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Bonnie G. Smith

Editor in Chief



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[See also Domestic Violence; Education; Human Rights; Marriage; and Wages.]

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ELISA A. CARRILLO

STEIN, GERTRUDE (1874–1946), American poet, prose writer, and playwright and one of the most innovative American writers of the modernist period. Stein was one of the most influential figures in the avant-garde circles of Paris between the beginning of the twentieth century and World War II. She was born in Allegheny, Pennsylvania, in 1874 to parents of German Jewish ancestry. After living in Vienna and Paris, the Stein family settled in Oakland, California. She attended classes at Radcliffe College at the Harvard Annex and studied philosophy and psychology with William James. Leaving Harvard without a degree, she went to Johns Hopkins to study medicine in 1897 but left after two years. In 1903, after an unhappy triangle love relationship with two other women, she left for Europe to join her brother Leo Stein in Paris, where she finally settled. Four years later she met Alice B. Toklas, and together they created one of the most famous lesbian couples of the twentieth century. The two received numerous friends in their literary salon, among them artists and writers like Pablo Picasso, Henri Matisse, F. Scott Fitzgerald, Ernest Hemingway, and Djuna Barnes. Together with her brother Leo, Stein had already purchased paintings by Paul Cézanne, Matisse, and Picasso, and the artistic exchange between the visual arts and literature became one of the main influences on her writing. In 1903 Stein began working on her monumental book *The Making of Americans* (1925), written in the highly rhythmical and abstract style that became characteristic of her writing. While posing for

Picasso for her portrait in 1905–1906, she tried to create in writing a kind of cubist composition "that had neither a beginning nor an end, a composition of which one corner was as important as another corner," thus emphasizing simultaneity and nonhierarchical structures in order to challenge linearity and chronological order. In the following years only a few experimental works, such as *Three Lives* (1909) and *Tender Buttons* (1914), were published, the latter a highly hermetic text containing linguistic and erotic wordplay.

During World War I, Stein and Toklas, working for the American Fund for French Wounded, traveled around France in their Ford car. In 1933 Stein published *The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas* and finally gained success and attention. Now considered one of the first subversive autobiographies in its radical challenging notions of the so-called true autobiography, the *Autobiography* is Stein's



Gertrude Stein. Photograph by Man Ray, c. 1929. ARTISTS RIGHTS SOCIETY (ARS), NEW YORK/CNAC/MUSEE NATIONAL D'ART MODERNE, CENTRE GEORGES POMPIDOU, PARIS/DIST. RÉUNION DES MUSÉES NATIONAUX/ART RESOURCE, NY

most popular book. During World War II, Stein and Toklas had to move to Bilignin, a small village, and pretend to be French. After the war, in 1945, Stein visited American troops in Germany, Belgium, and Austria. She died after a cancer operation in 1946 and is buried in the Père-Lachaise Cemetery in Paris.

Stein's enormous influence on the literature of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries is linked to her challenging language and her probing of the possibilities of meaning and sound, both characteristics of experimental postmodern texts that explore the limits of language. This subversive use of language went hand in hand with Stein's questioning of the patriarchal structures in language, culture, and society, and it was partly the feminist movement of the 1970s that drew attention to the significance of her work and life. During her lifetime she never received popular recognition; instead, she was even called unreadable. Stein is *The Mother of Us All*, the title of her last play, staged in 1947, both for the lesbian and feminist communities and for many postmodern writers.

[See also Literature.]

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FRANZISKA GYGAX

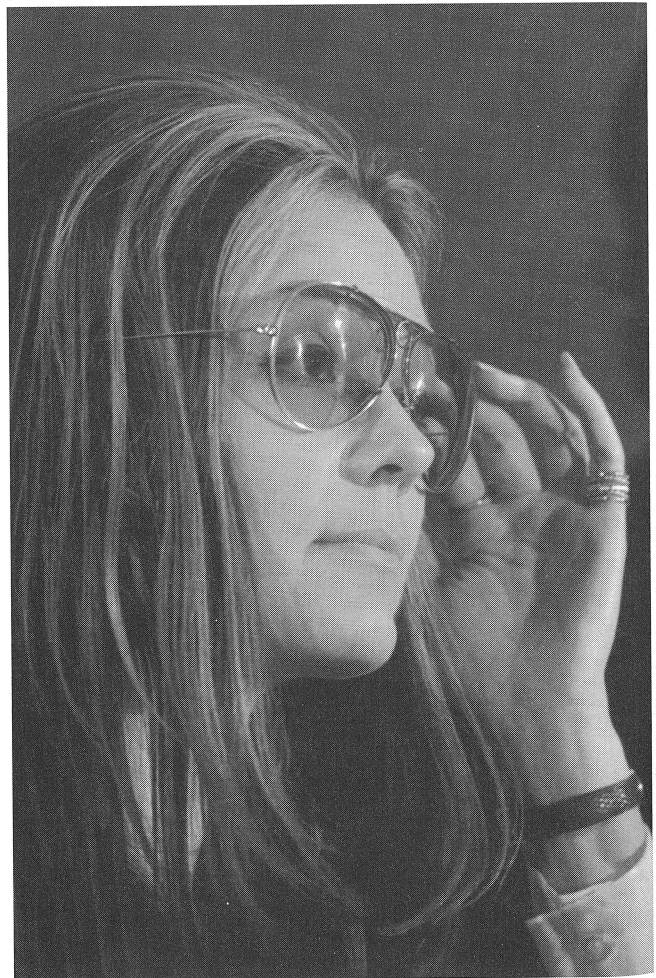
STEINEM, GLORIA (b. 1934), feminist activist, writer, and founder of *Ms.* magazine. Born in Toledo, Ohio, Steinem spent her childhood moving between Michigan, Ohio, and Florida, following her father's entertainment and antiques businesses. At the age of eleven, her parents split up, leaving her the sole caregiver for her mentally ill mother, with whom she lived in Toledo. During her last year of high school she lived with her older sister, Susanne, in Washington, D.C., before entering Smith College in 1952 on a scholarship. She graduated magna cum laude with a major in political science in 1956. She went on to do graduate work at the University of Delhi and the University of Calcutta, India, where she honed her interests in journalism, human rights, and activism.

Returning to the United States in 1958, Steinem began her career as a journalist and civil rights activist in New

York City. Known for her attractiveness, humor, and wit, Steinem soon became a successful freelance journalist. In 1968 she helped Clay Felker found *New York* magazine, not only solidifying her status in the New York publishing world but also developing her editing and fund-raising skills.

While her 1963 article "A Bunny's Tale," chronicling her time as an undercover Playboy bunny, clearly prefigured her interest in the economic and cultural situation of women, she did not explicitly define herself as a feminist until she attended an abortion rights rally in 1969. The rally, she said, caused her to think anew about the abortion she had had immediately after college graduation, alerted her to the legal and cultural constraints facing women, and led her to write "After Black Power, Women's Liberation" (1969).

By the early 1970s, with her large glasses, miniskirts, and ability to speak succinctly and without wavering, Steinem had become a media symbol of the women's movement.



Gloria Steinem. January 1972. PRINTS AND PHOTOGRAPHS DIVISION, LIBRARY OF CONGRESS