

‘I Love Cherish Idolise Adore and Worship You’: Lesbian Love in the Work of Gertrude Stein

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Introduction

‘[Lesbian Modernists] turned their backs on patriarchy and created their own society. Rather than staying where they were born and struggling against censorship and outrageous denials and inequalities enforced by male legislators, they took their own power and authority and defied the stigma that conservative society tried to impose on them.’

(Diana Souhami)



Sexual Wordplay

‘I say lifting belly and then I say lifting belly and Caesars. I say lifting belly gently and Caesars gently. I say lifting belly again and Caesars again. I say lifting belly and Caesars and cow come out.’

(Stein, *Lifting Belly*)



Subverting Gender

'Use of these popular forms [by lesbian writers] serves to counteract the absence of lesbians from much of heteropopular culture, undercuts the notion that heteropatriarchy 'owns' these popular forms, inscribes lesbians into popular culture and subverts some of the ideological conservatism inherent in formulaic texts by asserting the existence of lesbians.'

(Gabriele Griffin)



Queer Domesticity

‘Helen Furr was gay there, she was gayer and gayer there and really she was just gay there, she was gayer and gayer there, that is to say she found ways of being gay there that she was using in being gay there.’

(Stein, *Miss Furr and Miss Skeene*)



Conclusion

‘Eager to celebrate once-silenced white female -and especially lesbian- writers as progressive foremothers ... many white feminist critics have also exercised a measure of “unknowing” concerning racial stereotypes...’

(Jaime Hovey)



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