgentius. As a contribution to the generic debate in Menippean studies, this approach reveals the hybridity of Menippists such as Petronius, Apuleius, Julian, and Joyce, who composed their texts by eclectically referring to two or more of these currents within the Menippean mode.

As Menippean satire is an umbrella-term which is notoriously difficult to define, the study focuses on the generic problem. It pays particular attention to the cultural differences within the Menippean pedagogy and tries to come to terms with various sub-genres rather than the literary mode as a whole: It compares the Hellenistic tradition already mentioned to a Roman prototype developed by Varro, Seneca, and their neo-classicist imitators. A third tradition that has to be distinguished emerged in late antiquity and in the dark ages, and includes authors such as Macrobius, Capella, and Fulgentius. As a contribution to the generic debate in Menippean studies, this approach reveals the hybridity of Menippists such as Petronius, Apuleius, Julian, and Joyce, who composed their texts by eclectically referring to two or more of these currents within the Menippean mode.

As a next step, the study offers an archaeology of Menippean, or as the book calls it, sympotic discourse. Starting from Bakhtin's observation that the Menippean emerged from Socratic dialogue and the carnivalesque, it claims that the world-view expressed by that mode can be traced back to the socio-cultural institution of the Greek symposium. Being inextricably related to the democratic spirit of the ancient city-state and commemorating the foundation myth of ancient urban society, the symposium includes philosophical dialogue, radical freedom of speech, and carnivalesque licence. In the wake of the decline of the city-states, sympotic discourse is transferred to the mode of the literary symposium as a Menippean prototype: Like the literary symposium of Plato and his imitators, that is centred around a Socratic speaker who will die for the freedom of his city state in the near future – the Menippian traditions include sympotic gatherings and Socratic persona as a common generic feature. As a radical and non-elitist continuation of Socratic philosophy, the Cynics cultivate the dog-philosophical mode of Menippian satire in order to disseminate the sympotic world-view among the masses. When ancient culture becomes absorbed by Christianity and is re-defined as the Christian Western Hemisphere – a process that Bakhtin and Kristeva regard as an infringement of intellectual freedom – the Menippean as a subversive and anti-authoritarian mode becomes the cultural archive of the sympotic mindset.

As is shown throughout the book, Joyce reconstructs this background in order to free himself from the dogmatic chains of his Jesuit education. As a master ironist, he not only imitates the Menippean mode in his art; he also fashions himself as a modern counterpart of Menippus of Gadara – the dog-philosophical founding father of the Menippean form – hence the book’s title Joyce and Menippus – ‘A Portrait of the Artist as an Old Dog’.

Beyond reconstructing the richness of Joyce’s topical references to Seneca, Petronius, Julian, Cervantes, or Swift, the study in its main part sheds light on how the Menippean traditions contribute to Joyce’s poetics in general. The book demonstrates that the experiment with the Menippean can be traced back to the very beginnings of Joyce’s art, being foreshadowed as early as in the Epiphanies, the fragmentary novel Stephen Hero, The Sisters, and Grace. Then the study shows that – in contrast to current opinion – already in The Dead and A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man, Joyce experiments with the technique that Ulysses is famous for: The characters from Portrait and The Dead anticipate the figural ignorance of the characters from Ulysses, who have no idea that the triviality of their everyday life corresponds to the structural patterns of the Odyssey, the Divine Comedy, and Hamlet. In Portrait, for instance, Stephen Dedalus consciously imitates the myth of Daedalus known from Ovid’s Metamorphoses, but fails to perceive that his role corresponds rather to that of the main character from Apuleius’s The Golden Ass – a Menippian narrative that is alternatively known under the pseudo-Ovidian title Metamorphoses and that alludes to the myth of Daedalus. The same is true for Gabriel Conroy from The Dead, whose role at the dinner party celebrated at the Twelfth Night after Christmas corresponds to that of a character from Macrobius’s Saturnalia. With regard to Ulysses, the study reconstructs references to Lucian’s Necyomantia – a Menippian dialogue that presents a fictional portrait of Menippus as a comic Odysseus. As a parody of Ulysses, the Lucianic Menippus appears perfectly integrated into the macro-structural pattern of Ulysses which not only refers to the Homeric Odysseus, but also to adaptations of the Ulysses-archetype by Dante, Shakespeare, Tennyson, and others.
Menippus, for instance, reappears as "Nippy", or "Mepos": Although the name as a marker of a unified self disintegrates, the Menippian mindset of synoptic discourse lives on in the collective memory.

