

The French Reception of Gertrude Stein (1914 - 1932)

Susanna PAVLOSKA

Abstract

This study charts the French reception of American writer Gertrude Stein between the years 1914, with the publication of *Tender Buttons*, and 1932, when Stein gained celebrity with the publication of *The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas*, by examining the writings of the French critics Jean Cocteau, Georges Hugnet, Marcel Brion, and Bernard Faÿ in various early twentieth-century publications housed in the collection of Twentieth-Century Periodicals in the Bibliothèque nationale de France. While in her home country, Stein's experimental writings were regarded as obscure and even suspected of being a hoax, the French poets, critics, and historians discussed here had no problem perceiving what she was trying to accomplish. In addition, examining these texts during this time period gives us important insights into the quickening pace of the linguistic and cultural rapprochement between France and the United States in the period between the First and Second World Wars.

Keywords

Gertrude Stein, France, Modernism, Reception, American Studies

In late September, 2008, I decided to pay a visit to Père-Lachaise. I had lived at different times in Montmartre and Montparnasse, the two Parisian neighborhoods most closely associated with Gertrude Stein's life, and now after a year spent researching her artistic milieu, I could not resist the impulse to pay my respects to her mortal remains¹. Inside the huge cemetery, I was accosted by a dapper older man named Gérard, a retired *maître d'hôtel* who now spent his days as a “*rat de cimetièrre*,” or volunteer guide. Consulting a thick, highlighted notebook, he led me to a plain marble headstone, surrounded by flourishing pachysandra. He explained to me that the small stones covering the top of the marker were a Jewish token of remembrance, and I pointed out to him the name of Stein's life companion, Alice Toklas, which was engraved on the back of the stone. He looked pleased to have this information about two of the handful of Americans memorialized in the vast necropolis, and then he asked, “who is she, by the way?” This episode struck me as ironic considering that during her lifetime, as my research showed, Gertrude Stein's literary work was given more serious attention in France than in her own country, where she was best known as an art collector, a *saloniste*, and celebrity: an American who had unaccountably appeared at the heart of the French avant-garde.

Except for her American lecture tour in 1934, Gertrude Stein spent the last forty-three years of her life in France but wrote in English and never considered herself anything other than an American writer at a time when language barriers were more formidable than they are today. Her biographical entry in the catalogue of the Bibliothèque nationale reads: “Gertrude Stein (1874–1946) Allegheny E-U. Romancière – animatrice de l'avant-garde American installée en France en 1903” [novelist – leader of the American avant-garde, settled in France in 1903]. She maintained that her residence in France was incidental to her writing, but it is not by coincidence that her writing received its first serious critical attention from French, not American critics. This study covers the time period between 1914, when Stein published

Tender Buttons, and 1932, when she gained international fame as the author of *The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas*. It charts the history of her interactions with four French literary figures: Jean Cocteau, Georges Hugnet, Marcel Brion, and Bernard Faÿ, and in the process, also tells us something about the quickening pace of literary rapprochement between France and the United States in the period between the First and Second World Wars.

I. Gertrude Stein as an American

Born on the east coast of the United States to well-to-do German-Jewish parents, Gertrude Stein and her siblings lived in Vienna and Paris before settling in Oakland, California, where her father established the first streetcar company. Despite the family's cosmopolitan background, Stein considered her family to be quintessentially American: her *magnum opus* is a thousand-page novel entitled *The Making of Americans: The History of a Family's Progress* (1925). After her mother's death, she and her brother Leo Stein (1872–1947) moved to Baltimore. She then followed Leo to Harvard, where she studied psychology with William James. At James's suggestion, she enrolled in medical school at Johns-Hopkins, as part of the first class of women students, where she studied brain biology for three years before dropping out to rejoin Leo in Europe. In Paris, the Steins started collecting modern art and were among the earliest supporters of Henri Matisse and Pablo Picasso. Their weekly salon at their house at 27, rue de Fleurus became an important meeting place for artists, writers, and potential patrons of modernist art.

