

ROUTLEDGE REVIVALS

# **The Fictional Encyclopaedia**

Joyce, Pound, Sollers

**Hilary Clark**



## The Fictional Encyclopaedia

First published in 1990, this work offers an analysis of the phenomenon of encyclopaedism in literature. Hilary Clark develops the theory of an encyclopaedic form in the interests of making clear distinctions between the realist narrative form and that of the encyclopaedic-parodic or fictional encyclopaedia. She makes clear the special links that non-realist, parodic fictions have with the forms of essay, Menippean satire and epic, and indeed with the encyclopaedia itself. The study pays particular attention to the way in which literary encyclopaedism has flourished in the twentieth century, with special reference to the works of James Joyce, Ezra Pound and Philippe Sollers.



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Hilary Clark

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## INTRODUCTION

Many of the most enduring literary texts are encyclopaedic in nature. Critics have given this phenomenon a number of names, speaking of an encyclopaedic form, encyclopaedic narrative, the encyclopaedic Book, an encyclopaedic impulse, an "encyclopoétique."<sup>1</sup> Critics have applied the epithet "encyclopaedic" to novels, to poetry, to mixed forms such as the anatomy or Menippean satire, and to the autoportrait.<sup>2</sup> Despite the variety of their responses, these critics have all noted a similar literary "fact." However, they have not analyzed encyclopaedism in literature for its own sake, but rather mentioned it in passing, as something taken for granted to exist. The precise nature of the phenomenon, however, remains unclear. For example, are we talking about a literary genre or a mode of literary presentation? If a genre, what other genres are related to it? Does the encyclopaedic tradition have any bearing on the problem? We must focus upon such questions in order to look at literary encyclopaedism in its own right. In this study, we will investigate the nature of what we shall call the "fictional encyclopaedia."

Edward Mendelson, in his articles "Encyclopaedic Narrative from Dante to Pynchon" and "Gravity's Encyclopaedia"<sup>3</sup> writes about a genre of encyclopaedic narrative, a genre having only a handful of members from over the centuries: Dante's Commedia, Rabelais' Gargantua and Pantagruel, Cervantes' Don Quixote, Goethe's Faust, Melville's Moby Dick, Joyce's Ulysses and Pynchon's Gravity's Rainbow. This genre, whose members are highly significant for their respective national literary traditions, exhibits a set of special formal traits. "Near-encyclopaedias" do not fulfil all the formal conditions and do not occupy a special historical/cultural position. According to Mendelson, Gabriel García Márquez' Cien años de soledad is such a "near-encyclopaedia."

Mendelson's view does not take into account the great number of works that we sense to be encyclopaedic in nature. When we say that a work we have just read is "encyclopaedic," we usually mean literally that the work encircles or includes all human knowledge. This is surely to say more than that the work fulfils certain fixed generic conditions--for example, that it contain a discussion of statecraft, feature giants and provide a history of languages, as Mendelson would have it. The term "encyclopaedic" should not be so broad that it loses descriptive precision; however, it should not be so narrow, as in Mendelson's "genre," that it excludes many eligible works.

We can counter the narrowness of an exclusively generic approach to the problem if we also develop the idea that the encyclopaedic text foregrounds the functioning of a certain mode, potentially present in all texts, but in some literary genres more important, and in encyclopaedic texts dominant.<sup>4</sup> This is something like the idea of an encyclopaedic form developed by Frye in his Anatomy of Criticism.<sup>5</sup> In his theory of fictional modes, Frye imagines two forms at work throughout literary history: an encyclopaedic or continuous form and an episodic or discontinuous form, each playing against the other. The encyclopaedic form, embracing a continuous vision of a culture, depends on the episodic forms (based on discontinuous moments of vision) out of which it is built; and the episodic forms likewise take their meaning from the overarching circle of vision which is their context. For Frye, sacred scripture (or the "Great Code") is paradigmatic for encyclopaedic form; this is built out of, and in turn gives sense to, the episodic forms of the parable, prophecy and prayer.

Frye's dialectical notion of encyclopaedic form would seem to contradict the simpler generic notion of

Mendelson. For Frye, non-encyclopaedic, non-continuous forms would be episodic, discontinuous form; there are no near-encyclopaedias in this scheme. The problem with such a dichotomous approach is that it cannot take into account the reader's experience that some texts are more or less encyclopaedic than others. Some texts may contain certain pertinent features and lack others. Frye's dichotomous approach cannot take into account this important intuition of continuity or degree.

