

Legendary Expatriation of American Women Writers: Salon Coteries in *Adventures of the Mind* and *The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas*

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Abstract—The expatriate life of American women writers based upon salon coteries in Paris in the early 20th century is probed into in this paper. The expatriate American women writers constructed an impressive female community through artistic salons led by Natalie Clifford Barney and Gertrude Stein as well as cosmopolitan bookshops run by Sylvia Beach and Adrienne Monnier. When post-war despair and cultural bankruptcy prevailed, they found a new approach in a different world, far from their hometown, and thus promoting American-European cultural exchanges, diversifying modernist ecosphere. The influx of expatriate women also benefited gender equality and feminist writing. Salon coteries reflected their quest for emancipation under constraints and nurtured collective creativity. In the modernist hemisphere belonging to them, the expatriate women writers shared new modes of language, and found their own freedom to write, to voice, to live. The innovation of the paper is the detailed study of salon hostesses Barney's memoir *Adventures of the Mind* and Stein's life narrative *The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas*, with the analysis of public sphere theory and life-writing theory to highlight the memory of collaborative salon space—a created gender-equal sphere of women writers, and their self-discovery spirit in the legendary expatriation.

Index Terms—Expatriation, salon coteries, female writing, Natalie Barney, Gertrude Stein

I. INTRODUCTION

The early decades of the 20th century witnessed a legendary expatriation of writers and artists in Paris—the world's cultural centre at that time. They forged intimate connections with each other through an innovative literary community composed of modern salons.

The paper focuses on American women writers, especially the expatriate ones, and their female salon coteries. Well-known American expatriate women at that time included Gertrude Stein (1874–1946), Alice B. Toklas (1877–1967), Natalie Clifford Barney (1876–1972), Djuna Barnes (1892–1982), Sylvia Beach (1887–1962), Janet Flanner (1892–1978), and so on. Other brilliant women—British expatriates such as Bryher (Annie Winifred Ellerman) (1894–1983), Nancy Cunard (1896–1965), Mina Loy (1882–1966), and French natives such as Adrienne Monnier (1892–1955) also frequented female salons.

With a renewed sense of wonder and boundless enthusiasm, they stepped into a space that has been crafted with desire in mind. They were allowed to be itinerant

travellers at ease. They were so active in creations that a dazzling group portrait of the impressive literary community was well presented through journalist essays and life narratives.

The paper is to analyse that in Paris, American expatriate women writers initiated a modernist movement in their coteries based on literary salons and cosmopolitan bookshops—the public space in private settings, which can be seen in NCB's *Adventures of the Mind: The Memoirs of Natalie Clifford Barney* (1992) and Gertrude Stein's *The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas* (1990). Barney salon, Stein salon, Beach's and Monnier's bookshops together formed a salon space, within which the avant-garde style of international modernism and gender equality through female writing flourished.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

The brutal fact is that expatriate women had been neglected and erased from the landscape of literary Paris for a long time. While male voices were prioritized, women writers and their literary works hadn't gotten serious treatment until the rise of feminist literary criticism, which advocated fair opportunities and rights of women, and the attention to their achievements.

When *Women of the Left Bank* by Shari Benstock was published in 1986, women's contributions were seen and gradually got acknowledgement by the public. Benstock (2008) thought that critics of the period such as Malcolm Cowley (1898–1989) were themselves men, so they tended to lay stress on male consciousness and safeguard masculine image. Therefore, over time, well-known men writers, including T. S. Eliot (1888–1965), James Joyce (1882–1941), Ezra Pound (1885–1972), represented the whole modernist group. Instead, women became reticent passersby in history, appeared solely in footnote or appendix. [1]

Lanser [2] believed that salon coteries helped build a solidary female community with unbridled ambition. Uniquely, it's a financially and emotionally prosperous one, so these women writers left more worthwhile records of life than other cultural groups, and embraced their own memoir boom. Wells-Lynn [3] analyzed Barnes' and Hall's works to see how geographic marks in Barney's *Friday Afternoons* turned into prevalent metonymy in literature. Cheng [4] explored Djuna Barnes' and Stein's works and listed their differences in terms of standpoint, target readers, and production in the marketplace. Liu [5] demonstrated a cultural overview of salon coteries constructed by Stein and Barney in Paris, Mabel Dodge (1879–1962) and Jessie Fauset (1882–1961) in New York in the 20th century. At this point,

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the interconnections between two main salon coteries: Friday Afternoons sponsored by Barney, and Saturday Evenings launched by Stein, have been mentioned, yet not discussed in full.

