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HUNKER, M. BETH STERNER

GERTRUDE STEIN: A RATIONALE AND CONTENT FOR AN INTRODUCTION TO THE AESTHETICS OF MODERNISM

The Ohio State University

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GERTRUDE STEIN: A RATIONALE AND CONTENT FOR AN
INTRODUCTION TO THE AESTHETICS OF MODERNISM

DISSERTATION

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree Doctor of
Philosophy in the Graduate School of
The Ohio State University

By
M. Beth Sterner Hunker, B.A., M.A.

* * * * *

The Ohio State University
1980

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For Henry, Frederick, Kurt, 

David, and Erich. 

They endured.
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With appreciation for the suggestions and enthusiastic and dedicated aid given me by the staff of the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University.
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INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

That Gertrude Stein's writing was neglected while less important and less influential American writers became standard in the English curriculum at both secondary and college levels has been, in part, the failure of teachers of English to understand her artistic and historical importance in the development of twentieth century American Modernism. Although Stein's writing encompasses many genres, our failure, alone, to teach "Melanctha," the most critically acclaimed of her early fiction, is indicative of our failure to comprehend the aesthetic significance to the modern literary movement of this psychological narrative written in 1905-06 and published as the central "life" in Three Lives.

The unconventional development of character in Three Lives and Stein's acknowledged aesthetic intent--to realize the rhythm of the spoken personality as directly as possible--brought Stein to the attention of other American writers. Both Sherwood Anderson and Ernest Hemingway, with whom teachers often do introduce American Modernism, were influenced by Stein's writing. Anderson had read Three Lives in 1915 and wrote that it had "pointed the way toward a simpler and more repetitive style" which is evident in his Winesburg, Ohio. Hemingway wrote In Our Time and The Sun Also Rises at the peak of his devotion and contact with Stein. He admitted that her "method
is invaluable for analysing anything or making notes on a person or a place"¹ and, later, that "I learned the wonderful rhythms [sic] in prose from her."²

These three American writers—Stein, Anderson, Hemingway—make up an American literary movement, the essence of which both the American critics, Malcolm Cowley and Edmund Wilson, found to be a prose style which realized "the same simple colloquial language, based directly on the vocabulary and rhythm of ordinary American speech."³ Since Stein published Three Lives ten years before Sherwood Anderson's Winesburg, Ohio and sixteen years before Hemingway's In Our Time, it is reasonable to introduce a survey course in modern American literature, not with Winesburg or In Our Time, but with Stein's Three Lives.

Stein's first and last published books, Three Lives and Brewsie and Willie, reveal the inarticulate nature in dialogue—the aesthetic which influenced Anderson and Hemingway and which Hemingway developed so adroitly that it is thought of as a Hemingwayesque aesthetic. Between those books, Stein attempted to violate every genre she touched, developing stylistic forms for each new work.

Because Stein's aesthetic system changed as she made "discoveries" in each new form (novel, word-portrait, etc.), her aesthetic system is

² Hemingway in a letter to W. G. Rogers (July 29, 1948), MS, YCAL.
³ Edmund Wilson, The Shores of Light, p. 234.
best recovered in chronological order. Part II of the dissertation examines her aesthetic in selected writings from her apprenticeship work to "The Mother of Us All," her last work in 1946. Part I is intended for the instructor who requires a general overview of Stein's work as well as the Modernist context--the "scene"--in which to set her work and aesthetic values.

For students, Stein's work is a broad experience in Modernism. Her writing is a revelation of the possibilities of literary freedom which often encourages creative "discovery" in the student's own writing. Her unconventional realization of conventional genre forms encourages acceptance of what is inventive and unconventional in the writing of others, educating the imagination and stretching students' "literary experiences" to the heights and depths of what the human mind can conceive.  

This dissertation proposes to make Gerturde Stein's writing accessible, establishing both a rationale and content for its use as the best and most direct method of introducing Modernist aesthetics and, in particular, the aesthetics of Modern American literature to students. Recovering her aesthetic values as accurately as possible, through a study of a broad sampling of her writing, places Stein, on her own terms, within reach of students.

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CHAPTER I

Her Work: An Overview

...she had to discover a new system
with almost every book she wrote...

Donald Sutherland in *Gertrude Stein: A Biography of Her Work* (1951)

Gertrude Stein told a publisher who asked her for something that the public could understand, "My work would have been no use to anyone if the public had understood me early and first." The public did not understand Stein's serious work, but they had so much fun with Steine...
like the strange and singular painting of Picasso, is no longer looked
upon with derision but with an attempt at understanding the new
aesthetic values out of which it was born. In the final quarter of
the twentieth century, we are ready for it; in the first quarter of
the century, we were not.

Although Stein's writing encompasses many genres—short story,
novel, essay, poetry, criticism, history, drama, biography, autobiography,
social commentary—readers of even her earliest work discover that none
of her writing fulfills traditional nineteenth century prescriptions for
these genres. In fact, her method was to violate her genre and to
refuse to be led by the expectations of her audience as she felt
nineteenth century writers had been led—or misled. Her intention was
to make something new, and not to make another thing from an old mold
but a new thing for which there was no mold. This, of course, was the
primary reason for the notoriety as well as for the derision with
which her work was greeted. The chief aesthetic principle to which
she was dedicated, as was her friend, Picasso, was to refuse to be "of
the museums." Neither would make museum pieces—not one more portrait
in the manner of Cezanne; not one more story in the manner of Flaubert
or even of Henry James! And if you had done a "one more" in passing,
and if it had been successful (and had earned you praise and money),
you did not allow yourself to be tempted into another "success."
Repeating was not creation. "If it can be done, why do it?" said Stein.
Having written Three Lives in 1905-06, Stein refused to repeat the
performance. "Melanctha," the middle story of the three lives which
she had composed while she sat for her portrait by Picasso, led her on to something new—the style she called the continuous present which fills the 925 pages of *The Making of Americans* (1906-11). And in the period 1910-12 she tried little descriptive studies, little still-lifes in the manner of the cubists, which she called *Tender Buttons* (1912). This work was praised by Sherwood Anderson and William Carlos Williams and by some critics. But she did not repeat this performance. Her word-portraits were praised even by painters; Marsden Hartley wrote her that her portraits "seem to get as close to the subjects in hand as words can go." ¹ She went on to "plays" and operas and here and there, along the road to fame, she gave in and wrote for "mammon"—writing she called "identity writing" of which she was not especially proud since it was one of the museums—more of the same.

Stein believed that the twentieth century would not produce successful novels and that the time when people "lived and died by these characters"[in novels] had passed. "No individual that you can conceive can hold their own beside life," she told an interviewer.² Her work was not to be about living; it was to realize living. She believed, as Picasso put it, "The value of a work resides precisely in what it is not."³

Stein's first book, *Three Lives*, appears to have been well known to many American writers. F. W. Dupee writes that "In serious literary

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circles, as distinguished from the larger public, Gertrude Stein's accomplishments were always known."4 Edmund Wilson owned a copy; so did F. Scott Fitzgerald. Sherwood Anderson, Ernest Hemingway, Thornton Wilder, Eugene O'Neill, Richard Wright, William Carlos Williams, and Louis Bromfield have gone on record as to Stein's importance to their thinking and to their literary achievements.

The first Stein work to come to the attention of the American public struck the American funny bone. In August, 1912, Alfred Steiglitz, who had met Stein in Paris in 1909, published her word portraits of Picasso and Matisse in his Camera Work, an avant-garde magazine devoted to the arts. In anticipation of the Armory Show, he published in the August, 1912 issue of his Camera Work, as an example of literary cubism, Stein's word-portraits of Picasso and Matisse. This was "one of the most daring and most telling of Steiglitz's early ventures."5 Along with fourteen full-page photographs of paintings and sculptures of Matisse and Picasso, the public was treated to Stein's early work, the 1909 portraits of Picasso and Matisse.

For the Armory Show, the work of Matisse had been lent by Stein's two brothers. Michael Stein lent Le Madras Rouge and his La Coiffeuse; Leo Stein lent Blue Nude. Leo Stein also lent two of Picasso's early

works, both still-lifes. The paintings proved to be as strange as
the Stein word-portraits. The public was angry, the public was
bewildered, the public laughed and became hysterical. It all made good
press. Gertrude Stein's friend, Mabel Dodge, who had been the willing
subject of a Stein word-portrait, "The Portrait of Mabel Dodge at the
Villa Curonia," was asked to write an article on Stein to appear with
the word-portrait in a special issue of Arts and Decoration to be sold
at the Armory Show. Advance copies of the March, 1913 edition were on
sale almost as soon as the exhibition opened. Of her friend, Mabel
Dodge wrote:

"Gertrude Stein is doing with words what
Picasso is doing with paint. She is im­
pelling language to induce new states of
consciousness, and in doing so, language
becomes with her a creative art rather
than a mirror of history."

And in this article which Dodge called, "Speculations or Post-Impressions
in Prose," she suggested another of the Modernists' aesthetics:

"Many roads are being broken—what a wonderful
word—"broken"!"

Later, Dodge was to write in her autobiography that Stein's "essence was
poured into the public consciousness . . . like a slow inevitable tinc­
ture coloring prose and verse." This seems to be exactly how the Stein
reputation was made. What little of Stein the public read made them
laugh. Between 1914 and 1919, her writing appeared in magazines only

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6 Mabel Dodge Luhan, Intimate Memories, Vol. III (New York: Harcourt,
Brace, and Co., 1937) p. 27.
7 Ibid., p. 28.
ten times, but from 1920 to 1925, it appeared in twenty-six periodicals, including the nine installments of *The Making of Americans* in *transatlantic*. But the writers did not laugh—not those who were to become the serious American writers whose work was to be published after war when the "lost generation" got down to the business of fiction. By then, even Stein's most experimental work had been done. And, in turn, it had done its work.

The central life in *Three Lives* is "Melanctha," and in it Stein allows the action to stream from the protagonists' consciousness. The action takes place, not as if it is being reported but from within the consciousness. What happens in "Melanctha," as in the word-portraits and in *The Making of Americans*, happens in the mind. Anecdotes are unimportant. This early psychological fiction, however, was only Stein's first break with tradition. In 1910-12, Stein attempted to break from the syntactic order of the sentence and to present words as if they appeared to her fresh without content and without representational meanings or associations which reflected what was already known. These descriptive studies, *Tender Buttons*, which defied interpretation and explication, and which were ridiculed in the American press, nevertheless, attracted other writers. Sherwood Anderson wrote that they made "familiar words seem almost like strangers."\(^8\) Anderson wrote the introduction to her collection which appeared in 1922, *Geography and Plays*, in which the short story, "Miss Furr and Miss Skeene," appeared. It was that story from which

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\(^8\) Sherwood Anderson in the "Introduction" to Stein's *Geography and Plays* (Boston: The Four Seas Company, 1922), pp. 5-8.

By the end of the first quarter of the century, Stein's influence was manifest in her greatest "pupil," as she called Hemingway. His first novel, *The Sun Also Rises* (1926), carried Stein's "You are all a lost generation" as its epigraph. Some critics found evidence of Stein's sentence structure and use of repetition to realize American speech patterns in Hemingway's *A Farewell to Arms* as well as in *The Sun Also Rises*. Certainly, in Walter Allen's evaluation of Hemingway's language, much of Stein's "teaching" is recalled:

> Against the great abstractions Hemingway sets the small concrete nouns, the names of things one could be sure of, that could be tested by the evidence of the senses. His vocabulary must be the smallest of any major writer, and the restriction was deliberate. (my italics)¹⁰

Thornton Wilder, too, had learned to write, as he said, "drily and objectively" from Stein. He called her the "greatest influence on my life," and his biographers are unanimous in documenting Stein's intellectual and artistic importance to him.¹¹ His *The Bridge of San Luis Rey* (1927) is felt to show clear evidence of Stein's influence on his writing, and one critic feels that his play, *Our Town* (1938),

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¹⁰ Hemingway's *Three Stories and Ten Poems* had been published in Paris in 1924.

accomplished "what Stein convinced him to be the main achievement of a literary masterpiece."\(^{12}\)

Stein's importance to these three American novelists, alone, should have established her significance to twentieth century Modernism. But Stein's own work, experimental and eccentric, easily parodied because its repetitions and banal, conversational tone appeared simplistic or even whimsical, was more fun to ridicule than to read. She knew she had a "reputation" but few readers. Her writing was called obscure and incomprehensible because she took any risk necessary to reveal what she believed was the "bottom nature" in her characters. It was claimed she was genius by association with William James at Radcliffe and later with Picasso in Paris. From "this union of the laboratory and the studio," writes F. W. Dupee, "came a body of theory and writing like none before or after it."\(^{13}\) The role assigned her, however, made it possible for the general public to know Stein without reading her! She was called "The Mother Superior of all that shoddy magic," the "lady guru of the lost generation," the "midwife to modern culture," the "Matron Saint of literature," the "Mother Goose of Montparnasse."

Often, but most surprisingly in a serious essay like Frederick Hoffman's Gertrude Stein, a sexist-oriented phrase was used to belittle her like "an old maid eccentric."\(^{14}\) What she really seems to have been in those

\(^{13}\) Dupee, pp. 70-71.
\(^{14}\) Frederick J. Hoffman, Gertrude Stein (Univ. of Minnesota, 1968), p. 45.
first two decades of the century was "one of a handful of writers, who, hauling together, dragged literature into the Twentieth Century," breaking away from nineteenth century conventions and prescriptions. In this revolutionary role in American Modernism, she was discovered by one of the most important and most respected critics of that period, Edmund Wilson.

Edmund Wilson's *Axel's Castle: A Study in the Imaginative Literature of 1870-1930* was not of importance to the general reading public. Published in 1931, this book was and is an important critical document to serious students of Modernism. Thirty years after she had begun to write, Stein was included among the writers who represented a "self conscious and very important literary movement," by which Edmund Wilson meant Modernism. Along with W. B. Yeats, Paul Valery, T. S. Eliot, Marcel Proust, and James Joyce, Wilson considered Stein as having a literary inheritance from the Symbolists and Naturalists—but to have "carried Mallarme's principles so far in the direction of that limit where other lungs find the air unbreathable as perhaps finally to reduce them to absurdity." Absurdity was to become, in fact, an aesthetic thrust of Modernism, but Wilson did not foresee this.

What is the eternal paradox of Stein criticism is that Wilson questions whether or not her work stretches any genre into "absurdity,"

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16 She wrote "Quod Erat Demonstrandum" in 1903. It was published as "Things As They Are" in 1951, five years after her death.
while he makes it clear that her "nonsense" is serious work, even judging her early work (Three Lives) to be "masterly" and influential on such people as Carl Van Vechten, Eugene O'Neill, and Sherwood Anderson. He judges "Miss Fur and Miss Skeene" to be "really excellent," accurately adducing the repetitions in it to be "admirably suited to render the monotony and insipidity of the feminine lives which are being narrated." And he discovers the charm of Stein's humor, suggesting that he might call her books "amusing nonsense" but for the improper connotation of nonsense:

If I should say that Miss Stein wrote nonsense, I might be thought to be implying that she was not a serious writer or that she was not artistically successful.17

Obviously, Edmund Wilson had no intention of denegating her accomplishments. Further, he established the extent of Hemingway's debt to her:

I have spoken of her influence on Sherwood Anderson—and Ernest Hemingway, not only in such short stories as "Mr. and Mrs. Elliott" (who recall Miss Furr and Miss Skeene), but also in certain passages of "The Sun Also Rises" and "A Farewell to Arms," where he wants to catch the slow rhythm of time or the ominous banality of human behavior in situations of emotional strain . . . 18

18 Wilson, Axel's Castle, p. 252.
Stein's literary contemporaries sometimes went far beyond Wilson's cautious assertions. William Carlos Williams appears to have understood Stein's aesthetic aims and in his Autobiography, as well as in his letters, he alludes to the "age of Stein and Joyce." He believed that Stein "presented" words in the way in which Sterne presented words in Tristram Shandy, and he suggests that American scholars have not dealt with Stein either out of lack of heart or ability or from an aversion to "the risks of today":

"It was the work of painters following Cezanne and the Impressionists that, critically, opened up the age of Stein, Joyce, and a good many others." ¹⁹

A critic of Stein, often overlooked, is Stein herself. Early, she had begun to defend her experimental work by talking about writing and by writing about writing. After successful Oxford and Cambridge lectures in 1926, her lecture material was published as Composition As Explanation by Hogarth Press (Leonard and Virginia Woolf) and by Doubleday-Doran in America a year later (1927).²⁰ In it, she defines contemporaneity as the chief rationale for Modernism:

... each generation has something different at which they are all looking.

She writes that Modernism will be of importance when those creating it are all dead, since then, it will no longer be an "outlaw" but it will be in the past and "classified"—hence, modern works will be then classic works:

For a very long time everybody refuses
and then almost without a pause every-
body accepts . . . When the acceptance
comes, by that acceptance the thing
created becomes a classic.

Like Picasso, probably the only creative artist who was influential upon Stein's thinking after she wrote Three Lives, Stein believed that the new-born work of art had to be a thing "irritating annoying stimulating" and ugly. But when the new-born is finally acceptable to the public, it then becomes wonderfully beautiful. That time might not come until after later artists had made the new style pretty as, for example, followers of Picasso made the early hermetic cubism of the master into a brighter, rococo cubism. Or the new-born might become acceptable when the public had seen it often enough to be no longer either shocked or stimulated by it.

In this same lecture, Stein alludes to the difficulty of "time-
sense" in composition, and names her own time-sense in "Melanctha" as a "prolonged present." The time-sense in her novel, The Making of Americans, for which "Melanctha" was an inventive stage, she calls a "continuous present." Both of these modes were meant to destroy narrative development as past time—as remembered time—as history. Here, in her notions of presenting knowledge and experience within the context of present time, Stein's aesthetic theory of time developed
directly from the influence of William James, according to Haas:

Knowledge, James held, is what you know; and all knowledge (whether of the present or the past) is held within the experience of the present. This is what is real. Reality is now, and this present is in continual flux. As applied by Gertrude Stein in aesthetic theory, writing, to be "real," must be a description of the "now."21

Haas concludes: "Goodbye past tense." Stein's lecture was less precise.

When it became clear that Stein-as-critic would be as difficult to publish as Stein-as-author, Alice Toklas published Stein's critical writing at her own expense. Some of her work from 1927-1931 was published in How to Write (Paris: Plain Edition, 1931). Here Stein considers paragraphs, sentences, grammar, and vocabulary—all in her own eccentric manner. She includes examples, but she excludes the simplistic, didactic exposition which readers wanted. The edition was limited to 1,000 copies, and it probably reached her small, devoted audience, especially other writers, as well as her equally devoted detractors. But it must have been ignored by that general public who always preferred to read about Stein than to read Stein.

