

# Twentieth-Century Literary Criticism

TCLC 274

TOPICS VOLUME

# Twentieth-Century Literary Criticism

**Commentary on Various Topics  
in Twentieth-Century Literature, including Literary  
and Critical Movements, Prominent Themes and  
Genres, Anniversary Celebrations, and Surveys  
of National Literatures**

**Kathy D. Darrow**

*Project Editor*



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# Twentieth-Century Literary Criticism

Topics Volume

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## Preface

Since its inception *Twentieth-Century Literary Criticism* (TCLC) has been purchased and used by some 10,000 school, public, and college or university libraries. TCLC has covered more than 1000 authors, representing over 60 nationalities and nearly 50,000 titles. No other reference source has surveyed the critical response to twentieth-century authors and literature as thoroughly as TCLC. In the words of one reviewer, “there is nothing comparable available.” TCLC “is a gold mine of information—dates, pseudonyms, biographical information, and criticism from books and periodicals—which many librarians would have difficulty assembling on their own.”

### Scope of the Series

TCLC is designed to serve as an introduction to authors who died between 1900 and 1999 and to the most significant interpretations of these author's works. Volumes published from 1978 through 1999 included authors who died between 1900 and 1960. The great poets, novelists, short story writers, playwrights, and philosophers of the period are frequently studied in high school and college literature courses. In organizing and reprinting the vast amount of critical material written on these authors, TCLC helps students develop valuable insight into literary history, promotes a better understanding of the texts, and sparks ideas for papers and assignments. Each entry in TCLC presents a comprehensive survey on an author's career or an individual work of literature and provides the user with a multiplicity of interpretations and assessments. Such variety allows students to pursue their own interests; furthermore, it fosters an awareness that literature is dynamic and responsive to many different opinions.

Every fourth volume of TCLC is devoted to literary topics. These topics widen the focus of the series from the individual authors to such broader subjects as literary movements, prominent themes in twentieth-century literature, literary reaction to political and historical events, significant eras in literary history, prominent literary anniversaries, and the literatures of cultures that are often overlooked by English-speaking readers.

TCLC is designed as a companion series to Gale's *Contemporary Literary Criticism*, (CLC) which reprints commentary on authors who died after 1999. Because of the different time periods under consideration, there is no duplication of material between CLC and TCLC.

### Organization of the Book

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- The **Introduction** contains background information that introduces the reader to the author, work, or topic that is the subject of the entry.
- The list of **Principal Works** is ordered chronologically by date of first publication and lists the most important works by the author. The genre and publication date of each work is given. In the case of foreign authors whose



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- Reprinted **Criticism** is arranged chronologically in each entry to provide a useful perspective on changes in critical evaluation over time. The critic's name and the date of composition or publication of the critical work are given at the beginning of each piece of criticism. Unsigned criticism is preceded by the title of the source in which it originally appeared. All titles by the author featured in the text are printed in boldface type. Footnotes are reprinted at the end of each essay or excerpt. In the case of excerpted criticism, only those footnotes that pertain to the excerpted texts are included. Criticism in topic entries is arranged chronologically under a variety of subheadings to facilitate the study of different aspects of the topic.
- A complete **Bibliographical Citation** of the original essay or book precedes each piece of criticism. Source citations in the Literary Criticism Series follow University of Chicago Press style, as outlined in *The Chicago Manual of Style*, 15th ed. (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2003).
- Critical essays are prefaced by brief **Annotations** explicating each piece.
- An annotated bibliography of **Further Reading** appears at the end of each entry and suggests resources for additional study. In some cases, significant essays for which the editors could not obtain reprint rights are included here. Boxed material following the further reading list provides references to other biographical and critical sources on the author in series published by Gale.

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In response to numerous suggestions from librarians, Gale also produces a paperbound edition of the *TCLC* cumulative title index. This annual cumulation, which alphabetically lists all titles reviewed in the series, is available to all customers. Additional copies of this index are available upon request. Librarians and patrons will welcome this separate index; it saves shelf space, is easy to use, and is recyclable upon receipt of the next edition.

