

Testimony
against
Gertrude Stein

February 1935

Georges Braque

Eugene Jolas

Maria Jolas

Henri Matisse

André Salmon

Tristan Tzara

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The Hague

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Miss Gertrude Stein's memoirs, published last year under the title of *Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas*¹⁾, having brought about a certain amount of controversial comment, Transition has opened its pages to several of those she mentions who, like ourselves, find that the book often lacks accuracy. This fact and the regrettable possibility that many less informed readers might accept Miss Stein's testimony about her contemporaries, make it seem wiser to straighten out those points with which we are familiar before the book has had time to assume the character of historic authenticity.

To MM. Henri Matisse, Tristan Tzara, Georges Braque, André Salmon we are happy to give the opportunity to refute those parts of Miss Stein's book which they consider require it.

These documents invalidate the claim of the Toklas-Stein memorial that Miss Stein was in any way concerned with the shaping of the epoch she attempts to describe. There is a unanimity of opinion that she had no understanding of what really was happening around her, that the mutation of ideas beneath the surface of the more obvious contacts and clashes of personalities during that period escaped her entirely. Her participation in the genesis and development of such movements as Fauvism, Cubism, Dada, Surrealism, Transition etc. was never ideologically intimate and, as M. Matisse states, she has presented the epoch "without taste and without relation to reality".

The *Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas*, in its hollow, tinsel bohemianism and egocentric deformations, may very well become one day the symbol of the decadence that hovers over contemporary literature.

EUGENE JOLAS.

Paris, Feb. 1935.

¹⁾ All page numbers refer to the English edition published by John Lane The Bodley Head, London.

Henri Matisse:

(Monsieur Matisse's comments are as follows. The quotations from Miss Stein's book are in small type.)

Page 9 — On the only free space, the doors, were tacked up a few drawings by Picasso and Matisse.

To my knowledge I have at no time had either drawings or reproductions on Gertrude Stein's walls (or doors).

Page 38 — It was the first year of the autumn salon.... There they (Miss Stein and her brother) found Matisse's picture afterwards known as *La Femme au Chapeau*.... Gertrude Stein liked that picture.... She said she wanted to buy it.... Her brother was less attracted but all the same they agreed and they bought it.... And so this was the story of the buying of *La Femme au Chapeau*....

Madame Michel Stein, whom Gertrude Stein neglects to mention, was the really intelligently sensitive member of the family. Leo Stein thought very highly of her because she possessed a sensibility which awakened the same thing in himself.

It was Madame Michel Stein and her brother who discussed the advisability of purchasing "*La Femme au Chapeau*". When the purchase had been made, Leo said to Madame Michel Stein: "I am going to ask you to leave it with me for I must know in detail the reasons for my preferences."

In the end, it was Madame Michel Stein who came into possession of the picture at the time when Leo, who had broken with Gertrude Stein, sold his collection. It is still in her possession.

Page 40 — (Description of Madame Matisse). She was a very straight dark woman with a long face and a firm large loosely hung mouth like a horse. She had an abundance of dark hair. They had with them a daughter of Matisse... and Madame Matisse, as she once explained in her melodramatic simple way, did more than her duty by this child because having read in her youth a novel in which the heroine had done so and been consequently much loved all her life, had decided her to do so.

Madame Matisse was a very lovely Toulousaine, erect, with a good carriage and the possessor of beautiful dark hair, that grew charmingly, especially at the nape of the neck. She had a pretty throat and very handsome shoulders. She gave the impression, despite the fact that she was timid and reserved, of a person of great kindness, force and gentleness. She was generous and incapable of calculation in her gestures of kindness. She characterizes

the story of the novel having to do with a case of adoption similar to that in my family as pure invention.

Page 41 — Matisse had at this time a small Cézanne.... The Cézanne had been bought with his wife's marriage portion.... The Cézanne was a picture of bathers and a tent....

With regard to the purchase of the Cézanne: there was no tent in the picture, it was a Cézanne with three women bathers and several trees. It was very much worked over so that there was no possibility of mistaking it. The story of its purchase with my wife's dot is invented.

