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 **Fiction: 1900 to the 1930s**

Jeanne Campbell Reesman

American Literary Scholarship

Duke University Press

1999

pp. 289-311

ARTICLE

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**In lieu of** an abstract, here is a brief excerpt of the content:

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## *i* Gertrude Stein

Gertrude Stein changed the course of autobiography by rejecting the traditional forms of the conversion narrative, the didactic treatise, and the self-conscious confession; she eschewed the romantic conception of the autobiographical subject by constructing a multiple, modernist self to replace it, as Carolyn A. Barros finds in "Getting Modern: *The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas*" (*Biography* 22: 177-208). Similarly, Stephen Scobie writes that Stein's *Autobiography* (1933) is about finding a "site of narrative alterity, a place for the Other," as typified by Stein's creation of a narrative structure based on exile and displacement in Paris. Scobie compares Stein's book with John Glasco's *Memoirs of Montparnasse* (1970) and Robert McAlman's *Being Geniuses Together* (1938) ("'I Is Another': Autobiography and the Appropriation of Voice," pp. 124-36 in *American Modernism*). In his essay "The Franklin-Stein Monster: Ventriloquism and Missing Persons in American Autobiography" (pp. 16-28 in *Writing Lives: American Biography and Autobiography* [VU, 1998]) Richard Har-dack addresses the "ventriloquism" of autobiography as a "staging of memory and self-identity as fictions of alienation and reification," a move away from a linear self. He compares Benjamin Franklin, Henry Adams, Gertrude Stein, James Weldon Johnson, and William Faulkner in their practice of speaking by copying and imitating others or representing **[End Page 289]** themselves as others. "Why is the American autobiographical self under such siege?" he asks. Why is it sacrificed to the observer, becoming purely fictional? Stein is an excellent ground on which to search for answers. Phoebe Stein Davis also focuses on Stein and autobiography, analyzing the repeated destabilizations and decenterings of subjectivity in the *Autobiography*, accompanied by the creation of an image of Stein herself that "ventriloquizes Alice's voice and a national voice." Nationalism is "an aesthetic that can be adopted" ("Subjectivity and the Aesthetics of National Identity in Gertrude Stein's *The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas*,"

David Kaufman's "Desperate Seriousness and Avant-Garde (Mis)recognition in Some of Stein's Sentences" (*MP* 97: 220-33) argues for the *Autobiography's* influence on feminist "anti-authoritarian dialogism"; its lack of referentiality leads to playful dialogue within the text, as Stein creates two readerships, one an avant-garde reader who appreciates these maneuvers and "a supposedly retrograde one that disdains them." Another way to see the dualistic play in the *Autobiography* is to examine Stein's struggle between the voices of the "genius" and that of the "wife": Laurel Bollinger finds an insight into Stein's writer's block in this pairing; "Stein-as-popular-writer" depended on the joint voice, but Stein as solitary genius did not—the book expresses her anxieties about exposure and duality ("'One as One Not Mistaken But Interrupted': Gertrude Stein's Exploration of Identity in the 1930s," *CentR* 43: 227-58). Zofia Lesinska explores Stein's treatment of World War I in "Gertrude Stein's War Autobiographies: Reception, History, and Dialogue" (*LIT* 9: 313-42).

Stein's early literary explorations of sexual intimacy in fiction, begun shortly after her studies in psychology and medicine, including *The Making of Americans* (1903), "Q.E.D.," "Fenhurst," and *Three Lives* (1933), are provocatively discussed in relation to Darwin's theory of sexual selection, William James, and Sigmund Freud by Bert Bender in "'The Varieties of Human Experience': Sexual Intimacy, Heredity, and Emotional Conflict in Gertrude Stein's Early Work" (*Amst* 44: 519-43). Stein's treatment of marriage and adultery by lesbians is the subject of Jennifer Ashton's "How Can a Lesbian Be an Adultress? Marriage and Promiscuity in Gertrude Stein's Domestic Fictions" (*WHR* 53: 54-64). Her last novel *Mrs. Reynolds* (1943), written about wartime France, is viewed as a "bellicose, quintessentially modernist declaration" by John Whittier Ferguson ("Stein in Time: History, Manuscripts, and Memory," *MoMo* 6...

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