Gertrude Stein and Picasso's friendship developed during the winter of 1905–1906, when according to *The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas*, "practically every afternoon" (55) she made the journey from Montparnasse to Montmartre and Picasso's studio in a decrepit building known as "le

Bateau-Lavoir,” or “laundry boat,” to sit for *The Portrait of Gertrude Stein* (1907), now on display at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City. As I describe in detail in Chapter One, “Stein and Picasso: The Anti-Aesthetes,” in my book, *Modern Primitives: Race and Language in Gertrude Stein, Ernest Hemingway, and Zora Neale Hurston* (2000), their shared interest in Primitivism during this period of intense interaction turned out to be formative for both writer and painter: during this time Stein completed “Melanctha,” the third story in her *Three Lives*, which, in *The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas*, she describes as “the first definite step away from the nineteenth century and into the twentieth century in literature” and was “deep into” the writing of *The Making of Americans* (61); as for Picasso, after finishing Stein’s portrait, he embarked on a series of Primitivist experiments that culminated with the large proto-Cubist painting, *Les demoiselles d’Avignon* (1907), described by contemporary art critic Roger Fry as the “first truly twentieth-century painting” (12).

Picasso went on to achieve worldwide fame as the originator of Cubism; however, at the time of their early acquaintance, both Stein and Picasso were *étrangers* or foreigners in Paris whose works dealt with the outsiders of society: Picasso in the paintings of his Blue and Rose Periods, and Stein in the stories in *Three Lives*. According to Pierre Daix, Stein’s friendship “constituted a priceless opening out” for Picasso partly because her “American French freed him from his own linguistic complexes” (56). With French as their common language, she could talk to him about the work of Paul Cézanne, whom they both admired, in terms of the theories of perception she had studied as a member of William James’s Psychological Laboratory, and he could share with her the insights he had gained from the Bohemian contingent of poets and painters who gathered in his studio, where he had inscribed “*au rendez-vous des poètes*” [“the meeting place of poets”] above the door. Above all, Stein and Picasso recognized in each other’s artistic practice an intense ambition to rebel against and overturn artistic conventions.

Like their hero, Cézanne, with his aesthetic of uncompromising experimentation, they embraced “ugliness” — not simply ugliness as a necessary intermediary step — but ugliness as a way of displaying the human mind involved in the process of creation. In other words, both were committed to what the philosopher, literary critic, and psychoanalyst Julia Kristeva, in her *Revolution in Poetic Language* [*La révolution du langage poétique* (1974)] describes as “signifying practice,” a radically different way of thinking about artistic creation that was gaining influence in Paris among writers, painters, and composers in the late nineteenth century. This movement was characterized by the way in which aesthetic concerns were de-emphasized in order to foreground the physical qualities of visual images, words, and musical notes, often at the expense of intelligibility (see Pavloska, 10–20).

Signifying practice, or, in the specific case of writing, “poetic language,” is characterized by the weaving together of two qualities, which Kristeva terms the “Symbolic,” controlled by external constraints such as the laws of syntax, culture, and society, and the “Semiotic” (*le semiotic*), which arises from unconscious drives and impulses. In her daily writing practice from *Three Lives* on, Stein sought, as she said, to record “the rhythm of everyone’s personality” by writing down her thoughts immediately as they occurred to her, without editing or embroidering upon them in any way (Pavloska, 10–11). Stein termed this process “composition,” and was obliged throughout her career to defend herself from accusations of automatic writing (*Autobiography*, 87), or simply as being, as Hemingway once spitefully limned, “Gertrude Stein was never crazy / Gertrude Stein was very lazy” (90).

Because she was working with words, Stein’s project was even more radical than what Picasso was trying to accomplish with his forays into Cubism: while Cubism as a movement in the visual arts had the goal of forcing viewers to consider the process of perception, Stein’s literary practice questions the basis of perception itself. Both Picasso and Stein went on to

become international celebrities, but serious recognition came later to Stein. Picasso's period of poverty and obscurity essentially ended in 1908, when he was signed by the art dealer Henri-David Kahweiler, although his tour-de-force, *Les Femmes d'Alger*, was regarded as being so scandalous that it was not exhibited until 1916. In the case of Stein, *The Making of Americans*, considered unreadable because of its length and its repetitious, experimental style, was not published by a commercial publishing house until 1934, and even then, in an abridged edition, and that was only after the publication of Stein's most accessible work, *The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas* (1933) which finally brought her mainstream recognition.