Page 41 — Matisse had come to Paris as a young man to study pharmacy.

I was not studying pharmacy but law. I was not interested in painting at that time. It was during a period of convalescence after an attack of appendicitis, when I was living with my family, that a neighbour suggested painting as a means of passing the time, and it was then that I first began to paint. I was for several years a clerk in a lawyer's office before I decided to take up painting seriously.

Page 42 — The year after his very considerable success at the Salon he spent the winter painting a very large picture of a woman setting a table and on the table was a magnificent dish of fruit.... It was finished at last and sent to the salon where the year before Matisse had had considerable success, and there it was refused. And now Matisse's serious troubles began, his daughter was very ill.... and he had lost all possibility of showing his pictures. He no longer painted at home but in an atelier. It was cheaper so.

The canvas was accepted immediately for the reason that I was a member of the committee, but it was badly hung. I did not begin to paint in an atelier until much later, after I had finished "Le Bonheur de Vivre", for the reason that it was much cheaper to paint at home. But perhaps Miss Stein means that I painted in a public atelier like Colarossi.

Page 43 — Once Vollard came to see him.... Vollard came and said he wanted to see the big picture which had been refused. Matisse showered it to him. He did not look at it.... Matisse and Madame Matisse were both getting very nervous although she did not show it. And this door, said Vollard interestedly to Matisse, where does that lead to, does that lead into a court or does that lead on to a stairway. Into a court, said Matisse. Ah yes, said Vollard. And then he left. The Matisses spent days discussing whether there was anything symbolic in Vollard's question or was it idle curiosity.

The story about the court-yard is hardly possible when one considers that we lived on the sixth floor.

Page 43 — ...The Matisse's asked each other and all their friends, why did he ask that question about the door. Well at any rate within the year he had bought the picture at a very low price but he bought it, and he put it away and nobody saw it, and that was the end of that.

Vollard payed fr. 200 for the picture. A few months later he sold it for fr. 1500 to Herr Freudenberg of Berlin. Herr Freudenberg still owns the picture.

Page 43 — Matisse was painting Madame Matisse as a gypsy holding a guitar. ... She had a great deal to do and she posed beside and she was very healthy and sleepy. One day she was posing, he was painting, she began to nod and as she nodded the guitar made noises. Stop it, said Matisse, wake up. She woke up, he painted, she nodded and the guitar made noises. Stop it, said Matisse, wake up. She woke up and then in a little while she nodded again the guitar made even more noises. Matisse furious seized the guitar and broke it.

The guitar story gives a very good idea of how Gertrude Stein understood the things she happened to witness either wholly or partially and which it pleases her to affirm with insistence. This incident might have been made funny if it had been told as it happened by a real story-teller such as Vollard, for instance. This is the story. My wife was posing for me in a dark blue treader costume embroidered in silver. Her toe was resting on a little stool in order to support the knee on which the guitar was resting. This position, which is not very comfortable for anyone who is not a guitar player, gave her cramps in her leg which, added to the long periods of absolute immobility required for posing, caused her to grow impatient. I, on the other hand, was absorbed in my work, quite silent and often intense as a result of the effort I was making. Suddenly my wife gave a quick pluck at the strings: ding, ding. I let this pass without comment. After it had happened several times, I realized that it was getting on my nerves. I told her so with all the gentleness of a person who is holding on to himself. Finally, when my wife repeated the same sign of exasperation as a sort of unconscious form of relaxation, I gave a vigorous kick against the bar of my easel which was oblique and very light weight. The bar broke in two with a loud noise, the easel fell down as also the canvas and the oil cup which splattered everything. At this moment my wife threw the guitar on top of the other things

with a gesture that was as quick as what had gone before. The guitar did not break, but we burst out laughing. This relaxed our nerves and united us in our gayety as we had been united in our tension.

