WILLIAM JAMES AND GERTRUDE STEIN: PSYCHOLOGY AFFECTING LITERATURE*

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I will mention Gertrude Stein's influence on me, then William James's personal and theoretical impact on Gertrude Stein, then, his student, Leon Solomons's influence on Stein. Finally, I will speculate on Gertrude Stein's psychodynamics, using an outline for an imagined novel in which I treat Stein in analytically oriented therapy.

I met up with Gertrude Stein's work in 1976 soon after I began at Chestnut Lodge. Prentiss Taylor, then the Lodge's art therapist, when he learned I had gone to The Johns Hopkins Medical School, said that I must read *Three Lives,* which describes three women from Stein's medical school days there. He told me about the Rockville library's collection of spoken-word records. I could transpose the records to cassettes and hear her read to me as I drove the 45-minute commute to work. So, I heard her saying again and again in *The Making of Americans*

> Repeating then is in every one, in every one their being and their feeling and their way of realizing everything and every one comes out of them in repeating. More and more then every one comes to be clear to some one. Slowly every one in continuous repeating, to their minutest variation, comes to be clearer to some one. Every one who ever was or is or will be living sometimes will be clearly realised by someone. Sometime there will be an ordered history of every one. Slowly every kind of one comes into ordered recognition. (Stein, 1934, p. 206)

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These tapes helped me resume reading for pleasure as I had in my high-school summers. I realize now that Stein's message resonated with a central theme in my mother's early advice to me. Repeatedly she would say, with a more paranoid edge than Stein conveys, "Observe how people treat you. If they do it to you once, they will do it again. Character formation is fixed by age 7." My mother was a demanding perfectionist, but she didn't interrupt me if I were reading. So, the Stein tapes and my subsequent reading rescued me from reading exclusively the scientific stuff and required reading lists from my years of forming a medical identity. Stein literally rejuvenated me. Stein said to me, as I drove to work,

> Sometime then there will be a history of all women and all men, of all the men and all the women, of every one of them, of the mixtures in them of the bottom nature and other natures in them, of themselves inside them, there will be then a history of all of them of all their being and how it comes out from them from their beginning to their ending. Sometime there will be then such a history of every one who ever was or is or will be living, and this is not for anybody's reading, this is to give to everybody in their living the last end to being, it makes it so of them real being, it makes for each one who ever is or was or can be living a real continuing and always as one looks more and more at each one, as one sees them walking, eating, sitting, sewing, working, sleeping, being babies, children, young grown men and women, grown up men and women, growing old men and women, old men and old women, as one sees them every moment in their being there must be sometime a history of them, there must be sometime a history of each one of them and of the nature or natures in them, of themselves to themselves in their living, of the nature or natures mixed up in them and the coming out of this being in them from them from their beginning to their ending. Sometime there will be a history of all of the kinds of them and of each one of all the millions of each kind of them. (Stein, 1934, pp. 123–124).

As I will discuss, this quote, like much of Stein's work, resonates with James's *The Principles of Psychology,* in this case, with chapter IV on habit:

> Habit is the enormous fly-wheel of society, its most precious conservative agent. . . . It dooms us all to fight out the battle of life upon the lines of our nurture of our early choice, and to make the best of a pursuit that disagrees, because there is no other for which we are fitted, and it is too late to begin again. . . . You see the little lines of cleavage running through the character, the tricks of thought, the prejudices, the ways of the 'shop,' in a word, from which the man can by-and-by no more escape than his coat-sleeve can suddenly fall into a new set of folds. (James, W., 1890, p. 121)

Stein accompanied me on my otherwise lonely commutes. She seemed to approve of the intensive psychotherapeutic methods I was learning. She somehow encouraged me to write, to let ideas flow, to trust my impressions, to value whatever comes along without trying to force it into some objectively required frame of reference. Her words streamed by, along with the images of farm scenes or migrating birds. Her words made traffic jams less aggravating. She reveled in her silliness. She helped me begin keeping a journal and presenting papers.

Listening to the tapes or reading her works, I felt as I listened to her that I was right in doing what I was doing. She spoke about learning about people in detail through the way they talk and move, through their patterns of repeating. Redundancy wasn't inefficiency, to be scorned and rooted out, but something to cherish. She conveyed the gradual evolution of character through the stages of living. This was the message of my Lodge supervisors, and the message in the case conferences where therapists reported with astounding self-scrutiny on work that continued with that same patient, sometimes over decades. We weren't standing in judgment or prescribing how our patients should proceed, but were bearing witness and trying to help them clarify things and to share their observations with us.