Several other approaches to literary encyclopaedism bear further though briefer mention. Vincent Descombes notes that "any book aspires to be encyclopaedic, i.e., to go around its subject, so as to be equal to that subject (to say everything, all that must be said from the point of view that had initially been decided)...."<sup>6</sup> Despite this universal aspiration, however, editors and compilers of encyclopaedias and dictionaries very often include not only an original body of articles and entries, but also an appendix or supplement. Descombes argues that the very possibility of a supplement undermines the comprehensiveness implied by the term "encyclopaedia"; he concludes that it is of the essence of encyclopaedic summation not to be able to close itself in a circle from A to Z. As we will see in this study, the encyclopaedic work is never complete.

Ronald T. Swigger has noted a general encyclopaedic impulse in literature, an impulse toward comprehensiveness in cognition, an "impatience for cognition." Such an impulse seeks both unification and division; an "ultimate vision of mystic union is preceded by a survey of the varieties and categories of existence."<sup>7</sup> Swigger assumes that the issue of encyclopaedism is not only a formal one, involving questions of genre and mode, but also a psychological and philosophical one.

Michel Beaujour, in his discussion of the "autoportrait" in *Miroirs d'encre*, lists certain formal traits which can help us think about the encyclopaedic text. In Montaigne's *Essais* (his autoportrait), for example, there is no "récit suivi, ni d'histoire systématique..."; instead, there is "une sorte de bricolage...assemblage peu cohérent...."<sup>8</sup> Linear narration gives way to a paratactic or thematic organization which is open to any number of additions.

...[L']autoportraitiste ne sait jamais où il va, ce qu'il fait. Mais sa tradition culturelle le sait bien pour lui: et c'est elle qui lui fournit les catégories toutes faites...catégories des péchés et des mérites, des vertus et des vices...les cinq sens...les humeurs...les facultés...l'astrologie...la race, le milieu...<sup>9</sup>

The encyclopaedist's material begins to organize itself according to its own internal/cultural system of order. This non-narrative principle of order, one based in the thematic knowledge-categories of a culture, is important in thinking about the fictional encyclopaedia.

Mikhail Bakhtin has sketched around the topic of literary encyclopaedism in some of his formulations on the novel. In distinguishing between the novel and the epic, Bakhtin suggests that the novel is an open-ended or inclusive form which accords as much importance to present-day reality as it does to the glories of the (epic) past: "the subject of serious literary representation (although, it is true, at the same time comical) is portrayed without any distance, on the level of contemporary reality...."<sup>10</sup> We will see that a parodic or "seriocomical" inclusion of a

diverse array of topics, literary modes, and forms is an important trait of the fictional encyclopaedia. Philippe Sollers' remark that the novel is a form including everything in the culture is also applicable to our form.<sup>11</sup>

Why, then, use "fictional encyclopaedia" when "novel" might do just as well? This study is developing the theory of an encyclopaedic form in the interests of making clear distinctions: if the term "novel" must cover both encyclopaedic-parodic (Sterne's) and realist (Austen's) narratives, then as a term it is somewhat ambiguous. Developing the idea of a fictional encyclopaedia makes clear the special links that non-realist parodic fictions have with the forms of essay, Menippean satire and epic, and with the encyclopaedia itself, that repository of the knowledge of a culture.

Encyclopaedism is that impulse betrayed in a text when it gathers and hoards bits of information and pieces of wisdom following the logic of their conventional (metonymic) associations in the writer's culture.<sup>12</sup> Chapter I looks at literary encyclopaedism in its generic and modal dimensions, as both a genre of works encompassing the essay, the Menippean satire and the epic, and a mode appropriating and parodying other literary modes. Chapter II explores the history and organization of the encyclopaedia as the model or base of the fictional genre, while Chapter III looks at the implications of this encyclopaedic base and surveys examples of the fictional genre. Literary encyclopaedism has flourished in different cultures and times, but seems to be especially prevalent in twentieth-century writing. Chapters IV, V, and VI, in their discussion of *Finnegans Wake*, the *Cantos* and *Paradis* as fictional encyclopaedias, should indicate the diversity of forms, in this century, which nonetheless converge in their fascination with encyclopaedic compilation.