Incipient views were inclined to treat dissenting voices within female salon coteries as negative interactions such as quarrels, sarcasm, but essentially, an abundance of diverse opinions enriched the literary circle. Lanser [2] pointed out that if any of these literary works was indeed a bitter pill of satire or even insult, then it would be impossible for the “victims” to gladly accept it. The real situation was: some women members even openly declared that they loved a work very much, in which they had got an “uglification”. They formed a forbearing, light-hearted space in salons, which called forth a tender mightiness all members of their community had the ability to resort to.

From the two books chosen in the paper, female writers’ closeness can be well seen. In *The Autobiography*, Stein [6] mentioned Nancy Cunard, Adrienne Monnier, Sylvia Beach, Djuna Barnes and Mina Loy, Natalie Barney. In *Adventures of the Mind*, Barney carefully described her encounters with Loy, Djuna Barnes and Nancy Cunard, Gertrude Stein, Romaine Brooks (1874–1970) [7]. Their relationships and proximity within the community will be further discussed in detail.

III. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

To better prove the point, the theory of life narrative by Smith and Watson [8] is to be used as theoretical support. Their interpretations delved into the characteristics of life-writing and the internal structure of autobiographical facts.

In life narrative, the author is not a freewheeling describer, he or she is always under the pressure of self-observation, introspection, and interrogation, while being relatively free to narrate. The author is a subject and an object at the same time; is a hunter and simultaneously a prey. Therefore, the narration of the author is like a capricious child chasing the fast-moving kite, changing the angle, changing the direction, yet all about one thing.

Life narrative reflects not only the author’s own life experiences, but the social relationships, public knowledge, group accomplishments, and collective memory. It’s “a set of ever-shifting self-referential practices” [8], which reflects not only the things happening at the present moment, but past records and a reasoning future. Life narrative is different from biography because it’s not an extrinsic tale told by a scholar or a celebrity; it’s a concoction of inner moods and geographically, culturally external changes. Sometimes, second-person POV, third-person POV, a person from a shared community or group’s perspective are applied to the narration.

Readers have a latent desire for the credibility of life narratives. They want to read the family history recorded by a real member, the Left-Bank-legend in those years described by a genuine Parisian expatriate, a love story recollected by the lovers or their children and even grandchildren. *The Autobiography* somewhat meets the needs, but Stein had made it into an unusual one. It’s a life narrative centering on Stein, yet claimed “of Alice B. Toklas”. It brought Stein’s

intimate girlfriend, family member Toklas’ voices in, but portrayed countless friends of Stein in her own salon circles. Some people even doubt if it’s a swindle, a “parasitism”. [8] This debate will be extended in the latter part, but at least the readers should admit that the POV of *The Autobiography* cannot be oversimplified into a single person Stein’s or Toklas’ voices. It’s a sophisticated mixture of perspectives, instead of a straightforward multiple choice of a mind onefold.

Habermas [9] put forward the theory of the public sphere’s structural transformation. This provides another theoretical support for the paper. In the 18th century, when cities took a more important position, a public literary sphere, built upon cafes, parties, and social gatherings, opposed to traditional court culture, emerged. These newly constructed cultural meeting places were the embryonic forms of modern salons. However, the renovation of concepts and thoughts could not be achieved overnight. Literati, at that time, were under the strict mind control of the aristocrats, so they could only follow bandwagon of using trite language – neither repudiate nor denounce.

Finally, when cities completed the metamorphosis into a real center of culture, a well-educated middle class between old noblemen and destitute intellectuals was formed. “The public sphere in the world of letters was replaced by the pseudo-public or sham-private world of culture consumption” [9]. A group of publishers replaced the patrons, promoting the circulation of literary works in the marketplace. The patrician heritages with ethical manners gradually turned into conversations with the spirit of public criticism.

Along with the transformation from a declining court field to a progressive bourgeois public sphere, the most important space in a citizen’s house became the fire-new sitting room for social intercourse. As people stepped out of the private bedroom, they entered a field both public and private: space for salons, in which the relationship of the writer, reader, and work itself shaped an inner intimacy of self and other, human nature and the reason.

The public traits of social gatherings and the private feature of conjugal family life were mutually complementary, shaping the literary and geographical definition of fiction [9].