Page 67 — And now once more to return... to Picasso becoming head of a movement that was later to be known as the cubists. Page 68 — In these early days when he (Picasso) created cubism...

According to my recollection it was Braque who made the first cubist painting. He brought back from the south a mediterranean landscape that represented a sea-side village seen from above. In order to give more importance to the roofs, which were few, as they would be in a village, in order to let them stand out in the ensemble of the landscape, and at the same time to develop the idea of humanity which they stood for, he had continued the signs that represented the roofs in the drawing on into the sky and had painted them throughout the sky. This is really the first picture constituting the origin of cubism and we considered it as something quite new about which there were many discussions. At the same period, in Braque's atelier, Rue d'Orsel, I saw a big wide canvas that had been started in the same spirit and which represented the seated figure of a young woman.

Page 105 — I remember so well one spring day, it was a lovely day and we were to lunch at Clamart with the Matisses. When we got there they were all standing around an enormous packing-case with its top off.

This incident took place Boulevard des Invalides, not in Clamart.

Page 120-121 — (In connection with the government sale of Kahnweiler's property which included a number of important cubist canvases and which had been confiscated during the war.) There had been quite a conscious effort on the part of all the older merchants now that the war was over, to kill cubism. The expert for the sale who was a well known picture dealer, had avowed this as his intention... Braque had approached the expert and told him that he had neglected his obvious duties. The expert... had called Braque a Norman pig, Braque had hit him... Just after it was over Matisse came in and wanted to know what had happened and was happening. Gertrude Stein told him. Matisse said, and it was a Matisse way to say it, Braque a raison, celui-là a volé la France, et on sait bien ce que c'est que voler la France.

Not having seen Miss Stein since the war I could not have made the statement she attributes to me.

(In conclusion Monsieur Matisse says): Gertrude Stein had a senti-

mental attachment for Picasso. With regard to myself, she has satisfied in her book an old rancour which had its origin in the fact that having promised me she would help Juan Gris, who had been caught by the war in Collioure where he was obliged to stay, she did not keep her word, and it was for this reason that I stopped seeing her. I had returned from Collioure after having promised Gris to see several people in Paris who might take an interest in his situation. I met Brenner, an American sculptor, who was also a kind of picture broker, and who, I knew, admired Gris. I informed him of the predicament Gris was in, at the same time broaching the possibility of his helping Gris who was living at Collioure in very modest circumstances. It was understood that if Gertrude Stein would agree to share the responsibility, he, Brenner, would give fr. 150 per month and she the same, which would have sufficed. In return Gris would let them have canvases that would cover the money advances. I saw Gertrude Stein and made the proposition which she accepted immediately. To my stupefaction I learned later through Gris that she had done nothing about it and that as a result he had been obliged to come to Paris to make out as best he could. For this reason, I have never seen Gertrude Stein since the first months of the war. Around 1922-1924 I saw Gris and his wife in Nice. "I have just seen Gertrude Stein at the Hôtel Suisse", he said. "We are spending the evening with her and she invites you too." I replied: "Please thank Gertrude Stein for me, but I am not free this evening." I saw Gris again at Toulon several years later. We did not speak of the past.

I am entirely unaware whether or not she helped him out during his last illness, but I do know very directly that Kahnweiler showed him unusual devotion and that it was he who assumed all the cost of Gris' illness, nor did death interrupt this devotion. It was Kahnweiler who found work for the widow and saw to it that the son, whom he has never lost from sight, was able to make a place for himself. The son is now a chemical engineer of the first order.

If Miss Toklas had spoken of Gertrude Stein's life with the same *sans-gêne* and irresponsibility that she did of the lives of others, her book might have been, by its sincerity, a very interesting human document and probably as picturesque as their own two personalities. Miss Toklas, in other words, Gertrude Stein, has contacted indiscriminately things about which, it seems to me, she has understood nothing. Gertrude Stein's translator doesn't seem to have understood her. Nor does he seem to understand the things he is

talking about and I suppose that Gertrude Stein is not sufficiently acquainted with the French language to have realized this. Her book is composed, like a picture puzzle, of different pieces of different pictures which at first, by their very chaos, give an illusion of the movement of life. But if we attempt to envisage the things she mentions this illusion does not last. In short, it is more like a harlequin's costume the different pieces of which, having been more or less invented by herself, have been sewn together without taste and without relation to reality.