## NOTES TO INTRODUCTION

1 In the order given, these critics are the following: Northrop Frye, Anatomy of Criticism (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1957) 54-62; Edward Mendelson, "Encyclopaedic Narrative from Dante to Pynchon," MLN 91.2 (1976): 1267-1275; Vincent Descombes, "Variations on the Subject of the Encyclopaedic Book," trans. Ian McLeod, Oxford Literary Review 3.2 (1978): 54-60; Ronald T. Swigger, "Fictional Encyclopaedism and the Cognitive Value of Literature," Comparative Literature Studies 12.4 (1975): 351-366; Stanley Fertig, "Une Ecriture encyclopoétique: formation et transformation chez Raymond Queneau," diss. Harvard, 1982.

2 Michel Beaujour, "Autoportrait et encyclopédie," Miroirs d'encre (Paris: Seuil, 1980) 40.

3 Edward Mendelson, "Gravity's Encyclopaedia," Mindful Pleasures, ed. George Levine and David Leverenz (Boston: Little, Brown, 1976) 161-189.

4 I am using "dominant" in the Russian Formalist sense. See Roman Jakobson's essay "The Dominant," Readings in Russian Poetics, ed. Ladislav Matejka (Ann Arbor: U of Michigan P, 1962) 82-7.

5 Frye 54-62.

6 Descombes 54.

7 Swigger 353.

8 Beaujour 7.

9 Beaujour 10-11.

10 Mikhail Bakhtin, "Epic and Novel," The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays, trans. Michael Holquist (Austin: U of Texas P, 1981) 22-3.

11 Philippe Sollers, "On n'a encore rien vu," Tel Quel 85 (1980): 9-31.

12 Frye, Anatomy of Criticism 311: Frye says that a "magpie instinct" characterizes encyclopaedic literature.



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## CHAPTER ONE

### GENRE, MODE AND THE ENCYCLOPAEDIA

#### Genre and mode

What is an encyclopaedic mode? What, indeed, is a literary mode? Let us recover the original meaning of a literary mode from Plato's Republic and from Aristotle's Poetics. In Book III of the Republic, Socrates speaks of methods of telling:

...there is one kind of poetry and tale-telling which works wholly through imitation..., tragedy and comedy, and another which employs the recital of the poet himself, best exemplified...in the dithyramb, and there is again that which employs both, in epic poetry and in many other places...<sup>1</sup>

Methods of telling are to be distinguished from the content being told. In the Republic it is somewhat unclear whether ways of telling should be distinguished from the forms of genres in which they appear; form and method seem to be used interchangeably, both being set against content.

In the Poetics, however, Aristotle distinguishes between mode (method) and form. We find, again, three basic modes: narration, the mixed mode characteristic of epic, and dramatic representation.

Given both the same means and the same kind of object for imitation, one may either (1) speak at one moment in narrative and at another in an assumed character, as Homer does; or (2) one may remain the same throughout, without any such change; or (3) the imitators may represent the whole story dramatically, as though they were actually doing the things described.<sup>2</sup>

These modes, when applied to different objects--high or low sorts of men--result in different forms such as tragedy, comedy, epic. Aristotle's distinguishing of the modes (presentation and narration) from the means and objects of imitation precedes any analysis of the forms of tragedy and epic. Mode and form/genre are thus not to be confused with one another.

Plato and Aristotle thus isolate three modes of telling in literature: narration, direct presentation, and mixed narration-presentation. In his Introduction à l'Architexte, Gérard Genette describes the historical changes that these basic modes went through before and during the Renaissance and the Enlightenment. The two or three original modes of telling were rebaptised "genres" and were elevated to the status of eternal, great forms ("archigenres") existing above a multitude of individual forms or species.<sup>3</sup> Renaissance genre theory made an evaluative distinction between the three great genres of lyric, epic and drama, and the individual species such as the ode, the epistle, the elegy, and so on. This distinction continued in Romantic poetics. Goethe elevated the traditional triad to the status of "natural forms"; unaltered by history, these were not to be confused with the changing, reappearing and disappearing historical kinds.<sup>4</sup>