Moreover, coffee houses were open to men only. After several failed revolts, women turned the salon into an ideal paradise for themselves. Salon hostesses started to ask guests to write something after social gatherings because everyone was a fictional theme for self and others. Life experiences enriched fictional space, and vice versa, the private field verified collective memories. The blurred boundary between interior and exterior had profound connotations: only when the aesthetic modernist revolution first obtained recognition from the internal community within the literary arena could it be further appreciated by the external field of power. Therefore, the salons of Barney and Stein, the bookstores of Beach and Monnier, jointly constituted a sphere between private and public, entwining home space together with socio-cultural space.

Based on the above, re-examining female experiences in Paris, at the peak of its enchanting era, is of great value. Expatriate women’s writings kept a record of an adventurous journey towards self-growth and self-awareness against the shackles of predominant literary authority. Literature was

holier and writing was more tutelary for women than for men [7]. Their voices displayed many varieties of powerful feminine beauty, within which intellectual accomplishments shone brighter than physical allure.

Presenting oneself through writing and engaging in communication within the intimate circles of salons served as their most effective means of self-expression. In *Ladies Almanack*, when everything crumbled into dust, the tongue survived in the fire [10]. It's a powerful symbol, indicating that words and languages, as well as the willingness to speak, are immortal. It signified that a female-centered language mode had the potential to soar, even beyond the dominant norms.

Realizing that they were the thoughtful subjects instead of the passive objects being gazed at, women writers tightly held their own liberty for self-discovery in literature creation and self-determination in expatriate life.

IV. FEMALE SALON COTERIES IN MEMOIR-BOOM-ERA

A. *Adventures of the Mind and Natalie Barney Salon*

Being a heartthrob and female role model at that age, Barney appeared in countless memoirs and literary works written by the intellectuals around her, but *Adventures of the Mind: The Memoirs of Natalie Clifford Barney* shows her own description of her expatriate life to us. It takes readers on a short trip within Friday Afternoons to encounter several writers, artists, and our lovely hostess NCB [11]. Through this work, readers get to know her beautiful mind and infinite imagination, even beyond her deep blue eyes and blond hair shining in the moonlight which had been chattered about by her peers. Though soaking in sweet words, Barney made sardonic comments on the compliments she received. She demythologized herself to step out of the honeyed trap of deification.

She did describe life in salon coteries and expatriate community, but different from Stein, Barney recorded them in romantic tranquility as if she left us with a viewfinder of her eyes. By saying "they are fragments of sensation, broken mirrors of joy of life on which one cuts oneself, but do not believe you have grasped her in that either, because she escapes from sentiment in order to ridicule" [7], Barney depicted the mystery, and ethereal essence of her friend Djuna Barnes; by saying "these sketches correspond to the expulsion of our interior demons, to imaginary catastrophes, to baseless fears in which one seems to participate in the confused birth of dreams" [7], Barney portrayed her life-long companion Romaine Brook's heartrending sensibility in art and her deep-cutting sentiment in life. When she delineated, she floated past all the figures; when we read nowadays, we, through fog, see them afar. She made it magical because neither her recollections nor our reading disturbs the very existence of those people, which might precisely be the purpose of her subtleness.

NCB exuded an air of regal elegance, graced with a serene and almost divine nonchalance befitting of her status. She concealed a "formidable acuity in the shadow and the glimmers" [7]. But she was also a rebel, a danger, a woman who would rather die than bear banality. When French noblemen arrogated in Parisian salons, she did dare to create

her own female salon to re-shape the cultural history.

Her key role, as salon hostess, had long been regarded as a result of sexual orientation, and great wealth from her family of origin, but people had managed to miss the most important feature: her inner spirit leading a magnificent literary activity.

Barney was very sagacious, ingenious, and affable. Friday Afternoons was an eclectic salon, receptive to divergences set beyond borders, welcoming guests with different sexual preferences from different places. The all-embracing attitude was inseparable from her rejection of single-sexualized perspective or over-categorization. She did provide those new arrivals with a cozy home-like place to rest in. Being a philanthropic and very clever organizer, she initiated a charity project, and put it into practice within her salon circles. She encouraged the rich to be the shareholders to subsidize the talented yet poor writers. In return, the shareholders had the top priority to read and keep the best version of their informal writings.

Barney had been committed to overturning the deep-rooted concept in mainstream society, and the abnormal image of Sapphic women.

Barney was a firm and persistent woman writer; she believed in the equivalence of adversity and clumsiness; she had created a truly impressive gender landscape.

Born and raised in high society, Barney naturally attracted celebrities into Friday Afternoons, but exceptions like Djuna Barnes also won a ticket because her astounding genius was appreciated by Barney.