The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas became an instant bestseller in the United States because American readers had been waiting for many years for a work of Stein's that they could understand. One thing that must be remembered about Stein is that she was a woman of enormous charisma. Americans coming to Paris sought out her salon, and after meeting her often went home as her strong supporters, even if they found her work incomprehensible. Because of the efforts of people such as the writer and socialite Mabel Dodge, art critic Henry McBride, and especially Carl Van Vechten, who was a music critic for the *New York Times*, Stein became one of the celebrities of the 1913 Armory Show, which introduced Cubism to the American public. As Milton Brown points out, in the United States, Modernism was a populist movement: even if people could not understand what they were seeing, they were interested, even if they could only take what they were seeing as a joke. As an anonymous ditty appearing in *The Chicago Tribune* at the time went:

I called the canvas *Cow with Cud*
 And hung it on the Line
 Altho' to me 'twas vague as mud
 'Twas clear to Gertrude Stein. (qtd. in Brown 138)

The mixture of homely, even rustic, diction and archaic spellings attests to the state of American culture at the time. While Stein's published work, appearing in the United States mainly in small literary magazines, continued to be the object of parody and ridicule during her lifetime, Stein was fond of declaring, somewhat paradoxically, that "the United States is now the oldest country in the world." Her reason for making this declaration was as follows:

By the methods of the Civil War and the commercial conceptions that followed it America created the twentieth century and since all the other countries are now either living or commencing to be living a twentieth century life, America having begun the creation of the twentieth century in the sixties of the nineteenth century is now the oldest country in the world. (*Autobiography*, 86–87)

According to this theory, Americans were the people who were most comfortable with modernity because they had been living in the modern world for the longest period of time. They respected what modernity stood for, and were pleased and proud that an American should be at the center of the movement. Ignoring the jokes, Van Vechten capitalized on Stein's celebrity to get a collection of shorter — and therefore more easily accessible — pieces, *Tender Buttons* (1914), published by a small press in New York. Thus, Stein's international reputation at the outbreak of World War I rested mainly on her art collection and her *salon*, and to a smaller extent, on *Tender Buttons* and pieces appearing in "little magazines" and vanity press publications.

II. Jean Cocteau, “ce radiotélégramme atteignait vite mon cœur”

The first known mention of Stein’s work in a French publication was in *Le Potomak* (1924) by Jean Cocteau. Written during World War I but not published until four years later, Cocteau considered it to be his first mature work: it constitutes the first volume of his *Collected Works*. His discussion of Stein’s writing occurs in a section entitled “Esthétique du Minimum” [“The Aesthetics of the Minimum”]’ in which he writes of a group of friends gathering around to read aloud from *Tender Buttons* and laughing:

Un soir, j’entendis rire des camarades autour d’un poème d’une Américaine. Or ce radiotélégramme atteignait vite mon cœur. «Diner, c’est ouest» décide simplement Gertrude Stein au milieu d’une page blanche.

Une seule épithète devrait suffire au rêve, un léger cou d’épaule, une flèche de poteau indicateur. Ce qui offusquait ce groupe, la farce américaine, me parut au contraire une preuve de confiance. (34–35)

[One evening, I overheard a group of friends laughing around a poem written by an American. But it struck me like a radio telegram direct to my heart. “Dining is west” Gertrude Stein states simply in the middle of a white page.

A single epithet can set one dreaming, a light tap on the shoulder, a signpost pointing the way. The thing that offended this group on the contrary appeared to me as evidence of supreme self-confidence. (my translation)]

While his friends regarded the words on the page as nonsense, Cocteau

testifies that he took them seriously: they were to him like a “radio telegram direct to his heart”: an experience that was both modern and exhilarating.

As a young poet born in Paris in the late nineteenth century, Cocteau was familiar with the writing of such poets as Mallarmé, Lautréamont, and especially Rimbaud. Rimbaud’s prose-poem “Une saison en Enfer” [“A Season in Hell”] (1873) which is regarded as a foundational text in the history of European modernism, ends with the line, “il faut etre absolument modern” [“it is necessary to be absolutely modern”]. The prose-poems collected in *Illuminations*, Rimbaud’s other major work, were described by John Ashbery as “a crystalline jumble” (16), an epithet that could also be applied to the prose-poems in *Tender Buttons*.