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Kuester, Martin. "Myth and Postmodernist Turn in Canadian Short Fiction: Sheila Watson, 'Antigone' (1959)." In *The Canadian Short Story: Interpretations*, edited by Reginald M. Nischik, pp. 163-74. Rochester, N.Y.: Camden House, 2007. Reprinted in *Twentieth-Century Literary Criticism*. Vol. 206, edited by Thomas J. Schoenberg and Lawrence J. Trudeau, 227-32. Detroit: Gale, 2008.

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Kuester, Martin. "Myth and Postmodernist Turn in Canadian Short Fiction: Sheila Watson, 'Antigone' (1959)." *The Canadian Short Story: Interpretations*. Ed. Reginald M. Nischik. Rochester, N.Y.: Camden House, 2007. 163-74. Rpt. in *Twentieth-Century Literary Criticism*. Eds. Thomas J. Schoenberg and Lawrence J. Trudeau. Vol. 206. Detroit: Gale, 2008. 227-32. Print.

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# Cubism in Literature

Cubism was an avant-garde artistic and literary movement that emerged in the early decades of the twentieth century and advocated breaking up, analyzing, and then reassembling images or language in order to reveal a deeper meaning in a new context.

## INTRODUCTION

Championed by artists Pablo Picasso and Georges Braque, both of whom were living and working in Paris during the first decade of the twentieth century, the aesthetic movement that came to be known as Cubism revolutionized the art world and also influenced the domains of sculpture, architecture, music, and literature. Picasso and Braque, later joined by Henri Matisse, Paul Cézanne, and Paul Gauguin, advocated the breakup of the painted surface into smaller areas of simple, natural forms that could be reassembled to represent the world in a new way, one emphasizing multiple perspectives rather than a single one. In addition, Cubist artists espoused a detached and realistic way of looking at the world, as well as an interest in exotic and primitive art, mythology, and folk culture from various parts of the world. These traits are exemplified in such landmark early Cubist paintings as Picasso's "Les demoiselles d'Avignon" (1907) and "Portrait of Daniel-Henry Kahnweiler" (1910). While art historians divide the movement into various phases, they generally agree that the first, most radical period of Cubism lasted from 1907 to 1921, with many later manifestations lasting into the present day. Cubist and modern European art was introduced in the United States at the famous 1913 Armory Show in New York, where canvases by Picasso, Braque, Marcel Duchamp, and other artists were viewed by the public for the first time.

Critics debate whether Cubism did indeed spread from art to literature in this period, or whether it is even possible to talk about a Cubist literature, but most acknowledge that its influence is evident, with American expatriate author and critic Gertrude Stein serving as an important link between the artists and the writers who regularly gathered in her Paris salon. In her own work, most notably in the prose pieces *Three Lives* (1909) and *Tender Buttons* (1914), Stein championed the technique of treating repeated individual words, phrases, or passages as building blocks for longer passages, paralleling Picasso's and Braque's painting style. Following the Cubist manner of dissecting in order to reassemble into

a newly coherent whole, one that would reveal a deeper truth about the subject and enable multiple points of view, many writers became interested in presenting faceted works that relied on precise, realistic detail. In poetry, this style was represented by the works of Jorge Guillén, T. S. Eliot, Mina Loy, and William Carlos Williams. Scholar Joyce Caldwell Smith notes that Williams's poem "The Red Wheelbarrow" (published in his 1923 collection *Spring and All*) "employs literary techniques that frustrate expectations through novel rearrangements of words and ideas." Similarly, Sherwood Anderson's *Winesburg, Ohio* (1919), James Joyce's *Dubliners* (1914), and Jean Toomer's *Cane* (1923) present cycles of stories, told from diverse and individual points of view, that cohere into a greater whole akin to a novel. Novelists like Ernest Hemingway, Ralph Ellison, Joyce, and Virginia Woolf also adapted such Cubist techniques as repeating patterns of imagery, breaking up and manipulating time, collage, and filmic montage sequences in their works in an attempt to get at the "real" beyond the printed page.