Furthermore, Barney held several salons dedicated to women writers to empower them mentally and economically, subverting the sexual landscape of literary "Left Bank" on her own:

"She was entering not only a well-established group of American expatriates, and an international community of writers and artists committed to radical experimentation in social content and aesthetic form, but a network of lesbians for many of whom sexual and aesthetic values seems to have converged in what Shari Benstock has called 'Sapphic modernism' [2]."

Barney turned her salon into a back garden for the practices of social-political movements. Initiating "Academy of Women"¹, she cracked a way towards the female-centered sphere, though strenuously. She dedicated her life to breaking gender stereotypes imposed upon women, including depravity, indulgence, stand-in masculinity.

B. *The Autobiography and Gertrude Stein Salon*

The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas can be viewed as an attempt, by Gertrude Stein, to be approachable. Before the publication of this work, Stein was under criticism, suffering from "alienation" due to her literary aloofness and uncanny writing style.

However, in this "autobiography", she wore a mask, and used Toklas' voice to tell a much more accessible story, in

¹ A cosmopolitan female salon founded by NCB in 1927, where women writers could comment about a wide range of topics including arts, literature, philosophy, and politics, together, per week. It's a form of tender protest over the all-male community: Académie Française (Academy of French).

plain English, which made readers understand her for the first time. This understanding was so valuable that it brought her social recognition and the first career success she had dreamed of for so long.

The Autobiography recorded the colorful life in Paris, at full length. It was centered on Stein's salon: Saturday Evenings. The life was described as an iridescent "kaleidoscope slowly turning" [6]. It is like a long movie – interesting experiences of the Left Bank circle gleamed; appealing reminiscence of salon participants blinked, being gorgeous, yet slightly somber. Suddenly, Gertrude Stein was inserted, like an advertisement, with her full name, her published works, brief jottings, and her accolades, collected from lots of influential intellectuals [12]. When Stein borrowed Toklas' perspective to express her own ideas, Toklas was put into a dilemma – she had "exceptional access without exceptional speculative abilities" [13]. Incisive artistic views and arcane details between Stein and other geniuses were publicized through Toklas' voices, while the register herself was still treated as an observer, an outsider, due to the typical "Steinese tone" in *The Autobiography*. Simultaneously, Stein propagated her intimacy with up-and-coming stars such as Pablo Picasso (1881–1973) by stating that for him, her salon was "the only home" [6] to go to, which was another way of special endorsement.

There are many differences between Barney salon and Stein salon. Barney's salon was more decorous, elegant, while Stein's was more casual, and even ambiguous. Friday Afternoons at 20 rue Jacob always attracted distinguished celebrities although there were exceptions like Barnes, whose literary talents were too breathtaking. Saturday Evenings at 27 rue de Fleurus was almost open to the public, and thus jampacked. "Everybody brought somebody, and they came at any time and it began to be a nuisance." [6] Its requirement of recommendation was just nominal.

While Barney acted as a feminist pioneer in holding female salons, Stein hardly ever conveyed her appreciation for the female peers' literary achievements. Excessive concern with male colleagues in her works implied her belief that only men contributed to serious writing; only men could be either her literary partners or rivals. She denied her femininity and almost cut ties with female bonding. Surrounded by notable figures, Gertrude Stein made herself a spokesperson for Saturday Evenings. Those "wives of many geniuses" [6] were sent to the other room, accompanied by Alice B. Toklas.

Stein's relationship with Toklas differed from that between Sylvia Beach and Adrienne Monnier; between Natalie Barney and Romaine Brooks; between Djuna Barnes and Thelma Wood (1901–1970). It's more like a mimesis of traditional marriage patterns under patriarchal discourse. Unilateral concession was always there, causing disequilibrium.

Natalie Barney regarded Toklas as an all-round woman with wide-ranging interests, wonderful cooking, and zeal in gardening. In fact, Toklas undertook most of the household chores when Stein was busy writing or sleeping. Even in an "autobiography" titled with her name, she was marginalized, setting off the radiance of the only protagonist: Stein. The role of Toklas in the story was to win acclaim for Stein, and explain how they met each other.

Simultaneously, overlap can still be found within these two

main salon coteries. They interweaved with one another. Regular visitors of Friday Afternoons, including Stein, Toklas, Brooks, Beach, Monnier, and Dorothy Wilde (1895–1941), seated around the table, nearest to Miss. Barney. Housemaid Berthe frequented Monnier's bookshop to pick books for Barney. Stein and Toklas also visited rue de l'Odéon frequently, borrowing books from Shakespeare and Company (Beach's English bookstore). Many members from two different coteries were close friends. For them, the route from rue de l'Odéon to rue de Fleurus to rue Jacob was known so well by heart.