After three decades of writing, Stein had developed an aesthetic, toward the exegesis of which, Carl Van Vechten points out in his introduction to Composition as Explanation in the Selected Writings of Gertrude Stein, she had devoted almost as much time as to creation.22

21 Haas, p. 49.
But Stein's real accessibility to the common reader came with the
publication of *The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas* in 1933. This is
a period piece, as often read incorrectly as pure autobiography of
Stein as it was as "autobiography" of Toklas, that produced an instant
public for Stein. It resulted in an American lecture tour in 1934-35.²³

These lectures in America before college audiences or audiences
like the first one at The Museum of Modern Art in New York, convinced
those who heard her that she was a serious writer and a serious
aesthetcian. In addition, her own collection of modern art made her
a very real connoisseur of painting, and her long friendship with
Picasso made her a creditable commentator upon his modernist aesthetic
objectives. He had, after all, painted her portrait in 1906 just at
the beginning of his Cubist period, while she sat making "Melancthha"
in her head. In both works of art, the chief aesthetic of twentieth
century Modernism was evolving as a refusal to conform—"Any copy is
a bad copy."

Three professors at The Ohio State University were students in
midwestern colleges where Stein lectured in 1935. They have told me
that her lectures were "campus events," for which college audiences
were limited to 500 persons. Each one says that he came away with a
feeling of having heard someone stimulating and provoking—a philosopher

²³ The best account of her American tour is in Elizabeth Sprigge,
following the tour, 1936) is romantic and joyous. It is, as she
might have called it, a love story.
who was both brilliant and exciting. Each man interviewed separately called her theories "avant-garde."

Her Lectures In America was published by the Modern Library (1935). These lectures are on English literature, plays, painting, and on her own work and thinking. They are important critical documents long ignored by Stein readers, as well as by most of her critics.

After the American tour, Stein did much of the "identity" writing—by which she meant writing identified with Gertrude Stein-the-personality. Everybody's Autobiography was both sequel to The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas and a response to the popularity of her American visit; Paris france was Stein's love letter to Paris, her "home town." Wars I Have Seen is both biographical and contemplative. Her small book, Brewsie and Willie, published a few days before her death on July 27, 1946 was her tribute to the hundreds of American soldiers she had met during World War II in France and to whom she had promised such a book. These autobiographical books, like her other writing, have as many detractors as they have enthusiastic readers. But for Stein herself, they were not the important work.

After her death in 1946, Stein's small devoted audience remained steadfast, increasing in devotion if not in numbers. Although 600 of Stein's titles are now available to the public, many in the eight volumes of her work published by Yale University Press (1951-1958), other titles like her mystery, Blood on the Dining Room Floor, and her book for children, The World Is Round, have appeared in paperback. Most of the books published in her lifetime are available in paperback.
The Selected Writings of Gertrude Stein (edited by Carl Van Vechten), for which she wrote a "Message" just six weeks before her death, was published after she died in 1946. In it are all genres which she attempted: "Melanctha," The Autobiography, Tender Buttons, "Miss Furr and Miss Skeene," the best word-portraits (Cezanne, Picasso, Matisse, Mabel Dodge), lectures, drama, poems, plays and operas, selected passages from the novel, The Making of Americans, the final sixty-six pages of Wars I Have Seen, and one example of Stein's erotica, "As a Wife Has a Cow: A Love Story." Carl Van Vechten's sympathetic introduction, "A Stein Song," and his notes before each selection are useful to the common reader, and F. W. Dupee's general introduction acquaints the reader with "Steinese," with her scientific and Cubist predilections, and with her family background.

An easy introduction to Stein, after an initial exposure to Three Lives, is Robert Bartlett Haas's A Primer for the Gradual Understanding of Gertrude Stein (Los Angeles: Black Sparrow Press, 1973). In it are the "Transatlantic Interview--1946" as well as what Haas calls "A Little Anthology of Gertrude Stein--1894-1946" on which he was working with Stein when she died. The anthology contains early work beginning with two of her Radcliffe themes (1895) through an excerpt from her final work--the concluding aria from the opera, The Mother of Us All. There is also a biographical sketch of Stein, her sister, and three brothers written by a niece. In an excellent essay
on "Gertrude Stein and the Twentieth Century," Donald Sutherland tackles an explanation of Stein's repetitions ("ringing the changes on a single idea"). He also attends to Stein's participial style, juxtaposition, parataxis, and immediacy. This essay, along with Thornton Wilder's introduction to *Four in America*, in which Wilder discusses her sense of audience, are the best quick introductions to Stein's work and aesthetic.

Two companion volumes (all in paperback) to the Haas Primer are *Reflection On the Atomic Bomb* and *How Writing Is Written*, Volumes I and II of the *Previously Uncollected Writings of Gertrude Stein* (Los Angeles: Black Sparrow Press, 1973 and 1974). Volume I contains direct description, portraits, plays, and essays, from 1914-1946. In Volume II (*How Writing Is Written*) Stein's lecture to the Choate School, her most precise and conversational explanation of her aesthetic, is reprinted. There are also texts first published in newspapers and magazines, written during the second half of her writing career (1928-1945), including a series of essays on America for the *New York Herald Tribune* (written in 1935 during the successful American lecture tour) and essays on money for the *Saturday Evening Post* (1936). These articles which were written expressly for a general audience, may have reached the largest and most heterogeneous reading public of any of Stein's writing. Of these popular essays for the *Saturday Evening Post*, Haas says they "contain a kind of authority and mother-wit which holds the attention for a short space of time, much as a political cartoon might" and that they
were "in those post-depression Rooseveltian years--refreshing."

Gertrude Stein, liberator of the language, violator of genre, whose outlaw aesthetic produced "Rose is a rose is a rose is a rose" intended neither "authority" nor "mother-wit" until the public forced this role upon her. It was an aesthetic system which she intended, which would experience language and not just use it.
CHAPTER II

Her Critics: A Review

Not, as she always explains, that she could ever have enough of glory. After all, as she always contends, no artist needs criticism, he only needs appreciation. If he needs criticism he is no artist.

Gertrude Stein in The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas

Contemporary Criticism (1909-1949)

Stein's first published book, Three Lives, gave birth to the first of a long line of contemporary Stein criticism. Some of these critics were advancing their own careers and reputations, often, by doing damage to hers. The gross errors of some clung to Stein's work and obliterated its real meaning and value.

However, the unknown critic who reviewed Three Lives for the Kansas City Star on December 18, 1909\(^1\) recognized the "originality of its narrative form" and suggested that the repetition is "something more subtle still; something involved, something turning back for a

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\(^1\) Reprinted in full in Maureen R. Liston's An Annotated Critical Bibliography (Kent, Ohio: Kent State University Press, 1979).
new beginning." He (or she) concluded that the repetition "makes the book a very masterpiece of realism, for the reader never escapes from the atmosphere of those lives . . . . Here is a literary artist of such originality that it is not easy to conjecture what special influences have gone into the making of her."

The publication of Stein's word-portraits in Camera Work in 1912 linked her aesthetic to that of the painters she portrayed (Matisse and Picasso), and to the criticism of their work as well as of hers as "revolting." A review of the Portrait of Mabel Dodge at the Villa Curonia, which had appeared in another edition of Camera Work, was called "Flat Prose" and appeared in The Atlantic Monthly in September, 1914. The anonymous critic, calling Mabel Dodge the "subject-victim" of the word-portrait, quoted Dodge's article on Stein, and then, quoting the portrait, wrote, "After a hundred lines of this I wish to scream, I wish to burn the book, I am in agony." He declared that he was "willing to fight to the last drop of ink against any attempt to bring back 'fine writing' and ornate rhetoric into prose" but believed revolt like Stein's prose, which would breed extravagance, "leads to absurdity."²

Kenneth Burke's "Engineering with Words" in the April, 1923 issue of Dial, was a review of Geography and Plays. Stein's method,
Burke wrote, was "one of subtraction" and she "continually utilizes this violation of the genre." Burke seems to have unknowingly realized her aesthetic when he wrote that "her book is a continual rebeginning. No sentence advances us beyond the sentence preceding [it]." She refused "association of ideas" and "sacrificed by an under emphasis on the selection of subject matter."3

Later in 1923, Stein's "Miss Furr and Miss Skeene," which had been ignored by Burke, was reprinted in Vanity Fair (July 1923), and the editor noted that "the style, though queer, is exactly suited to the subject," echoing Hutchins Hapgood's blurb for the dust cover of Three Lives that "by this manner [the difficult style] only could this particular world be laid before" the reader.

Edmund Wilson appears to have worked harder than most critics to come to terms with Stein's work. Just two months after "Miss Furr and Miss Skeene" appeared in Vanity Fair, Wilson wrote a "Guide to Gertrude Stein" for the September, 1923 issue of Vanity Fair. He had high praise for Three Lives and high hopes for the publication of The Making of Americans (still in manuscript). He wrote that Tender Buttons "astonished the world in 1914" and that Geography and Plays was a "queer selective stenography of live," some of it "amusing," and some of it "incomprehensible and all is tantalizing with the suggestion of a fine artist just out of reach."4

When *The Making of Americans* was finally published in 1926, Marianne Moore (then editor of *Dial*) wrote a review calling the style a "chiselled typography." Moore was intrigued by the author's self analytical intrusions and the "power of sex" in the book which she called "palpable" in some male characters.⁵

Another American writer, Katherine Anne Porter, found *The Making of Americans* "the diary of an aesthetic problem worked out momently under your eyes," and warned that "to shorten it [for easier consumption by the public] would be to mutilate its vitals." However, the following year, in an article called "Second Wind," Porter did a parody of Stein's *Useful Knowledge*, ending:

> Now all together,  
> Repetition makes subways.  
> I know what I am saying and if  
> you flatter me I am insulted.⁶

In 1928, Edmund Wilson wrote to Maxwell Perkins and outlined his plans for *Axel's Castle*. Stein, "furthest away" from conventional literature, was to be included with W. B. Yeats, Proust, Joyce, and T. S. Eliot.⁷ When *Axel's Castle* was published in 1931, it was clear that Wilson had taken the critical position which attached Stein to the Cubists, but he had discovered that "Miss Furr and Miss Skeene"

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rendered the "monotony and insipidity of feminine lives," and he declined to judge Stein's writing "nonsense," for he considered her a serious writer.

In 1933, Stein's *The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas* established her reputation, but with critical acclaim for it still in the air, B.F. Skinner wrote "Has Gertrude Stein a Secret?" for *The Atlantic Monthly* in January, 1934. He assumed her early writing was "automatic," based upon Stein's publication in the *Psychological Review*, written with Leon Solomons in 1896. Skinner ignored Stein's own article, published in 1898, in which she made clear her judgement that automatic writing was not possible and that her own interests in the earlier study had been in "the habits of attention which are reflexes of the complete character of the individual." Leon Katz calls Skinner's error "the original error" which has clung to her work.

In 1940, Julian Sawyer's *Gertrude Stein: A Bibliography* (New York: Arrow Edition, 1940) was published, and the following year, *A Catalogue of the Published and Unpublished Writings of Gertrude Stein Exhibited in the Yale University Library 22 February to 29 March, 1941* by R. B. Haas and Donald C. Gallup was published by the Yale press.

Among the journalistic debris which followed immediately upon Stein's death, was Katherine Anne Porter's third article on Stein, five times as long as the first article twenty years earlier. The 1947 "view" was called "The Wooden Umbrella," and the essay is clear evidence that Porter had done her homework, having read much or all of the published Stein. The article is a perceptive blend of Stein's life, thought, importance, and non-importance to the literary scene.
Porter seems to have believed that "the mind [Stein's] so long shapeless and undisciplined" could not now (1945) "express any knowledge" but that "the heart spoke its crude urgent language" in Stein's final words "To Americans" at the end of *Brewsie and Willie*. The wooden umbrella (carried by Miss Hennessy, according to Stein in *Everybody's Autobiography*) "was struggling slowly, slowly, much too late, to unfold," Porter wrote, and "take on the nature of its form." Evidently, Porter sensed that Stein, at the end of her life, was willing to write prose that an audience would be willing to read.  

Also in 1947, the first of Stein's unpublished writing appeared as *Four In America*, published by Yale University Press. Thornton Wilder wrote the introduction to these 1931–33 long portraits of Ulysses Grant, Wilbur Wright, Henry James, and George Washington. Aside from his discussion of the portraits, Wilder recognized Stein's perception of audience and felt that Stein "was engaged in a series of spiritual exercises whose aim was to eliminate during the hours of writing all those whispers into the ear from the outside and inside world where audience dwells."  

Stein recognized the difficulty which her critics encountered; they refused to read her on her own terms, applying the very conventions, which she intended to violate, to her work.


Critic ism (1950-1980)

Dozens of books about Stein have become available since her death in 1946. Stein criticism began in earnest about 1950. Stein partisanship, as Michael Hoffman who considers her to be a major writer, pronounces it, has always been vigorous. No one has been able to write about her work without succumbing to her legend or to the company she kept. The first dissertation on Stein was called Gertrude's Web: A Study of Gertrude Stein's Literary Relationships, and the most comprehensive biography of Stein is Charmed Circle: Gertrude Stein & Company (1974). Both are studies of Stein as a salonière, mistress of 27 rue de Fleurus, Paris. But the serious Stein who was aesthetic theorist and rhetorician is difficult to find in these pages. Consequently, it is to a devotee like Donald Sutherland who wrote the first important book devoted to her work, Gertrude Stein: A Biography of Her Work (1951), or to a detractor like B. L. Reid whose Art By Subtraction (1958) is subtitled A Dissenting Opinion of Gertrude Stein that we turn for an understanding of her work and of her aesthetic theories.

Donald Sutherland was a student at Princeton in 1935 when Stein appeared there to lecture. She corresponded with him until her death, and his understanding of her aesthetic objectives is clear.

The demands of the educated American public were for precisely the things her work was meant to destroy, biographical or historical emotion, vagueness of feeling and slurred ideas, all essential to the average educated American literary taste.12

Sutherland feels that the chief impact of Three Lives was its "verbal novelty" which, he says, "destroyed the extemuated rhetoric of the late 19th century" and gave literature a metaphorical "crew cut." He calls The Making of Americans "a universal history of human types," all types falling into two classifications which Stein designed: the attacker or the dependent-independent type and the resister or independent-dependent type. Sutherland proclaims that The Making of Americans is a novel with the "essential quality of a masterpiece." It is "both appalling and magnificent" and "monumental" and like the Pentagon, writes Sutherland, "a self-contained labyrinth of simple essential abstractions."13

She was determined to express the essential being, the final mode of existence in people, as a thing in itself and sufficient in itself, independent of their historical and social conditions. This has to be said, because she has been accused often enough and even by her friends, of an inhuman treatment of the human subject.14

Sutherland, always sympathetic to Stein, has been misunderstood concerning his criticism of Tender Buttons. When he says that it can

13 Sutherland, pp. 52-65.
14 Ibid., p. 57.
be taken as "a sort of Wonderland or Luna Park for anybody who is not too busy," he does not mean that it is merely madness, but that it "maintains constantly the marvelous and the unexpected, the arbitrary and the absurd," and that it is "as valid and heroic a way of life as any." Here, he points to what he feels to be the philosophy behind the work: "The philosophy is radically one of freedom within a fairly strict empiricism."\textsuperscript{15} The mode is like the painter's choosing of familiar objects for a still life in order to present common objects (in Stein, it becomes common words) as importantly and as monumentally as if they were uncommon objects. In \textit{Tender Buttons}, objects, food, and rooms, long common and unseen, become unique and insistent like a blue coat:

\begin{quote}
A blue coat is guided guided away, guided and guided away, that is the particular color that is used for that length and not any width not even more than a shadow.
\end{quote}

These tender buttons, Sutherland feels, are meant to be "a natural phenomenon like any other, not a commentary on a phenomenon."\textsuperscript{16}

The \textit{Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas} is "an attempt to give the past a really present and objective existence" and to do this, Sutherland suggests, Stein created a Doppelganger "who burst into publicity at once," becoming almost a monster. He feels the book is lucid and "told in a purer and more closely fitting prose, to my

\textsuperscript{15} \textit{Tbid.}, p. 84
\textsuperscript{16} \textit{Tbid.}, p. 92.
sense, than even Gide or Hemingway have ever commanded, but it is based on the long discipline of French conversation which is to an extraordinary degree a matter of general ideas."17

Sutherland believes that Stein's great success and "complete realization" was in her descriptions of contemporary legends. Picasso, both the word-portrait of 1909 and the book in French, do not "confuse" his legend. Her Paris France (1940) is "full of the same discretion" and Wars I Have Seen, while "not so beautiful" is exciting "as the account of the French legendary realities through the catastrophe . . . and exhausting struggle" of World War II.18 Brewsie and Willie (1946) describes "with astonishing accuracy the legend of the GI as it was being lived and created in Europe at the end of 1944 and the first half of 1945." Sutherland adds his personal witness to the accuracy of Stein's realization of the GI state of mind: "While the GI legend was really on, in Paris, it was as Brewsie and Willie describes it . . . At least it sounds exact to me, and I was in and out of Paris and Germany at the time, being as GI as possible."19

Obviously, Sutherland should be read for himself as well as for an understanding of Gertrude Stein's work. Not only did he know Stein and Toklas intimately, corresponding with Toklas until her death twenty years after Stein's, but even his value judgments, almost always ringing with admiration and affection pursued through his own

17 Ibid., pp. 148-149.
18 Ibid., pp. 164-165.
19 Ibid., pp. 166-167.
critical sensibility, are acute and perceptive. Yet, he is never the arrogant critic. In his speculations upon Stein's abilities to realize contemporary legends like Picasso, Paris, and the GI's of World War II, he adds:

I trust I am not confusing hers [Stein's], but if I am it is not very serious, because it is the essence of legend to survive any amount of true or false enthusiasm or explanation.20

Sutherland's book is to Stein as Hugh Kenner's The Pound Era (1971) is to Ezra Pound--indispensable, seductive, and literary. This is the single Stein criticism praised and damned by almost all other critics--but damned for its difficulty and not for its deficiencies.

Although B. L. Reid's Art By Subtraction is subtitled "A Dissenting Opinion of Gertrude Stein," Reid credits Stein with having evolved her own aesthetic system which he calls "genuinely coherent and in many ways impressive."21 Reid then attends to the two elements in her work which Sutherland had adduced. He cites Stein's "Written writing should not be led" by which she meant that the writer's aim should not be to please an audience. She should not be "led" or directed by her sense of audience. The nineteenth century had served the audience--readers already conditioned to expect writing which was "literary." The nineteenth century "served mammon, then, and committed the sins of identity, memory, audience, and human nature" and its writers lived in the past, making "copies" of things past and not putting down what is

20 Ibid., p. 164.
21 B. L. Reid, Art By Subtraction (Norman: Univ. of Oklahoma Press, 1958)
the contemporary thing. Secondly, Reid knows, the "contemporary thing" is what is important for Stein. "Why is the present moment so important to her?" he asks. His answer is that:

Because it is the moment of perfect knowledge, of perfect union between the artist and his subject matter, when his object is what it now is, rather than what it was an instant ago. For her, what is real is what is real now. 22

In order to achieve her artistic end, Reid feels that she achieves it only by "subtraction."