Contemporary commentators continue to be interested in exploring the figures and facets of Cubist literature. The beginnings of the movement in the first two decades of the twentieth century remain an area of much scholarship, with studies examining the interactions between its principal figures and the ways in which their ideas spread and evolved. Echoes of Cubism in later-twentieth-century literature receive much critical attention as well, as does the role of ideas from other fields—for example Albert Einstein's Theory of Relativity and its repercussions for the depiction of time in Cubist literature—that bear on the general intellectual climate of the era. Carrie Noland has summarized the impact of Cubism, noting "If cubism possessed the force of an idea, if it defined an entire generation, it is because it centered attention not on an exotic iconography or earlier subtext but rather on the way elements acquire and displace signifying value within the alternate reality of the pictorial field (or . . . the poetic text)."

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## REPRESENTATIVE WORKS

Sherwood Anderson  
*Winesburg, Ohio* (short stories) 1919

Ersine Caldwell  
"The Yellow Girl" (short story) 1933; published in *Journal Story Magazine*

Carl Einstein

*Werke*. 5 vols. (essays) 1992-96

T. S. Eliot

"The Waste Land" (poem) 1922

Ralph Ellison

*Juneteenth* (unfinished novel) 1999

Jorge Guillén

*Cántico* (poetry) 1928, 1935

Ernest Hemingway

*In Our Time* (novel) 1925

*Death in the Afternoon* (novel) 1932

Langston Hughes

"Cuba" (poem) 1934; published in journal *New Masses*

James Joyce

*Dubliners* (short stories) 1914

*Ulysses* (novel) 1922

Mina Loy

*Songs to Joannes* (poetry) 1917

Vladimir Nabokov

"Britva" ["The Razor"] (short story) 1926; published in journal *Rul'*

Gertrude Stein

*Three Lives* (novellas) 1909

*Tender Buttons* (prose) 1914

*Picasso* (biography) 1938

Jean Toomer

*Cane* (prose and poetry) 1923

William Carlos Williams

*Spring and All* (poetry) 1923

Virginia Woolf

*The Waves* (novel) 1931

our knowledge is historical, flowing and flown

—Elizabeth Bishop

She wanted a "flow"

—Kathleen Fraser

But they called it a "flaw."<sup>1</sup> In fact, while our historical knowledge of Gertrude Stein, both as a person and as an artist, has certainly improved in recent years, and some recent critics have gone so far as to see Stein as the first modernist writer or as a quintessentially feminist writer, and now most recently as a proto-postmodernist writer, our appreciation of Stein as an individual artist as well as her place in the artistic movement she helped to inaugurate, particularly for American authors, remains deeply flawed. As Michael J. Hoffman noted in 1986, in his introduction to a collection of essays and reviews that represent all those various responses to Stein (and others), "Twenty years ago I was able to claim that nothing in Stein scholarship was comparable to the burgeoning 'Joyce industry.' That claim can no longer be made."<sup>2</sup> And certainly, in the intervening decade, critics have given more and more attention to Stein, particularly a Stein that is experimental, particularly in an "antipatriarchal" way, or a Stein that is psychoanalytical in a somewhat "French feminist" way, or a Stein whose meditations on love, war, and place are manifestations of encoded lesbian love and desire in much the way that they are for other contemporary lesbian writers.<sup>3</sup> In other words, part of the recent surge of interest in Stein stems from the legitimate ways her work in the first part of the century can be seen to anticipate numerous developments in poetic practice at the end of this century.