C. Beach's and Monnier's Bookshops as Salon Space

The salon coterie created an intimate realm in the bourgeois public field. Barney's Friday Afternoons and Stein's Saturday Evenings were both held in salon hostesses' private space. A fine line between the bedroom and salon space showed the fuzziness of the sphere boundary. On the one hand, salon space in the house made the private home space less for individual residents, more for audiences; on the other hand, it oriented the home sphere towards a social milieu, beyond the environment of family members.

According to tradition, bookstores did not assume the social function of cultural conferences. Nevertheless, the miraculous booksellers, Sylvia Beach and Adrienne Monnier, created modernist inter-communication spaces based on bookshops Shakespeare and Company and the counterpart La Maison des Amis des Livres (The House for the Friends of Books). It was recorded by Stein:

"Adrienne Monnier wanted Sylvia to move to the rue de l'Odéon and Sylvia hesitated but finally she did so. They gave a party just after Sylvia moved in and we went and there Gertrude Stein first discovered that she had a young Oxford following. There were several young Oxford men there and they were awfully pleased to meet her and they asked her to give them some manuscripts and they published them [6]."

The two booksellers well assimilated the party prototype, and put it into the bookshop circumstances. They designed the bookshops as a full-featured arena, instead of a merely commercial outlet. An unexpected literary landscape was formed in the Left Bank circle, which had become the irreplaceable landmark of twentieth-century Paris for Bryher, Janet Flanner, Ernest Hemingway (1899–1961), and many others. When Joyce was caught in a predicament, Shakespeare and Company worked as a provisional publishing house. While the economic crisis hit the bookselling industry, and Beach once considered shutting the bookstore down, André Gide (1869–1951) became quite anxious because this interdisciplinary space had been too important for almost every modernist in Paris.

"The complex merging of intellectual, literary and social endeavor – the formulation of bookshop space as party space – is demonstrated in the practice of readings, screenings, exhibitions, and other gatherings." [14] The bookshops provided a habitat, and brought cohesion for avant-gardists from the expatriate community, promoting European and American cultural exchanges. They formed an interactive forum, built upon multiple interpretations.

V. SALON COTERIES FOR INTERNATIONAL MODERNISM

A. *Avant-garde Style of Left Bank Expatriates*

Salons and bookstores, where the synthesis of American and European cultures flourished, promoted artistic exchanges and cosmopolitan literature. After the war, hopelessness, the crisis of faith, and fragmentation of civilization engulfed the world. Simultaneously, the avant-garde trends reflecting the disintegration of reality were also evoked.

It's natural to associate the Lost Generation with Bohemian life and intemperate hedonism, when it comes to the Parisian group in the early 20th century. However, in fact, after recovering from the paralysis of desperation, they started a positive hunt for renewed values. "In order to seize these influences and create as well as re-create them there needs a very dominating creative power [6]." Literature and art embodied the power to heal the wounds damaged by ruthless shells and blazes of war. Also, it must be new, or even revolutionary, to cover, to overthrow all the painful memories. Modernism had an enterprising essence, a focus on form innovation, and "reliance on network and coterie culture for dissemination" [14]. It's the influx of the Left Bank guests that fostered the innovation in literature, and enriched the modernist settings.

Avant-garde features, as manifestations of American literary modernism, could be found in expatriate women writers' works. For example, Djuna Barnes innovated in form; Gertrude Stein innovated in perspective. Barnes, *Lady of Fashion*, re-arranged rare archaic form, instead of normal realistic form, to serve her writing purposes. She constructed the narration through a January-to-December timeline in the look of calendar. In the last part "DECEMBER hath 31 days" of *Ladies Almanack*, she wrote: "In this cold and chill December, the Month of the Year when the proof of God died, died Saint Musset, proof of Earth, for she had loosened and come up rooted in the Path of Love" [10]. The monthly annals functioned as the record of the protagonist's life story from birth till death. Barnes used this unfamiliar and even eccentric form to create a style mixed with out-of-date conventions and mechanistic concepts, which was "ornate, circular, obscure, rambling, hyperbolic" [15]. Almanac had been labeled as a masculine literature form for long. But through her changes composed of recondite descriptions and secret symbols, Barnes adopted it as her own version, and made it into a female-centered one.