She dismisses and strips away the traditional until all that is left, finally, is her own very personal, very narrow art--the thin result of a complex and frequently impressive aesthetics. 23

Although Reid felt that Stein had "the equipment of a first-rate creative writer," he concludes that "she is writing in one language and we are reading in another." Her lectures on composition, he admits, are the thinking of a good mind, but he feels that she is "effectively dead as a writer" and suggests that "she be defined out of existence as an artist." 24 His thesis which was that she failed to communicate--"the crime for which we shall finally have to hang her." 25 Yet, Reid admits:

22 Ibid., p. 49.
23 Ibid., p. 64.
24 Ibid., pp. 170-207.
The truth seems to be that her real influence comes through Hemingway—through Hemingway's refinement and elaboration of techniques and attitudes that he learned in part from her.26

Many readers of Reid have felt, as W. H. Gass, who reviewed Reid's book, felt, that Reid's claim to objectivity and scholarship was "sheer pretense."27 Reid suggests that Stein's process is like that of the phenomenologists, a process of reduction. She begins "with the subtraction of that extraneousness in which other writers have found their content,"28 and he suggests that this process goes back to Stein's discipleship as student under William James whose Principles of Psychology was published in 1890. James' doctrine, "Never reject anything. Nothing has been proved. If you reject anything, that is the beginning of the end as an intellectual,"29 very probably, in Stein, became a narrow and "bloodless ideal of scientific 'objectivity,' " according to Reid. Her art, then, becomes "art by subtraction," an ideal of the twentieth century which was to be exploited, finally, in the minimal art of the blank page and bare canvas.

It is not surprising that the "new" century which Gertrude Stein and Picasso had dragged into being in the first decade, had become old by the time the best work on her writing was published. Richard

26 Ibid., p. 160.
28 Ibid., p. 66.
Bridgeman's *Gertrude Stein in Pieces* was published in 1970, almost twenty-five years after Stein's death. In fact, she had not "died" or been "defined out of existence as an artist" as Reid had proposed. If anything, she seemed to be very much alive in herself as well as in writers like Samuel Beckett and Pinter. As her centenary drew near in 1974, interest in her work was revived, and paperback editions of her work began to appear. Bridgeman's book is an objective appraisal. He is able to stand back from the biographical morass of gossip and legend and to discuss Stein's formative environment with objectivity and insight. For example, he assesses the painful insecurity of her adolescence during the long illness of her mother which ended with the mother's death when Stein was fourteen. The "depressing" father died when Stein was seventeen, and her dependence upon her older brothers, Michael and Leo, as well as her anxiety, Bridgeman believes, resulted in her defensive self-congratulatory mechanisms, in her robust and easy laughter, and in "the literary act" which externalized "psychological dilemmas that (her) laughter could not dissolve."

Bridgeman feels that her college work at Harvard under Hugo Munsterberg in the Psychological Laboratory and under William James led eventually to her lack of "narrative imagination" for which she substituted "psychological detail" in building character; that early training led, as well, to her theories of "bottom natures" and to her "crazy quilt of a style" which is pieced together without identifiable

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narrative voices. Had she cultivated what Bridgeman feels was a "talent for sympathetic realism," she might have been a "superior novelist." But he concludes that her method which was "improvisation" and her acceptance of "the mess of her prose, refusing revision" is wearying to the reader and lacks the "urbane control of Proust and Joyce." Bridgeman's analysis of individual works will be noted in Part II of this study. But about her most experimental work, Tender Buttons, it should be noted that he feels it to be "her most original and cohesive work."  

"Miss Furr and Miss Skeene," dominated by a narrative line, Bridgeman feels is a remarkable study of behavior, and that both its "elliptical references and ironic repetitions were imitated by Ernest Hemingway in several of his early stories."  

Bridgeman is able to document Stein's work with important biographical material, but the biography does not dominate his analysis of her writing. Bridgeman's estimation of Stein's feminism advocated most publicly at the end of her life in Brewsie and Willie (1946) and in The Mother of Us All (performed May 7, 1947 at Columbia University, almost a year after her death) is an important focus for these two works. He judges Brewsie and Willie to have been "at worst, contempt for the childish American male," but The Mother of Us All "became outright hostility." In the latter, as a sex, men were "poor things"—selfish, boring, ugly, gullible, unchanging bullies. The character of Daniel Webster represents "masculine pomposity" which keeps women and blacks suppressed; his name and character and

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31 Bridgeman, p. 125.
32 Ibid., p. 95.
physical appearance, Bridgeman reminds us, Stein herself as the character "G.S." likens to her father, Daniel Stein.\(^{33}\) In a two-page flourish at the end of his book, Bridgeman summarizes Stein's life, psychological condition, work, and influence, attempting a final effort to establish \textit{Gertrude Stein} in \textit{Pieces} as a thesis supported:

So, in pieces, because no term accurately describes Gertrude Stein's unit of literary expression. Her compositions memorialize that daily half-hour when she gathered what came to mind and randomly, incidentally, shaped it into a prose that was part free association, part mechanical variation, part revelation only partially revealed. Her strength resides in those unprompted moments. Whatever else she may have been, she has proved herself master of the telling phrase, of the memorable and haunting assessment reached when the tide of her persistence carried her to a spontaneous height.\(^{34}\)

Indispensable to a study of Stein's long book, \textit{The Making of Americans}, is Leon Katz's unpublished Ph. D. dissertation, \textit{The First Making of the Making of Americans: A Study Based on Gertrude Stein's Notebooks and Early Versions of Her Novel (1902-1908)}.\(^{35}\) For his study, Katz reviewed Stein's unpublished notebooks. These "make clear in plain language the meanings of statements made so cryptically and sometimes hermetically even in those early writings," and they help to

\(^{33}\) \textit{Ibid.}, pp. 341-2.
\(^{34}\) \textit{Ibid.}, p. 347.
clarify "the stages through which she [Stein] passed during the years of apprenticeship that led to the peculiar, incommunicable style of such works as The Portrait of Mabel Dodge and Tender Buttons." Katz calls his study a "critical biography of her apprenticeship as a novelist." It is an important, revealing critical study which establishes Stein as a working writer as early as 1902. Katz secured Alice Toklas' help from November, 1952 through February, 1953 in adumbrating and orally annotating the Notebooks. Since Katz discovered that the Stein notebooks began with her London stay in 1902, well before the composition of Three Lives in 1905, his study will be considered in this dissertation in the chapter on Three Lives as well as in the chapter on The Making of Americans.

Katz believes that The Making of Americans in which she attempted to fit every biography of every person she had known, resulted in her view of a "landscape so enormous, so colorless and so uniform that it reduces human being to something too unimportant and small to exhibit difference." Thus, Katz suggests, Stein precedes Kafka and Beckett in their philosophical isolationism—recognizing as she did, by the time she was thirty, that "living" is putting in the time until "dying." However, her fascination with human personality and with psychology led her into character typology, a system more highly structured and plotted than her detractors would have us believe. Katz concludes that "always, Stein thought of human relations, with cold consistency, in terms of battle."36 Since Katz fails to find any references in

36 Ibid., p. 290.
Stein's notebooks to form or style, he suggests that she "settled" into her style" rather than designed it. When these notebooks are published, a new wave of Stein scholarship will, without doubt, follow and increase interest in Stein's work and aesthetic posture.

Elizabeth Sprigge's *Gertrude Stein: Her Life and Work*, published in 1957, has now been superseded in volume and in scholarship by Mellow's *Charmed Circle*, but Sprigge's book has the vitality of a biography for whose sources the writer has been able to interview living contemporaries. Having the good fortune to interview Alice B. Toklas and dozens of Stein's friends, Sprigge, writing about ten years after Stein's death, is especially rewarding for her portrayal of Stein's "vital singularity". Sprigge's book is filled with insights into Stein's family environment. She also extracted entries from Stein's mother's diaries, and these are remarkable for a simplicity, clarity, and repetition like Stein's own early work. Without punctuation and paragraphing, the diary of Amelia Stein could easily be taken as a stylistic pattern for Stein's writing before 1914. Sprigge writes that Stein, too, kept a diary in adolescence in which she had written that she was "preparing to kill the century she was born in," and if this was the case, Stein's aesthetic urgency to break away from the literary conventions of the nineteenth century was articulated much earlier than later biographers understood it to be.

Sprigge accounts for Stein's reading which will be available in the published notebooks but which has the disorderly charm, here, of a

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37 Sprigge, pp. 11-17.
table piled with a winter's feast: Wordsworth, Scott, other poets
and stray novels, Pilgrim's Progress, Shakespeare, Burns, Clarisa,
Fielding, Smollet, Congressional Records, Carlyle's Frederick The
Great, Lecky's Constitutional History of England, the Old Testament,
Emerson, Jekyll and Hyde, The Cenci, Adam Bede, George Eliot's In
the Red Deep, Oscar Wilde, Browning. When Stein writes in a Radcliffe
theme, "Nothing but myself to feed my own eager self, nothing given to
me but musty books," the list becomes an important element in her
intellectual development as do the other Radcliffe experiences in the
Psychological Laboratory under Hugo Munsterberg's direction.

Sprigge gives Leo Stein his due for his purchases of Japanese
prints, Cezannes, Renoirs, Gauguins, and the first Matisse and Picasso
paintings in the Stein family collections, thus recording Leo Stein's
amazing critical powers without denegating Stein's own. Sprigge
establishes the importance of Michael Stein's (the oldest of the five
Stein children) business sense since he was able to set up small
trusts which permitted Gertrude and Leo life styles free of the
necessity of any work which they did not feel enthusiasm to do.

Michael Stein and Sarah Stein, his wife, became patrons of Matisse,
of Picasso, and of the century's great architect, Le Corbusier. It
was Le Corbusier who, unknown at the time they first saw his work in
Paris in 1925, built their villa at Garches, Les Terrasses, considered
today a masterpiece of domestic architecture of the first half of
this century.
There are some insights into Stein's work in this early biography. For example, of *Wars I Have Seen*, Sprigge accurately attests that this journal "gives us more of the author herself than any other single volume," thus rescuing from near-oblivion the book not included in the 1946 edition of the *Selected Writings of Gertrude Stein*, except for the final sixty-six pages. These pages are the least autobiographical section of the book and, perhaps, a misleading representation of the book.

James R. Mellow's *Charmed Circle: Gertrude Stein & Company*, published in the year of Stein's centenary (1974), represents twenty years of scholarly digging and orderly reassembling of facts as well as some attempt at dismantling legend. If anything, Mellow's ample book sometimes obscures the serious Stein in order to place her in the center of the "charmed circle" as a sort of salon hostess. But it is doubtful that anyone again will have the time and the dedication to do a biography of Stein as complete. Mellow's book makes some attempt at integrating Stein's daily life and work with the coming and going of the "company," but Frederick W. Lowe Jr.'s *Gertrude's Web: A Study of Gertrude Stein's Literary Relationships*\(^{38}\) used the circle metaphor more effectively to reveal the "musical-chairs" aspect of the company's movements.

Mellow's book, however, puts into perspective all of those dozens of memoirs in which Stein has been made to appear as a minor eccentric in the age of Joyce:

\(^{38}\) Unpublished Dissertatation (Columbia University, 1956).
I wanted to re-create the texture of a life, a writer's daily life, out of memoirs, recollections, and old letters that, if not always literature, still carried the fire of issues and ambitions that had not burned out completely.  

He did not intend a "definitive" life of Stein, he says, but he hoped to "present an honest woman" instead of a legend. However, without an emphasis on her work and aesthetic system, the danger is that he has created yet another Stein legend.

Stein has been included in books on Modernist writers since Axel's Castle as a minor character who often ends up center stage taking more bows than the major players. In Three Studies in Twentieth Century Obscurity (1954), Joyce and Kafka share sixty-five pages while Stein alone dominates fifty-six pages:

The final significance of Gertrude Stein lies, not in her work, but in the fact that she was the first writer in English to express fully the disintegrative tendencies [of the twentieth century]...and to that extent she was justified in calling herself the first twentieth century author.

In Educated Lives, Stein was included with Henry Adams, Twain, William Dean Howells, Henry James, Lincoln Steffens, Sherwood Anderson. Autobiography in America in the nineteenth century had been an account of "educated lives" or of something almost fictional--a

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39 Mellow, Afterword.
middle ground between fiction and history, according to Cooley. While
the generation of Adams defined "self" by external forces as if the
age demanded behavior and growth in a prescribed way, the age of
Stein (and Joyce) was to define "self" as internal (psychological)
growth. The "story" of a life was no longer the mode for autobiography;
the modern mode for autobiography, Colley believes, is akin to modern
psychological fiction rather than to narrative fiction.

In other books like Michael J. Hoffman's _The Development of
Abstractionism in the Writings of Gertrude Stein_ (1965) and Norman
Weinstein's _Gertrude Stein and the Literature of the Modern
Consciousness_ (1970) Stein's style and relationship to the phenomenol-
ogists is considered paramount, while in Hugh Kenner's _A Homemade
World_ (1975), a book as eccentric and brilliant and un-edited as
Stein herself, Stein becomes the "Mondrian of prose . . . resisting a
drag toward lyric nostalgia."42 Her prose, Kenner writes, was
"pressed flat into ritual symmetries":

that was how Miss Stein intuited
twentieth-century language; and when
she told Hemingway that remarks were
not literature, she was enjoining him
not to let a sentence escape from the
system, and acquire a trajectory, and
claim to be "about" something.43

Kenner believes that narrative art in the twenties reached a "purity"--

42 Hugh Kenner, _A Homemade World: The American Modernist Writers_
43 Kenner, p. 122.
an "ideal of showing, not telling" akin to the art of the motion picture which was all showing except, in the early silents, for the subtitles.44

The renewed interest in Stein may have peaked in 1974 on the 100th anniversary of her birth, but there is much valuable material in the 11,500 pieces45 of her writing in Yale University’s Beinecke Library, bequeathed by Stein to that institution. Dissertation titles, magazine articles, references to her in books on Modernism (both in literature and in painting), and her name appearing more frequently in memoirs, in biographies, and in collections of letters, attest to a continuing interest in Stein thirty-five years after her death. The Mother Of Us All was revived in 1980 in New York, and a one-woman show, Gertrude Stein Gertrude Stein Gertrude Stein, has had sell-out houses since 1979 when it first played in New York. Some of the present interest in her work appears to be the result of feminists' struggles to include women writers where Anderson, Fitzgerald, Hemingway, and Faulkner have dominated classroom and scholarly activity.

Frederick J. Hoffman in The Twenties (1965), reaches the conclusion that "Miss Stein's influence has been more considerable than at first appeared." Not enlightening—but of the sort of amazed recognition that critics have awarded Stein since her beginning as a writer. Hoffman believes her notoriety unfortunately, preceded her fame as a writer, and that she had too often proclaimed herself

44 Ibid., p. 127.
to be a "genius" and that others, who might have done so, were put off by her posture of self-approval.

In the dozens of memoirs in which Stein's name has been dropped, none is better known than Hemingway's, A Moveable Feast, in which he attempted to capture the Paris years of his own experience. It was published after his death, but there is no doubt that he meant to see it through to publication. In attempting an exposé of the "real" Stein (eighteen years after her death), Hemingway devotes twenty per-cent of his small "feast" to her. From her "strange steerage clothes" to her "great paintings," Stein is very much a part of the feast of those years for Ernest Hemingway.

In many published memoirs, Stein's fame appears to rest upon her connoisseurship of twentieth century art. William Carlos Williams, in his Autobiography, speaks of the highlight of his Paris stay in 1927 as "tea at Gertrude Stein's" where "the astonishing wall of Picasso's paintings, largely of the blue period in three tiers above us" made her salon "one of the sights of Paris." In her Intimate Memoirs: Movers and Shakers (Vol. III), Mabel Dodge Luhan of the "portrait at the Villa Curonia," writes that "the only place in Paris where anyone could hear anything about Modern Art was at the Stein's in the rue Fleurus."48

After Gertrude Stein's death, Alice B. Toklas was persuaded to write a cookbook (1960) and a memoir (1963). These are thin little

volumes, but they add to the Stein legend and present us with a new
tale—Alice B. Toklas's own. The Alice B. Toklas Cookbook49
became famous for its "Hashish fudge," errors, anecdotes, and literary
style. Unfortunately, some readers felt that in the hashish fudge
recipe they had discovered the secret of Stein's writing.

Alice Toklas' memoir, What Is Remembered, was published in 1963.50
She was then eight-five and her memory was faulty, but her friends
convinced her to write the book in order to add to the Stein legend
as well as to make some money. After her death, her letters written
in the last twenty years of her life were edited and published in
Staying On Alone.51 In her centenary year, 1977, The Biography of
Alice B. Toklas was published, adding to both her legend and to
Stein's. The author, Linda Simon, appears to believe that she can
find the woman who "disappeared without a trace into Gertrude Stein's
life." Of interest is an Appendix "meant to supplement Richard
Bridgeman's dissection of Gertrude Stein into pieces."52 Here,
Stein's erotic love poetry to Toklas is "dissected" and attention
called to some of Stein's puns and word play.

Stein criticism was and is a difficult matter even for her
admirers. Because her aesthetic values changed with each new work,
critics could not depend upon her to be where they had last found her

51 (New York: Liveright, 1973)
52 Linda Simon, The Biography of Alice B. Toklas (New York:
aesthetically. Much of her writing, they often decided, was too "obscure" and too "difficult" to merit efforts at recovering her aesthetic system. Many of them settled for making fun of her writing and some of them entertained their audiences with lively parodies in the Stein style. Among the most famous parodies was a 1912 letter from a frustrated publisher who declared "Dear Madam, I am only one, only one, only one. Only one being, one at the same time. Not two, not three, only one." A. C. Fifield (London) was returning the manuscript, "Only one M.S. by one post."53

Hemingway's parody on The Making of Americans in his The Torrents of Spring was called "The Passing of a Great Race and the Making and Marring of Americans," and he softened the cutting edge of his humor by writing at one point, "Right around the corner from where Gertrude Stein lived. Ah, there was a woman!"54 But even Hemingway, who had read The Making of Americans in manuscript and had the opportunity to talk with Stein at length, appeared as confused as those distant critics who were given no help at all. Hemingway added, "Where were her experiments in words leading her? What was at the bottom of it?"

Stein seems to have only once referred to a criticism of her own work. She defended herself against B. F. Skinner's charge of "automatic writing" in her lecture to the Choate School on January 12, 1935

53 The Flowers of Friendship, p. 58.
by calling Skinner's article "very amusing." She knew that some critics used her work to advance their own reputations, jumping upon such ideas as "automatic writing" and her refusal to use commas in conventional ways. She knew that critics often insisted that they should be able to "say it in other words"—their own.

55 "How Writing is Written," The Choate Literary Magazine, V. 21, No. 2 (February 1935).
CHAPTER III

The Modernist Aesthetic Scene

There is no 'must' in art because art is always free.

Wassily Kandinsky

In 1900, Gertrude Stein was twenty-six. Like the other creators of Modernism who were to ferment an aesthetic revolution in the twentieth century, she was prepared to bury the past and to refuse the old models. A new century was the appropriate time to set aside the catalog of old styles in architecture, in sculpture, in painting, in literature, and even in music, and to explore the infinite possibilities for creation in a new age. A new aesthetic was demanded of the new age, and it was quickly articulated as an aesthetic which required and found its energy in the "battle" or "struggle" rather than in "achievement." The struggle required freedom from the academic spirit--from the old traditions and the old conventions. Nothing was too sacred; anything could be refused. In prose, "theme" and narrative were rejected; volume could be refused in sculpture so that a face could be defined by a void; in architecture, the aesthetic of "space" superseded that of "matter." In music, it was suggested

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that no one listen and that music could become "furniture music" or "useful." In painting, the time for beauty was, indeed, over—the "new," like the newborn child, would be marked by the struggle and intensity of birth and would be ugly.