Without realizing it, I was sharing with Stein a particular heritage in American psychiatry. William James had, through his writings, particularly *The Principles of Psychology,* made the detailed observation of oneself and others that the legitimate province of a science of mind, breaking away from a rather simplistic cause-and-effect, stimulus–response approach that had held sway. His idea of pragmatic analysis "follows from the nature of the stream of consciousness, from thought as it actually occurs. Pragmatism is the expanded description of how we natively think" (Barzun, 1983, p. 100). I came to see that James authorized Stein as I found Stein authorizing me. James had taught that "the artist acknowledges no restraints; he claims and exercises the right to use any material, to treat any subject, to flout any rule or precedent. The history of art is a tale of violence done to set forms, moral and esthetic imperatives, and public expectations" (Barzun, 1983, p. 101).

In the 1970s, I tried writing a novel about Gertrude Stein and

me: she is in her senior year at Hopkins Medical School, the odd woman out in a lesbian triangle. She is frantic. I get in my time machine and go back to those familiar red brick Baltimore row houses surrounding Hopkins Hospital. In my story, I have an office there on Broadway. I give a lecture to her medical school class, about medical students' fears of illness. She is intrigued; the talk, "given" in 1901, 8 years before Freud, Jung, and Ferenczi came to Worcester, Massachusetts for the meeting organized by G. Stanley Hall, commemorating Clark University's twentieth year, and thus 8 years before Freud and James met. So, in my novel, Stein seeks me out for treatment. I say my "purpose (is) not to judge her, but to respond to her curiosity about her own problems" (Volkan, 1981, p. 168).

For the first time, she is able to mourn her mother's death; she realizes she is regularly describing the various women in her life as always the opposite of her mother. She then works on her own dread of succumbing to cancer. She becomes aware that she had felt that her own beginning to menstruate had somehow caused her mother's illness. She decides to complete medical school, and stays in Baltimore. She does not go to Paris with her older brother, Leo, and does not alert America to the importance of Matisse and Picasso. Instead, she becomes a psychoanalyst and when Harry Stack Sullivan is struggling to keep his unit going at Sheppard Pratt, she, 18 years his senior, helps him. They are devoted to each other. They both speak and listen well.

And as I have researched Frieda Fromm-Reichmann and her mutually supportive friendship with Sullivan, I now see that Fromm-Reichmann and Stein were similar, both of them loving both to talk and to listen very acutely, making conversation the center of their lives. They were similar in their charismatic ability to convey an attracting aura about themselves and their work, a sense in others of a desire to emulate them. They each inspired. They were effective both through what they said and what they omitted. Each conveyed a partially accurate portrait of themselves and their abilities. Both were little women, Fromm-Reichmann 4 feet 10 inches and Stein 5 feet tall, both are remembered as giants. And Sullivan and James seem fundamentally similar in their all-inclusiveness of interest in human behavior, their abilities to stay with a train of thought and let it develop in its uniquely personal way, their enormous popularity as teachers. I didn't actually write much of the novel, partly out

of regret that it fictionally destroyed Stein's writing career. I wasn't clear about my destructive rivalry.

BIOGRAPHIC SKETCHES

Both Stein and James were deeply anxious and troubled people, having conquered long bouts of despair. James' question, "Why live?" was Stein's also. Both confronted anxiety over living and dying. They didn't wield death, through suicidal outbursts (as did my Lodge patients) nor did they avoid thinking about it (as I then did). In grand style, Stein bridged the canyon between psychosis and hypernormality.

Gertrude Stein lived from 1874 to 1946 (72 years). She was born in Allegheny, PA, a suburb of Pittsburgh, the youngest of five. She spent her early years in Vienna and Paris and her girlhood in Oakland, CA. According to some biographers, when Stein was 11, her mother was found to have breast cancer (Zeeden, 1970, p. 201). Others, quoting from Milly Stein's diary, depict what seems more likely to have been ovarian cancer: "the symptoms, tiredness and diarrhea, began in 1884." She received "electric treatment" for abdominal pain. Her diary became a log of her illness. "There are only two entries about Gertrude, one describing her first menstrual period: 'Gertrude was unwell for the first time,' Nov. 5, 1885. Not yet twelve, 'Baby' experienced the abdominal pain that marked her mother's illness" (Wagner-Martin, 1995, p. 20). Milly died when Gertrude was 14.