Genre theory slipped in emphasis, then, from three simple mimetic modes, modes of telling and presenting, to a triad of eternal forms. Genette pursues the distinction between a mode as a way of telling, and genre as the specific, historical form this manner of telling may take, in the following way:

...les genres sont des catégories proprement littéraires, les modes sont des catégories qui relèvent de la linguistique, ou plus exactement de ce que l'on appelle aujourd'hui la pragmatique. 'Formes naturelles,' donc...dans la mesure où la langue et son usage apparaissent comme un donné de nature face à l'élaboration consciente et délibérée des formes esthétiques.<sup>5</sup>

Modes are means, common to all forms of discourse, of making an effect; genres, however, are more arbitrary categories, with "rules," either explicit or implicit, that influence--and are in turn influenced by--individual poetic cases. Mode and genre imply one another, a mode needing to be realized in a specific form, while such a form is animated by a dominant mode. A feature of rhetorical situations of any time, a mode will operate in historical genres that may change and disappear; yet the mode itself will persist and come to animate new forms. Looking within, any piece of discourse is a hierarchy of modes whose weighting characterizes the particular genre of discourse; looking without, it is a member of a genre--or, more frequently, more than one genre, having connections with a network of genres.

Not all theories of genre have honoured the traditional generic triad of drama-epic-lyric discussed by Genette. Some have conceived of another genre: the didactic. This new category takes the essay into account as another canonical literary genre. The Chicago critics, for example, divided literature into two basic genres: the mimetic and the didactic.<sup>6</sup> In a similar vein, Frye has distinguished four basic "genres": the old triad of epos, drama and lyric plus something that he calls "prose." The latter can comprehend both an "intellectual" orientation (the didactic forms such as the essay and the menippea) and a fictional orientation (the novel).<sup>7</sup>

It seems to me that the didactic or prosaic "genre" discussed by these critics is actually a mode, and should be added to the other three "mimetic" modes--dramatic, epic and lyric. I would further suggest that an encyclopaedic mode be added to this group. But what is such a mode? Like the others, it is a manner of telling; however, it is a mode bringing together and comprehending all of the other modes.

Aristotle saw the modes operating individually to the end of imitating an object. As distinct from this goal of mimesis, what is the goal of the didactic mode? This takes over any or all of the mimetic modes, to the end of persuasion, perhaps, the teaching of a moral or metaphysical order or doctrine. A didactic mode, like the mimetic modes, is present to a varying extent in different genres.

The encyclopaedic mode functions rather like the didactic in that it, too, takes over other modes and adapts them to new ends. Going further than the didactic, however, its gesture of appropriation is by definition totalizing, comprehensive: it swallows up and transcends mimetic modes (telling and presenting, or both) and didactic modes (teaching or persuading by telling and presenting). The encyclopaedic mode defuses the traditional debate between pleasure and instruction in literature. Encyclopaedic forms are "seriocomical"<sup>8</sup>, offering a synthesis of instruction

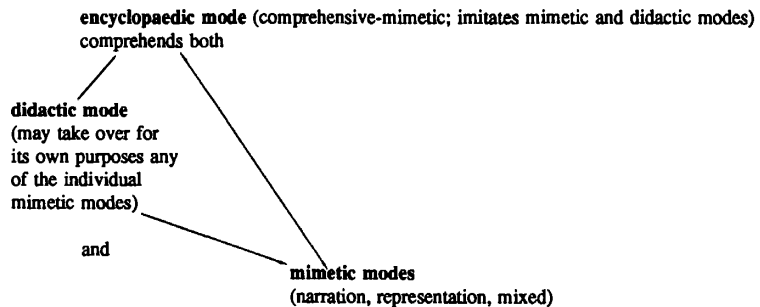
and pleasure. The encyclopaedic mode imitates what has already been said, especially in books; it comprehends epic, lyric, dramatic and didactic modes in one sweeping gesture, imitating these modes playfully and seriously--parodically, that is--for the sake of imitation as an activity and not for the sake of any reality imitated or doctrine upheld.