The symbols and the mystique of the old century were dying, however, without anyone's intervention. Victoria, the most prominent symbol of the old age, died in 1901, but everything "victorian" had begun to lose vitality before the final decade of the nineteenth century. The prescriptions for "taste" which had rigidly controlled behavior as well as art during Victoria's long reign had become, as Hamlet's world had to him, "weary, stale, flat, and unprofitable."

The Victorians had been a self-conscious society, adopting "Victorian" as an adjective for themselves as early as 1851. By 1880, the spirit of the age was blurred into a twilight period when many Victorians, sensing the impotence of the "old" age, welcomed the signs of rebellion and the spirit of freedom in the air.

The impact of the revolution in the arts upon the Steins—Gertrude, Leo, and Michael, and Michael's wife, Sarah—was prodigious. In Paris, Leo and Gertrude became friends and patrons of artists, Matisse and Picasso among them. Sarah Stein became Matisse's student; Michael became Matisse's fervent patron. Gertrude, later, was friend and patron of Juan Gris, Francis Picabia, and Marsden Hartley. She sat for sketches and portraits by Picasso, Vallotton, Francis Picabia,

and Francis Rose; for busts by the sculptors Jacques Litchitz and Jo Davidson; for photograph-portraits by Man Ray and Cecil Beaton.

She sat, in fact, at the head of the table during the "banquet years" of the arts in Paris, and she was part of the "moveable feast" of those years, cultivating a taste for everything within reach.

Modern Music: Erik Satie

Perhaps, one of the least known artistic tastes Stein acquired was the one for Erik Satie. Stein seems to have entertained him a half dozen times at the Rue de Fleurus and found him to have a "playful wit which was sometimes very biting." One of Satie's enthusiastic replies to an invitation of Stein's first announces that "it is impossible to accept" and consoles himself, "Poor me!" but ends with "P.S. At the last minute: I am free! I am coming! Until tomorrow!" Later, Stein wrote that she heard Virgil Thomson, who wrote the music for two of her operas, play Satie's "Socrate" and became a Satie enthusiast.

Stein met the intransigent Eric Satie (1866-1925) in 1915. She seems to have understood his music which poked fun at the traditional forms of music and at the Wagner-ridden traditions of the nineteenth century. She had empathy for an aesthetic like his which instructed an audience to "act as if the music did not exist" and to "keep on

talking, and move around. Whatever you do, don't listen." Stein intended to act as if the audience did not exist, taking this aesthetic posture a step beyond Satie's.

Stein's career was like Satie's in many ways. Both were recognized late and exploited as "shrewd" and insincere by shrewd, self-serving critics. When Satie's aesthetic was misunderstood, he was attacked as a "dilettante." Because he took the playful quality in his art to be a serious aesthetic value, he was seen as superficial. His very great influence upon Debussy, like Stein's upon Hemingway, was obscured by the greater success of the follower. When Satie was finally "discovered," he had only ten years remaining in which to work. It was, however, his early work done when he was twenty-one and two that the critics praised. He enjoyed the "lionizing" that success provided, but remained uncompromising and refused to do "more of the same."

Satie's success came with the recognition of his music composed for the Parade, the Diaghilev ballet, for which Picasso designed costumes and sets and Jean Cocteau wrote the scenario. Because of his association with Picasso, this work was called "cubist" and "abstract." It brought young composers to him, and they formed a "circle" around him. The younger musicians admired Satie's freedom from social conventions as much as his break with traditional music. Although Parade was admired, Satie moved on to another discovery and

4 From the program notes for "Sports and Diversions: An Evening with Erik Satie" by David Porter, Carlton College, performed on April 24, 1980 at The Ohio State University.
set the death of Socrates to music. This was a final performance like Stein's *The Mother of Us All*. It appeared to be a valedictory work in which the artist strongly identified with an historical figure's decline and death.

Described in affectionate terms by those who admired him, Satie has been called a "primitive" with a child-like quality of simplicity. He thrived on scandal, was "scandalous" in his aesthetic posture, distressing traditionalists with his "modern" music. He found that absurdity in life was imperative to express in his art. Boredom, which he said was "mysterious and profound," was "venerated by the public," because, he said, it subdued the listener: "The listener is defenseless against boredom. Boredom subdues him." Roger Shattuck in his chapter on Satie claims that Satie did steer perilously close to boredom and occasionally went aground." Modern music, however, owes much of the freedom of its form to Erik Satie whose "music" was in the air before the turn of the century.

Modern Architecture: Wright and Corbusier

Stein was as aware of her physical environment as she was of her cultural environment. She wrote about "geography" and "native land"

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as elements discernable in personality. She seems to have needed the
distance from her own native land in order to look back at it with
clarity. Paris, as she later wrote, became her "hometown" where she
lived for two-thirds of her life, but America remained her "country."

In both her country and her hometown, the horizon was changing
by the end of the nineteenth century. In 1889 in Paris, the Eiffel
Tower had risen, a stark, detested skeleton unclothed. The following
year in St. Louis, Missouri, the first skyscraper clothed, the Wainwright
Building by the American architect, Louis Sullivan (1856-1924), rose
ten stories against the sky. The simple, vertical form of the
building, wrapping an internal steel skeleton, expressed the clarity
of modern architecture. The function of the interior determined the
form of the exterior design. In another five years, in 1895, Louis
Sullivan, born before the Civil War, would engineer the Guaranty
Building--rising higher still to fourteen stories. The modern American
skyscraper had been successfully engineered, and the modern age of
urban architecture born, finding its most extravagant expression in
the architectural magnificence of Manhattan Island, which thrilled a
twenty-eight year old Gertrude Stein, into calling it a "clean
simplicity" in her first story, Q.E.D.

The clean simplicity of the new architecture was a rejection of
the Victorian passion for revivals--neo-Gothic, neo-Classic, neo-
Romanesque--already seen as dead ends, as borrowings from a catalog
of ancient styles, a phase of Victorian Romanticism like the building
of sham ruins on English country estates or the decoration of
"grotto" rooms with shell-encrusted walls. To copy the past or to
sham its moods had little to do with creation; modern architects like Sullivan shared a determination to create—to make something new to express the contemporary. The authority of borrowed styles like the neo-Romanesque style of Henry Hobson Richardson (1838-1886) had to be broken. While Richardson's buildings clothed an iron structure, they were built in the massive forms of neo-Romanesque as if their thick masonry and arcades actually supported the mass—a shamming of design and decoration.

Sullivan's protege, Frank Lloyd Wright (1869-1959), carried into domestic architecture the "battle," as he called it, which Sullivan had begun in commercial building—the battle against sham, toward integrity and simplicity. Wright reported in 1908 that when he was twenty-four (in 1894), he had formulated a set of "propositions" for modern architecture. Among these, he set down simplicity, expression of individuality, emphasis of the nature of the materials, and "integrity" which appeared to be a rejection of Victorian ornamentation and fashion which had dictated the designs of Richardson and other nineteenth century architects. For Frank Lloyd Wright, the "new reality," as he called it, was "space instead of matter":

I came to realize that the reality of a building was not the container but the space within.

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8 Frank Lloyd Wright, In the Cause of Architecture, ed. Frederick Gutheim (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1975), pp. 53-63. This essay had been written by Wright in 1908 for The Architectural Record.
By 1907, Wright had accomplished equilibrium of masses and voids in the Robie House (Chicago, Illinois) where a "wandering" spatial arrangement is broken by "the placement of the walls as mere screens."

Architecture, often called a civilizing force, is the most highly visual art form for the most people, becoming as it does, the urban environment for millions. In the twentieth century, there were new materials to impel invention--structural steel and concrete. Steel was sheer strength, and it could be used to make buildings rise into the air and to support mass. Concrete was a plastic material which could be poured and molded and modeled. Architecture was to become, in the twentieth century, both sculptural and expressive, and as an art form, more closely related to sculpture and to painting.

In Modernist sculpture before World War I, "structure" was often articulated as voids. In the sculpture of Alexander Archipenko (1887-1964), for example, the torso has been defined by a void in "Woman Walking" (1912), and in the "Woman Combing Her Hair" (1915), the face is defined by a void. Just as space became an important aesthetic in architecture, the void was accepted as a strong and positive element in sculpture. The exciting possibilities which the new century seemed to reveal to the creators of Modernism spread through the arts uniting artists in an aesthetic urgency which made it possible for architects, sculptors, and painters to talk the same language.
When Wright established the new aesthetic for modern architecture in his 1908 essay in The Architectural Record, it read like an early manifesto for the painters of the Paris School. Architecture, once rigidly prescribed, was to be in the twentieth century, expressive, plastic, fluent, organic. And its very methods and processes were to be revealed and idealized. In the method and process revealed would lie its beauty which was without the conceit of revival or the deceit of sham and pretense:

As for the future—the work shall grow more truly simple; more expressive with fewer lines, fewer forms; more articulate with less labor; more plastic; more fluent, although more coherent; more organic. It shall grow not only to fit more perfectly the methods and processes that are called upon to produce it, but shall further find whatever is lovely or of good repute in method or process, and idealize it with the cleanest, most virile stroke I can imagine.10

Wright's own battle against the domestic "box" punched full of holes ended with his fluid, one-quarter mile long ramp which sweeps, unbroken and clean from ground level to skylight, one hundred feet above—the "perfect placticity of presentation" which he promised Mr. Solomon R. Guggenheim11 for his museum in New York City. It was completed a few months after Wright's death in 1949. It is the future Wright had seen in 1908—"more truly simple; more expressive with fewer lines; fewer forms; more articulate with less labor; more

10 Wright, In the Cause of Architecture, p. 63.
plastic; more fluent, although more coherent; more organic." The 
Guggenheim is method and process idealized "with the cleanest, most 
virile stroke" imaginable. It is as free from the stale impotence of 
Victorian revivals as creation and human genius could make it. 
Architecture, Wright believed, could be an enlargement of the human 
imagination. Modernist architecture demands participation which is a 
great deal more, Wright knew, than appreciation of those whose 
environment it becomes for even a small period of time.

In Europe, too, the revival styles were passing from the scene in 
the first years of the century. The movement called "Art Nouveau" 
had been articulated by a Spaniard, Antoni Gaudi (1852-1926). 
Although he was a contemporary of Louis Sullivan, Antoni Gaudi's 
aesthetic was often closer to the Modernist aesthetic, but he chose 
to render a "passionate naturalism" in which the surfaces appear 
"eroded" out of the stone. 12 Gaudi's Casa Mila Apartment House in 
Barcelona (1905-1907), perhaps the chief monument of Art Nouveau, 
was a "blind alley" in architecture, more properly thought of as 
decoration than as architectural design. The publication of a 
portfolio of Wright's work in Berlin in 1910 "hastened destruction of 
the dying Art Nouveau and stimulated younger men to turn in the new 
direction." 13

The purist strain in domestic architecture, developed in France 
in Le Corbusier's purist "white style," was directly influenced by 
Cubism. The Swiss-born architect, Charles Edouard Jeanneret-Gris

12 Gardner, pp. 758-9.
13 Ibid., pp. 760-62.
called Le Corbusier, whose "machines for living" (his phrase) first appeared about 1914, was a Cubist painter. In collaboration with another painter, he published *Apres le Cubisme* in 1918. This manifesto signalled the beginning of the purist movement in architecture. He placed his villas, like objects, into the setting. The Villa Stein, built for Michael and Sarah Stein in 1927, is a double cube, standing starkly white on its site. It was, perhaps, their patronage of Cubist painters that led the Michael Steins to commission the Villa Stein called "Les Terrasses" at Garches when they saw Le Corbusier's work in a Paris exhibition in 1925. The designs for the villa, shown in the Museum of Modern Art in New York in 1978, are Cubist works of art—arrangements of cubes and space in which the architect realized order, serenity, and simplicity. Le Corbusier had written in *Towards A New Architecture* (*Vers Une Architecture* by Editions Cres, Paris, 1923):

> The Architect, by his arrangement of forms, realizes an order which is a pure creation of his spirit; by forms and shapes he affects our senses to an acute degree and provokes plastic emotions; by the relationships which he creates he wakes profound echoes in us, he gives us the measure of an order which we feel to be in accordance with that of our world, he determines the various movements of our heart and of our understanding; it is then that we experience the sense of beauty.\(^{14}\)

Le Corbusier achieved this aesthetic or "order" in the structure called the "most revolutionary" of the century—the church of Notre-Dame du Haut (1950-1955) atop a mountain in eastern France at Ronchamp.

Ronchamp is of about the same period as Wright's Guggenheim Museum (1944-1959). Both structures play curves and countercurves off against the drama of their sites. Wright's round structure, designed for a site in Central Park in New York, appears to shoulder its massive strength into a city block; Ronchamp stands against the sky, its roof like a grey wave against blue and white, a reminder of Gaudi's Casa Mila apartment house roof. Ronchamp's effect is like that of a sculpture. It is, in its Modernist aesthetic, "more expressive with fewer lines" and "more articulate with less labor" as the contemporary expression of the purity of Mary.

It does not seem surprising that, in architecture, an aesthetic which found its expression in freedom should have found its greatest vitality in America and in France. Wright's and LeCorbusier's gifts are a "combined range," as one architect has called them, "representative of a total image of modern architecture."15 Wright's influence has freed architects in the twentieth century of the imitation and the conceits beloved by the Victorians and monumentalized in Art Nouveau architecture, and he had successfully engineered the "new reality"—space—first. Le Corbusier wrote that "Architecture is stifled by custom" and that "The 'styles' are a lie."16

If we set ourselves against the past, we are forced to the conclusion that the old architectural code, with its mass of rules and regulations evolved during four thousand years, is no longer of any interest; it no longer concerns us; all the values have been revised; there has been revolution in the conception of what Architecture is.17

The Modernist "scene" was apparent in architecture long before it was an established fact in painting or in literature. The costs of land and of construction prohibit a fickle aesthetic in architecture, and the changes in engineering possibilities develop slowly. Once a building had been created on its site, however, it was a fact of life of the cityscape. Although it might be derided as a "cube" or a "sky scraper," it could not be ignored and was soon looked upon with less discrimination.

Modern Painting

Painting, however, to become part of the "daily scene," must be seen, and the viewer is forced to make an effort to see it by going to it. It does not insert itself into his environment even as music may do since music is so easily "repeated." In America, Modernist painting, particularly that of the Paris School of the first two decades, forced itself into the aesthetic environment in the Armory Show in New York in 1913. However many thousands attended the show,

17 Ibid., pp. 266-268.
many thousands of others only knew "what they read in the newspapers" or heard in the streets. Modernist painting for those who attended the Armory Show was a shock, for those who did not attend, it was a laughing matter. Even in Paris, at the first showing of the Fauves in 1905, Gertrude Stein reported that angry viewers tried to scratch the paint from Matisse's "La Femme au Chapeau" and that others became hysterical with laughter. Even to look at modern painting was not necessarily to see it.

The age demanded "the word" of its painters as well as of its architects in order to proselytize the new aesthetic and to strengthen resistance to a return to the "romance" of the past. Two years after Frank Lloyd Wright's manifesto for the future of architecture, Wassily Kandinsky (1866-1944) wrote in Concerning the Spiritual in Art (1910) that "Conventional beauty must go, and the literary element, 'story-telling' or 'anecdote' must be abandoned."\(^\text{18}\) Correctly calling it an age of "conscious creation," Kandinsky prophesied that "the element of the abstract is creeping into art." In that year, Wassily Kandinsky painted the first abstract watercolor and reinforced the chief aesthetic impulse of the creators of Modernism—freedom:

There is no 'must' in art, because art is always free.\(^\text{19}\)

Representation of reality is the oldest aesthetic, and perhaps still the most popular, in art. It is the least difficult art to

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\(^{19}\) Ibid., p. 50.
evaluate since the single basis for judgement is the accuracy of the depiction. The more accurately the work of art resembles the object for which it is the iconic sign, the "better" the work of art may be judged to be. "Conventional beauty," usually a mirror image, quickly disappeared with the creeping abstraction Kandinsky foretold. Just as architecture had been "stifled by custom," painting had been stifled by the mimetic aesthetic.

The urge to imitative painting is as old as man's history. The three cows and the "Chinese" horse rendered with vitality and skill on the ceilings of the caves at Lascaux in France are approximately life-size and whatever their magical purposes—it is suggested that by naturalistic rendering of the animals, the hunter "tamed" them—the intent of the artists was mimetic. The artists at Lascaux, working from 15,000 to 10,000 B.C., even used the irregular surfaces of the walls—projections, recessions, fissures, ridges—to add to the illusion of volume.20 When stone figures were carved in the full-round like the tiny (4 3/4 inches high) "Venus of Willendorf," which probably served as a fertility fetish in the same period, the rendering was representational. Even when the object represented an abstract idea such as "fertility" and not an ideal of womankind, a realistic rendering of the form remained the aesthetic articulated. But in the twentieth century, artists consciously insisted upon an expressive aesthetic, stretching an economy of line and form into abstraction so that the model became unnecessary and even the figure, by 1910, disappeared altogether in some painting.

20 Gardner, pp. 27-35.
The mimetic aesthetic was most familiarly known in the Poetics of Aristotle who had insisted that "imitation is natural to man from childhood" and, further, that "we delight to view the most realistic representations in art." Nineteenth century painters had been Aristotelian in this sense; they had painted imitations of life and they had painted "from life." They had attempted to set life into picture frames and, often, the picture frame became the metaphor for the window frame. Although the expressive and the psychological elements appeared in art through the ages from the cave wall renderings at Lascaux to the wood panel and canvas painting of easel artists, the chief aesthetic was an accurate and realistic rendering which denied the two-dimensional surface of panel or canvas for the conceit of a "view" into a room (as in a portrait) or out of a room (as in landscapes). If one thinks of the "Mona Lisa" (1503) or of Rembrandt's "Bathsheba" (1654), one's sense of "the reality" of a singular woman in a unique environment is overpowering. But by the nineteenth century, in a painter of singular women like James MacNeill Whistler, for example, the expressive element by which the painter conveys his own emotional response to the figure begins to dominate even the mirror image, and the representation of place becomes less important than the psychological "setting."

James MacNeill Whistler (1834-1903), the single American painter whose work hangs in the Louvre, painted his "Arrangement in Black and Grey: The Artist's Mother" in 1871. Whistler's portrait of his mother

is that of a figure in profile, seated at a distance in a room into which the viewer is made to feel that he peers, uninvited. Whistler's chief aesthetic here was a representational one; the painting is typical of the elegant and fastidious work for which Whistler was admired and which "seemed to reflect the mood and temper of the last quarter of the nineteenth century." But the "facts" of personality and environment strike a balance between mirrored realism and the abstract qualities of the "arrangement" which the viewer must interpret. This subtle tension which demanded the viewer's participation fore-shadowed the demands which twentieth century artists were to force upon the viewer.