I am less interested in tracing our critical responses to Stein over time, however, than I am in seriously placing Stein back in her "period"—that somewhat contradictory but certainly exciting period we have traditionally called "modernism." It is not merely that reinserting Stein back into the artistic movements of which she was so clearly a seminal figure moves the dates of "modernism" back by a decade (a point already made by Ellen Friedman and Miriam Fuchs), or that doing so reaffirms the importance of women writers as a constitutive force in that period (a point made by the same critics, as well as by Margaret Dickie and Linda Wagner-Martin, to name only a few), but that her writing—and the subsequent aesthetic response of other writers—dismantles the very notions of modernism and postmodernism themselves in ways that allow us to appreciate anew and more accurately Stein's self-proclaimed genius.<sup>4</sup> Such a dismantling also forces us to reevaluate such canonized works as Eliot's "The Waste Land," James Joyce's *Ulysses*, and Virginia Woolf's *The Waves* and such less well known works as Mina Loy's *Songs to Joannes*, Parker Tyler's "Sonnet,"

## CONTEMPORARIES OF CUBISM

**Jacqueline Vaught Brogan (essay date 2000)**

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[In the following essay, Brogan discusses Stein's intellectual interaction with Cubism in her era, citing her influence on her contemporaries as a writer who treated "language as a self-conscious reflection of writing."]

and Jean Toomer's *Cane* as all being part of the same aesthetic climate—essentially the “cubist moment,” or (as I am redefining it here) the “cubist phenomenon.”<sup>5</sup> In other words, putting Stein seriously back into her own time revises our notion of that period of modernism to the point that the term evaporates. If Stein, rather than Eliot or Pound or Joyce, is seen as the ironically charged matrix of the literary activity of the time, our inherited vision of modernism as a (largely male) nostalgia for an order no longer available shifts to a focus on the remarkable breakthroughs (including most particularly the possibility of multiplicity of perspectives) that characterized virtually all the major writings—and paintings—of the time. It is notably that aspect of the cubist aesthetic, of which Stein was both a proponent and a creator in the realm of literature, which is its most important legacy in the experimental writings at the end of the century.

In this regard, my argument that Stein reveals “her period” as actually an explosion of a wider cubist phenomenon at the time makes one gigantic swerve away from Marianne DeKoven's otherwise excellent and groundbreaking discussions of Stein. Although subsequent critics such as Margaret Dickie and Lisa Ruddick have convincingly shown that thematically, Stein was often writing from very specific gendered concerns, DeKoven's insistence that Stein's writing should be called “experimental”—when by the term, DeKoven specifically means “antipatriarchal modes of signification”—distorts both the aesthetic animating Stein's best verse, as well as that animating the writings of many of the men around her and the actual company she chose to keep in her real life.<sup>6</sup> DeKoven specifically dismisses the importance of cubism in understanding Stein's work in favor of an “alternative mode of signification” that is “antipatriarchal and antilogocentric.”<sup>7</sup> And yet as Dickie rightly points out, despite the subversions of various parts of such a poem as “Patriarchal Poetry,” in other sections of that same poem Stein is clearly “attempting to find a place for herself in the tradition of patriarchal poetry”—as were T. S. Eliot and Ezra Pound, other writers who were also writing a new kind of poetry in response to the cubist aesthetic dominating the times.<sup>8</sup> It is not that cubism, with its privileging of multiple perspectives in particular, is not open to feminist or post-structuralist concerns. It is. But it is not necessarily or exclusively antipatriarchal—either in the hands of Stein or other male writers of a literary time or period she both shared in and largely inaugurated.