Another way of characterizing what the encyclopaedic mode does with other modes is to see it as reflecting upon--speculating upon--modes as such. Texts in which the encyclopaedic is dominant tend to foreground their own processes of telling and showing, commenting on them as they develop them. Indeed, such texts figure the very processes of selection and arrangement of material basic to the making of discourse as such. The encyclopaedic mode is both meta-mimetic (imitating other modes) and meta-rhetorical (reflecting or figuring the making of discourse as such). In both directions the encyclopaedic text performs a turn (the gesture of Romantic irony), going far beyond other texts, going to the limit, or aiming for infinite inclusiveness, infinite self-reflection and speculation. Such a movement is not built on specularity, an inward "mise-en-abîme," but rather on fullness or excess, the enrichment of knowledge, the freedom of infinite speculation.

The forms in which an encyclopaedic mode is dominant will in turn imitate a wide variety of literary kinds; they will include and play with specific styles, works, books. Such mimicry blends pleasurable play and didactic critique. In texts such as Bouvard et Pécuchet, Don Quixote, and the "Oxen of the Sun" episode in Ulysses, books, genres or styles replace the world as object of imitation. Such "imitations of imitations" impart a refracted, "literary" knowledge of the world. Encyclopaedic texts disperse--or perhaps, on the contrary, concentrate--reality through the highly polished lens of literary imitation and discursive speculation.

With the notion of an encyclopaedic mode in mind, it makes sense to explore the notion of a genre of fictional encyclopaedias. In this genre, the encyclopaedic mode would be dominant, and didactic and mimetic modes would be subordinated and brought into the service of an over-all "bookish" or parodic orientation. Let us put these ideas in diagram form:

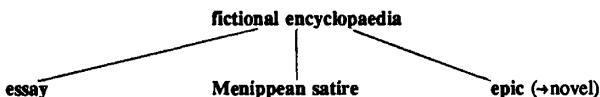
Modes:



Our ideas on encyclopaedic forms can be arranged in a similar hierarchical fashion; such an arrangement does not

valorize the more comprehensive mode:

Genres:



The essay, the Menippean satire and the epic are all encyclopaedic genres. Looking at the traits of these forms should help us add to our understanding of the fictional encyclopaedia, inasmuch as the latter reveals elements of essay, menippea (anatomy) and epic while comprehending and exceeding them. Finnegans Wake, the Cantos and Paradis--each in its own way--gather up and exceed these traits; Melville's Moby-Dick is also a fine example of the fictional encyclopaedia as great baggy book, essay-anatomy-epic-plus.

### The essay

The essay can be both didactic and autobiographical in nature. In Montaigne's essays, for example, frequent citations from other authors, and use of moral exempla, cause autobiography to be cut across by didacticism, personal writing by public writing. Very little of the material on which his moral conclusions are based is actually personal; most is public knowledge, book knowledge.

In contrast, Pound's essays in poetics begin from the opposite direction: unlike Montaigne, Pound begins with a didactic intent, but this is countered by a strong autobiographical presence. His precepts in the ABC of Reading as much record a personal artistic programme and set of discoveries as they instruct students in writing and reading poetry. Both Pound and Montaigne work within a public/personal tension at the heart of the essay form.

A variation of this tension between the personal and the public, the autobiographical and the didactic, is the essay's interplay between fiction and non-fiction: it is often difficult to decide which of these two characterizes the form. This interplay is linked to the essay's simultaneous veiling and unveiling of its own ideological nature: "...cette oscillation entre deux attitudes...consistent, l'une, à dévoiler les modalités du faire idéologique, l'autre, à les occulter, conditionne, dans l'essai, la possibilité même du discours."<sup>9</sup> The essay hovers between a didactically motivated excursion into the public domain of other texts, an activity prompting an exploration and unveiling of its own ideological premises, and, on the other hand, an autobiographical exploration more closely linked to the construction of fictions and ideologies. Beaujour has discussed a similar ambiguity in the autoportrait: a writer such as Rousseau or Montaigne begins with a desire to paint himself. But in this desire to fill in the void of the page with his own person, the autoportraitist instead reproduces the public domain of "les bêtises, les fantaisies, les fantasmes...le code moral de son époque ou de sa classe, les bienséances, les conventions psychologiques et

culturelles."<sup>10</sup> The *autoportrait*, in its hesitation between the personal and the public domains, is simply another version of the essay.