"The Arrangement in Black and Grey," however, hardly foreshadowed Whistler's own extraordinary and daring "Nocturn in Black and Gold: The Falling Rocket" of 1874, painted when Whistler was forty. No French painter had dared a painting as non-representational, and Whistler was accused of "flinging a pot of paint in the public's face" by the critic, John Ruskin. Whistler sued for libel and, in his own defense, demanded the artist's right to paint in his own style and not "after" any other style or period. He also recorded his chief aesthetic intent which, in many ways, belongs to the twentieth century and to abstract impressionism:

I have perhaps meant rather to indicate an artistic interest alone in my work, divesting the picture from any outside sort of interest. . . . It is an arrangement of line, form, and color, first, and I make use of any incident of it which shall bring about a symmetrical result. 23

In establishing an aesthetic of "art for art's sake," in "divesting the picture from any outside sort of interest," and in insisting that a painting is "an arrangement of line, form, and color, first," Whistler had prophesied the twentieth century's aesthetic. It was not an aesthetic of realism nor one of conventional beauty. Too, Whistler's revelation that he made use of "any incident . . . which shall bring about a symmetrical result," for the first time, affirms the Modernist aesthetic of chance. Whistler, the painter of "Arrangement in Black and Grey: The Artist's Mother," the world's best known American painting, freed himself from the constraints of the nineteenth century. He freed himself to experiment. Whistler experimented in the use of white as a color, in the mediums of pastel and etching, and in the use of brown paper which in itself "constituted a fifth color."

Whistler was sixty-six when the new century arrived, but he helped to establish an integrity of self-expression and to insist upon the artist's freedom from academic concepts and techniques which the twentieth century Modernists forced upon an unwilling and angry public in the first exhibition of the Salon d'Automne in Paris in 1903.

23 Janson, p. 500.
That exhibition of early fauve painting was a memorial exhibition for Gauguin (1848-1903) whose painting was felt to be the inspiration of the colorists--the Fauves. Ironically, James MacNeill Whistler, who had first flung "a pot of paint in the public's face," died in the same year, his painting already considered "too tasteful" in the explosive first decade of the new century. Within ten years, the great Armory Show of 1913 in New York had challenged the American critics, the American public, and young American painters.

The tradition of which Whistler, lounging in his kimona, writing "The Gentle Art of Making Enemies," was the epitome, was dying. The artist in the twentieth century refused the long tradition of the model on the dias and, revealing his processes, gloried in the eccentric innovations and experiments which had not been possible when tradition was revered above creation. But Whistler's "arrangements," which foreshadowed the arrangements called Cubism, and his "nocturnes" which foreshadowed the work of the abstract expressionists, had influenced the most daring and extravagant prodigal of the twentieth century.

Pablo Ruiz Picasso (1881-1973)

At ten, Pablo Ruiz Picasso had painted his first pictures under the direction of his father, a teacher of art who eventually became a professor at Barcelona's Academy of Fine Arts. At fifteen, Pablo Picasso passed the entrance examination there in one day, although one month's time was prescribed for the required work. But even before
that, in 1894, when the son was only thirteen, the father, Don Jose Ruiz Blasco, had given up his brushes and paints to the thirteen year old prodigal and retired from painting.

In the following summer when Picasso was fourteen, the family passed through Madrid on a visit to Malaga, Picasso's birthplace, and Picasso saw, for the first time, the paintings of the masters in the Prado. In this year, Picasso briefly flirted with tradition. He painted the "Man in a Cap," a sombre portrait of a beggar done in the manner of Valesques; he painted "Aunt Pepe," very dark, like a Goya portrait in which only the dignity of the features of the sitter lights up the canvas; he painted "An Old Man" in which the seated, three-quarter figure appears to be caught in an endless reverie and, here, Picasso, like Frans Hals, applies the genre style to portraiture. But he painted genre paintings, too—"Barefoot Girl" and "First Communion." An in this single year of an amazing prodigality, he painted still lifes in the same "broad naturalism reminiscent of the old masters."24 The young painter was, undeniably, an old master.

And more.

For sometime in that year when he was fourteen—and still a child—Pablo Ruiz Picasso painted a watercolor portrait of his father—the father who had given up his own brushes to the child of thirteen. Only the head is finished in detail; the handsome, sensitive face might have been a cameo executed by Whistler. Both the fine features and the painterly expression of them have an elegance and sublety unmistakably "after Whistler." In this psychological portrait of a

middle-aged man withdrawn into a private world, yet with "almost an English way of imposing himself " as Gertrude Stein described him, there is a depth of realization akin to Rembrandt's. But in Picasso's "The Artist's Father," there is something more direct and more compelling. There is a new way of expressing personality. The young painter neither copied nor denied traditional portraiture, but he made it into something uniquely of his own time. Within ten years, Picasso painted the "Portrait of Gertrude Stein," in which the face, sculpturesque, a powerful focus, dominated and expressed, not a realistic representation of the sitter, but her own solid, strong, physically intense personality.

In 1899, however, the year before he went to Paris, Picasso continued to paint "after Whistler." Both "Seated Woman Reading" and "The Artist's Sister" are arrangements. The "Artist's Sister" is a seated figure in profile. The sitter looks toward a window which appears as two darkened squares at the left of the painting. Its ordered and spare composition is like that of Whistler's "Arrangement in Black and Grey." But Picasso's paintings after Whistler do not follow in Whistler's idiom in which elegance and accuracy of detail become subtle insinuations of the sitter's personality. Picasso's portraits are charged with the vitality of the artist's own response to the sitter. This "objectivity" in Picasso's work is an element which sets him apart, eventually, from mere expressionism.

In Paris, in 1900, Pablo Picasso saw, perhaps for the first time, the paintings of Gauguin, Van Gogh, and Toulouse-Lautrec, the

post-impressionists whose works were dominated by the expressive color and brushwork which allowed the painterly process to reveal both the painter's emotional intensity and his method. Elegance of composition, accuracy of realistic detail, and the subtle insinuation of personality, as well as a muted pallete, were abandoned by Picasso, as well as the signature "P. Ruiz Picasso." In 1901, "Picasso" was born.

Picasso, who had extended and manipulated traditional painting styles to suit his own sensibility, in Paris, adopted the expressionist style of the post-impressionists—decorative flatness; a smaller, but brilliant color range; and expressive, almost bravura brushwork, as well as the simplicity of posterlike composition—in a single portrait of 1901. "Pedro Manach" is almost empty of the academic tradition of his father's training, of the Valesquez-Goya tradition of Spain, and of the romantic tradition of Whistler. It realizes the "essence" of the sitter's personality with a simplicity of composition and detail. "Pedro Manach" is "an arrangement of line, form, and color, first" (Whistler), but it is consciously "more truly simple; more expressive with fewer lines, fewer forms; more articulate with less labor."

As such, it is also Wright's Modernist aesthetic realized in painting.

Pedro Manach, Picasso's earliest patron in Paris, was a Catalan industrialist with whom Picasso shared a flat. The portrait expresses the young patron's resolute and determined character by

26 Manach returned to Spain, eventually, his portrait under his arm. He was killed in the Spanish Civil War, and the unknown portrait remained with his widow until the 1950's. It is in the National Gallery of Art in Washington, D. C.
means of the strong, black outlining of the standing, three-quarter figure. The essence of aggressive vitality, of the spirit of twentieth century industry and commerce is here in the forceful, frontal pose, right hand on hip, left hand clenched at the side. The viewer is reminded of Hals' "The Laughing Cavalier"—the essence of the cavalier manner. But the flat color areas and the intensity of red and yellow and black, as well as the brushwork in the white, buttonless shirt, are reminiscent of Van Gogh and of Gauguin, and the simplicity of the posterlike composition is Lautrec-inspired. The picture frame, however, has disappeared. Pedro Manach appears to confront the viewer from the canvas so intently that the sense of framing is lost. He does not "fit" into a frame.

In this portrait of 1901, Picasso established four aesthetic principles of Modernist painting. First, the painting process is apparent, even emphasized in the "first stage" sketch of the figure and in the brush strokes which cut into the pigment. The painting does not appear to be "finished;" it might have been painted yesterday or this morning. The pigment, uneven and unbrushed, might still be wet. The vitality of now is expressed rather than an aesthetic of "the past." Secondly, there is no amorphous light washed over the sitter's features.

There is no impression of a fugitive light passing over the features or into the "room." There is, of course, no room. The intense yellow background does not suggest a particular place. The absence of a frame suggests that the viewer need not remain at a discreet distance. The viewer is commanded to participate, not only
in the composition which is "sketched," but in the process which is not finished; and he finds himself participating with the painter in the confrontation with Pedro Manach— with his presence and essence.

Third, a new aesthetic value upon which to judge the painting is essence, the single most important achievement of "Pedro Manach." Pedro Manach's "essential nature" is revealed in his portrait.

Fourth, tradition in art (the portrait, for example) will not breed traditional art in the twentieth century. But some traditional aesthetics will be assimilated into the Modernist aesthetic tradition. Because Picasso can draw as well as Raphael, does not mean that he is limited to the tradition of Raphael. As he said, that skill means that he has, "at least, the right to choose my own way."

Picasso's "Pedro Manach" of 1901 and Whistler's "Arrangement In Black and Grey: The Artist's Mother" of 1871 might be the paradigms for painting in the new century and in the old. Picasso's painting was "not so much a visual object as a personal experience, something that happens to him," and "he comes to grips with it, takes possession of it, seeks to express it by a simple and meaningful sign."27 Picasso's painting does not "mirror" reality but is, itself, a tangible reality.

The viewer, too, takes possession of it aesthetically. Painting, in the twentieth century, is not as much a diversion for the viewer as it is something that he experiences. The personal experience is heightened by the painterly process apparent in modern painting, by

27 Boeck and Sabartes, p. 72.
the freedom from the sense of "looking in" where the picture frame has served as a metaphor for the window frame, and by the sense of an immediate aesthetic experience which he shares with the painter and which is intensified by the essence of object or sitter expressed as he would first experience that object or personality and not as "memory" would reconstruct it.

"Pedro Manach" was exhibited on June 24, 1901 at the first Parisian show of Picasso's work. Then, Picasso returned to Spain, and the expression of his "Spanish solemnity," which was "the result of that return," according to Gertrude Stein, generated the Blue Period paintings. Each of these periods, Stein wrote, was a way Picasso had of emptying himself of his experience. Then, back again in Paris, "seduced by France" once again, the Rose or harlequin period followed:

Then he emptied himself of this, the gentle poetry of France and the circus, he emptied himself of them in the same way that he had emptied himself of the blue period and I first knew him at the end of this harlequin period. 28

"The Young Girl with a Basket of Flowers" was painted at the close of the Rose period. It has the "wan harlequin" appeal of the delicate Rose period paintings. This painting brought the Steins--Leo who initiated the purchase of it and Gertrude who first resisted it--and Picasso together. With this purchase, the Steins became as much a part of the Modernist scene as the painter. After the purchase of "Young Girl," Gertrude became Picasso's model and posed for him in the winter of 1905-06.

28 Stein, Picasso, p. 7.
Gertrude Stein wrote later in *Picasso* that, after the Rose period, Picasso's "drawing hardened, his line became firmer, his color more vigorous."²⁹

I posed for him all that winter, eighty times and in the end he painted out the head, he told me that he could not look at me any more and then he left once more for Spain... and immediately upon his return from Spain he painted in the head without having seen me again and he gave me the picture and I was and I still am satisfied with my portrait, for me, it is I, and it is the only reproduction of me which is always I, for me.³⁰

It is interesting that the sitter, whose writing was to be a search for the essence in personality, felt that Picasso had achieved her essence in her portrait of 1905-06. The flat, mask-like face, said to be like the Iberian masks of the pre-Roman civilization in Spain,³¹ rivets the attention. It expresses the essence of the sitter who dominates her environment, and it is the single focus of the painting. The mask-face is not intended to be a mirror image but to be a representation of the inner, intense strength and solemn intelligence of the subject. When he was told that the portrait did not look like Stein, Picasso's confident retort was, "She will look like it," meaning that her essence would intensify and become apparent and that the painter had "realized" it.

In 1907, Picasso painted "Les Demoiselles d'Avignon." This was the "reality of the twentieth century" which, as Stein pointed out, was

³¹ The "newly" discovered Iberian figures were shown in the Spring of 1906 at the Louvre.
"not the reality of the nineteenth century."\textsuperscript{32} In "Les Demoiselles d'Avignon," Picasso "attempted a synthesis of process, style, and subject," and it is "the principal agent in redirecting twentieth century painting."\textsuperscript{33} The chief aesthetic, clearly, was not traditional beauty or a narrative element.

A figure on the extreme left of the painting appears to hold back a curtain to permit entrance into the room; the face in profile is dark and "Egyptian." Two figures on the left side next to it are prostitutes with their arms raised in the seductive pose of the Venus di Milo; they are draped about the hips. The two nude figures on the right of the painting—one standing and one squatting—appear to wear African masks and to vibrate with sinister movement. If the five figures are connected by a narrative or "literary" element, there is no effort made by Picasso to reveal that element. This strange ambiguity of "Les Demoiselles"—its changing, seething tone—embody the struggle of the painter to bring his painting into existence as a conscious creation and not as an expression of anecdote or an imitation of conventional beauty. Picasso was not interested in making "a successful painting but in a painterly handling of his material."\textsuperscript{34}

The importance of "Les Demoiselles" lies in Picasso's willingness to allow his struggle to remain exposed on the canvas. The painting is not finished, and it is not successful in the traditional sense; it is neither "beautiful" nor mimetic. Picasso simply stopped painting it sometime in 1907. It is an act of bravado, and it has become the most

\textsuperscript{32} Stein, Picasso, p. 21.  
\textsuperscript{33} Dr. Mathew Herban, Professor, History of Art, The Ohio State University. In a lecture on Picasso, January 19, 1977.  
\textsuperscript{34} Ibid.
important painting in the twentieth century. After "Les Demoiselles," the aesthetic of the painter became his private affair; he was freed from academe, and schools, and conventions which had bound painters since the Renaissance. He was freed by his own hand. In a single canvas, Picasso had struck down conventional beauty and form, and he had established the Modernist aesthetic in painting.

"Les Demoiselles" is not so much a "break-up" and a shattering of surfaces, a buckling of the picture plane, as it is a breaking away from the conventional aesthetic of beauty which grew out of the ancient urge to "view the most realistic representations in art." This aesthetic had been determined by the painter's preoccupation with "audience." Picasso freed the painter of this preoccupation and from aesthetic "laws." In its most revolutionary form, Cubism (of which this was a beginning) was a "philosophy, a new way of thinking and seeing."36

In 1909, when Picasso returned from a holiday in Spain "with his first Cubist landscapes in his hand . . . a long struggle commenced."37 Two of those paintings were "The Resevoir, Horta" and "Houses on a Hill, Horta" which Gertrude Stein owned. Tacked to the wall in Stein's salon was a photograph which Picasso had taken of Horta. For Stein, the photograph was proof that Picasso had realized the nature of Spanish architecture:

35 Many writers have suggested that "break-up" is both method and the chief aesthetic of modern art.  
37 Stein, Picasso, p. 13.
The architecture of other countries always follows the line of the landscape, it is true of Italian architecture and of French architecture, but Spanish architecture always cuts the lines of the landscape and it is that that is the basis of cubism, the work of man is not in harmony with the landscape, it opposes it . . . and that is what Spanish cubism is.38

The so-called "Heroic Age of Cubism" lasted from 1909 until 1914. The work of the heroes of modern painting was not beautiful, but it was intense and stimulating. Picasso's struggle made his new painting ugly; followers, as he predicted, "because they know what they are doing, the thing (Cubism) having already been invented," would make it beautiful.39 And the public, after the first shock of the work of the Paris School had worn off, would find the work of Picasso and his followers an exciting leap into the twentieth century.

In that same heroic year, 1909, when Picasso at twenty-eight realized the object as "a heavy thing, a solid thing, and a complete thing"40 in his first Cubist landscapes, Gertrude Stein at thirty-five, published Three Lives. Picasso painted a "Homage a Gertrude," a little parody of Baroque ceiling painting in which the nude, winged angels, who might be sisters to "Les Demoiselles," appear above clouds and from behind a red curtain. One bears fruit, one trumpets, one plays a concertina, one a flute; two hold up the scroll which says "Homage a Gertrude." All wear buns of hair atop their heads like the bun that Stein

38 Ibid., p. 23.
39 Ibid., p. 9.
40 This is from Stein's first portrait of Picasso. The first line appears in her Notebook (No. 13) which dates the composition before 1909. This word-portrait of Picasso appeared in Camera Work, August, 1912, the first Steinesse which reached a wide audience in America.
wore when Picasso painted her portrait in 1905. Stein tacked "Homage" to the ceiling above her bed. It must have been pleasant to awaken each morning and to look up at the little painting which was Picasso's bravó! Stein felt a particularly strong affection for this artist whom she knew to be the genius of his age. The homage she paid to Pablo Picasso was a private notebook entry:

Pablo and Michael Angelo are artist every moment of their being.⁴¹

The camaraderie which Stein and Picasso shared was the joy of youth and enthusiasm. No impact upon Stein was greater than the impact of Picasso. In her notebooks, Stein writes of Picasso as she would have of a younger brother over whom she worried and defended against real or imagined detractors. Picasso has an "emotional leap and courage" which Stein believed was lacking in Cézanne and in herself:

Pablo is never dragged; he walks in the light and a little ahead of himself like Raphael.⁴²

No homage and no success would keep Picasso in the past. He would move "a little ahead of himself" in the avant-garde of painting, of

⁴¹ Stein Notebooks (D-9) YCAL. All references to Stein's unpublished notebooks have been taken from the typescript of an unpublished work by Dr. Leon Katz. Dr. Katz, now in the Department of Drama, University of Pittsburgh, based his Ph. D. Dissertation (Columbia, 1963) on these notebooks. The numbering system is Dr. Katz's. These original notebooks are in the Beinecke Rare Book Library, Yale University Collection of American Literature. (YCAL)

⁴² Stein Notebook (13-14), YCAL.
sculpture, of pottery, and of lithography and etching. And Picasso's homage which greeted Stein each morning could not keep her from risking even this small success, Three Lives, for the adventure of another discovery. Three Lives had been done. Why do it again? Stein's chief aesthetic urgency, like Picasso's, was to continue.
CHAPTER IV

Gertrude Stein's Outlaw Aesthetic

...the creator of the new composition in the arts is an outlaw until he is a classic...

Gertrude Stein in What Are Masterpieces?

Stein believed, as did Matisse and Picasso, that her real influence was Cezanne. She had written Three Lives, she claimed in her 1946 interview, "impressed" by Cezanne's idea of composition:

Up to that time [the period of Cezanne's painting] composition had consisted of a central idea to which everything else was not an accompaniment and separate but was not an end in itself and Cezanne conceived the idea that in composition one thing was as important as the whole...