Cocteau was introduced to Stein by Picasso the following year, and although the two professed admiration and friendship for each other, Cocteau did not become a member of Stein’s circle, and in the years that followed, politely refused her requests to review her books. Nevertheless, despite the fact he worked almost exclusively in the French milieu, it is significant that Cocteau readily accepted Stein’s experimental work into the lineage of modern European poetry, and was willing to go on record with that acceptance.

III. Georges Hugnet, “Le mystère de la rue de Fleurus”

A second French writer who publicly recognized Stein’s work was the poet, graphic artist, publisher, and Dada historian Georges Hugnet (1906–1974). He was introduced to Stein in 1926 by Virgil Thompson, the American composer. Hugnet moved more easily than Cocteau between French-speaking and English-speaking artistic circles. Writing in response to a survey of French writers on their opinion of the impact of American literature on Europe in the English-language literary journal, *transition*, in 1928 he

explained that the reason Gertrude Stein was not “more known in France” was because

There is no influence whatsoever. American literature has so little influence on the French that it seems to me to be, in general, even influenced by the French. Moreover, no Frenchman knows English, reads only translations, and those who have a knowledge of English, aside from certain exceptions, play only a very restricted role. (35)

Hugnet emphasizes the reality of the language barriers that existed between French speakers and English speakers at that point in time, and suggests that if there was any interaction at all, it was one-sided on the part of Americans being influenced by French literature but not vice-versa. Picasso was self-conscious about his Spanish accent when he spoke in French, but he lived with French women, read French newspapers, and went on to write poetry in French, while Stein’s French was mostly limited to speaking to servants and tradespeople, and even then, she left most household matters to Toklas. However, she maintained that this linguistic isolation was entirely intentional: she repeatedly stated that she was not interested in French, declaring that “there is for me only one language and that is English” (*Autobiography*, 77). She claimed that the state of being surrounded by people who know no English, which allowed her to be “all alone with English and myself” (78), was an important part of her writing practice. This idea is in keeping with Kristeva’s theory about what she termed “poetic language:” herself a Bulgarian expatriate, in her essay, “A New Type of Intellectual: The Dissident,” Kristeva argues that in order to “break free of the mire of common sense,” it is necessary for an experimental writer to keep a distance from “one’s own country, language, sex, and identity,” even going on to add, “writing is impossible without some kind of exile” (“Dissident” 298). For a linguist, whose task is to study the materiality of language, and an

experimental writer, intent on overturning literary conventions, this type of distance is not only favorable, it is essential.

Hugnet, who became Stein's first important French translator, attempted to bridge the gap between Stein and the French literary community. His essay, "La Vie de Gertrude Stein" ["The Life of Gertrude Stein"], which accompanied a translation by "Mme. JPL" of one of Stein's minor pieces, "Un Saint en Sept," published in the Spring, 1929 edition of the French journal, *Orbes*, claims Stein as the first American writer to have accomplished the modernist task of "liberating language from thought" ("la liberation absolue de la pensée et les mots qui servent à l'exprimer"). He compared her writing to a "a music box" ["boite de musique"] (61) but later, added the qualification that Stein's use of language was different from poetry that sought to imitate music through various poetic devices:

Je n'entends pas par musique cette ridicule qu'on rencontre chez les poètes, celle de l'harmonie imitative et de ces rythmes mous dont la seule raison d'être est l'oreille. La musique que je veux dire est tout autre, elle satisfait l'esprit autant que le cœur. (Preface 12)

[By "music" I don't mean that ridiculous practice that one sees among poets who attempt to imitate it by means of harmony and soft rhythms, whose sole appeal is to the ear. The music that I want to describe is entirely different – it satisfies the spirit as much as the heart] (my translation)

In other words, in Stein's case, the musical element is not purely imitative, or, in Kristevan terms, "semiotic": there is always an element of double stranded-ness, so that it is not purely lexical meaning, not purely sound. The rhythm that is produced here is "un rythme de la pensée" (*Ibid.*, 15).

Hugnet's assessment of Stein's language is like Verlaine's famous

declaration that Rimbaud had liberated French lyric poetry from “the language of common sense.” Stein approved of Hugnet’s formula, and was so gratified by his words that she was moved to write to thank him in French in a letter archived at the Henry Ransom Humanities Research Center at the University of Texas at Austin: “Je suis touchée au fond du cœur vraiment vous pouviez pas dit des choses que j’aimerais mieux entendre, vous m’avez compris, et ça me fait énormément du bien” (Postmark 25 September 1928, qtd. in Dydo 285–286). [“I’m touched to the bottom of my heart – truly you have been able to say what I love to hear best. You have understood me, and that does me a lot of good”] (my translation).