Gertrude's father, Daniel, died unexpectedly in his sleep when Gertrude was 17. A difficult man at best, he was unpredictable and even sexually aggressive toward his daughters after his wife's death. Gertrude alluded to sexual aggression toward her by her father's former business partner, whom she called "Uncle Sol" (Wagner-Martin, 1995). Soon after his death, Gertrude and her brother Leo left high school (most of their education had been with private tutors). She then studied at Radcliffe College from 1893 to 1897, learning psychology from William James. She couldn't graduate with her class as she hadn't yet passed the required Latin exam.

She then attended The Johns Hopkins Medical School from 1897 to 1902, which had admitted its first class in 1893. Stein served as anatomist Llewellys F. Barker's research assistant, both

before and after her formal medical school career, creating a series of 63 drawings of the brain, including its embryology, which constituted a detailed but rejected submission for publication in the *American Journal of Anatomy.* Barker cited Stein's work in his own writings, and wrote defending its importance and originality (Wagner-Martin, 1995).

A. McGhee Harvey, however, reports a different version. Commenting that William Osler chaired the Advisory Committee that recommended that she not graduate with her class, he adds,

> She was failing four courses: laryngology and otology, ophthalmology, dermatology, and obstetrics. . . . J. Whitridge Williams, the professor of obstetrics, had voted to deny her the medical degree, but Franklin P. Mall wanted to give her another chance, and he persuaded the board to allow Stein to salvage her degree. He gave her a problem similar to one Florence Sabin had completed successfully in her fourth year. Stein worked for several weeks on the project, which involved the sectioning and reconstruction of a human embryo brain. Her results perplexed Mall. He took them to Sabin, saying, 'Either I am crazy or Miss Stein is. Will you see what you can make out of her work?' Sabin concluded that Stein must have embedded the cord when it was turned back under the embryo brain instead of extended from it. So flawed was Stein's model that Mall threw it in the wastebasket. When Stein was refused her degree, she left for Europe. (Harvey et al., 1989, p. 146)

My guess is that both versions are accurate: Stein polarized her audiences and associates who either staunchly defended or attacked her. This, too, resonates with my understanding of Fromm-Reichmann's effect on others.

Stein later established herself in Paris, living at 27, rue de Fleurus. Alice B. Toklas became her companion in 1907. A constant stream of interesting people visited them there—artists and writers, and American soldiers during World War II. Stein, a German Jew, did not leave Paris even during the Nazi occupation (Zeeden, 1970).

William James lived from 1842 to 1910 (68 years), and was 34 years Stein's senior. Born in New York City, he was the *oldest* of five. Next in line was novelist Henry James. Their father, also Henry, had required an above-the-knee amputation, having built and fired a rocket while in high school. It landed, setting a hay stack on fire; he attempted to stamp it out, and was severely burned. He developed into a restless philosophic wanderer, a perfectionist who inconsistently praised and scorned his children (Simon, 1995).

At first, William studied art, then chemistry and medicine. Then, he accompanied Louis Agassiz on his expedition to the Amazon, but his health failed and he resumed studying medicine in the United States and Germany. There, he suffered a breakdown and contemplated suicide. Having earned his M.D. in 1869, he couldn't practice but lived at home for the next 3 years, suffered from phobic panic attacks and could do nothing but read. Things improved once he began teaching physiology and then psychology at Harvard, making it a laboratory science rather than the domain of theology. He married Alice Howe Gibbens in 1878, and the old neurasthenia practically disappeared. Alice, the daughter of a country doctor who had died young, had learned to speak German fluently and had studied the piano with Clara Schumann (Barzun, 1983).

The Principles of Psychology appeared, after 10 years of preparation, in 1890. It established the functional point of view in psychology. He then turned to empirical studies of the nature and existence of God, the immortality of the soul, free will and determinism, the values of life. *The Will to Believe* was published in 1897, during Gertrude Stein's senior year at Radcliffe. In 1899 James became ill, with some sort of cardiac ailment. For 2 years, he was again an invalid. In 1901–1902, James gave the Gifford lectures at the University of Edinburgh, which appeared as his most famous book, *The Varieties of Religious Experience.* Next, he developed his ideas on pragmatism, a theory of logic introduced by his eccentric friend and colleague, C.S. Peirce. (Joseph Brent has written a stunningly rich biography of Peirce.) James was in San Francisco during the great earthquake of 1906. His ideas, for example, that you can't have one thing without having everything, infuse Gertrude Stein's writings. "His classes rang with the polemic against absolutes" (Kallen, 1970, p. 846b). He said, "The real specific event is the individual; his character, his beliefs, his endeavor are an adventure in autobiography of which the conclusion is not established in advance" (Kallen, 1970, p. 864d).