It seems clear that Stein felt Cezanne's method of composition influenced her own form. In "Melanctha," the last of the lives composed, she said she tried to "convey the idea of each part of the story being as important as the whole," feeling that this was the aesthetic value which determined Cezanne's style. In her writing, she seems to

1 "The Transatlantic Interview—1946," in A Primer for the Gradual Understanding of Gertrude Stein, p. 15.
have rejected the pattern of ascending action and descending action, as well as "central idea," by which Stein may have meant either denouement or theme or both. She covered her "canvas," in theory, evenly; each "inch" of the composition was important or equal to any other inch, consequently illuminating no central idea or theme. Unlike the classical composition in painting which led the eye to a center, the modern composition was "de-centralized." Consequently, since the narrative action in Stein's three stories in *Three Lives* does not rise or fall, and is "de-centralized," the prose may appear to be without energy or flat. Stein was accused later, of course, of "flat prose," but only when she carried this aesthetic further in the repetitive structuring of sentences with only slight word variations and a narrow vocabulary of "flat" and colorless words.

The "rise and fall" which Stein attempted to realize was not in narrative action, then, but a rise and fall "inside" the mind, and that became the source and form (stream of thought) for other modern novelists of the twentieth century. This revelation of the subjective life, or a view "on the inside looking out," she felt was first seen in Henry James' late novels. James abandoned the view from "the outside trying to 'look in!'" for a view on the "inside looking out."

However, James's "note absolute" which he saw as a "strong stake" driven in "with hard taps" is theme.

For Stein, although her aesthetic becomes muddied in *Three Lives* and a theme emerges, the strong stake

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driven in with hard taps was the realization of "bottom nature"--her note absolute sounded in the repetitive dialogue and behavior of her characters which revealed "the movement of their thoughts":

I then began to think about the bottom nature in people . . . to get enormously interested in hearing how everybody said the same thing over and over again until finally if you listened with great intensity you could hear it rise and fall and tell all that there was inside them, not so much by the actual words they said . . . but [by] the movement of their thoughts and words endlessly the same and endlessly different.  

Probably both Henry James and Gertrude Stein were strongly influenced by Henry James' older brother, William James, who coined the phrase "the stream of thought" in his Principles of Psychology (1890). What Stein may have discovered in Henry James' novels, as well as in William James' classes at Harvard, was that the realization of the subjective life was more dramatic than the creation of conventional narrative.

James did not escape taking an ethical position, but Stein had no interest in the morality of behavior. Her stories of Anna, Lena, and Melanctha in Three Lives are case studies which simply reveal the character. Stein's narrative choices are those choices which reveal the "bottom nature" or personality of the character rather than revealing them as "victims" and soliciting audience sympathy. Observation of human behavior was always more interesting to Stein than fiction. There appears to be no Madame Bovary--a truly created character--in any of Stein's writing. She seems to have always

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believed that "No individual that you can conceive [a fictional character] can hold their own beside life [human life]." 5

The Aesthetic Ideal

While Cezanne's modern, decentralized composition revealed a form and style which Stein could adapt to her own ends, Flaubert's aesthetic ideal of rendering the "color" of existence exactly suited Stein's aesthetic of "bottom nature." Flaubert had written that he was after "rendering a color, a shade," and he suggested that in Madame Bovary, he wanted to render a grey color, "the mouldy color of a wood-ouse's existence." Emma Bovary is not made real to the reader but revealed. Stein recognized this as the greater achievement and the greater reality. "Story," of no interest to Stein, was of no interest to Flaubert:

The story, the plot of a novel is of no interest to me . . . The story of the novel [Madame Bovary] mattered so little to me that a few days before starting on it I still had in mind a very different Madame Bovary from the one I created. 6

It appears that character, rather than plot, mattered. Flaubert seems to have meant that he intended to realize Emma Bovary's nature any way that he could—"plot" being of importance only as it could reveal the character.

Stein came closest of any writer in the first two decades of the century to the "book about nothing" which "would be held together by the strength of its style." This was Flaubert's vision of the "beautiful" book:

What seems beautiful to me, what I should like to write, is a book about nothing, a book dependent on nothing external, which would be held together by the strength of its style, just as the earth suspended in the void, depends on nothing for its support; a book which would have almost no subject, or at least in which the subject would be almost invisible, if such a thing is possible.  

Stein believed that such a thing was possible. "Melanctha" in Three Lives was her first attempt at the book "held together by the strength of its style"; The Making of Americans was her second attempt. Tender Buttons is almost the book "about nothing, a book dependent on nothing external." Flaubert's aesthetic ideal, the book "in which the subject would be almost invisible," was not possible even for Stein although some of her word-portraits render the "sitter" invisible to the reader.

The intellectualizing of their approach and of their aesthetic ideals was, for Stein, as well as for Flaubert, a result of early training in science and medicine. By the time each began a literary career, there was little left of the romantic in their natures. Each saw the human condition as it was and could not reveal it otherwise. Flaubert's rendering of "color" (Emma Bovary's grey existence) and Stein's rendering of bottom nature (Lena's grey-brown lifelessness,

7 Ellman and Feidelson, p. 126.
for example) were unlike the popular aesthetic which was, and is, a
prose in which biography and anecdote are manipulated within the
confines of plot in order to appeal to the reader's sense of ethical
conduct and its rewards.

Stein's Aesthetic: "Bottom Nature"

After Three Lives in which Stein revealed the subjective lives
of three inarticulate natures, she began her final draft of The Making
of Americans. Initially, she intended a history of a "decent family's
progress" in which the middle class tradition was to assume the heroic
proportions of both cleanliness and godliness.

In the first draft of The Making of Americans, found in her
notebooks dated 1902-06, Gertrude Stein addresses herself to "brother
Americans" and pursues a dialogue with her reader in which she takes
as her thesis the virtue of "being born in middle class tradition":

I believe in middle class tradition and in
honest business methods . . . I am strong to
declare even here in the heart of individualistic
America that a material middle class with its
straitened bond of family is the one thing always
healthy, human, and vital and from which has
always sprung the best the world can know. 8

8 Autograph manuscript. First draft. YCAL.
However, by the time she was ready for the final draft of The Making of Americans, she had been seized with a zeal to record every kind of human personality that had existed:

I found there was a certain kind of human being who acted in a certain way, and another kind who acted in another kind of way, and their resemblances and their differences. And then I wanted to find out if you could make a history of the whole world, if you could know the whole life history of everyone in the world . . . I made enormous charts . . . I was to make a description of every kind of human being . . . 9

Into a series of small notebooks, Stein began to make studies of her friends and to record conversations. Scattered through the notebooks are dozens of diagrams in which "bottom natures" are represented, touching at haphazard points to other bottom natures. Stein's diagrams in her notebooks looked like spider webs, labeled at the junctions of the strands. For example, one diagram in which she included herself, her brother, Matisse, and Picasso, strung Matisse and Leon Solomons (her collaborator at Harvard in the automatic writing experiments), and herself along a strand representing the "pure scientist" type. Solomons is closest to the "pure" scientist nature, while Matisse and Gertrude, a level below Solomons, connect to another strand along which Leo Stein is represented. Also, the "Anglo Saxon" and "Fanatic" types connect to types on this diagram but evidently at distant points only, and probably only in a very minor (but perceptible) way:

9 "How Writing Is Written." The Choate Literary Magazine, Vol. 21, No. 2 (February, 1935.) This lecture of Stein's was delivered to the school on January 12, 1935 during her American lecture tour. It has been reprinted in Volume II of The Previously Uncollected Writings ed. by R. B. Haas.
Stein became convinced that if she could go on long enough, she could diagram all the types of people who had ever lived or were living or would live. About 400 types were realized in The Making of Americans. Had she been able to spread out her diagrams on a large map, all types of human beings, all of their "bottom natures" connecting at some point to other less "pure" bottom natures of the same general type, would appear.

Eventually, along with the diagrams, she entered careful and sharply perceptive descriptions of her family and friends. These cameos, which are such clearly realized portraits, rarely appear in her published writing except in abbreviated portraits in the autobiographical writing.

10 Stein notebook (DB-54), YCAL.
Even Alice Toklas, who appeared on the scene in 1907, did not escape examination and analysis:

From the way Alice acts about the Annette business, I may come gradually to think that she cares more about loving than about me, that is she cares more about having completely possession of loving me than of loving me, in short the perfect emotion is more to her than the object of it and if I get to think so her tears won't touch me, not so very much.11

Friends and observers reported that Gertrude sat quietly while Leo pontificated on the subject of modern art. She eventually got him as well as the others down in a notebook entry. His "bottom nature" was intellectual and enthusiastic but not creative:

L. I think I understand now, mistaken about power of abstraction, imaginative realization not vivid enough to get so far away from presented problems of another's work of art . . . Trouble with writing book [probably A.B.C. of Aesthetics] It ought to be about concrete works of art to be really interesting. Quality of description very different then because original . . . by own confession someone else always has had to do the completed thing, he cannot do the completed thing in realization or expression. Has really imagination when confronted by problem of another's work, or a body of facts. I am now quite certain.12

Leo, whom she had followed for thirty years, had become clear to her, and before long, she ceased to follow him or anyone else. His first work on aesthetics was a "commentary" rather than the analysis of works of art of which she knew he was capable and expert. He evidently

11 Stein Notebook (H-8), YCAL.
12 Stein notebook (I-12), YCAL.
did possess that magical quality of the art historian whose analysis of a painting transcends mere description and becomes, itself, a work of art. In his effort to be "comprehensive," Leo Stein lost the imaginative power by which he was able to entrance his visitors at the Rue de Fleurus. His was a sharp and critical intelligence dulled by an excessive "intellectualizing" of everything which interested him. Gertrude Stein's "intellectualizing" went into her notebooks, and became part of her total aesthetic system.

Sometime in the winter of 1908, Leo and Gertrude read Otto Weininger's *Sex and Character* (1902), published in English in London in 1906. It remained a "center of violent discussion" for half a year, and the Steins sent copies of it to everyone, "even to old friends in America." Typically, Leo met with a friend once a week for discussions of the book and intellectualized it to pieces; but Gertrude ingested and absorbed Weininger's system of character typology, expanding her own system in her notebooks to include Weininger's system.

Otto Weininger's book is an anti-feminist "study" in which maleness is equated with good qualities in human personality and femaleness with weak and undesirable qualities. The highest form in his system is the "total male" and the lowest form is "total female." The female types are polarized into (1) the "mother" type to whom only the child is of importance and who would become a mother by any man for the sake of having a child and (2) the "prostitute" type to whom the male is of importance only for sexual gratification.

Stein's reading of Weininger seems to have shored up her own system of characterology which was born in William James's classes and nurtured in the Harvard Psychological Laboratory. Many of Stein's terms for female roles are borrowed from Weininger's system, although the role in Stein's system takes on its own qualities. For example, Helen in Stein's Q.E.D., "prostitutes" herself but is not Weininger's pure type who would use the "male" only for sexual gratification. Helen needs affection more than she needs sex and wants to know that she is loved more than she wants the object of the love or the loving.

Stein saw herself as "masculine," and this revelation in her notebooks takes on an importance in the light of her interest in Sex and Character. In her own "adopted" masculinity, she found stimulus as a creative artist in Weininger's notion that "The male lives consciously, the female lives unconsciously." Her declaration of her own genius, too, may have found an initial impetus in Weininger's concept of the "completed individual" who is "timeless" and "outside" of his own generation and his own time.

Stein probably would have developed an elaborate system of classification without Weininger's book. Her training and her inclination led her to analyze personality and to note resemblances of the behavior patterns of her friends in her notebooks before Leo Stein's discovery of Sex and Character brought that book to her.

15 Ibid., pp. 279, 134-141.
16 Freud, who knew of Otto Weininger's work, felt that Weininger was mad. Others in psychology believed he was a genius. Otto Weininger committed suicide in 1903 at the age of twenty-three.
attention. But Weininger's book stimulated her interest in psychological
typology at the moment she was beginning her final draft of The Making
of Americans, and it was probably a factor in her submerging of
narrative elements and in her elevation of human relationships to
"heroic" battles between personalities. The struggle between people,
she wrote in a notebook entry, was like "the struggle I watch
often between the clouds and the sun burning them away."17

The sense of the struggle of unlike bottom natures, one attacking
and the other resisting, was evident in Stein's apprenticeship story,
Q.E.D., in which Stein made it clear that she believed there could be
no meeting of the minds—only deadlock—("I am afraid it comes very
near being a dead lock," she groaned dropping her head on her arms" is
the final line.) Individual natures, so singularly timed and so
complex could meet, evidently, only at tentative junctures on her
charts.

Stein's Modernist Aesthetic: Violating the Genre

Stein's aesthetic within a period of ten years from 1903 to 1913
was a haphazard progression from the conventional style and realism
of her autobiographical story, Q.E.D., to Tender Buttons in 1913 in
which she attempted to violate both syntax and meaning. This
violation began with The Making of Americans, finished about 1911,
when she abandoned the conventional narrative form after about fifty
pages and submerged narrative in order to reveal "bottom nature" in

17 Stein Notebook (6-17), YCAL.
about four hundred types, allowing, at the same time, her own
aesthetic considerations to erupt into the narrative.

In order to break away from conventional forms, her modern form
became a "violation" of the genre form. Picasso's violation of form in
his painting, at this time, resulted in a similar violation of
traditional genres in painting. In "Les Demoiselles," for example,
the representation of the human figures and of their environment is
violated by the splintering of forms and by the distortion of
"biographical" elements--faces become mask-like or masks and are
biographically impossible to identify; bodies are made into patterns
and rendered into cubes rather than rendered as biologically accurate
representations of particular human bodies. While the impulse is
toward abstraction, the work remains a representational one, but it
violates the conventional representational style. This is exactly
Stein's method: her narrative prose work remains a chronological
narrative, but the gerundive-participial style she adopts distorts
biographical and historical elements so that a "pattern" of behavior
is revealed, but she does not render an accurate accounting of
individual behavior patterns. In addition, Stein's use of impersonal
pronouns (one, some, someone, anyone, everyone) masks and conceals
identity--perhaps, an impulse on her part toward abstraction--but
they remain words of a representational nature which, indeed, do
represent "persons" but not individual personalities. In Stein's
word-portrait of Picasso (1909), both Picasso and his followers are
masked by these impersonal pronouns:
One whom some were following was one who
was completely charming.18

In Tender Buttons which she wrote in 1913 in Spain, Stein moved
even closer to abstraction when she violated the sentence and syntactic
order. Conventional sentence structure, with its conventions of word
order (subject+verb+object, for example), and its dependence upon the
tactical placement of function words19 was often rejected. Yet, the
object remains, if only because it is always named in the title of each
descriptive "poem."

Water Raining

Water astonishing and difficult
altogether makes a meadow and a stroke.

Mildred's Umbrella

A cause and no curve, a cause and
loud enough, a cause and extra a
loud clash and an extra wagon, a
sign of extra, a sac a small sac
and an established color and cunning,
a slender grey and no ribbon,
this means a loss a great loss a
restitution.20

Water raining or Mildred's umbrella remains the object described,
however "abstract" or violated that description appears to be. The
reader must consider the images in the particular short linguistic

18 The first line appears in Stein's notebooks (1908?) and the portrait
was written in 1909 and appeared in Camera Work (August, 1912),
giving the public its first taste of Steinese.
19 Words which function in the sentence as articles before nouns or as
prepositions introducing objects or as auxiliary verbs in verb
phrases.
20 Excerpts from "Objects," Tender Buttons, published in 1914 by the
poet, Donald Evans, in his Claire-Marie Press, New York. The other
"chapters" were called "Food" and "Rooms."
units in which Stein chose to render her descriptions. Just as in the collages of Picasso and Braque in this period, objects or parts of objects are set free from conventional contexts, juxtaposed against other set-free objects, and "presented" as compositions. In a Cubist painting of 1913-14 by Picasso called "Card Player," for example, "images" associated with the card player are present (cubes of wood panel, cards, an eye, a mass which may represent a seated figure) and are freed from any conventional context and juxtaposed against each other, forming a descriptive collage of "card-playing" rather than a representational rendering of a card player. Yet, the title of Stein's "Mildred's Umbrella" insists upon the unconventional images like "A cause and no curve" as the essence of Mildred's umbrella.

In Tender Buttons, Stein had forced her prose to the limits of meaning, yet that book remained her chief contribution to modern writing for some of her admirers. She said of it that "There is as much failure as success in it":

When this (Tender Buttons) was printed I did not understand the creation. I can see now, but one cannot understand a thing until it is done . . . Until then you are struggling.

Much as the struggling aesthetic of Picasso in "Les Demoiselles" remained on the canvas, the struggling aesthetic of Stein remained in Tender Buttons. She had not intended the publication of these studies, and only when she was asked by Donald Evans for permission to publish

22 A Primer, p. 30.
her plays, did she gather up the bits and pieces and allow him to publish them instead.

In Geography and Plays (1922), Stein was interested in violating the play form. But the first three pieces in Geography and Plays are portraits—each a variation on a genre. The first, "Susie Asado," is a twenty line portrait-poem in which the cadence of the meaningless words echoes the rhythm of a Spanish dancer's choreography:

Sweet sweet sweet sweet sweet tea.
Susie Asado.
Sweet sweet sweet sweet sweet tea.
Susie Asado. 23

In the second portrait, the prose-portrait of Alice Toklas called "Ada," the conventional narrative elements of the first two and one-half pages are little more than thinly disguised biographical details of Toklas' life before she and Stein met. But the portrait comes alive in the final paragraph in which Stein's participial-gerundive style insists upon the essence or the nature of the new relationship:

Trembling was all living, living was loving, someone was then the other one. Certainly this one was loving this Ada then. And certainly Ada . . . 24

"Miss Furr and Miss Skeene," the third piece in the book, is an achievement in which the narration is tightly controlled by a lean, flat prose style which realizes a lifestyle which is "flat." "Miss Furr and Miss Skeene" is psychological portraiture which submerges narrative and reveals repetitive behavior in sentence structures which are repetitive.

24 Ibid., p. 16.
Much of the writing which Stein did for an audience after the success of *The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas* and her American lecture tour of 1934-35 was "identity" writing. These were books written for a public which could identify the personality, Gertrude Stein, and for an identified audience. The other, important work was not done for identity's sake but for art's sake. The autobiographical writing which won Stein, at last, a public, had won her that public for the wrong reasons aesthetically yet even her autobiographical form was a violation of conventional autobiography.

Gertrude Stein is the ideal writer, as Picasso is the ideal painter, upon which to build an understanding of the revolutionary, outlaw aesthetic systems which are the foundation of Modernism. Both Stein and Picasso were at work at the turn of the century. Each had developed an aesthetic out of an uncompromising instinct to be free of the past and of its models. In his freedom, Picasso "discovered" Cubism. In freeing herself of the nineteenth century models for prose and poetry, Stein sacrificed accomplishments for discovery, displacing aesthetic values as she attempted new forms, leaving in the accumulation of the literary work of the first fifty years of the century, something best called "Steinese" which is only the tip of a complex aesthetic system. The recovery of Stein's aesthetic system, made up of the aesthetic values which dominated each new work, is the objective of the following seven chapters of this study.

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25 In music, Erik Satie, is the ideal modernist-revolutionary in his resistance to tradition. An outlaw in his aesthetic, he battled convention in his first work in 1887 and was still refusing convention in his last in 1925.
A very bad painter once said to a very good painter: Do what you like, you cannot get rid of the fact that we are contemporaries. . . The thing that is important is that nobody knows what the contemporariness is. In other words, they don't know where they are going, but they are on their way.