It is significant that Stein herself approved Hugnet’s characterization of her writing practice; at the same time, one senses that this was a novel experience for her. Hugnet went on to translate and publish selections (“Morceaux choisis”) from *The Making of Americans*, and also produced, with Thompson, a bilingual edition of some of her literary “portraits” entitled *Dix Portraits* (1930). Hugnet’s translation is generally regarded as the best French translation of the *Making of Americans*, even though his elegant French, in both his translations and his own writings, shows no trace of Stein’s influence. On a side note, their collaboration ended when the two of them had a falling out over an English translation that Stein did of some of Hugnet’s poems in 1933 and they never worked together or spoke again (See Dydo 278–323).

IV. Marcel Brion, “Le contrepoint poétique de Gertrude Stein”

Of the four critics discussed in this study, Marcel Brion (1895–1984) was the only one who was not acquainted with Stein personally. Brion, who was twenty years younger than Stein, wrote mainly about Renaissance art, although he also published articles on Cézanne, Braque, and Klee. He

went on to have a distinguished literary career and was elected to l'Academie française in 1964. In June 1930 he published an article entitled "Le contrepoint poétique de Gertrude Stein" ["Gertrude Stein's Poetic Counterpoint"] in the newly established bilingual journal, *Échanges*, whose subtitle: *Révue trimestrielle de littérature anglaise et française* [*Quarterly Review of English and French Literature*] testifies to the growing interest in English-language literature in France. Drawing on a deep knowledge of French poetry, Brion nevertheless resorts to a non-literary comparison in order to elucidate the significance of Stein's writing: like Hugnet, he draws an analogy with music, in this case with the fugue, especially as developed by Johan Sebastian Bach. Brion was the first to recognize the polyvalence of Stein's writing, and that far from being a practice of "art by subtraction," as the title of a book written by B. L. Reid, one of her most vehement American detractors put it, Stein's writing was characterized by the interplay of forces, similar to Kristeva's "Symbolic" and "Semiotic." The use of musical metaphors by both Hugnet and Brion indicates an understanding that the "signifying practice" employed by Stein in her experimental works encompasses the sign systems used not only by writers, but also musicians and visual artists as well. It is no accident that a concern with the act of looking at paintings, in particular, the paintings of Cezanne, acted as the common ground that enabled Stein and Picasso to communicate with each other about their shared theories about modernism in art.

Like Cocteau and Hugnet, Brion was not overly concerned with intelligibility. He concludes his essay with the words, "it is not necessary that we understand Stein, only that we know she exists" (128). In other words, Stein's accomplishment is in how she demonstrates an alternative use of language beyond its practical signifying function, turning it into a means of liberation from conventional ways of thinking. Stein herself was clear about whom she regarded as her intended audience and was upset by the fact that, in an ironic twist, people had become preoccupied with the materiality of her

books, rather than the words contained therein, making her early limited-edition publications into expensive collector's items. One reason for her relentless pursuit of mainstream publication is because she wanted her books to be "read, not owned," as the narrator of the *Autobiography* states: "Gertrude Stein's readers are writers, university students, librarians, and young people who have very little money. Gertrude Stein wants readers not collectors" (264). By her own account, Stein wanted to be read by serious lovers of literature and especially young people, whom she hoped to inspire by the revolutionary aspects of her work in order that they might build upon them.

V. Bernard Faÿ, "ces amis si précieux, méritaient un vivre le voici"

Bernard Faÿ (1893–1978) is the most prominent and influential of the French critics who publicized Stein's work during her lifetime and as a scholar of American history, the one the most well versed in American culture and, at the same time, the least motivated by artistic concerns. One of the first distinguished French scholars of American Studies, Faÿ graduated from the Sorbonne and studied for two years at Harvard University after the First World War. He first met Stein in 1924 while teaching American history at the University of Clermont-Ferrand. His well-regarded biographies of Benjamin Franklin (1929) and George Washington (1931) earned him the first Chair in American Civilization at the College of France, thirty years before similar programs were being instituted in the United Kingdom. The following year, he and a co-translator, J. Seillière, translated a longer abridgement of *The Making of Americans* than the one done by Hugnet and Thompson. This abridgement, with Faÿ's preface translated into English, became the basis of the U.S. edition published in 1934, in the wake of Stein's tour of the United States. Thus, the Frenchman Faÿ occupies an important place in Stein's literary history because he was the one responsible for realizing Stein's

lifelong ambition by bringing about the first American edition of her masterpiece to be published by a commercial publisher.

