*“Picasso and Identity”*

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Theme: Collaboration versus Independence in the Formation of Identity: Writers, performers, and other artists

Title: Dining with Picasso and Gertrude Stein - Eulogical Feasts of the Gods

Picasso’s love for food had a vital influence on his work. Our paper goes behind the traditional Picasso scene in a culinary and cultural evocation and we analyse through an iconographic approach photographs, drawings, paintings, letters and recipes the atmospherically meeting between food, him and Gertrude Stein.

There is considerable evidence to suggest that Gertrude Stein was a major influence in both the career and personal life of Picasso. Gertrude Stein, as the prominent champion of Picasso began with the purchase of the 1904 painting”*Young Girl with A Basket of Flowers*”. However, the painting became more than the start of a collection. It was the start of a friendship. Although neither spoke nor read the other’s native language, they managed to form a deep understanding, particularly of art and modernism.

During the period 1905-1906 Picasso painted Gertrude Stein’s portrait in his Montmartre studio: After eighty or ninety sittings the result – according to their mutual friends – did not resemble Gertrude Stein in the slightest. Picasso’s response was to shrug: “*Never mind*”, he replied, “*in the end she will manage to look just like it*”. Whilst Picasso was painting Gertrude Stein’s portrait he first started attending the Stein Salons. Saturdays were the evenings dedicated to the legendary Stein Salon; an invitation was considered a rite of passage into the early Modernist movement. The location of these particular events in rue de Fleurus was famed as the place - where everybody - who was anybody - would be gathered to talk about art, literature, and philosophy.

Our paper takes into consideration the language of cubism, and we take the journey through the foodscapes of Cubism in the period’s early-20th-century avant-garde art movement. We focus on how, centered on Gertrude Stein and Picasso, food along with painting and sculpturing inspired related movements in art, music, literature and architecture.

In the beginning, it was not a priori that the cubistic perception of spatial construction could be utilized in other areas than painting. The symbols of cubism were not rational and could not be used directly in architecture and handicrafts, but they were still ahead of guidelines for artistic creations. Picasso’s “L’Arlésienne” from 1911-1912 supplies the visual support to these reflections. A parallel study of Gertrude Stein’s works confirms that even in her early works, Stein’s focus is constantly on a retreat from structure and the conventional composition of writing. Languages thus started to assume a new opacity.Picasso “nods” to Stein in two important cubists still lifes, “*Homage a Gertrude Stein*” in 1909; followed by “*The Architect’s Table*” in 1912. The paintings exhibit all the hallmarks of the analytic cubist approach that Picasso, but what did the cubists eat we ask? In 1908, Picasso was in the middle of cubism’s locks when he arranged the famous homage for le Douanier Rousseau in his studio where ‘ris à la Valencienne’ was served. Dining with Picasso and Gertrude Stein will also include evocative meetings involving foodscapes, formation of identity.