Introduction to the Content

The following seven chapters should be used as a guide for Stein studies. Specific works of Stein's are examined with the intention to recover (1) her aesthetic system as it grew out of the conventional aesthetic system she rejected in nineteenth century writing, (2) her method for expressing her aesthetic which became her "outlaw" form which violated the conventional genre forms, and (3) her "borrowed" or painterly aesthetic values which she intuited from the work of her painter friends, especially Picasso.

Out of Stein's 600 titles, those have been chosen which are innovative or which were acclaimed when they were published. An effort has been made to chose both those inaccessible and accessible works--the accessibility of which was usually determined by critics and publishers.

Some of Stein's own critical comments concerning her writing, particularly her lectures, are included in appropriate chapters. Only one of her plays, The Mother of Us All, is included as an example of her feminist writing as well as the single example of her drama.

In the case of each work, some background material and some analysis, including special emphasis on Stein's developing aesthetic system as it is realized in that work, follows. When the condition of the autograph manuscript indicates Stein's compositional method and/or aesthetic values, these are detailed. The facts of publication, in some cases, are relevant to the distribution and accessibility of Stein's writing, and these are included, especially where the lack
of distribution of a book such as the small number of *The Making of Americans* (probably 300 copies) which reached an audience, made Stein's writing appear to be elitist. Where some minor detail of interest has come to my attention which I feel will be of use to the instructor, I have included it, but most biographical information is available elsewhere in detail and is not included. The purpose of the following chapters is to make Stein accessible to the instructor, first, and consequently, to student readers.
CHAPTER I

Apprenticeship Writing

Three early apprenticeship pieces which Stein wrote before Three Lives—or before 1905—were published in 1971. The first draft of five early chapters of The Making of Americans and Q.E.D. were written in 1903. Fernhurst was written in 1904-05. These comprise the apprenticeship work along with the material in her private notebooks. The early chapters of The Making of Americans (see Chapter III) and Q.E.D. are conventional narratives in a conventional prose style. About 1904, in Fernhurst, Stein's style becomes eccentric. She uses repetition to reveal the rigidity of behavior, a deviant sentence structure punctuated only with commas to increase tempo, and a colloquial style which appears to mirror, or at least to suggest, the colloquial speech of her characters.

Q.E.D. and Fernhurst are evidence of Stein's early commitment to the realization of "bottom natures" and to the view that human

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1 Fernhurst, Q.E.D. and Other Early Writings (New York: Liveright, 1971). All quotations from these works are taken from this publication and page numbers cited refer to this edition.

2 Stein's notebooks (1902-09) along with Leon Katz's work on The Making of Americans (using the notebooks as source material) is to be published in the future by Liveright.
relationships as "struggles" between natures are the "real drama" as she wrote in a private notebook entry. Q.E.D. is especially interesting since it is the story of Stein's first lesbian encounter which, it appears, she reconstructed from letters sent to her as well as from copies she had made of her own letters.

**Quod Erat Demonstrandum (1903)**

The story of Stein's first love affair appears to have become the plot for her first story. The plot of Q.E.D. is simply this: without realizing the intimacy of the relationship between May Bookstaver (who becomes Helen Thomas in the story) and Mabel Haynes (Mabel Neath in the story), Stein (Adele) becomes involved with May. The three women are fixed to their positions in the triangle through their essential natures (which are unchanging), and the relationships are in a deadlock.

Stein must have recognized that the story's explicit lesbian theme and the explicit lesbian encounters would prohibit publication. She had written the story using the letters which May Bookstaver had sent to her and copies of her own letters to Bookstaver. Consequently, the dialogue is "literary" rather than colloquial, since it represents written conversation rather than spoken conversation.

Stein had read Henry James' *The Wings of the Dove* while the events which she set down as fiction in Q.E.D. were taking place.³

³ Henry James' *The Wings of the Dove* was published in 1902, and the affair of which Stein wrote in Q.E.D. occurred in 1901-02.
She compared one of her characters in *Q.E.D.* to Henry James' heroine, Kate Croy:

> Like Kate Croy, she would tell me 'I shall sacrifice nothing and nobody' and that's just her situation, she wants and will try for everything (p. 121)

Stein also seems to attempt a Jamesian enrichment of her narrative when she suggests that her three characters were "distinctly American but each one bore the stamp of one of the older civilizations, incomplete and frustrated in this American version but still always insisten" (p. 54). But Stein did not have James' fascination with English society, and her interest in the conventions of "the social situation" and "aristocratic order" (James's phrases in *The Wings of the Dove*) flagged. She does describe Helen Thomas as "the American version of the English Handsome girl" (James used "handsome" to describe Kate Croy), but she is primarily interested in the natures of the three women rather than in plot, setting, or theme.

The three "Books" of *Q.E.D.* are subtitled with the three women's names. Book I is "Adele" which seems to suggest that hers is the important point of view in the narrative. Book II is "Mabel," and her secondary position indicates her importance to the plot as the "other man" in contention for Helen's affection. The last book, "Helen," reveals Helen in relationship to Adele, subordinating this character to Adele. Stein clearly, was indulging in self-glorification in identifying the Adele character with herself. The other characters are "incomplete" personalities (vulgarized editions of their types), but Adele-Stein is a complete personality who will survive alone
while the others can only survive as complements to each other's incomplete natures.

Stein's chief aesthetic interest in character determined her emphasis on the essential or "bottom nature" in these personalities. The prostitute type, of which Helen is a "pure" example, Stein defines in her notebooks as "egotists but no feeling of being important to themselves inside them" except as they find their importance in resisting. In not yielding, she notes, "they keep themselves from giving themselves and so get their sense of importance . . . they have power only when they are loved." 4

The model for Mabel Neath (Mabel Haynes) appears in another notebook entry as a "pure" masculine type, her whole personality or bottom nature "concentrated to attack." Thus, the two personalities which interact most harmoniously—the resisting nature and the attacking nature—are seen in Helen and Mabel. These two are complementary—opposites attracting and interacting.

Stein seems to see her own nature (or in Q.E.D., Adele's nature) as a complicated androgynous nature neither purely feminine (or resisting) nor masculine (attacking). She defines her own nature as "pure servant female." This type dominates only within her limited territory, but may attack as well as resist:

I like insolence. I find it difficult to work up energy enough to dominate. 5

4 Stein Notebook (DB-36), YCAL.
5 Stein Notebook (C-30), YCAL.
As pure servant female, Adele (or Stein) fails to complement either the resisting nature (since she cannot dominate) or the attacking nature (since it is not in the nature of the servant type to resist). This "pure servant female" type, not clearly defined by the Adele character in Q.E.D., is realized fully in the three chief protagonists in Three Lives, for which Q.E.D. is the "first draft."

At one point in her notebooks, Stein writes that the "Epilogue of the whole story will be yes I say it is hard living down the tempers we are born with." This is actually the epilogue for her long novel, The Making of Americans, which was taking shape in the notebooks from 1902 through 1908, but it might be the epilogue for Quod Erat Demonstrandum and for Three Lives, as well. In her word-portraits of 1909-11, and in particular, in her portraits of Picasso and Matisse, and in "Miss Furr and Miss Skeene," the aesthetic impulse which drove her was to reveal the "rhythm of the spoken personality as directly as possible using every means that [she] could invent." Her style, eventually, was the result of a series of aesthetic choices she made in order to realize personality as something akin to bio-rhythms.

Although Stein's aesthetic, in her mature style, denied "memory" which recalls and re-creates, rather than expresses the now-time of experience, in Q.E.D., expressed narrative and so re-created experience. As such, Stein indulged in descriptive passages and in imagery. Even the direct and implied metaphor, rare even in Three Lives and The Making of Americans, is present in Q.E.D. Adele, for example, as the American type, is in foreign waters (implied) when the three sail for

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6 Stein Notebook (1-11), YCAL.
Europe and, of course, she is the "innocent" abroad (also implied). When Adele loses her "moral sense," the imagery of lost virginity is explicit:

They lay on the deck, the stars bright
overhead and the wine-colored sea
following fast behind the ploughing screw.  (p. 64)

Europe, in Q.E.D., is the metaphor for complication and evil; New York (and America) is "obvious, superficial, clean simplicity" (p. 101). London is characterized by "the dead weight of that fog and smoke laden air" and "women with bedraggled, frayed out skirts, their faces swollen and pimply," while New York is white snow and "empty upper air" and "straight high undecorated houses" (p. 100).

As Picasso did in his Blue Period, Stein emptied herself (a phrase she used in analyzing his aesthetic) of this unhappy time. She did not again permit herself the cathartic of a narrative as autobiographical.

In Q.E.D., Stein had surrendered to a nineteenth century impulse to tell a story with a beginning, a middle, and an ending. In her second lecture on "Narration" she said, "When I first began writing, I was tremendously impressed by anything by everything having a beginning, a middle, and an ending." She had also attempted to manipulate the anecdotal material so that the reader's sense of right conduct and wrong conduct coincided with her own. One critic has said of it, "Circumlocution, euphemism, pedantry bring the story to its knees" and that "its rhythms are held back."7 The narrative skeleton of Q.E.D.

was used more creatively in "Melanctha" where the rhythms of both her
language and her characters are set free.

Stein finished Q.E.D. on October 24, 1903 in Paris. It remained
stored away until Louis Bromfield read it in 1932. It was published,
with some material changed, by The Banyan Press in 1950, but since only
516 copies were printed, it was read by only a few of Stein's
audience who must have been surprised by Q.E.D.'s
conventionality of form. In the version published by Liveright in 1971 (Fernhurst,
Q.E.D., etc.), Stein's original text was restored.

Fernhurst (1904)

Late in her thirtieth year, Stein wrote Fernhurst. It is an
accounting of the "Hodder affair," a scandal which took place on the
Bryn Mawr campus. Alfred Hodder, who had been a brilliant student of
William James, was well known in the Stein circle. Stein may have
first heard of the scandal from Mabel Haynes (the Mabel of Q.E.D.)
who was a Bryn Mawr graduate. Alfred Hodder is called Philip Redfern
in the story; the other "masculine" figure is that of Dean Carey
Thomas who is Dean Helen Thornton in the story. The love object is a
female philosophy teacher at Bryn Mawr named Miss Mary Gwinn (Miss
Janet Bruce in Fernhurst.) The scandal ended with Hodder and Mary
Gwinn leaving Bryn Mawr together and, eventually, marrying.

In Fernhurst, Philip Redfern is the outsider who steps innocently
into an established relationship. Redfern's wife is the free-spirited

8 Carey Thomas was dean at Bryn Mawr and its second president in the
years 1885-1922. See The Making of a Feminist: Early Journals and
Letters of M. Carey Thomas. (Kent, Ohio: Kent State Univ. Press, 1980).
Western woman whose innocence first attracts and then repels Redfern. Redfern appears to be an androgynous figure, "feminized" by a zealous mother whose "constant rebellion against the pressure of her husband's steady domination found effective expression in the training of her son to be the champion of the rights of women."

Redfern's rival for Miss Gwinn's affection is Dean Helen Thornton, a true or "pure" masculine type. Stein goes to some length to show Dean Thornton as a leader in the feminist movement who had been raised in a Quaker household where the "doctrine of the superiority of women had been highly developed." She had been chosen by the founder of Fernhurst to help establish the college for women in an atmosphere of intellectual freedom like that of men's colleges. The Dean is a practical person, but she is not scholarly. To raise the intellectual environment of Fernhurst, it is necessary for her to find a complement in the figure of a scholarly woman. She has chosen for her partner, a scholarly mind--Miss Janet Bruce--whose influence would not "trouble" Dean Thornton's realm of administrative power. Stein points out that these two women "of such different natures" are of the same "unmoral temper":

The one practical worldly ... adapting the means to a specific end and the other with a mind of a philosopher ... a dreamy detached nature ... and a strange incapacity to touch the lives of others. (p. 20)10

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9 Although Carey Thomas, the model for the Dean, had a Ph.D. degree from Zurich, summa cum laude, her journals and letters give no evidence of a literary or scholarly mind.

10 Fernhurst, Q.E.D. (same source as used for Q.E.D.). Liveright paperback.
The plot is a simple one. Philip Redfern comes to Fernhurst to teach. He meets Miss Bruce, falls in love with her unaware of the nature of her relationship to Dean Helen Thornton. His wife is unaware of his interest in Miss Bruce. The students are fascinated by the affair and watch its course intently. The Dean discovers the affair, alerts Redfern's wife, who finds and confronts him with a damaging letter he had written to Miss Bruce. Redfern is forced to leave Fernhurst and the Dean "regained all property rights" in Miss Bruce and, at the end, Miss Thornton and Miss Bruce are once again "the two very interesting personalities in the place . . . in their very same place."

The story is told in forty-six pages. It is wordy and dull and self-consciously rhetorical. The dialogue which moves Q.E.D. forward is missing in Fernhurst, and the author busily imposes herself in the first person between the narrative and the reader.

Fernhurst is of importance, however, not only as the second apprentice work, but because Stein copied it into The Making of Americans later.

Fernhurst is divided into seven short chapters. The first chapter is written in the first person intentionally didactic and messianic and takes up women's rights and women's educations. Eventually, the Dean is introduced, after which follows a lengthy exposition on women's colleges:
... one college trains them to be cultured sophisticated perhaps decadent, another makes them aggressively healthy and crudely virgin, another increases their learning power at the expense of their health ... it has always seemed to be a dreadful task to decide for any young woman, what college shall make for her a character. (pp. 6-7)

Although Stein will shortly begin her analysis of the character's personalities, she seems to suggest here that women's colleges provide an intellectual and emotional environment which shapes personality. Or, perhaps, misshapes personality. The rambling first chapter ends on a self-conscious note: "And you shall none of it says my reader tired of this posing." "Posing" refers to the stance that men and women can be made equal through education.

Philip Redfern is introduced in Chapter II. At a faculty tea for the new instructor, Redfern, immediately attracted to Miss Bruce, discusses "naive realism" with her. Chapter III establishes, as college gossip, the histories of the college, of Dean Thornton, and of Miss Bruce.

At the end of Chapter III, the metaphor of the wall which Stein used in O.E.D. ("Adele was aroused from it by a kiss that seemed to scale the very walls of chastity.") becomes again the metaphor for a place of innocence. Miss Bruce wishes to "tear down the walls that enclosed her and escape into the world of humans" (human experience).

Chapter IV of Fernhurst is devoted to a lengthy history of Philip Redfern at college in the Middle West "where no one was conscious of a grandfather and not held responsible for a father" which Stein calls
"a complete democracy ... a simple world, uncultured but not crude."
The notion of "complete" or completed in Stein is analogous to ideal. Redfern meets Nancy there (a "Western woman") and marries her. The marriage is not a happy one and becomes an "armed neutrality."
Nancy Redfern "tried all ways of breaking through the walls that confined her." Here, the walls are Redfern's "unfailing scrupulous courtesy"—his elaborate Southern courtesy which her Western openness and eagerness cannot penetrate. His is an old world mannerism and hers is a new world innocence. As in O.E.D., the "old world" signals complication and the new world, particularly the West, signals open-minded honesty and directness.

In Chapter V, Redfern breaks down the wall for Miss Bruce and "lets her escape" into the world where, it appears, she will come to terms with her feelings and with life.

In Chapter VI, after the Dean discovers the affair and alerts Redfern's wife, the "atmosphere" of the college campus becomes threatening. The once-secure walled community is now a prison from which there is no escape. For the lovers, there is "no moment ... without an audience." Even for Nancy Redfern, the wronged, innocent wife, there was a vague uneasiness:

that had a different meaning than the habitual struggle against the hard wall of chivalrous courtesy that Redfern had erected before her. (p. 39)

In Chapter VI, the impasse which Stein has created must be resolved. She builds Nancy Redfern's "vague uneasiness" and sense of
powerlessness through the use of repetition, the rhetorical device for revealing the rigidity (the fixed nature) of character which she perfected in her mature writing:

She sat there long and long thinking over
again and again the same weary round of
thoughts and terrors. (p. 42)

Stein employs alliteration, too, as a form of repetition—thinking, thoughts, and terrors in the line quoted above stressing "action" and "mood."

At first, Nancy Redfern is "powerless" to change Redfern and "powerless" to get within Redfern's polished guard. Then, she finds power in her 'determination to watch him—"She must watch him."

In the long weary days that followed . . .
  she must watch him always and secretly . . .
  she dared not keep an open watch but her
observation was unceasing and did not escape
the keen observers who with eager interest
were watching this drama work itself out in
their midst. (pp. 42-43)

In the following paragraph, watch is used five more times, increasing the pace of the prose as well as the sinister effect since Redfern is first unconscious of the danger—"too much on guard [his natural pose] to fear surprise" and, at the same time, "too ignorant of women's ways to see danger where danger really lay." Mrs. Redfern's watching is "suspicious watching"; the students "eagerly" watch and then "watched openly, joyously, tauntingly":
Mrs. Redfern watched secretly, furtively, incessantly, the dean watched abruptly, annoyingly, intermittently, there was no moment when they were without an audience and that audience in keen observation and ready from one motive or another to interpret largely slight variations in tone and manner. (p. 43)

The deviant sentence structure (comma splices abound) forces the reader to push on without pause, increasing the tempo and the sense of onrushing doom.

When Stein has convinced the reader of the "maze of watching womanhood" through which Redfern moves "half conscious, half unconscious," she returns to Nancy Redfern who is now sad; "sad" repeated eight times within four sentences, replacing "powerless," for Nancy Redfern's chief activities are now sitting and sadness. Again, the alliteration is a repetition forced upon the reader. An additional sixteen words beginning with s in the excerpt below slow the prose rhythm and emphasize the two most important s words—sad and sat:

. . . Mrs. Redfern filled with her sad past and sadder future sat in her room drearily watching the young leaves shining brilliantly green in the warm sunshine of the long row of elms that stretched away through the village toward the green hills that rose so beautifully beyond. . . As she sat there in sadness . . . she had yielded her spirit to the languor of that morning springtime and sadness had become stronger in her than desire. She sat there in quiet sadness for some minutes and then the old eager anxiety sprang into full life, her hands strained in their clasp. . . (p. 45)
At this moment, Nancy Redfern takes her own life into her hands, now "strained in their clasp." She goes into her husband's study, opens his portfolio and reads the letter he has written to Miss Bruce--"she had her evidence." (The s words have become strained and sprang, replacing sad and sat.) She confronts Redfern with the evidence:

"Redfern was sinful (the final s word); she was dishonorable."

Nancy Redfern has changed; she lies--"I found it by accident." Redfern does not speak as she hurries from the room:

"That was a brutally discourteous act"
Redfern said to himself some hours later,
"I should have accepted her apology, of course she lied but I ought not to have shown that I thought so"  (p. 46)

Chapter VI ends on this note. Each has been untrue to his essential nature. Nancy Redfern, the Westerner, open and innocent, has become crafty and wise; Philip Redfern, the old-world, Southern gentleman, has failed in his "unfailing scrupulous courtesy." The walls are down: Nancy Redfern escapes through the crumbled wall of "courtesy and deference toward all women," and Redfern is exposed without his "unfailing" protective wall of courtesy. His "brutally discourteous act" is like her furtive, incessant watching and final lie--both acts are foreign to the actor's nature.