In 1940 Faÿ was appointed Administrateur General of the Bibliothèque nationale de France. He used his position, which gave him direct access to Marshall Petain, to protect Gertrude Stein and Alice B. Toklas from the Nazis during the Second World War. His protection enabled them to wait out the war in their house in Culoz in the French countryside, and also prevented the invading German army from looting their art-filled apartment. When, in 1944 Faÿ was arrested as a collaborator, tried, and sentenced to life in prison with hard labor, Stein and Toklas campaigned for his release. After Stein's death in 1946, Toklas continued to make efforts on his behalf until he was eventually pardoned in 1959. As for the question of why Faÿ, a gay Catholic Nazi sympathizer went out of his way to protect two elderly Jewish women, the answer seems to be that he simply liked them. In his preface to his abridgement to *The Making of Americans* he says of Stein, "the greatest and most beautiful of her gifts was her presence" (xi). He was convinced of the value of her work because he was well versed in American history and thought and, unlike the majority of French academics of his generation, he was able to discuss her writings in fluent English.

VI. Building (and Destroying) Gertrude Stein's Transatlantic Reputation

While French critics were able to perceive Stein's writing practice as "nothing strange" (Bowers 155), her reputation in the country of her birth continues to be divided, even into the twenty-first century. On the occasion of Stein's inclusion in the canonical Library of America's *American Poetry: The Twentieth-Century*, the pre-eminent scholar of twentieth-century poetry, Marjorie Perloff, approvingly notes that it is "the first mainstream anthology to treat Gertrude Stein as what she surely was – one of the century's major

poets” (“Difference,” 2000, para 1). Even so, ten years after this, the foundational feminist critic Elaine Showalter, in her “magisterial” book, *A Jury of Her Peers: Celebrating American Women Writers from Anne Bradstreet to Annie Proulx* (2010) writes that “although she is widely acknowledged to be unreadable, incomprehensible, self-indulgent, and excruciatingly boring...” Stein nevertheless has always had ‘a cult of devotees.’” Included among these are “academics, tantalized by her difficulty and obscurity, who hoped to decipher her,” feminist critics, who saw her as a “major innovator of a woman’s language,” “lesbian readers,” and “playful writers and poets” (253–254). For Showalter, the reasons for Stein’s continuing literary existence seem to encompass everything except intrinsic literary merit.

Showalter goes on to cite the work of such scholars as Janet Malcolm and Barbara Will to argue that “as more information about Stein’s ongoing battles with Toklas, the casualness of her texts and methods of composition, and the unsavory details of the couple’s survival in Vichy France as the pet Jews of a Nazi collaborator comes to light... the harder it will be for Stein’s supporters to defend an investment of time in her work. Stein seems more and more like the Empress Who Had No Clothes – a shocking sight to behold in every respect” (253–254). Indeed, in one respect Showalter is correct, because monographs such as Randa Dubnick’s *The Structure of Obscurity: Gertrude Stein, Language, and Cubism* (1984), Lisa Ruddick’s *Reading Gertrude Stein: Body, Text, Gnosis* (1990), and Elizabeth Fifer’s *Rescued Readings: A Reconstruction of Gertrude Stein’s Difficult Texts* (1992), in trying to “recover” hidden meanings from Stein’s texts written during the time period of this study are missing the point of Stein’s experimental writing practice: to borrow a phrase from *Everybody’s Autobiography* (1937), “there is no there there” (298). Coming from a background of Victorian Studies and 1970s feminism, Showalter is clearly incapable of comprehending Stein’s project, and her response is to resort to biographical criticism in an attempt to call in the “jury” and to sentence Stein

to obscurity once and for all.