Maria Jolas:

On page 254 Miss Stein says: It was Bravig Imbs who brought Elliot Paul to the house and Elliot Paul brought transition.

We had liked Bravig Imbs but we liked Elliot Paul more. He was very interesting . . . He had an element not of mystery but of evanescence, actually little by little he appeared and then as slowly disappeared, and Eugene Jolas and Maria Jolas appeared. These once having appeared, stayed in their appearance.

Page 256 — One day Elliot Paul came in very excitedly, he usually seemed to be feeling a great deal of excitement but neither showed nor expressed it. This time however he did show it and express it. He said he wanted to ask Gertrude Stein's advice. A proposition had been made to him to edit a magazine in Paris and he was hesitating whether he should undertake it. Gertrude Stein was naturally all for it. After all, as she said, we do want to be printed. One writes for oneself and strangers but with no adventurous publishers how can one come in contact with those same strangers.

However, she was very fond of Elliot Paul and did not want him to take too much risk. No risk, said Elliot Paul, the money for it is guaranteed for a number of years. Well then, said Gertrude Stein, one thing is certain no one could be a better editor than you would be. You are not egotistical and you know what you feel.

Transition began and of course it meant a great deal to everybody. Elliot Paul chose, with great care what he wanted to put into transition. He said he was afraid of its becoming too popular. If ever there are more than two thousand subscribers, I quit, he used to say. He liked *Made A Mile Away*, a description of the pictures that Gertrude Stein has liked and later a novelette of desertion *If He Thinks* for transition. He had a perfectly definite idea of gradually opening the eyes of the public to the work of the writers that interested him and as I say he chose what he wanted with great care . . .

Elliot Paul slowly disappeared and Eugene and Maria Jolas appeared.

Transition grew more bulky. At Gertrude Stein's request transition reprinted *Tender Buttons*, printed a bibliography of all her work up to date and later printed her opera, *Four Saints*. For these printings Gertrude Stein was very grateful. In the last numbers of transition nothing of hers appeared, transition died.

What does the reader of these cryptic passages learn about Transition? He learns that it was edited by a great admirer of Miss Stein's, Elliot Paul, that it was luxuriously and anonymously financed and that when it ceased to publish Miss Stein's work it died. But on the other hand, who are these people, Eugene and Maria Jolas who fade cinematographically into the picture as Paul fades out? What did they do once they arrived? Why were they not there from the beginning?

All those who were associated with the genesis of Transition — including Miss Stein — know that Eugene Jolas was its director and intellectual *animateur* from the very beginning. But since she has chosen to distort this fact — can it be through fault of memory? — I feel I should give the story in detail exactly as I told it to Miss Stein in 1931.

In the fall of 1926, the cost of living being cheap in France for Americans, my husband and I discussed the founding of a magazine together, at our own expense. It would mean a sacrifice — fortunately we little realized how great — but we were keen to do it. At that time my husband who had just spent six months in America, was preparing his *Anthologie de la Nouvelle Poésie Américaine*¹⁾, so that we already had an excellent American list. Also he had previously made friendly contacts with most of the French writers and painters who later appeared in *transition* and due to his organic German contacts, he was entirely familiar with the Expressionist group.