As "Madame Curie" in modernist experiments of English writing, Stein was wildly creative in language, literature, and modern arts. Her words hardly had practical implications, but drifted gently on a fluid theme. *The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas* was an interesting example. Literal ventriloquism, a writing method very experimental, was used in the book. Stein made a lie in her so-called "autobiography". By saying "she was terribly uneasy lest some day she would be without anything to read" [6], Stein boasted of her diligence and wide reading; by saying "it is her eyes and mind that are active and important and concerned in choosing" [6], Stein flaunted her uniqueness and natural gift; by saying "she understands very well the basis of creation and therefore her advice and criticism is invaluable to all her friends" [6], Stein showed off her literary and artistic merit, while displayed her position as

the tutor of those masters. Assuming her romantic partner's voices and perspectives, Stein cunningly imposed glorification upon herself—she's one of the three geniuses Toklas had ever met in her life. The other two geniuses were Picasso and Alfred Whitehead (1861–1947) [6]. The ostentatiously paradoxical disguise was to make Toklas a conduit between geniuses and normal readers. This way benefited both the literary production and the Stein-image-building.

B. *Cultural Exchanges by Parisian "Outsiders"*

Leaving for Paris was more an active chase, than a forced escape. The ambitious youngster had to be uprooted from the sweet home and drop those threadbare struggles. They had to try their fortune in a foreign land; to construct a home on a very unfamiliar planet [16].

Being the outsider, free in somewhere between, the exiled Parisian ladies followed no certain custom, pertained to no singular realm, and therefore regained strength to introspect. For example, NCB was partly American, partly French. While saying "in coming from the United States to live in France, I was only returning to some of my dearest origins" [7], she was an outsider, with amusing exoticisms, in all senses, and everywhere, which made her the perfect hostess for the international socio-cultural gatherings.

Although her English writing was outstanding, Barney showed her great enthusiasm for using French, setting her native language aside. In sharp contrast to Barney's all-French writing habits, Gertrude Stein wrote about America, and she wrote in English. But she chose Paris, too. For Stein, America and France were both her beloved countries, one to arouse nostalgia and belongingness, another to daily live in.

The reasons mirrored her special personality. First, she felt the necessity to leave America to describe it: "Here you were with America in a kind of way that if you only went to America, you could not possibly be" [6]. A foreign land nurtured her observation; underpinned her contemplation. Maintaining a distance from the facts, she got new chances to re-approach them in the world of words. With Paris, a useful backdrop, the pursuit went closer to the truths.

Also, Stein once said: "One of the things that I have liked all these years is to be surrounded by people who know no English. It has left me more intensely alone with my eyes and my English." [6] Stein hardly ever heard English in Paris, so she could concentrate easily. As a talented eccentric, she heard cadence and prosody, instead of language itself; she saw sentences and paragraphs, instead of the words.

On the one hand, expatriate women depicted American tales from a remote place; on the other hand, they told their own life stories in a sense of otherness: "Hitherto she had been concerned with seriousness and the inside of things, in these studies she began to describe the inside as seen from the outside." [6]

"I have no more desire to read than to write, but I allow this little bit of writing to trace, on bare skin, a unique tattoo [7]." Both *Adventures of the Mind* and *The Autobiography* use first-person narration. Although the former is purely seen as a memoir, while the latter, a life narrative, they have things in common.

First-person POV in life-writing was an amazing tool,

according to Habermas' analysis of the reciprocal infiltration of the intimate realm and public strata. It fictionalizes an experience beyond the differences between actuality and illusion, constructs a conversation between self and other under the sentimental influence of the subject, and narrates the changes of mental image in the look of autobiography.

VI. SALON COTERIES AS COLLABORATIVE FEMALE COMMUNITY

A. *Salon Coteries for Gender Equality and Feminist Writing*

The perspicacious women writers from salon coteries empowered each other, as their spiritual ancestors, biblical archetypes: Naomi and Ruth.

In Paris, they strived together to live and prosper, not as one's daughter, wife, mother, but as themselves, at liberty to see, to tell, to write, to draw.

Salon hostess, a seemingly docile, beautiful "Muse", in accordance with the traditional ideal image of woman, was in fact, with intrepidity, at the forefront of the modernist movement, further injecting a spirit of feminism and liberation into the Left Bank society. It could be seen in the titles of salon members' memoirs, like Barney's *Adventures of the Mind*, and Bryher's *The Heart to Artemis* [16]. Artemis was unstrained. She had a deep love for the wildlands. She fought against conjugal relations. Accompanied by her hunting dogs, she held bows and arrows, roaming through the forests. Tribute was paid to Artemis because she was precisely a role model for Bryher, and the Sapphic community.