The essay potentially includes an encyclopaedic range of topics (moral, political, scientific, and so on): essays may be written about anything. We think of the variety of titles in the essays of Montaigne and Bacon. Each essay explores its topic in an open-ended way, following no predetermined path, often using a method of "bricolage"<sup>11</sup> in which everything that comes to hand (including fragments of other texts) is used to explore the theme. The essay is both self-sufficient and tentative (open to further "assaying"). A collection of essays has no over-arching, predetermined order of its own; such an order is usually decided after the components are complete. The writer of an essay is like the writer of an encyclopaedia article: each is concerned with discovering and following the internal logic of his topic, not with the over-all order of the work that will enclose it. The essay is "encyclopaedic" in several ways. First, it has at its disposal an encyclopaedic range of possible topics. Although each essay will tackle (usually) only one topic, one tiny segment of the entire circle of knowledge, the fact that the essay in general has the desire and the potential to work with and "go around" any topic of knowledge qualifies the form as being encyclopaedic in impulse if not in realization. Second, an essay may be formally heterogeneous, featuring now one mode, now another. Is this essay lyrical? dramatic? narrative? all of the above? One author has listed ten types of essay: literary, poetic, fantastic, discursive, interpretive, theoretical, literary-critical, expository, journalistic, chronicling a time or a life.<sup>12</sup> There are shades, here, of Polonius' compound dramatic kinds; only a truly protean, assimilative form could generate such a list. In its movement through all the modes, then, the essay enacts on the formal level its encyclopaedic assimilation of knowledge.

For the fictional encyclopaedia, the essay suggests a coexistence of autobiography, or the writing of knowledge gained from personal--and perhaps unwritable--experience, with the writing of a public knowledge mediated by texts. In the fictional encyclopaedia, the autobiographical impulse encounters the essential anonymity of the enterprise of compiling an encyclopaedia: the fictional encyclopaedia differs from other fictions primarily in its relatively greater emphasis on public anonymity as opposed to autobiography. Similarly, the more comprehensive form takes over the essay's oscillation--a veiling versus an unveiling--over its own ideological nature, its status as rhetorically shaped discourse. For example, Pound's *Cantos* as fictional encyclopaedia overtly displays the pressure of the public domain of documents, histories, texts, upon the record of a life. Nonetheless, in its recurring lyric epiphanies this text at the same time hides its own temporal-rhetorical orientation, yearning toward a peculiarly personal "voyage" toward knowledge and beyond time: "Knowledge the shade of a shade/ Yet must thou sail after knowledge/ Knowing less than drugged beasts" (Canto XLVII).

The fictional encyclopaedia also absorbs the peculiarly fragmented format of the essay-collection. We have noted that such compilations follow no over-all order that is not imposed on them externally. Similarly, the order of the fictional encyclopaedia is thematic and associative rather than narrative and logical; the form is more a constellation of independent pieces than a unified teleological movement. A work such as *Moby-Dick*, for example, features the play of a narrative against a thematic order; the quest story is broken up by a whale encyclopaedia that

develops in counterpoint to the narrative line.

### The Menippean satire

Frye and Bakhtin have both discussed the menippea.<sup>13</sup> Petronius, Varro, and Apuleius--and later Burton, Sterne and Swift--worked within this form. To briefly summarize the traits of this form, we should note that the ancients placed Menippean satire with Socratic dialogue in the special category of the "serio-comical," a genre felt to be quite distinct from the "serious" genres of epic and tragedy, and presumably also distinct from comedy. The serio-comical emphasizes what Bakhtin calls a "carnival attitude to the world": "in all the serio-comical genres there is a strong rhetorical element, but that element is radically altered in the atmosphere of jolly relativity...of the carnival attitude: its one-sided rhetorical seriousness, rationality, singleness of meaning, and dogmatism are made weaker."<sup>14</sup> This subversion of single-mindedness is matched, at the formal level, by a multiplying of styles and genres, a mixing of high and low styles, verse and prose forms.

The Menippean satirist works within fantasy, yet at the same time embarks on a philosophical search for the truth, in this search often ranging from earth to the heavens and down to the underworld. The menippea brings together the most sublime elements with the lowest human types of character in its characteristic fantastic journey towards truth. In this quest, it reflects its historical point of emergence, a time of "the decay of the tradition of a nation and the destruction of those ethical norms which made up the antique ideal of 'seemliness'...an epoch of intense struggle among multitudinous heterogeneous religions and philosophical schools and tendencies...."<sup>15</sup> Petronius' Satyricon, an early example of the form, is satirical, ridiculing current oratorical and social excesses. The hero (or antihero) of the story embarks on a fantastic journey, passing through many scenes of low life in a quest for a mystical/erotic knowledge--and a cure for impotence. The sublime and the base are indistinguishable in this strange genre.