As our plans unfolded it soon became evident that we would need an assistant. Before his trip to America my husband had conducted for two years the Sunday Literary section of the *Paris Chicago Tribune*. Elliot Paul, who was working on the same paper, had succeeded him in this position. Now my husband was back at the Tribune in the position of City Editor and in the early morning hours, after the paper had gone to press, the two men often talked books together and seemed to have much in common. This despite the fact that Paul, through his meagre knowledge of French and unfamiliarity with any other foreign language, was only superficially aware of what was being written in Europe. Among several other possible assistants we finally decided however, to engage Paul. There followed several interviews and it was decided

¹⁾ (Kra, Paris, 1928.) The first published translation into French of Miss Stein's writing appeared in this volume.

that we would work towards a first number in the spring. Further it was agreed, in order for Paul to be of real assistance, that he would receive a salary which would permit him to quit the newspaper. It was in December that the actual work got under way. I undertook all the business and general secretarial part and the two men were to be responsible for the editorial part.

With many people to be seen and several difficult translations to be made for the first numbers, the work had to be divided between the three of us, and among other assignments it was decided that Paul, who knew Miss Stein, would ask her for a manuscript. She agreed to give us something and all subsequent questions concerning her proof etc. were left to Paul.

Meanwhile he represented her to us as a sort of female Buddha who lived entirely apart from the world and saw very few people. Being ourselves very busy we were not inclined to force ourselves upon her and accepted Paul's version, thus leaving a free field for false impressions. These impressions Miss Stein has described in the paragraphs of her book quoted above. To me, who was present at numerous editorial discussions, they are often very amusing, as for instance, when she says that Paul "chose with care what he wanted to put into *transition*". I remember heated arguments with regard to the publication of such men as Jouhandeau, Drieu La Rochelle, Breton and his Surrealist friends, to mention only a few, during which Paul at first opposed their inclusion until my husband's usually rather excited analysis brought final agreement and, more than often, later enthusiasm.

In March 1927 we moved to a remote village in the East of France where we had taken a large, very primitive old house with the idea that Paul, who had seemed happy to do so, would join us. For it had become evident that in order to continue we would have to economize. But Paul was only very intermittently with us and his "evanescence", particularly at moments when we faced difficult problems concerning the review, soon became a serious hindrance to any sort of effective cooperation. As the first year wore on we realized that he was definitely not to be counted on for the work we had engaged him for, and this, added to the fact that ideologically he contributed little to the review beyond a certain literary liberalism, decided us to dispense with his active services and give him the rank of an unsalaried contributing editor. His name appeared in this complimentary capacity for the last time in *Transition* no. 16/17, published in June 1929, but after the

first year when, in order to get a fresh start, we abandoned the monthly for a quarterly appearance, his collaboration had been no more than that of numerous other contributors.

In the Spring of 1930 Miss Stein, in an interview with my husband, during which she reproached him with neglecting her reputation for a too warm support of James Joyce said: "When Paul edited *Transition* things were different." "When did Paul edit *Transition*, Miss Stein?" my husband answered.

This was our first realization of the mis-apprehension which had been left intact during long visits to the Rue de Fleurus, and Miss Stein's subsequent refusal to listen to my proffered rectification of what had been told her brought about a coolness between us.

This state of affairs lasted until late in November 1930 when, *Transition* having been suspended for eighteen months, Miss Stein heard rumors that it was to reappear. There followed notes, telephone calls, invitations etc from her until it was agreed that we would publish her in *Transition* no. 21, then in preparation. We even received an autographed copy of her "How to Write", published in November of the same year, with on the fly-leaf, "To Maria and Eugene Jolas with affection and appreciation for what they are and what they do."

It was during this period of comparative entente cordiale that one evening in the Spring of 1931, at her house, I reopened the subject and furnished her with the details I have given here. We compared notes and she shared my surprise. Paul, by then, had completely disappeared from her house as well as our own, with an impartial indifference to certain elementary obligations.