Within the salons, the women writers made comments on others' works through their insightful yet sympathetic eyes, and stimulated creativity in the process of peer editing and mutual encouragement. They gradually learned how to use their own pens to write their own novels to tell their own stories. For years, Colette (1873–1954) had been her husband's ghostwriter. He squeezed her youth and inspirations to better integrate into the upper classes; he extracted her intellectual resources to earn fame and wealth. With assistance from her salon friends, Colette finally broke loose, and wrote something for herself. In the 1930s, Janet Flanner suddenly realized that she had always obeyed the invisible patriarchal rules. As she turned awake, she found her own voice as a journalist. Being with her friends in the salon, Barnes felt that she forgot to fear the rest of the universe [7]. Mina Loy declared she loved Stein's works so much that if one day she understood all of them, it would be too exciting for her to remember how to enjoy a simple breakfast [7]. Sacred love without sensual enjoyments and friendship securer than camaraderie gave them courage and energy to keep it up. Collective literary efforts helped earn the expatriate women a place they deserved in that space, that world.

B. *Group Portraits of the Community and the Diverse Self-Images*

Sticking to writing, these women of genius presented diverse self-images in salon coteries. They formed intimate group portraits of an amazing community. They gave birth to

an array of viewpoints, born of female experiences, independent of masculine traits. Contextualizing what they wrote and how they lived a life, it can be seen that the writings revealed their patterns of expatriation.

Their financial conditions varied greatly. As heiresses from extremely affluent circles, ladies such as Barney, Cunard, Bryher, and Beach did not have to make a living as the writers. They were more likely to see writing as a path towards satisfaction and self-esteem, so they wrote in a more daring, more excursive style. They hardly disguised their identity of lesbianism, or catered to the mainstream society. Barney even publicly recruited homosexual intellectuals to her Temple to Friendship, thanks to not only her rebellious heart, but her very deep pockets. Her generosity of constructing a salon, not for profits, but for values, impressed Delarue-Mardrus (1874–1945); while Sylvia Beach's bounty of holding a bookstore, not for salaries, but for encounters, moved Hemingway in that money-grubbing era.

However, Barnes, the poor at the feast, relied on her writing career to live a life, so she had to try her best to protect herself. After Radclyffe Hall (1880–1943), another frequenter of Barney salon, got a fine due to her literary disclosure, Barnes became more cautious with her words and started to use recondite Old English as well as "the paradoxically bold exposure and intentional blurring" [17], popularly speaking, she wrote in riddles.

Furthermore, their gender ideas differed a lot. Radclyffe Hall treated female homosexuality as a malposition of gender identity in her work, which could be traced to sexual psychologist Havelock Ellis' (1859–1939) gender theory of sexual inversion. Besides, in her books, Hall described homosexual women as vulnerable, pathetic groups, crying for public approval.

These views were rejected by both Natalie Barney and Djuna Barnes. Barney once wrote: "Woman, the center of the world's gravity, owes it to herself, with her accessory, man, to direct the children she produces. Virgin, mistress, and mother, from her may they receive life a second time" [7]. Barnes also said in *Ladies Almanack*: "Love in Man is Fear of Fear. Love in Woman is Hope without Hope. A Man's love is built to fit Nature. Woman's is a Kiss in the Mirror" [10]. High similarity can be found in Barney's and Barnes' gender perspectives. They strongly disagreed with Ellis and Hall because the opinions devalued the vital importance of women's existence, to an inferior state. Instead of thinking Sapphic women as the bad seed of psychological disorders, Barney and Barnes believed in the physiological irreplaceability and endless potential of them.

C. *Innovation of Female-Centered Language Mode in Salon Coteries*

By breaking the ideal image, the women portrayed their self-images; by breaking conventional norms, the women created a set of language modes for themselves. Women writers including Stein, Barney, Barnes, and Cunard initiated a literary style extraordinary, personal, and even eccentric.

Holding this literary view, they did not keep consistent with the pure pursuit of order and logic. In *The Autobiography*, the full name "Gertrude Stein" arises about a thousand times. Stein's purpose was to make the repetitive "Stein" function as the iterative "Rose" in her most famous

sentence, counteracting the meaning of the word, of the signified, of the name, of the ego. Anderson [18] said: “The double self-portrait that serves as *The Autobiography*’s frontispiece, as well as Stein’s innovative ruse of authorship, exposes the ego’s investment in coherence as a denial”. Stein had played witchcraft in this book, for her language experiment—to testify the power, and to catalyze the appetite of visual and verbal arts, in the form of both the frontispiece² and the autobiography.