As can be seen from all these examples, Menippus sits as a serio-comic complement of Ovidian and Homeric mythology contributes to Joyce's 'mythical method' (T.S. Eliot), and is of vital importance to Joyce's poetics.

28 Maren Bonacker und Stefanie Kreuzer (eds.), Von Mittelerde bis in die Weiten des Alls. Fantasy und Science Fiction in Literatur und Film. [From Middle Earth into the Universe. Fantasy and Science Fiction in Literature and Film.] Schriftenreihe und Materialien der Phantastischen Bibliothek Wetzlar 94. Wetzlar: Phantastische Bibliothek Wetzlar, 2006, 213 pp., EUR 13.00. (Orders to be directed to the Editor, Tumstrasse 20, D-35578 Wetzlar; e-mail: mail@phantastik.eu).

Keywords: 20th century literature, fantasy; science fiction; interculturality, film

This publication results from a symposium held in February 2005 as a cooperation between Giessen University and the Phantastische Bibliothek Wetzlar [Fantastic Library, Wetzlar, Europe's largest collection of fantastic literature, fantasy, and science fiction. Three main topics (i.e., "fantasy scenarios", "science fiction literature under the influence of technical progress", and "fantasy and science fiction films and computer games") are discussed in ten thoroughly researched articles. Four articles on fantasy literature are dominated by Joanne K. Rowling's Harry Potter and J.R.R. Tolkien's The Lord of the Rings; three, dealing with science fiction, closely observe the role of evil and the importance of creation in German, English, American, and Polish science fiction novels. The third section introduces Tim Burton's movie Big Fish as a conglomerate of fairy tale, fantastic fiction, and fantasy; furthermore the Alien-tetralogy is analysed under the aspect of gender studies. The publication closes with an essay on narratology in computer games.


Keywords: 20th century literature; novel; sense perception; ekphrasis; orality; reading experience (literary)

A person absorbed by a book, completely cut off from the events around him – one could hardly imagine a less sensuous situation, a less sensuous activity than that of reading. It isolates: sounds and smells reach the reader as if through a veil – if at all – and his eyes do not perceive anything apart from the letters on the page. It seems that for him communication with the outside world has ceased. If we give up our external perspective, however, and put ourselves in the reader's place, the situation changes fundamentally. For the reader himself experiences the act of reading in a distinctively different form. For him, reading can cause emotions so powerful and perceptions so lively that they outdo the real world. For him, reading is not a non-sensuous activity, far from it; for him, a book can create an imaginary world that is more lively and intriguing than the real one.

It is obvious that sensation in literature differs from sensation in reality. The reader is not conscious of the room temperature, the ticking of the clock, or the chair he sits on. Yet this is not to say that he does not feel any sensations as the onlooker might suppose. How else could descriptions of a sumptuous meal have a mouth-watering effect on him? How else could his heart beat faster in moments of tension? How else could erotic descriptions have an arousing effect? How else could he see the protagonists in front of his inner eye or seem to hear their voices? Rather than creating a sensory void, reading employs a different mode of perception. It internalises: outward stimuli fade out, and the reader creates new perceptions from within his imagination. Thus, in literature to sense is quite literally to make sense – a creative act rather than passive perception. Part of appropriating a novel is the creation of sense perception and making the fictional world come to life not only in front of our inner eye but also before our inward ear, our inner nose, our inner tongue, and our inner skin. Hence literature is what Gunter Gebauer and Christoph Wulf term a "mimetic process": a process in which the distinction between reality and fiction is blurred. It is "the creation of worlds from symbols [...] on the basis of sense perception" and the production of images that are "sensuous events without reference to reality" (Gebauer and Wulf 1992: 11, 434). Obviously, literature does affect our senses somehow – if only in the imagination. An explanation of what this 'somehow' means is at the centre of this study.

This dissertation argues that techniques of sensuous writing contribute decisively to bringing the text to life in the reader's imagination. In detailed