In the case of academics of the Postmodern persuasion, however, the “obscurity” of the work of writers such as Stein is seen as a plus, rather than a minus. In fact, Karin Cope, in her book, *Passionate Collaborations: Learning to Live with Gertrude Stein* (2005), avers that she was first drawn to work on Stein because, “trained as I was, not only in the history of philosophy, but specifically in the moves of various poststructuralist and deconstructive ‘linguistic turns,’ Stein appeared to offer a more or less endless proof of the wiliness of the play of the signifier” (7). In this case, poststructuralist and deconstructive theory precedes the text. However, as we have seen, in France, during the time period of this study, a number of individual literary figures were able not only to comprehend, but to appreciate Stein’s writing. Just as Freud derived his Psychoanalytic theories from his readings of Greek plays, German poetry, and other European literature, the four French literary figures discussed in this study were able to take Stein’s work seriously because of their familiarity with an established artistic avant-garde.

In conclusion, the intellectual and artistic collaboration between Gertrude Stein and Picasso suggests that, in its “semiotic” capacity, the visual arts may be superior to language as a medium of international exchange. Nevertheless, in spite of linguistic differences, which were much greater than they are today, these four French critics were able to grasp the significance of Stein’s experimental literary practice decades before her United States-based intended audience. It is significant that Jean Cocteau and Georges Hugnet were practicing poets themselves, while Marcel Brion was known for his writings on the visual arts. Of the four, as a scholar of American Studies, Bernard Faÿ was the least knowledgeable about Stein’s literary practice, although his career speaks to the growing academic exchange between France and the United States, its intellectual offspring. Stein’s ideas were taken seriously in France decades before the advent of postmodern criticism made their acceptance possible in her own country.

Stein may have claimed to have chosen to live in France simply as a place to be “alone with English and myself,” but her significance and influence were understood first in France.

Note

- i I would like to express my gratitude to Doshisha University, l'Université de Paris 8 St-Denis, the Bibliothèque nationale de France, Professor Claude Cohen Safir, and the members of the Résonances feminist literary study group for their generous support of this research during academic year 2007-2008. This paper is dedicated to the late Professor Emory Elliott and Professor William Howarth, with abiding thanks.

Works Cited and Consulted

- Ashbery, John. Preface. *Rimbaud/Illuminations*. John Ashbery, trans. New York: W.W. Norton, 2011.
- Bowers, Jane Palatini. *Gertrude Stein*. Women Writers. London: MacMillan, 1993.
- Brion, Marcel. “Le Contrepoint Poétique de Gertrude Stein.” *Échanges: revue trimestrielle de littérature anglaise et française* 3 (June, 1930) : 122-128.
- Brown, Milton W. *The Story of the Armory Show*. Washington DC: Hirschorn Foundation, Abbeville Press, 1963.
- Cocteau, Jean. “Esthétique du Minimum,” *Le Potomak*, 1913-1914. Paris: Stock, 1924.
- Cope, Karin. *Passionate Collaborations: Learning to Live with Gertrude Stein*. Victoria: ELS Editions, 2005.
- Curnutt, Kirk, ed. *The Critical Response to Gertrude Stein*. Critical Responses in Arts and Letters, Number 36. Westport (CT) : Greenwood Press, 2000.
- Daix, Pierre. *Picasso: Life and Art [Picasso Créateur]* Trans. Olivia Emmet. New York: HarperCollins: [1987] 1993.
- Dydo, Ulla, and William Rice. *Gertrude Stein: The Language that Rises 1923-1934*. Evanston: Northwestern UP, 2003.
- Faÿ, Bernard. ‘Portrait of Gertrude Stein.’ *Révue Européenne* (Summer 1930).
- . *Les Précieux*. Paris : Librairie Académique Perrin, 1966.
- . “Préface.” *Américains d’Amérique : Histoire d’une famille américaine*. Paris: Stock, 1933. 7-20.