In conclusion it might be well to inform Miss Stein that *Transition* was not conceived by Eugene Jolas as a vehicle for the rehabilitation of her own reputation, although it undoubtedly did do this. Nor was her rôle in its development different from that of many other well-wishing contributors. *Transition* was conceived, and the personal and financial sacrifice gladly accepted, in order to create a meeting place for all those artists on both sides of the Atlantic who were working towards a complete renovation, both spiritual and technical, of the various art forms. Miss Stein seemed to be experimenting courageously, and while my husband was never enthusiastic about her solution of language, still it was a very personal one, and language being one of his chief preoccupations, she obviously belonged with us. Her final capitulation to a Barnumesque publicity none of us could foresee. What we should have foreseen

however, was that she would eventually tolerate no relationship that did not bring with it adulation. This was undoubtedly lacking in our otherwise entirely correct and cordial attitude towards her, so when the moment came to play the mad queen in public, our heads had to come off with the others, despite the very real service we had rendered her.

It is interesting to speculate as to just why Miss Stein should have chosen to create in her book false impressions which she knew to be such. Why has she sought to belittle so many of the artists whose friendship made it possible for her to share in the events of this epoch? The answer is obvious.

Tristan Tzara:

Miss Gertrude Stein has written a book dealing with the memoirs of Miss Alice Toklas. As it happens, the memoirs of Miss Alice Toklas deal with the life of Miss Gertrude Stein. Miss Stein expresses herself through the mouth of Miss Alice Toklas and makes her say that she is a genius. Now since it is Miss Stein herself who uses this childish subterfuge to let herself be told by her "secretary" what she would have liked others, the silent others, to tell her, the principal accent of the book is placed on the documentary side, and thus we witness a considerable display of sordid anecdotes destined to make us believe that Miss Gertrude Stein is in reality a genius.

Far be it from me to throw any doubt upon the fact that Miss Stein is a genius. We have seen plenty of those. Nor that Miss Toklas is convinced of it. To tell the truth, all this would have no importance if it took place in the family circle between two maiden ladies greedy for fame and publicity. But the immense apparatus which has been put in motion in order to arrive at this affirmation finds an obviously noisy echo in the well-known process by which the aforementioned maiden ladies thought they had the right to quote names and tales indiscriminately, thus accounting for the fact that, among others, my name is associated with what they so candidly call their memoirs. It is therefore against my will that I find myself obliged to intervene in a private matter of which the Misses Alice Toklas and Gertrude Stein are at once the sole protagonists and beneficiaries. They tell us the infinite pains they took to lure to their house, where their collection of canvases constituted an irresistible bait, people who might be useful to them in publishing an article in this or that review. I have

no objection to their revealing the secrets of their literary kitchen, if they feel inclined to do so. It can all be used, even the left-overs. Everything I have done is proof of the disgust I have for this type of activity. I therefore have the right to ask on what grounds my name is mixed up with a story about which the least we might say is that the superficial and burlesque character of the persons quoted is such as to discredit certain humanly important enterprises which Miss Stein, who understood nothing, contacted in the final analysis only thanks to the weight of her pocket-book.

If the exploitation of man by man has found its shameful expression in the conduct of business, we have, up to now, rarely seen the application of this principle to the domain of art in the unexpected form of the exploitation of ideas. The memoirs of Miss Toklas furnish us with an opportunity to appreciate how far the limits of indecency can be pushed.

Underneath the "baby" style, which is pleasant enough when it is a question of simpering at the interstices of envy, it is easy to discern such a really coarse spirit, accustomed to the artifices of the lowest literary prostitution, that I cannot believe it necessary for me to insist on the presence of a clinical case of megalomania. This in itself, would not be extraordinary if, through the curiosity it has excited, it did not give the measure of the poverty of what we are accustomed to call today "intellectual life". It is necessary to point out, however, that in the realm where lie and pretention meet, the depraved morals of bourgeois society are now opposed by the strong loathing which is felt by a few rare beings who have posited the problem of man's destiny and dignity with a gravity that is very different from the attitude which approaches it under the form of certain politely esthetic games.

Georges Braque:

Miss Stein understood nothing of what went on around her. I have no intention of entering into a discussion with her, since it is obvious that she never knew French really well and that was always a barrier. But she has entirely misunderstood cubism which she sees simply in terms of personalities.