It would be a silly oversimplification to say that Stein's writings were influenced simply by James. Her English composition course was taught by the poet William Vaughn Moody. George Santayana also taught Stein, also grading her work with A's. "His theory [was] that the artist made correct choices not through reason but through 'contemplation,' what he called 'the intuition of essences.' His belief that writing, like the acquisition of all knowledge, started with mysticism—and that writing was in some

ways itself an acquisition of knowledge—set him at odds with most philosophers" (Wagner-Martin, 1995, p. 32). Santayana's method of writing was: "turning inward, finding the essence of an experience, and then creating language structures to capture that essence" (Wagner-Martin, 1995, p. 33).

But clearly, James and Stein were fond of each other. Paternally (and ironically, because he so resented his own father's control over his career choice), he urged her to get an M.D. Stein wrote in a student them,

> Is life worth living? Yes, a thousand times yes when the world still holds such spirits as Professor James. He is truly a man among men; a scientist of force and originality embodying all that is strongest and worthiest in the scientific spirit. . . . What can one say more? His is a strong sane noble personality reacting truly on all experience that life has given him. (Hoffman, 1966, pp. 226–227)

Later, she wrote that he was "the important person" of her Radcliffe days. She says, in *The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas,* He "delighted her. His personality and his teaching and his way of amusing himself with himself and with his students all pleased her. Keep your mind open, he used to say" (Wagner-Martin, 1995, p. 35, source: Stein, 1936, pp. 78–79).

Stein said,

> I like a thing simple, but it must be simple through complication. Everything must come into your scheme, otherwise you cannot achieve real simplicity. A great deal of this I owe to a great teacher, William James. He said, 'Never reject anything. Nothing has been proved. If you reject anything, that is the beginning of the end as an intellectual.' He was my big influence when I was at college. He was a man who always said, 'Complicate your life as much as you please, it has got to simplify.' (Haas, 1971, p. 34; Stendhal, 1994, p. 23)

William James's protégé, Hugo Münsterberg, in praising Stein, indicates the generally high esteem in which she was held:

> My contact with Radcliffe was in every way a most charming part of my Cambridge experiences. But while I met there all types and kinds of students, you were to me the ideal student, just as a female student ought to be, and if in later years you look into printed discussions which I have in mind to publish about students in America, I hope you will then pardon me if you recognized some features of my ideal student picture as your own" (Gallup, 1953, p. 4).

She had been his student during her first year at Radcliffe. He had used James's *Principles of Psychology* as the course's textbook (Wagner-Martin, 1995).

James, having completed The Lowell Lectures, was studying and thinking intensely about consciousness and the activity of thinking, its flights and lurches, about his own thinking and about the types of consciousness he delineated in others. Stein in her junior year, enrolled in his year-long course. The first semester was on "The Study of Feelings and Emotions" and the second, "Consciousness, Knowledge, the Ego, the Relation of Mind and Body, etc." (Wagner-Martin, 1995).

There is that famous anecdote:

> It was a very lovely spring day, Gertrude Stein had been going to the opera every night and going also to the opera in the afternoon and had been otherwise engrossed and it was the period of the final examinations, and there was the examination in William James' course. She sat down with the examination paper before her and she just could not. Dear Professor James, she wrote at the top of her paper. I am so sorry but really I do not feel a bit like an examination paper in philosophy to-day, and left.
>
> The next day she had a postal card from William James saying, Dear Miss Stein, I understand perfectly how you feel I often feel like that myself. And underneath it he gave her work the highest mark in his course. (Stein, 1936, p. 79)

But apparently the other students were so incensed that finally she did take the exam. She earned a C for that second semester (Wagner-Martin, 1995).

STEIN'S RESEARCH PROJECT

Stein also enrolled in his laboratory course. There, James matched her up with Leon Solomons, a slightly older Jewish psychology student from San Francisco, he, too, with a dazzling intellect, but with problems of insomnia, headaches, and faintness. They worked together, went on long walks in the country, she sometimes insisting on lying flat, saying her back had given out. "Platonic because neither care to do more. She and he both

have their moments but they know each other and it is not worthwhile. She tells her experiences, he never his" (Wagner-Martin, 1995, p. 37). They were clearly fond of each other.

