Observations of classical elements in Joyce’s work are often easily but shallowly made, such as the tracing of Homeric parallels in *Ulysses* done by Stuart Gilbert1 (a work written with a large nudge by Joyce himself). There are few critics who take the time and possess the close knowledge of classical literature to create a deep study that does sufficient justice to Joyce’s engagement with the Classical tradition not merely as an allusive parallel but as an active and fruitful process. Few works make specific reference to classical genres in detailing how closely Joyce binds his text to the possibilities afforded by an active dialogue synchronically combining past and present and fruitfully crossing forms of fiction, satire, realism, and fantasy. Dieter Fuchs’ work *Joyce und Menippos: “Portrait of the Artist as an Old Dog”* is such a rare work in Joyce scholarship, as it admirably traces how the literary form of Menippean satire informs Joyce’s texts. This is a well-founded study, whose attention to the variety of classical form is matched by its thorough analysis of Joyce’s texts and biography.

Fuchs foremost describes the long history of the Menippean tradition and clearly asserts that it consists of three interrelated expressions: a mix of prose and verse forms in seriocomic tone (the *spoudogeloion*), an anthropological and worldly critique of human existence (the Roman *satura*), and an encyclopedic focus (as a *summa*). Each of these features in turn poses consequences of meaning: an existential examination of the human condition through satire, a questioning of all knowledge, and a tension between reality and fantasy. Fuchs is at pains to stress the ways in which Menippean satire roots itself in various forms and consequences, in contrast to the more general and restrictive descriptions of Bakhtin, who argued for only the carnivalesque, or of Northrop


Frye, who argued that the term Menippean is misleading and only described the anatomy. Fuchs argues for the “Klassifizierung der Menippea als flexible Form und nicht als geschlossene Gattung” (classification of the Menippea as a flexible form rather than a closed genre, 25). It is this flexibility, perhaps most of all, that makes the genre a most useful and informative means of examining Joyce’s manifold and protean works. The long tradition of the Menippean would answer to Joyce’s aims as an artist writing about his particular Modern society sub specie aeternitatis; all its interconnected forms would appeal to his variegated artistic styles; and all the consequent critique of man and society would answer to his artistic purposes of appealing to “the conscience of [his] race.” The Menippean inclination to embrace various forms of discourse – most notably that of the Western-Christian tradition and that of the Attic symposium – makes it additionally appealing to the writer who would combine language and non-language as his means of making flesh into word. Joyce is well met by Menippos, and both are by Fuchs.

While it is clear that the Menippean is present in Joyce through the tradition of literary joking in the worldviews of Rabelais, Swift, and Sterne, Fuchs is at pains to demonstrate how Joyce was aware of more traditional, earlier works, drawing attention to the fact that the Daedalus and Icarus story was familiar to him not only from Ovid but also from an entry in the Suda-Lexicon, “[ein] Sammelwerk…[welches] das einzige erhaltene Testimonium ueber den historischen Menippos von Gadara ueberliefert” (a collection which provides the only preserved testimony about the historical Menippos of Gadara, 30). Moreover, Fuchs also finds in Joyce’s own life a strong tendency to enact the figure of Menippos, not merely in his cynical view of fellow beings but even performatively in his hat and raincoat, a photo of which pose depicts him self-referentially “in bewusster Analogie zum Oelportrait des ‘Moenippus’ von Diego Velázquez …” (in conscious analogy to the oil portrait of ‘Moenippus’ by Diego Velázquez, 35).

Fuchs’s open approach to the manifold expressions of the Menippean genre pays fruitful dividends in his reading of Joyce. While he acknowledges that satiric elements are underexamined in Dubliners, he notes Joyce’s very Varronian view of his fellow citizens within the work and traces how the Menippean satura comes to Joyce from Nietzsche (through the benefit that his described dialectic of Apollonian and Dionysian discourse reveals the duality of the pre-Christian world and makes possible a re-emergence of the archaic carnivalesque in the Menippean literature which has been repressed by Christianity [54]). Fuchs is able to make a convincing case that father Flynn in “The Sisters” is an anti-Socratic figure, a corrupter of youth as was Socrates, and also like-wise paralyzed in death, his corpse forming a carnivalesque grotesque for the boy-narrator. Fuchs also shows how the stultifying and erroneous conversations in “Grace” resemble an ironic Symposium. He is particularly original, in his analysis of the last story in Dubliners, on what is one of the oldest chestnuts in Joyce criticism, the concept of epiphany: “die sich zwar oberflaechlich des christlichen Zeicheninventars bedient, in ihrem tieferen Sinngehalt jedoch auf den symtopischen Diskurs verweist … Durch die Tatsache, dass sich das Weinachtswunder von The Dead als platonische Ideenschau entpuppt, wird die Epiphanie zum Medium, dessen biblische Oberflaechenstruktur von einem vorchristlichen Bedeutungskern durchstrahlt wird” ([epiphany] which superficially
helps itself to the inventory of Christian symbols, yet in its deeper meaning points to the discourse of the symposium. Through the fact that the Christmas miracle of “The Dead” turns out to be a Platonic vision of ideas, the epiphany becomes the medium whose Biblical surface structure is shot through with light from a pre-Christian core-meaning, 72).