In the early days of cubism, Pablo Picasso and I were engaged in what we felt was a search for the anonymous personality. We were inclined to efface our own personalities in order to find originality. Thus it often happened that amateurs mistook Picasso's paintings for mine and mine for Picasso's. This was a matter of

indifference to us because we were primarily interested in our work and in the new problem it presented.

Miss Stein obviously saw everything from the outside and never the real struggle we were engaged in. For one who poses as an authority on the epoch it is safe to say that she never went beyond the stage of the tourist.

Among other fallacies, she insists that Marie Laurencin and I "painted each other's portraits". I have never painted Marie Laurencin's portrait.

But while she was gossiping about the little things that happened it is a pity that she should have neglected to tell further details of her visit to me during the war. I was convalescing when she and Miss Toklas arrived in their Red Cross Ford. They looked extremely strange in their boy-scout uniforms with their green veils and Colonial helmets. When we arrived at Avignon, on the Place Clémenceau, their funny get-up so excited the curiosity of the passers-by that a large crowd gathered around us and the comments were quite humorous. The police arrived and insisted on examining our papers. They were in order alright, but for myself, I felt very uncomfortable.

We in Paris always heard that Miss Stein was a writer, but I don't think any of us had ever read her work until *Transition* began to make her known in France. Now that we have seen her book, *nous sommes fixés*.

André Salmon:

The scandalous part of the book took us somewhat by surprise. After all we were all young at that time and had no thought of possible later echoes of our actions. I am not angry but I think Gertrude Stein went too far when she made all these things public. Furthermore, there is great confusion of dates, places and persons in her book.

For instance, the story of the Rousseau banquet is very badly told. There is no respect for details, as we might have had the right to expect from Gertrude Stein since she enjoyed our friendly confidence, and the way she recounts this banquet is very flighty, to say the least. I am all the more astounded for I had thought, along with all our friends, that she had really understood things. It is evident that she understood nothing, except in a superficial way.

Her description of my drunkenness on this occasion is entirely false.

Madame Fernande Olivier, in her book "Picasso and his friends", tells it much better: "Salmon pretended delirium tremens in order to frighten the American ladies present." It was exactly that. Guillaume Apollinaire and I had spent the afternoon together writing the poems that were read. The banquet was not given just for the fun of it either, as Miss Stein seems to have thought, but because we sincerely admired Rousseau. The spectacular features of it were intentional and after the joke of drunkenness I simply went back to my own studio in order to make it seem more plausible. It is evident that Miss Stein understood little of the tendency we all had, Apollinaire, Max Jacob, myself and the others, to frequently play a rather burlesque rôle. We made continual fun of everything. When we dined together, for instance, Jacob would often pretend that he was a small clerk, and our conversations in a style that was half slang half peasant amused everybody in the restaurant. We invented an artificial world with countless jokes, rites and expressions that were quite unintelligible to others. Obviously she did not understand very well the rather peculiar French we used to speak. Furthermore, we saw "the Stein's", as we used to call her and Miss Toklas, very rarely, and I was at her house only once.

It is true that Apollinaire recited one of his poems at the Rousseau banquet but it was not he who sang a song afterwards. It is also true that I recited a poem in honor of Rousseau but I did not climb onto the table, as Miss Stein would have had me do. It would be better to refer the reader to the above mentioned book by Madame Fernande Olivier which tells the story of the Rousseau banquet with much more charm and veracity.

Miss Stein's account of the formation of cubism is entirely false. I was constantly with Picasso and the other painters involved and I know that Picasso, who was nothing of a doctrinaire, soon lost interest in it and left its further development to others.

Miss Stein often mentions people whom she never knew very well, and so irresponsibly, in fact, that the reader is astounded. Monsieur Princet, for instance, was not at all as she described him, but a man of real distinction. Germaine Pichot was not Spanish but a native of Montmartre. Vaillant, who is spoken of with a certain disdain, was a man entirely without pretensions but who had many excellent qualities. Apollinaire did not use the familiar "tu" with any and everybody. After all!

And what confusion! What incomprehension of an epoch! Fortunately there are others who have described it better.

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