In 1896, Solomons and Stein published "Normal Motor Automatism" in James's journal, *The Psychological Review,* a project that studied patterns of attention. This was not a study of automatic writing as many say, but a study of distractibility, of doing something outside of one's awareness. The idea was not to produce signed letters from Plato, but to see whether a person could be steered by an outsider to repeat some written pattern, while the research subject was concentrating on reading an interesting story aloud. It begins, "It is well known that many hysterical subjects exhibit a remarkable development of the subconscious life, amounting, in many cases, to that most interesting phenomenon known as double personality" (Solomons and Stein, 1896, p. 492). The two researchers hypothesized that "we underestimate the automatic powers of the normal subject" (Solomons and Stein, 1896, p. 491), which, they thought, could be as great as the powers of the second personality. They also wanted to "study as carefully as possible the process by which a reaction becomes automatic" thus reproducing "the essential *elements* of the 'second personality' " (Solomons and Stein, 1896, p. 493, italics theirs).

They used a "planchette," a glass plate mounted on metal balls with a metal arm holding a pencil. The subject's right hand rested on this plate while she or he became engrossed in a novel. The operator gently moved the plate around in a set pattern, "teaching" the arm that particular pattern. The natural movement is an ellipse. The further the operator's imposed pattern is from the ellipse, the easier is it for the subject to recognize whether it is her or his own, or is an imposed movement. There is a greater tension between the two individuals then. "It is by learning to recognize this tension that the subject is enabled to distinguish between spontaneous and impressed movements" (Solomons and Stein, 1896, p. 495). They found, "Nothing is more difficult than to allow a movement of which we are conscious to go on of itself. The desire to take charge of it is almost irresistible" (Solomons and Stein, 1896, p. 496).

They tried different experiments, for example, the operator would quietly dictate a word while the subject tried staying engrossed in reading. This at first was maddeningly distracting, and the subject couldn't attend to the meaning of the material read, but soon the subject could write all or part of the whispered

word without realizing it, while staying engrossed in the story. What at first was filled with effort became effortless. The subject wasn't even aware of movement in the arm. They concluded that automatism "comes *whenever the attention is sufficiently distracted*" (Solomons and Stein, 1896, p. 499, italics theirs). They noticed that the operator's voice could gradually be lowered to a point where it was almost inaudible and yet the subject could take the word from dictation without being aware of it, that is, having no memory of it. "In brief, what we observed was a phenomenon different from true unconsciousness, but corresponding almost exactly to the conception of alternation without memory" (Solomons and Stein, 1896, p. 501). They added, thus, the common sense view of the unconscious is correct: "it really is unconscious" (Solomons and Stein, 1896, p. 502).

Another experiment was in "automatic reading," in which the subject read something uninteresting quietly while the operator read an interesting story in a louder tone. "If he does not go insane during the first few trials he will quickly learn to concentrate his attention fully on what is being read to him, yet go on reading just the same" (Solomons and Stein, 1896, p. 503). The subject soon reads unconsciously, not even remembering scanning the lines. Then they tried reading simultaneously at equal volume, but said they would work more on that later, in studying "the general relation of attention and memory" (Solomons and Stein, 1896, p. 505).

Intriguingly, in light of Stein's later writing style and themes, they then looked at spontaneous automatic writing and noticed "a marked tendency to repetition." "A phrase would seem to get into the head and keep repeating itself at every opportunity, and hang over from day to day even. The stuff written was grammatical, and the words and phrases fitted together all right, but there was not much connected thought. . . . The ability to write stuff that sounds all right, without consciousness, was fairly well demonstrated by the experiments." They gave some examples: "When he could not be the longest and thus to be, and thus to be, the strongest." and "This long time when he did this best time, and he could thus have been bound, and in this long time, when he could be this to first use of this long time" (Solomons and Stein, 1896, p. 506). They concluded, "a large number of acts ordinarily called intelligent, such as reading, writing, etc., can go on quite automatically in ordinary people" (Solomons and Stein, 1896, p. 509).