The expatriate women shared the city of light, at its best of times, and faced similar confusions and plights. Many representative symbols, idiomatic expressions, and open secrets, recognized within the coterie, difficult for the outsiders to understand, can be found in their literary works. For them, “writing becomes a shared enterprise” [19].

Each woman writer’s personalized interpretation of Paris-Lesbos unfolded its more profound connotations, while being linked to the others’ perspectives. They were the scattered puzzle pieces, complementing each other to shape a panoramic view of the female literary field. Women writers also documented their experiences in diverse ways, and produced works with individualistic features, based on their distinct lifestyles, forging a multifaceted literary landscape.

The portrayal of Barney salon transcended the intersection, then had different endings in Hall’s and Barnes’ respective depictions. In the same coterie, using the same prototypes, they created divergent works in which the geographical scenes, imaginary sights, and life experiences mixed. Barney once wrote:

“I have nothing formal, reassuring, or fixed; it is possible that one day I will no longer even be found at my at-home day. I will have burned my Temple to Friendship—a ritual gesture owed to missing friends—or I will have borne it away like a tabernacle toward the unknown, with the horizons as my smiling accomplices [7].”

The Temple to Friendship, the nearby yard, and the geyser at 20 rue Jacob functioned not only as meeting locations, but a symbolic storage container for their memories, vision, inspirations, and words. Intertextuality shown in the works corroborated the private subtext they invented and the mysterious coded language they shared [3]. This kind of mysterious language could be seen as a re-writing of the male-centered one, although it bore risks both economically and aesthetically. For Barney, the owner of this artificial habitat, the hostess of Friday Afternoons, her beautiful house, and popular temple were meaningless without the companionship of those female frequenters, and their diverse interpretations and tacit language “encryption”.

VII. CONCLUSION

The expatriate female salon coterie were mainly built upon Barney salon, Stein salon, Beach’s and Monnier’s bookshops in Paris. The era is undeniably remarkable, deeply

valued by all those who were fortunate enough to experience it, and greatly yearned for by the future generations to come: “And so life in Paris began and as all roads lead to Paris [6].” The Left Bank female salon space promoted avant-garde style in expatriate life-writing and women’s emancipation in literary and artistic circles.

Natalie Barney’s *Adventures of the Mind* and Gertrude Stein’s *The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas* offered details of the two most important female salon coterie: Friday Afternoons and Saturday Evenings. They had diverse features and functions because of their hostesses’ different personalities and social roots, but they also surprisingly overlapped. Many female frequenters attended both, and they were in very close proximity.

In constructing the unusual literary landscape: salon space in twentieth-century Paris, Monnier’s and Beach’s bookshops played an indispensable role. The bookshops worked as a bridge, a substitute, complementing the gathering places for interdisciplinary communications and discussions.

The salons and bookstores highlighted the contributions of American expatriate women in international modernism. They functioned as space between public and private to promote European and American cultural exchanges, and nurture the development of modernist writing. In Paris, far away from the U.S., the expatriates became outsiders of their own culture, re-examined literature from a totally different perspective, and thus expediting avant-garde style. In female salon coterie, Barnes’ innovation in form – using a monthly chronicle to create a space for female-centered language mode, and Stein’s innovation in perspective – using Toklas’ voices to narrate a life story of her own, made them typical avant-gardists of that age.

The interconnections between coterie literature and expatriate life are found. The literary works of American expatriate women writers reflected their different living conditions, varied attitudes, and views of gender, of writing, and of life. Salon coterie contributed to gender equality and female writing by strengthening their friendships and stimulating creativity. Especially in the Barney salon, with the same geographical marks and the same prototype NCB, the participants shared similar fictional symbols, which can be seen as a secret within the coterie—a female-centered language mode they created and used.

A community composed of the expatriate women sharing literary friendships had been well founded in Paris. In the created gender-equal sphere, the women writers got a room to communicate in and a chance to insist on writing. Within salon coterie, a perfect coalition of planners, writers, publishers, and sponsors was formed. Their gatherings benefited the opportunities of individuals and the development of modernist literature in general. Through peer review, they motivated creativity; through literary patronage, they received financial support, so an interlinked female living space was created in Paris.

They left us with abundant and tangible records of their talents and endeavors, in commemoration of the impressive and collaborative female salon coterie in history. They trusted the strength of themselves and the influence of their words. They believed that the age belonged to them after all.

² The flyleaf photo in the 1st version of *The Autobiography* (1933), shot by Man Ray (1890-1976). It captured the moment that Toklas squarely stepped into the room when Stein sat sideways, absently reading a book.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The author declares no conflict of interest.

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