From an inspirited reading of a scene from the unpublished *Stephen Hero*, where Stephen comes to resist the call of the Church and to appeal to “the misrule of his father’s house” (as Stephen himself calls the carnivalesque in his own life), standing at a cross roads and hearing a dog bark nearby, Fuchs sees the cynic traces of the Menippean in Joyce’s autobiographical works. *Portrait*, he contends, is not only an Ovidian presentation of the Metamorphoses story of Daedalus and Icarus, but also one that contains a tension between the discourses of the Socratic symposium and the Apuleian satire (74). Fuchs convincingly traces how Stephen, unable to resist the Western-Christian discourse of his instruction, turns to satire as a *philosophus gloriosus* (74). Stephen’s vision of Hell, while more scatological than Christian, does show a mirroring of the Nekyia of Menippos. Of the *Portrait* itself, Fuchs well describes the effect of the classical on the quotidian in the novel: “Die unbewusste Praesenz der vorchristlichen Zeichenhaftigkeit der menippeischen Weltsicht im modernen Alltag wird als auktoriales Informationsgefaelle zwischen Text- und Figurenbewusstsein wahrnehmbar ... Die in Dubliners und Stephen Hero erprobte Methode, den modernen Alltag mit sympotischen Strukturen zu unterlegen, deren eigentliche Zeichenhaftigkeit der Protagonist selbst nicht erkennen kann, wird in Portrait als durchgaengiges Schreibprinzip realisiert und in ironischer Spannung zur aristotelischen Mimesis umgesetzt” (The unnoticed presence of the pre-Christian symbolic quality of the menippean worldview in modern everyday life becomes recognizable in the authorial gap in information between the consciousness of the text and that of the characters ... The method proven in *Dubliners* and *Stephen Hero* of underlaying the modern everyday with structures of the symposium, whose proper symbolic quality the protagonist himself cannot recognize, is actualized throughout in *Portrait* as a principle of the writing and is applied in ironic tension with Aristotelian mimesis, 81).

Fuchs’s breadth of associations to classical texts enables him to read the important scene of the bird-girl on the Strand in *Portrait* Chapter IV with great insight into how much Joyce’s work models the Menippean mode. Rather than a figure of fin-de-siècle aesthetics, the bird-girl herself, Fuchs shows, is like the Isis who humanizes Lucius in Apuleius, and her function in the Joycean scene is to take Stephen away from the satiric air of *The Golden Ass* and the labyrinth reminiscent of the Minotaur into an Apollonian realm (signaled by Stephen’s self naming as the “wreath-bearing ox”) of artistic self-awareness (92).

With *Ulysses* Fuchs’s argument comes into sharpest focus, as all the elements Fuchs has attributed to the Menippean can be found in the work, foregrounded, Fuchs claims, with the story receding into the background, as the encyclopedic quality of the text clearly shows its debt to the genre. Fuchs reads the figures of Stephen and Bloom as representing the dual tension within the modern Menippean of Western-Christian and symposiastic discourses, respectively. The characters also come to represent, on Stephen’s part, the cynic of the Lucianic tradition, and on Bloom’s, the questioner of the Socratic. The
tension in the novel between detailed reality and the mock-heroic style mirrors the tension in satire of the realistic with the fantastic. The ultimate interrogation by satire about human purpose is readily found in a novel in which a burial and a birth are both depicted, and the important critique of self-awareness which firmly grounds the Varronian view can be found made by characters and by the text itself. The “Hades” episode clearly brings the Nekyia to the fore, while the “Circe” chapter mirrors the various discrete fragmented features from the _Suda_-lexicon entry, as Fuchs amply demonstrates (126).

Throughout Fuchs’ analysis there are small insights which greatly enhance his claim for the closeness of Joyce to the tradition and which also further enchant the reader. Perhaps the most striking of these for a Joycean critic is his claim to see the enigmatic figure of McIntosh in the novel replete with raincoat, elusively appearing and disappearing at funeral and large gathering – and long a source of much fruitless speculation as to an identity – as Menippos himself (129). This sort of _aperçu_, as witty as insightful, along with the large and convincing deliberations recommends _Joyce und Menippos_ to Classicists and Joyceans alike.

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