Leon Solomons went home at the end of that year, hoping to

regain his health. Stein continued her work, and published a second article in *Psychological Review* in 1898, called "Cultivated Motor Automatism; A Study of Character in its Relation to Attention." She wanted to see how fatigue affected different types of people as they attempted to learn motor automatism. The article is disappointing. *She* seemed utterly fatigued. She wrote it up and sent it to Leon who was back at Harvard. I concurred with his response, which was in a confrontational style similar to Gertrude's brother, Leo:

> To begin then with the article. . . . My general comment is that you ought to be ashamed of yourself for the careless manner in which you have written it up. I think the work is good, and well worth publishing, though if you were here in the laboratory and continuing, I would advise waiting until you had carried the investigation further. The trouble with the article as it stands is that one has to hunt around too much to find the important points, —it is as bewildering as a detailed map of a large country on a small scale. What it needs is relief, perspective. You must make perfectly clear to yourself just what you regard as the essentials of the work, and devote all your energies to bringing them out. As it is one is apt to miss the essentials in irrelevant or at least less important details. . . . Don't be afraid of leaving things out. It is the essence of good writing frequently, and art is as essential in the presentation of scientific material as elsewhere. In short don't emulate our friends the Germans, but be a little French. Of course the article as its stands is as good as most of the stuff that is published, but that of course does not mean anything to you, you want what you write to be a good deal better, and it ought. There, with your kind permission I will now drop the role of instructor in English composition, and resume that of interesting invalid. (Gallup, 1953, pp. 15–16)

Leon Solomons received his Ph.D. from Harvard in 1898, then taught at the University of Wisconsin. "His health deteriorated, however, and on February 2, 1900, one day before Gertrude's twenty-eighth birthday, he died in the midst of, or shortly following, an operation for cancer" (Wagner-Martin, 1995, p. 49). Or perhaps he died "as a result of an infection contracted in the laboratory" (Gallup, 1953, p. 19).

William James wrote Stein a condolence letter from Geneva:

> Ever since Solomons's untimely and never too much to be regretted death, I have had an impulse to write to you, to express my sorrow to a sympathetic friend. . . . I never was more startled by anything, and never was anything outwardly at least more irrational and ascribable to mere chance than such an event. Exactly what he would have done had he lived, it is impossible to say, but it would have been absolutely original and remarkable, absolutely clear, and it might have been very important. Such a mixture of a rather wild independence, with amiability; of a rather contemptuous intellectuality with breadth of sympathy; made of him a very peculiar and extraordinary character. His eagerness, daring, honesty, good spirits, and scorn of all that was nonsensical and mendacious in life were glorious. We shall never look upon his like, and seldom on his equal." (Gallup, 1953, pp. 19–20)

To his disciple, Hugo Münsterberg, he wrote a more balanced remembrance, which left me wondering if he was trying to understand why someone committed suicide, this hinted at as well by four dots after commenting on his feeling shocked:

> CARQUEIRANNE, March 13, 1900.
> DEAR [Hugo] MÜNSTERBERG, Your letter of the 7th "ult." was a most delightful surprise—all but the part of it which told of your being ill again—and of course the news of poor Solomons's death was a severe shock. . . . As regards Solomons, it is pathetically tragic, and I hope that you will send me full details. There was something so lonely and self-sustaining about poor little S., that to be snuffed out like this before he had fairly begun to live in the eyes of the world adds a sort of tragic dramatic unity to his young career. Certainly the *keenest* intellect we ever had, and one of the loftiest characters! But there was always a mysterious side to me about his mind: he appeared so critical and destructive, and yet kept alluding all the while to ethical and religious ideals of his own which he wished to live for, and of which he never vouchsafed a glimpse to anyone else. He was the only student I have ever had of whose criticisms I felt afraid: and that was partly because I never quite understood the region from which they came, and with the authority of which he spoke. His surface thoughts, however, of a scientific order, were extraordinarily *treffend* and clearly expressed; in fact, the way in which he went to the heart of a subject in a few words was masterly. Of course he must have left, apart from his thesis, a good deal of MS. fit for publication. I have not seen our philosophical periodicals since leaving home. Have any parts of his thesis already appeared? If not, the whole thing should be published as "Monograph Supplement" to the "Psychological Review," and his papers gone over to see what else there may be. An adequate obituary of him ought also be written. Who knew him most intimately? I think the obituary and a portrait ought to be posted in the laboratory. Can you send me the address of his mother?—I think his father is dead. I should also like to write a word about him to Miss S—, if you can give me her address. If we had foreseen this early end to poor little Solomons, how much more we should have made of him, and how considerate we should have been! (James, H., 1920, pp. 119–120)

STEIN'S WRITINGS

Stein left the United States to travel in Italy, England, and with her brother Leo, finally settled in Paris in 1902, at 27, rue de Fleurus. She began writing seriously and regularly, beginning with *Three Lives,* which she first published herself after many rejections. Next came *The Making of Americans.* She was always grateful to Alice B. Toklas for her support and for the actual work of typing by day the manuscripts Stein produced during regularly sleepless nights. Stein then slept until noon.