The preceding is not meant to suggest that in her lifetime or that in subsequently written literary histories Stein has gone unrecognized. From various serious and popularized parodies of her work, to such appellations as the “Mother Goose of Montparnasse,” the “Mama of Dada,” or more recently (following her own lead) the “Mother of Us All,” Stein's presence—and the impor-

tance of that presence—in the artistic scene of the early twentieth century has remained generally acknowledged, even if undervalued. But as I am arguing, more important, her presence and importance have been misinterpreted. For although Stein could well have been called with more reverence the “Mother of Modernism,” she should be called, with far more accuracy, the “founding mother” of American cubist literature.<sup>9</sup> It is not merely that Stein's experimental writing was already in print years before T. S. Eliot's “Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock” ushered in (at least for Ezra Pound) modern verse, but that her experiments allow us to see that particular poem—with its multiple voices, repetitions, and collage-like scenes—as well as “The Waste Land” as essentially cubist poems. Thus reinserting Stein into the literary scene of which she was so much a critical part forces us well beyond a mere reevaluation of her work in that period, or a mere reassessment of the dates of that period, into a critical reinterpretation of precisely what the “period” following the turn of the century, in literary arts as well as the visual arts, really was. Doing so helps to explain why, at the end of the century, literary critics are everywhere finding in supposedly “modernist” writers—especially female modernist writers—precursors to postmodernist prose, poetry, and generically noncategorizable literary blends.<sup>10</sup>

Perhaps the most obvious works to consider when re-evaluating Stein's own work and its importance to other contemporaneous writers are *Three Lives* (composed around 1905 but not published until 1909) or the more famous *Tender Buttons* (composed between 1911 and 1913 and published in 1914). Certainly, in the choice of subject matter, in the refusal of both works to follow normally prescribed generic or narrative lines, and in the experimental manipulation of the language, we find ample evidence to support seeing Stein as a radically advanced modernist author, feminist protester, and post-modernist experimenter from stream-of-conscious techniques to resistance to linear closure. The real importance of these works, however, is far more discernible in her less well known publications of 1912—the generically slippery portraits of “Matisse” and “Picasso” (composed in 1911) that appeared not in a literary magazine but in the American photographic journal *Camera Work*, edited by Alfred Stieglitz.<sup>11</sup>

Although it is not my purpose here to repeat a history I have elsewhere documented at length, the importance of this particular issue of *Camera Work* lies in Stieglitz's combined effort to introduce cubist paintings (via photographic reproductions) to a relatively hostile American audience and, simultaneously, to justify this introduction of a suspect aesthetic movement with two literary texts by Gertrude Stein, which in their own time (and now in retrospect) can certainly be regarded as a defense or apologia for cubism.<sup>12</sup> Responding to the perhaps somewhat surprising rejection of Picasso's



exhibition of cubist paintings at the Photo-Secession in 1911, Stieglitz printed a special issue of *Camera Work* with two verbal portraits by Stein ("Matisse" and "Picasso"), several "representative" paintings and sculptures by these artists, and an introductory editorial that perhaps not ingenuously insists that "the fact is" that it is Stein's verbal pieces ("articles," he calls them) and "not either the subject with which they deal or the illustrations that accompany them" that "are the true *raison d'être* of this special issue."

Although the entire issue, with its photographic reproductions of various works by Matisse and Picasso, is clearly a deliberate "apology" for what Stieglitz calls "Post-Impressionism," its importance here is that he finds in Stein's writing, "whose raw material is words," precisely the same "spirit" as that which is conveyed in the visual works he is reproducing. He goes so far as to say that "it is precisely because, in these articles by Miss Stein, the Post-Impressionist spirit is found expressing itself in literary form that we thus lay them before the readers of *CAMERA WORK*." More important, he then adds that in what Stein is doing with the "medium" of words, readers of *Camera Work* can find a "decipherable clew [*sic*] to that intellectual and esthetic attitude which underlies and inspires the movement upon one phase of which they are comments and of the extending development of which they are themselves an integral part."