In his article on Pound and the Menippean tradition, Max Nänny outlines the following formal traits of the menippea: it is heterogeneous and fragmented in nature, being a collection of smaller texts bearing little apparent relation; it is a mixture of prose and verse, and of other forms such as letters, songs, epigrams, oratory, symposia, and so on; and it speaks in many voices, through many personae, creating an over-all effect of anonymity rather than authority. Further, the form (like the essay) is at least partly autobiographical (the author may become a character within the work), this impulse paradoxically countering the form's anonymity of voice.<sup>16</sup> Finally, it presents a vision of the world in terms of a "single intellectual pattern"<sup>17</sup>; it is organized symbolically, seeking an over-all synthesis of knowledge. Sterne's Tristram Shandy is thus Menippean in its fragmented, digressive narrative, its mixing of the forms of main text and footnote (the latter sometimes becoming so long that it is confused with the former), and its over-all patterning (countering its digressions) according to a theme of birth and the receiving of identity.

In the menippea, the single-minded quest for the truth is never far from the duplicities of irony--or the

encyclopaedic multiplicities of parody. Indeed, the parodic gesture informs the borrowing and mixing of forms and the emptying of characters, the latter becoming merely "mental attitudes," in Frye's expression. The menippea tends to expand into an "encyclopaedic farrago" based on a "magpie instinct to collect facts."<sup>18</sup> This tendency toward encyclopaedic compilation shows in the form's ostentatious "bookishness," its pointed and repeated reference to earlier works while parodying the very activity of making learned references. Petronius, for example, parodies past works, aiming at the Odyssey in presenting the wanderings of Encolpius and his quest to overcome a god-induced impotence. This Odyssean parody accompanies a ridicule of the practice of making references, as the poet Eumolpus does, to painters and other poets, including Homer and Virgil. In another instance, Rabelais parodies medieval romance and its glorification of the exploits of the hero, when he presents such exploits, blown up to grotesque proportions, at the hands of Gargantua and Pantagruel. In both Rabelais and Petronius, parody takes shape within a heterogeneous compilation of forms: narrative, dialogue, verse-interval, riddle, list.

In the menippea, an encyclopaedic range of topics is usually kept within the boundaries of a narrative which, even if fragmented, is still operative. The encyclopaedic activity of collecting is kept in check in the form of references made by the characters, or by the narrator in the form of footnotes. It is only when the encyclopaedist's love for topics begins to overtake the narrator's desire to tell a story that we begin to cross the tenuous boundary separating the menippea from the fictional encyclopaedia.

The fictional encyclopaedia takes over certain menippean traits. As, in the essay, autobiography works against a didactic or public tendency, so in the menippea, autobiography is countered by anonymous composition. One is never sure who is speaking or writing. In the Satyricon, Encolpius is so clearly visualized as a participant in the action that it is easy to forget that his is also the narrating voice. And Tristram Shandy features an even more extreme confusion of narrating subject and object of narration. With such a problematic narrator, anyone or no-one may be writing the tale. Yet Tristram Shandy is at least superficially autobiographical, narrating the birth and coming-to-identity of a subject. However, a fictional encyclopaedia such as Ulysses has a biographical narrative (Stephen Dedalus' coming into self-knowledge) encountering the anonymous pressure of many voices, with the result that the narrative is as much Dublin's as Stephen's or Bloom's.

Other Menippean traits taken over by the more comprehensive encyclopaedic genre are its "serio-comical" tone and, especially, its fragmented and digressive form, its mixing of genres and styles, and its organization according to a "single intellectual pattern." For example, narrative in Sollers' Paradis is a continuing digression, a kaleidoscopic sweep through countless fragments of knowledge and many forms of discourse. Oddly enough, this formal dissolution or "rhizome"-like multiplicity<sup>19</sup> coexists with an emerging symbolic shape: paradise forms the symbolic or intellectual crux of Sollers' text as it does in Dante's Commedia.