Ronald Levinson has said of Stein's writing, "My suggestion is that most if not all of Miss Stein's writings which resembles in form and content the early automatic writing, is the attempt to put into practice some notions of the ideal function of language, notions which were in all probability derived from the distinguished teacher of her Radcliffe days, William James" (Levinson, 1941, p. 125).

I believe this writing exemplifies what Vamik Volkan calls "linking phenomena:"

> I have found that patients with established pathological grief typically select an inanimate object—a symbolic bridge (or link) to the representation of the dead person—to use in a magical way. . . . Such objects mainly provide a locus for externalized contact between aspects of the mourner's self-representation and aspects of the representation of the deceased. The mourner sees them as containing elements of himself and of the one he has lost. By using his linking object, the mourner can keep alive the illusion that he has the power either to return the dead person to life or to "kill" him; that is, he has the illusion of absolute control over the psychological meeting ground that is afforded by the linking object or linking phenomena. It is on this meeting ground that the established pathological mourner seeks to restore and then finally resolve the ambivalence that characterized his relationship with the decreased in his lifetime. (Folkan, 1981, p. 20)

Stein supports this in the following quotation:

> William James was of the strongest scientific influences that I had and he said he always said there is the will to live without the will to live there is destruction, but there is also the will to destroy, and the two like everything are in opposition, like wanting to be alone and when you are alone wanting to have company and when you have company wanting to be alone and liking wanting eternity and wanting a beginning and middle and ending. (Stein, 1945, pp. 63–64)

William James wrote to Stein in May of 1910, 3 months before his death, having received a copy of *Three Lives.*

> Your letter has been forwarded to me here [Bad-Nauheim], while the Péguy volume doubtless waits for me at home. I will surely read it on my return.—I passed a week at Paris 10 days ago, and thought of you and your brother a good deal. I should have sought a meeting had I known of your address. My circulatory organs have been running down very fast during the past year and a half, and I am in hopes that the course of baths which I have begun here, may arrest the progress in the wrong direction, even if it doesn't cause time to roll backward in its flight & restore its youthful elasticity to my aorta. 'Youth's a stuff will not endure.'
>
> I have had a bad conscience about 'Three Lives.' You know (?) how hard it is for me to read novels. Well, I read 30 or 40 pages, and said 'this is a fine new kind of realism—Gertrude Stein is great! I will go at it carefully when just the right mood comes.' But apparently the right mood never came. I thought I had put the book in my trunk, to finish over here, but I don't find it on unpacking. I promise you that it shall be read *some* time! You see what a swine I am to have pearls cast before him! As a rule reading fiction is as hard to me as trying to hit a target by hurling feathers at it. I need *resistance,* to celebrate!
>
> How is the wonderful Matisse and his associates? Does he continue to *wear?* My wife and I will probably return to England through Paris by the middle of July, and if so we shall certainly look you up. (Gallup, 1953, pp. 50–51)

He gives his address and says "I warrant you to be sufficiently *happy!*" (italics his). His own romantic life was apparently a complicated one for the last 15 years of his life (Rosenzweig, 1992, p. 4).

Stein's own father received minimal formal education. He was addicted to the process of coming up in the world, clung to acquaintances who were rich and powerful, and poured his limited resources into creating such a façade. Her brother Leo was similar in his neuroticism, although as an avid reader, he intellectually earned his friendships more substantially. Stein had not been able to mourn her father who had been such a problem in her life, and who may have made sexual advances toward her as he had when drunk to her older sister Bertha (Wagner-Martin, 1995, p. 25). At Radcliffe, Stein found a safer father figure in William James. Did he play matchmaker when he assigned Leon Solomons to her as laboratory partner? Leon and Leo seem so alike in their caustic

remarks, erudition and ambition. Gertrude found a brother substitute and neurotically approached intimacy with him. She left him to go to Hopkins and then lost him to death. She often said she would not return to The United States until she was a lion.