Thus, with the publication of Stein's portraits, we find the possibility of what we might now call cubist literature (rather than "Post-Impressionist" literature) being introduced self-consciously as an "integral" part of the visual aesthetic they were both responding to and extending. Given how very difficult it has proven for subsequent readers and critics to recognize just what the writing of Gertrude Stein was introducing on the American scene, as well as continuing in Europe, it is somewhat amusing to find Stieglitz glibly assuming that what was difficult to comprehend initially in the visual medium would be transparently clear in the verbal medium.<sup>13</sup> Discussing the difficulty of comprehending the new visual movement, "which, with a merely chronological appropriateness, has been christened Post-Impressionism," he concludes that if the "expression" of that movement "came through an art with the raw materials and rough practice of which we were ourselves familiar—let us say through the art of literature, whose raw material is words—even an unpiloted navigator of the unknown might feel his way into the harbor of comprehension." And while many subsequent critics have tried to discount the possibility of an aesthetic convergence between arts of different media (here, the visual and the verbal), Stieglitz introduces Stein's verbal portraits specifically as "a Rosetta stone of comparison" for understanding the radically new works of Matisse and Picasso.

For understanding Stein's own radically new works, the 1912 publication of "Matisse" and "Picasso" clarifies the sharp break Stein had already made between the retrospectively normalized writing of *Three Lives* (however different from nineteenth-century writings that text can well be seen to be) and the far more radicalized writing of *Tender Buttons* (which would inaugurate the tendency of others to write, both seriously and parodically, "Steinese"). At the same time, "Matisse" and "Picasso" furnish the perspective we need to see the degree to which in *Three Lives* Stein was already turning away from simple stream-of-consciousness (that form of writing she had supposedly become interested in from studying psychology with William James) to a concern with language as a self-consciously reflective medium, a concern that would be characteristic of the majority of her works through the rest of her career.<sup>14</sup>

Although it may well be true that *Three Lives* represents a distinct break from her previously written (although posthumously published) *Q.E.D.*, compared with the generically puzzling verbal portraits of Matisse and Picasso, each of the *Three Lives* (which Stein first called "histories") seems almost traditional in its reliance on relatively normal linear narration and conservative grammatical structure.<sup>15</sup> Consider, for example, the opening and closing paragraphs of "Matisse":

One was quite certain that for a long part of his being one being living he had been trying to be certain that he was wrong in doing what he was doing and then when he could not come to be certain that he had been wrong in doing what he had been doing, when he had completely convinced himself that he would not come to be certain that he had been wrong in doing what he had been doing he was really certain then that he was a great one and he certainly was a great one. Certainly every one could be certain of this thing that this one is a great one.

(*SWGS* [*Selected Writings of Gertrude Stein*], 329)

Some were certainly wanting to be doing what this one was doing that is were wanting to be ones clearly expressing something. Some of such of them did not go on in being ones wanting to be doing what this one was doing that is in being ones clearly expressing something. Some went on being ones wanting to be doing what this one was doing that is, being ones clearly expressing something. Certainly this one was one who was a great man. Any one could be certain of this thing. Every one would come to be certain of this thing. This one was one certainly clearly expressing something. Any one could come to be certain of this thing. Every one would come to be certain of this thing. This one was one, some were quite certain, one greatly expressing something being struggling. This one was one, some were quite certain, one not greatly expressing something being struggling.

(*SWGS*, 332-33)

Although there does appear to be an implicit narrative story about Matisse's aesthetic development configured in these words (and in the words between the opening

and closing paragraphs, which deliberately repeat many of these words “again and again”), the effect of this writing is largely to undermine any real linear development on Matisse’s part and to make us, however ironically, slowly change our predicted perspective on and veneration of Matisse to something closer to amused skepticism. Through the simple device of repetition and variation, we come to feel that Matisse himself is perhaps repetitive or derivative. (This, I should clarify, is in complete contrast to the accompanying portrait of “Picasso,” which—again through devices of repetition and variation—manages to suggest that others are repeating and being derivative of Picasso and that Picasso is genuinely “working,” presumably like Stein herself.)<sup>16</sup> Far more important, however, such cognitive judgments are clearly a tertiary consequence to the writing of the portraits. Rather, the obvious verbal repetitions Stein employs, as well as the subtle variations on her theme, acutely remind us that her writing is specifically a construction made of a verbal medium, open to similar self-referentiality and to multiplicity of perspectives characteristic of the works of Picasso reproduced in Stieglitz’s issue, if not that of Matisse.” Thus, though nominally “about” Matisse, Stein’s verbal portrait exhibits two of the most important characteristics of cubist writing—multiplicity of perspectives and self-referentiality.