- . “Préface.” *L’Anthologie de la nouvelle poésie américaine*. Preface, Bernard Fay. Ed., Eugène Jolas. Paris: Éditions Kra, 1928.
- “Fugue.” Appel, Willi and Ralph T. Daniel, Eds. *Harvard Brief Dictionary of Music*. Cambridge (MA): Harvard UP, 1979.
- Fry, Roger. *Cubism*. New York: Oxford UP, 1966.
- Hemingway, Ernest. “Portrait of a Lady.” *88 Poems*, edited by Nicholas Geogiannis, New York: Harcourt, 1979, 90.
- Hugnet, Georges. ‘Le Berceau de Gertrude Stein, ou le mystère de la rue de Fleurus.’ *Revue Européenne*, February 1929.
- . “Response,” in Eugene Jolas, “Inquiry Among European Writers into the Spirit of America” *transition*13 (Summer 1928) 265-6.
- . “La Vie de Gertrude Stein.” *Orbes* 2 (Printemps). Paris : Au Sans Pareil, 1929. 59-61
- Kristeva, Julia. “A New Type of Intellectual: The Dissident.” Trans. Sean Hand. *The Kristeva Reader*. Ed. Toril Moi. NY : Columbia UP, 1986.
- . *Revolution in Poetic Language*. [La révolution du langage poétique] Trans, Margaret Waller. New York: Columbia UP, [1974] 1984.
- Leick, Karen. “Popular Modernism: Little Magazines and the American Daily Press.” *PMLA* Vol.123 no.1 (January, 2008).
- . *Gertrude Stein and the Making of an American Celebrity*. New York: Routledge, 2009.
- Pavloska, Susanna. *Modern Primitives: Race and Language in Gertrude Stein, Ernest Hemingway, and Zora Neale Hurston*. Literary Criticism and Cultural Theory: The Interaction of Text and Society. Oxford: Routledge, 2000.
- Perloff, Marjorie. *The Poetics of Indeterminacy: From Rimbaud to Cage*. Princeton: Princeton UP, 1981.
- . “The Difference is Spreading: On Gertrude Stein.” *Academy of American Poets. Poets.org*, 2007. <<https://poets.org/>>
- Place, Jean-Michel and André Vasseur. *Bibliographie des Revues et Journaux Littéraires des XIXe et XX Siècles: Chronique des lettres Françaises*. Paris: 12 rue Pierre et Marie Curie, 1977.
- Rimbaud, Arthur. *Illuminations*. Trans. John Ashbery. New York: WW Norton, 2012.
- Showalter, Elaine. *A Jury of Her Peers: Celebrating American women writers from Anne Bradstreet to Annie Proulx*. Ny: Vintage, 2009.
- Stein, Gertrude. *Américains d’Amérique: Histoire d’une famille américaine*. Bernard Fay and Baronne J. Seillière, trans. Paris: Stock, 1933.
- . *The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas*. London: The Bodley Head, 1933. Rpt, New York: Penguin, 2001.

- . *Everybody's Autobiography*. NY: Random House, 1937. Rpt. Cambridge: Exact Change, 1993.
 - . "How Writing is Written." *The Previously Uncollected Writings of Gertrude Stein*, Vol.II. Ed., Robert Bartlett Haas. Los Angeles: Black Sparrow P, 1974.
 - . *The Making of Americans Being a History of a Family's Progress*. Paris: Contact Editions, 1925. Rpt. Abridged edition with preface by Bernard Fay. NY: Harcourt Brace, 1934; Rpt. 1925 edition with a forward by William Gass . Normal (IL): Dalkey Archive, 1995.
 - . *Selected Writings of Gertrude Stein*. Ed., Carl Van Vechten. NY: Random, 1946.
 - . *Tender Buttons*. NY: Claire Marie, 1914. Rpt. Los Angeles: Sun & Moon P, 1990.
 - . *Three Lives*. [1909] NY: Vintage [1946] 1972.
- Will, Barbara. *Unlikely Collaboration: Gertrude Stein, Bernard Fay and the Vichy Dilemma*. New York: Columbia UP, 2011.

Susanna PAVLOSKA

要約

本研究は、フランス国立図書館に所蔵されている20世紀初頭の様々な出版物から、ジャン・コクトー、ジョルジュ・ユグネ、マルセル・ブリオン、ベルナルド・フェイらの著作を検討することによって、1914年から1932年までのアメリカ人作家ガートルード・スタインのフランスにおける受容を明らかにするものである。スタインの実験的な著作は、本国では曖昧でインチキ臭いとさえ疑われていたが、ここで取り上げたフランスの詩人、評論家、歴史家は、スタインが何を達成しようとしているのかを問題なく察知することができた。スタインの母国での評価が今日まで分かれていることは、フランス文学思想の洗練さを示しており、その過程で、これらのテキストは、第一次世界大戦から第二次世界大戦にかけてのフランスとアメリカの間の言語的・文化的和解がどのように加速されてきたのかを教えてくれるのである。