DISCUSSION

So, as a safe format for speculating on Stein's psychodynamics, I am returning to my abortive but revised novel. Now, I am treating her during her triumphant return from Paris to the United States in 1934. She has felt compelled to return to Hopkins, suffering near-panic, expecting to receive a death sentence. She talks grandly about having succeeded in becoming a lion, but keeps interrupting herself with remarks about her mother. Contemptuously, she describes her mother's boring little uneducated life, and her feeble attempts to make everyone feel safe. Abruptly, she sobs, remembering a lullaby. She realizes how much she has missed her. Her panic returns. I ask her what she just thought. She has imagined a doctor telling her with the same words her mother heard, "I'm sorry. You have cancer." She realizes that this terror lay behind her boredom at medical school, as well as her conviction that she should not marry and have children, because they might be orphaned.

I notice her hand a swirling rhythmically on the upholstered arm of the overstuffed chair as she speaks, and point this out to her. She is startled, and recalls her days working with Leon Solomons. His tough challenges were just the sorts of things she had wanted to say to her mother. She misses him, too, enormously. Again, she cries, mortified, thankful her brother Leo isn't anywhere around to see her so weak.

She says she must get back to Europe at once. I asked her why Europe might seem so much safer than here. Europe has always been safer, she says, even in the midst of war, even with the Nazis harassing the Jews. That makes no logical sense, I tell her. We gradually recognize that her safest years were there, as a child, when both her parents were healthy and young, and she didn't have to go to school, but was taught by tutors.

I then think about Hugo Münsterberg's praise of Stein, and realize he was impressed by her because her orientation was so much like his own European view. Gertrude and Leo had gone to Paris as a way of turning back time, getting back to their

childhoods. We talk about her having become a lion—a Leo and a Leon combined. She says that in the middle of the night she often begins writing by imagining she is back at Radcliffe, and Leon is again the operator, and she relaxes and imagines he is reading words to her while she is simultaneously reading. These are all linking phenomena, I explain. She is mourning. Her popularity derives from the universality of our yearning to get back to a time of swirling redundancy, a time before life's finitude became so clear to us. She brightens: "I just realized: my hatred of punctuation is the same thing exactly. As long as a sentence continues, as long as there is no period, there is no stopping, no death, no grief. Period." She again becomes regal in her posture. We both laugh.

"Period," I say; "Menstrual period." She gets serious, glares defensively, says she rushed here and didn't have time for breakfast. She simply must get some food or she'll be faint. I offer her tea and crackers. I wonder if maybe there is a connection between my inquiry and her sudden awareness of hunger. We get at her father's impulsivity and sexual hungers as his wife sickened and died, the midnight terror when he came home drunk. She had tried to make herself unattractive to him, and felt guilty that he seemed then to focus on her older sister. She swore she would never have anything to do with marriage and would never put a daughter in such a family trap. With clear regret, she recalls her long walks in the country with Leon Solomons, how passionately she felt about him, but how strongly she forbade herself anything that could lead her to marriage.

She gathers her belongings, preparing to leave the session early. I feel yet again that I will never get it right, and will always make provocative remarks before my patient is ready to work with them. I remark, though, on her pattern of fleeing before the authorities declare the event over: She had tried ending James's course before taking the final exam, left Radcliffe before taking the Latin exam, refused to retake an obstetrics and gynecology exam. I commented that she clearly dreads endings. She restructures language to meet this need. I asked, too, whether her insomnia might reflect a dread of ending each day.

I want to continue working with her, to bring these issues back to her dread of death, and to her sense of connecting it with maturation and generativity, her feelings of guilt over her mother's death, and her dread of retribution. I think about Stein's and my own mixtures of obsessionality and creativity, and how these are

two faces of the same coin of life. But she returns to Paris, and sends me a card, in which she quotes herself: "Repeating is the whole of living and by repeating comes understanding, and understanding is to some the most important part of living. Repeating is the whole of living and it makes of living a thing always more familiar to each one and so we have old men's and women's wisdom, and repeating, simple repeating is the whole of them" (Stein, 1934, pp. 123–124). I "return" to my work at The Lodge, repeating the routines of my schedule, discovering again for the first time some insight about a particular patient, then realizing I'd discovered this same pattern earlier but had come to forget it for a while.

Stein did die of cancer. Alice B. Toklas said "I sat next to her and she said to me early in the afternoon, What is the answer? I was silent. In that case, she said, what is the question? Then the whole afternoon was troubled, confused and very uncertain, and later in the afternoon they took her away on a wheeled stretcher to the operating room and I never saw her again" (Toklas, 1963, p. 173).

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