Seeing Fine Substances Strangely: Phenomenology in Gertrude Stein's Tender Buttons

Author(s): Ariane Mildenberg
Subject(s): Philosophy
Published by: Societatea Română de Fenomenologie
Summary/Abstract: Gertrude Stein may be regarded as one of the most innovative and obscure modernist writers. At the core of Tender Buttons (1914), her most experimental work, lies a dialectical tension between meaning and non-meaning, order and disorder, the opacity of which some of the earliest critical studies of Stein described as both "an eloquent mistake" and "the ravings of a lunatic", resisting interpretation. In this paper, I show that phenomenology offers an appropriate tool for opening up the much-discussed dialectic of this work. By "bracketing" the hard facts of our object-world, Stein enacts an epoché of sorts, allowing us to "see fine substances strangely" before the conventional structures of objectivity and factuality take over.

Related Content