So, too, does her verbal portrait of “Picasso,” which (while it may well be more laudatory of its nominal subject than “Matisse”) is far more concerned with repeating—or translating—a visual cubist aesthetic into a verbal medium than in suggesting any modernist, feminist, or postmodernist perspective on artistic productivity:<sup>17</sup> “One whom some were certainly following was one who was completely charming. One whom some were certainly following was one who was charming. One whom some were following was one who was completely charming. One whom some were following was one who was certainly completely charming” (SWG, 333). In fact, and in contrast to “Matisse,” Stein introduces the actual “subject” of cubism in a somewhat unexpected paragraph in “Picasso” that seems to describe, almost exactly, not only the cubist development in the visual arts but also the critical reactions—both positive and negative—that were already accompanying the exhibitions of cubist work to which, in turn, this special issue of *Camera Work* was responding. As if quickly tracing Picasso’s movement through various “periods” of his own making to cubism (and the almost instantaneous “cubist school” that more or less rose up around him and Georges Braque), Stein writes:

This one always had something being coming out of this one. This one was working. This one always had been working. This one was always having something that was coming out of this one that was a solid thing, a charming thing, a lovely thing, a perplexing thing, a disconcerting thing, a simple thing, a clear thing, a

complicated thing, an interesting thing, a disturbing thing, a repellant thing, a very pretty thing. This one was one certainly being one having something coming out of him. This one was one whom some were following. This one was one who was working.

(SWG, 334)

It is not accidental, I believe, but quite to the point that when Stein would reprint these portraits many years later (1934), they would be preceded by an additional “portrait” of Cezanne, that painter whose attention to form and self-referentiality in both paint and canvas provided the initial impetus for cubism.<sup>18</sup>

Something of these concerns can be found in *Three Lives*, but they had become overt in *Tender Buttons* (a work that has been variously described as “cubist,” “dada-ist,” “feminist,” and “poststructuralist”). Compared to her portraits in *Camera Work*, each of the “three lives” has a far more normalized linear development, even if their tendency toward repetition and their frustrating of climactic closure marks them as inherently different from earlier prose compositions. Nonetheless, something of Stein’s heightened consciousness of the verbal medium as such (as opposed to mere stream-of-consciousness) surfaces from time to time in *Three Lives*, as in the following quotation from “Melantha”: “He was silent, and this struggle lay there, strong, between them. It was a struggle, sure to be going on always between them. It was a struggle that was sure always to be going on between them, as their minds and hearts always were to have different ways of working” (SWG, 392-93). The similarity in and self-consciousness about language to that of “Matisse” and “Picasso” seems obvious. In the next paragraph of “Melantha,” however, Stein writes, “At last Melantha took his hand, leaned over him and kissed him” (SWG, 393)—a form of writing quite foreign to her subsequently written portraits or to her famous *Tender Buttons*, as well as to much later writings. Here, for example, is the opening of the second section of *Tender Buttons*: “In the inside there is sleeping, in the outside there is reddening, in the morning there is meaning, in the evening there is feeling. In the evening there is feeling. In feeling anything is resting, in feeling anything is mounting, in feeling there is resignation, in feeling there is recognition, in feeling there is recurrence and entirely mistaken there is pinching” (SWG, 477). Again, the similarity to her 1911 portraits in the manipulation of her verbal medium seems apparent. In contrast to a basically simple use of repetition and variation for narrative purpose (a technique Hemingway would clearly borrow from Stein), in both the portraits and *Tender Buttons* repetition and variation become the purpose of the writing as well as the process, thus marking them as essentially cubist productions.

I should clarify here that precisely what constitutes the nature of cubist writing is, and has been, a subject open