Chapter VII, the final chapter, begins "This was the end of Redfern's teaching experience--for the rest of his days he lived the difficult life of a man of letters who aspires to be an effective agent in the actual working of a boisterous world." In the real world beyond the college walls, Redfern's personality is splintered:
"Lathrop tells a lie as it it were the truth" he said speaking of another man of letters "and I tell the truth as if it were a lie." (p. 47)

But Nancy Redfern is freed from the insecurity of a marriage in which old-world courtesy imprisoned her; Dean Thornton is freed from the wall behind which she barricaded herself when her "property rights" were threatened. The first has new worlds to conquer and the second re-establishes her territorial imperative.

Redfern has been the most endangered by the situation which he had created. His "instincts always thrust him into danger and his chivalry bound him to a losing fight":

He did not know how to win, how to avoid the battle or how to yield—he only learned to dread the fire, he never learned to keep his fingers from it—the elements were so mixed in him that his best was no help against his worst and his worst never won the victory over his best—he remained always a hopeless inextricable mess. (p. 48)

Redfern's nature is "mixed," neither pure masculine nor complete (ideal). His androgynous nature produced by his mother's teaching is against nature and dooms him to failure. Dean Thornton, more complete as a masculine type, succeeds: "before many years she had regained all property rights in this shy learned creature" (Miss Bruce). Again, as in Q.E.D., property rights win over love. Fernhurst ends with "the two very interesting personalities in the place (the implication here is that now they are watched) were the dean Miss Thornton with her friend Miss Bruce in their very same place" (the implication is that neither their natures nor their relationship has changed).
Redfern's bottom nature is broadly developed in Fernhurst:
Redfern is a "fern" but a deviant fern, easily distinguished from the natural ferns in the fern woods. His unfailing and scrupulous courtesy is defeated by the unfailing and scrupulous energy of the women in whose world he has attempted to dominate. His nature dooms him to failure.

Summary

In both Q.E.D. and Fernhurst, Stein's aesthetic appears initially to be determined by the impulse to retell a true story with a beginning, middle and an end—the mimetic impulse to hold up the mirror to life. But the narrative impulse deteriorates, and the effort at mimesis seen clearly through the attempt at realistic dialogue in Q.E.D., vanishes in Fernhurst. The militant rhetoric of feminism, which surfaces in Fernhurst, fades. The impulse to demonstrate that personality (or bottom nature) evidenced in habitual behavior and habitual speech pre-determines success and failure in life dominates Stein's aesthetic even in these two apprentice pieces of prose.

Repetition and alliteration surface in Fernhurst as rhetorical devices which reveal habitual behavior. In both stories the notion of completed or ideal personality types surfaces. It was not events which interested Stein; her aesthetic was dominated by "personality" or the subjective life. In her notebooks of this period, she wrote:
Everyone has their own nature in them.
This comes out of them as repeating.
This comes out of them as making success
or failure in their living.  

In Fernhurst, she had discovered the stylistic device to express this
"nature"—repetition.
CHAPTER II

Revealing the Inarticulate Nature

In the period 1903-05, two of Leo Stein's aesthetic passions were Flaubert and Cezanne. Acting still as his sister's mentor, he persuaded her to embrace both. After finishing Fernhurst, Stein began to translate Flaubert's Trois Contes (Three Tales) which included "Un Coeur Simple" ("A Simple Heart"). The necessity to read slowly, isolating phrases, finding the English equivalent for the French words and phrases, and the sight of an unfamiliar word order must have diminished the "inherited capital" of Jamesian syntax—both that of Henry's novels and of William's Psychology.¹

The influence of Flaubert's "Un Coeur Simple" on Stein's "The Good Anna," the first story in Three Lives, is obvious. But Cezanne's influence on Three Lives' composition is less clear, although Leo and Gertrude had begun collecting Cezanne late in 1904 and owned the "Portrait of Madame Cezanne." Both Flaubert and Cezanne were masters of portraiture; and their subjects were often the humble, common people.

¹ It is reasonable to assume that Stein had read the one volume edition of William James (published in 1892) which was required reading at Harvard. Possibly, she had read the earlier two volume edition.
Cezanne's portrait of his wife, for example, is crude and forceful, Fauve in color and execution. Stein evidently sat at a table beneath this Cezanne portrait to write *Three Lives*, and she said in the interview in 1946 that both Flaubert and Cezanne had influenced "Everything I have done" and that it was Cezanne's concept that in composition "one thing was as important as another thing" that gave her a "new feeling about composition."²

Another painterly influence seems to have been at work on Stein's developing aesthetic, however, at the time she wrote *Three Lives*. Stein's brother Michael and his wife had departed for San Francisco to assess the damage done to their property during the earthquake there on April 18, 1906. Their large collection of Matisse paintings was "suddenly on the walls" except for the three which Michael Stein took with him.³ Matisse's crude, intense Fauve portraits of women ("The Green Line" and "The Woman with the Hat") may have been as instructive as Cezanne's "Portrait of Madame Cezanne." At any rate, when she had finished *Three Lives* in the fall of 1906, her own enthusiasms seemed to be Swift and Matisse. She wrote to a friend, Mabel Weeks, that "it [Three Lives] will certainly make your hair curl with the complications and tintinabulations of its style" and "I think it is a noble combination of Swift [she had been reading Swift's "The Tale of a Tub"] and Matisse."⁴

⁴ Ibid., p. 87.
Stein also wrote Mabel Weeks that her book was about "niggers and servant girls . . . Dey is very simple and I don't think they will interest the great American public." If the "great American" reading public which Stein indicated was the public who read Henry James, she was probably accurate in feeling that her simple characters would be no match for James's cast of characters. Stein's characters' sensibilities were undeveloped, their environment and inclinations were base, and their lives were filled with real poverty as well as with the poverty of ignorance.

Stein's three chief protagonists in Three Lives are limited to the range of experience possible in the kitchen, the back streets, and the bed. Even death is a dehumanizing experience, in a public bed, in all three cases. There is no final ecstasy or hallucinatory perception such as Flaubert's Felicite experienced in "Un Coeur Simple" when she died with a vision of the opening heavens before her—and in her own bed. Stein's Anna died on the operating table, exhausted by poverty, hard work, and illness; Lena died almost unnoticed in a difficult childbirth; and Melanchtha died a friendless pauper in a "home for poor consumptives" in an even more humiliating kind of public bed.

Stein's characters might have written the Jules LaForgue line, which Stein used for an epigraph for Three Lives, had they been articulate:

Donc je suis un malheureaux et ce n'est ni ma faute no celle de la vie.

(To be sure, I am an unhappy person and it is neither my fault nor that of life.)
"The Good Anna"

"The Good Anna" is almost a no-man's land. The kitchen and the marketplace are the battlegrounds peopled with women. In this first story, the extent of Flaubert's influence is obvious. In both stories, the first line establishes the positions of the two protagonists as mistress and servant; the locale is established (a bridge in each story); and the reputation (or "bottom nature") of both mistress and servant is established in order to reveal the servant's role as the dominant role:

Flaubert's "A Simple Heart":
Madame Aubain's servant Felicite was the envy of the ladies of Pont l'Eveque for half a century.

Stein's "The Good Anna":
The tradesmen of Bridgeport learned to dread the sound of 'Miss Mathilda' for with that name the good Anna always conquered. (p. 11)

In both stories, the servant is middle-aged, hard-working, joyless. Felicite was silent, straight, and precise in her movements—"like a woman made of wood and going by clockwork." Stein's Anna "led

5 Stein's title for the story in the autograph manuscript (YCAL) was "The life and death of the good Anna." She added "by Jane Sands," having also considered the possibilities for her "nom de plume" in a notebook (NB-12) to be Jane Sandys, Pauline Manders, Pauline Sandys.

an arduous troubled life." She, too, seems never to have been a young woman:

The good Anna was a small, spare, german woman, at this time about forty years of age. Her face was worn, her cheeks were thin, her mouth drawn and firm, and her light blue eyes were very bright. (p. 13)

Anna has a romance—a widow, Mrs. Lehnten, who befriends her but Anna's romance is not a sexual encounter. (Once, Felicite had been in love with a young man who married an older woman.) Anna's maternal instinct is lavished upon the children of her employers and, eventually, upon her dogs. (Felicite adored a parrot.) The death of Anna is reported by her friend in a letter to Miss Mathilda, the death becoming an "item" in the correspondence, and it is not re-created. What is important about Anna's death is the consistency of her behavior, even beyond the last moment of her life:

"Miss Annie died in the hospital yesterday after a hard operation. She was talking about you and Doctor and Miss Mary Wadsworth (her employers) all the time. She said she hoped you would take Peter and the little Rags (her dogs) to keep when you come back to America to live. I will keep them for you here Miss Mathilda. Miss Annie died easy, Miss Mathilda, and sent you her love." (p. 82)

Flaubert's Felicite, however, has a unique spiritual experience at the end:

Her lips smiled. The beats of her heart lessened one by one, vaguer each time and softer, as a fountain sinks, an echo disappears; and when she sighed her last breath, she thought she saw an opening in the heavens, and a gigantic parrot hovering above her head.
What Stein seems to have discovered in Flaubert's "A Simple Heart" was the economical model for a narrative which could serve as a "case history" of Lena Lebender, the German housekeeper who worked for the Steins in Baltimore. Anna's (or Lena Lebender's) case is presented in seventy-one pages. Flaubert's economy (twelve pages less) is managed with less dialogue. Too, Stein wrote herself into the role of cowed mistress which she had played in Baltimore, and so magnified the character of Miss Mathilda giving it a more sympathetic rendering than Flaubert gave to Madame Aubain:

And then Miss Mathilda loved to go out on joyous country tramps . . . over rolling hills and cornfields, glorious in the setting sun, and dogwood white and shining underneath the moon . . . it was hard to have to think of Anna's anger at the late return (p. 22)

But even here, when Stein is in danger of confusing her point of view, she used the consciousness of Miss Mathilda to reinforce the personality of Anna: "it was hard to have to think of Anna's anger at the late return." It is Anna's voice that is the insistent voice in the story:

"You bad dog," Anna said to Peter that night, "you bad dog." (p. 12)

"Sallie this ain't the same banana that I brought home yesterday for Miss Mathilda for her breakfast" (p. 20)

This grumbling and incessant disapproval in Anna's scolding is the battleground where Anna triumphs. Neither the dogs nor the kitchen
help nor Miss Mathilda can dominate Anna. Anna's life is made "hard and arduous" by Anna's own nature. It is this revelation which Stein accomplishes in the repetitions of the scoldings with which Anna conquers her dogs, the other maids, and even her employer who finds it "hard" to think of Anna's displeasure. Stein's intention here is to reveal Anna's inarticulate nature in Anna's own speech.

Stein attempted to recreate the strange dislocations of Anna's speech in a syntax representative of that of the German immigrants who expressed themselves in a language in which the nuances of idiom and meaning still escaped them. But this inability to speak and to think in an idiomatic way often forces a more direct, child-like clarity of expression. Often, the phrasing seems to reflect the German idiom such as the careless use of the preposition which gives a colloquial quality to the dialogue:

"Oh, Miss Mathilda . . . and you gave all that money out for that when you need a dress to go out in so bad." (p. 21)

Even Anna's thoughts and feelings which she cannot articulate are recreated in Anna's dialect and speech rhythms so that the reader is inside Anna's consciousness:

Miss Jane was always careful and respectful and very good to Anna, but never could Anna be a girl in a household where Miss Jane would be the head. This much was certain in her mind (p. 33)

Even the environment and the mood of a spring day is revealed through Anna's speech patterns as Anna "feels" the day:
The languor and the stir, the warmth and weight and the strong feel of life from the deep centres of the earth that comes always with the early, soaking spring, when it is not answered with an active fervent joy, gives always anger, irritation, and unrest. (p. 28)

Anna's articulated response even to anxiety is grumbling and scolding, her means of domination and triumph, which is her bottom nature:

To Anna alone there in the carriage, drawing always nearer to the struggle with her mistress . . . and the new life all around about were simply maddening. "Baby! if you don't lie still, I think I will kill you. I can't stand it any more like this." (p. 28)

Stein's use of repetition, which surfaced in Fernhurst, again appears in "The Good Anna" on the first page in an insistence on the "little house" of Miss Mathilda:

Anna managed the whole little house for Miss Mathilda. It was a funny little house, one of a whole row of all the same kind that made a close pile like a row of dominoes that a child knocks over . . . They were funny little houses, two stories high, with red brick fronts and long white steps. This one little house was always very full with Miss Mathilda, an under servant, stray dogs and cats and Anna's voice that scolded, managed, and grumbled all day long. (p. 11)

This rhetorical device, some critics have suggested, is an incantation or a "calling into being" of the object. Stein's calling-into-being of the "little house" by repeating it four times insists upon the "littleness" of the house and reinforces the image of the "full" house in which Miss Mathilda, an under-servant, stray dogs and cats,
and Anna's voice fill it to overflowing. "House" is a much repeated word in "The Good Anna" since it is the chief environment in which Anna's nature asserts itself.

At the end of the story, Anna cannot be persuaded to give up her house to go to the hospital, "for she had her house all furnished and she simply could not let it go." When she does, finally, "let it go," she has relinquished the environment in which she dominated. In the hospital where she cannot dominate her environment, she dies.

In a notebook entry, Stein attributed to Flaubert the aesthetic objectivity with which she had attempted to write the story of Anna:

F laubert has no emotion about his material
but complete emotion about his expression.7

"The Good Anna" is, however, a sympathetic rendering. Midway in the story, when Stein declares, "But things were not so simple with our Anna," Stein's surprising sympathetic identification with Anna signals the author's voice replacing the voice of Anna. Now, the insistent voice is that of the biographer of Anna, and Anna's voice—her direct speech—and vitality almost cease. At the end of Part II, it is the author who now reports as indirect discourse Anna's "scolding":

The last thing Miss Mathilda heard was the
good Anna bidding foolish Peter say good
bye and be sure to remember Miss Mathilda.

P. 76)

7 Stein Notebook (13-12).
In Part III, Anna's voice has ceased. It is not even reported as indirect discourse. Anna is reported to be living—working, saving, scolding. Anna becomes "tired, more pale yellow, and in her face more thin and worn and worried." Anna's death is reported: "And then the good Anna with her strong, strained, worn-out body died."

Only a faint echo of Anna's voice in the role in which she had dominated "the tradesmen of Bridgeport" lingers, and the scolding is diminished to a plea ("she hoped you would take Peter and little Rags"). Anna has the final word, faint though it is, passed along to Miss Mathilda in a letter mailed to Europe:

Miss Annie died easy, Miss Mathilda, and sent you her love. (p. 82)

The final words of the story, "and sent you her love," achieve the "last touch of human nature" which Stein's aesthetic substituted for conventional sympathetic realism. The quintessential element which is fixed in human personality, Stein felt, told the "story."

Stein's achievement in "The Good Anna" was a case history. The accuracy of its realization is best seen in a letter written to Stein on May 11, 1907 by the real Anna (Lena Lebender):

I still have my little home, try to do the best I can but have a hard struggle at times—but still it is my own little home.\(^8\)

The final words of this letter were, "Jack and Rags send love."

Since the letter arrived only three months after Stein finished the

\(^8\) The Flowers of Friendship, p. 39. The letter from Lena Lebender was sent from Baltimore to Stein in Paris.
book, it is reasonable to think that she may have added on or altered the letter which ends "The Good Anna" after she received Lena Lebender's letter, but there is no evidence in the autograph manuscript to suggest an addition or a revision. Obviously, she had her material so well in hand that she could "invent" the real Anna's final words.

"The Gentle Lena"\(^9\)

Lena is told with great economy; it is a monologue about half as long as "The Good Anna." Stein uses the syntax of the German immigrant, not only to suggest the insular environment of the German community in Baltimore but also to suggest a "German" phlegmatic temperament and Lena's own inertia and increasing passivity.

Lena, brought to America by an aunt, cannot speak English. Her voice is not heard at first, but the author tells us that she is "patient, gentle, sweet, and German." Lena goes to work for a "pleasant, unexactng mistress and her children, and they all liked Lena very well." Lena's life is pleasant. Lena's voice is reported first as she awakens the children in the mornings in a voice "as soothing and as appealing as a delicate soft breeze in midday summer." She would call again "always even, gentle, patient." Even when the other servant girls teased her, their teasing "only made a gentle stir within her."

\(^9\) The original title in the autograph manuscript (YCAL) was "The Story of a gentle soul."
In her new pleasant life, Lena grows pretty:

Lena was a brown and pleasant creature, brown as blonde races often have them brown, brown, not with the yellow or the red or the chocolate brown of sun burned countries, but brown with the clear color laid flat on the light toned skin beneath, the plain spare brown that makes it right to have been made with hazel eyes, and not too abundant straight, brown hair, hair that only later deepens itself into brown from the straw color of a German childhood. (p. 240)

Stein's portrait of Lena, a study in brown tones (brown used nine times, hazel once and straw once), a painterly study, is intended to convey the hue (color) of "patient, old world ignorance, and earth-made pureness." Stein reports that Lena has the "earth patience of the working, gentle, German woman." Stein's listing of Lena's attributes is a stylistic device by which she imposes upon the character absolute, unchanging traits of behavior and attitude.

Stein contrasts Lena to intelligent, quick, Irish Mary, one of the other servant girls who likes to tease Lena. Lena has a spot of green paint on her finger and Mary tells her it is poison that she has licked, and Lena "never knew for certain whether it was really poison, that green stuff that she had tasted." Lena's innocence, like her brownness, her "earth-made pureness," cannot be changed or colored or poisoned. Lena's experiences, like the symbolic experience with the green paint, will not alter her gentle nature. She will fade and grow pale, but her "earth-made" (brown) purity is constant.

Lena cannot resist nor can she dominate: hers is the pure, servant nature. In contrast to the good Anna, who understood the conventions of her position as servant and acted within the
prescribed boundaries of those conventions, dominating and resisting
at will, Lena cannot comprehend the freedom which is hers within the
conventions of her position. Lena remains "gentle" and passive.

A flashback shows Lena as the second girl in a large family.
"Lena was not an important daughter in the family." Lena was "dreamy"
and her German life was harsh, rough, and dreary. Lena's aunt, visiting
in Germany, decides to take Lena back to Bridgeport. The crossing is
uncomfortable, and Lena is scared and "had not self-control nor any
active courage." Lena's life in service in Bridgeport, however, is
pleasant except for Sundays, her free day, which she spends with the
aunt and her three cousins who dislike her. Lena would have "liked
much better to spend her Sundays with the girls she often sat with,
and who often asked her," but it is her "unexpectant and unsuffering
German nature" to do what is expected of her. She cannot resist her
aunt nor the domination of the mean cousins. Eventually, the aunt
decides that Lena must marry, and the tailor's son, Herman Kreder, is
chosen. Herman is sullen and quiet, a gentle German also, who enjoys
being with other men and does not want to have a girl "always near
him."

Before the wedding, Herman runs away to New York where he stays
with a sister. This is the most exciting time of Lena's life. She is
comforted and consoled. She becomes the center of her small world for
a short period of time. But Herman's father brings Herman back from
New York, and Lena Mainz and Herman Kreder are married. After the
wedding, Lena and Herman live with the old German tailor and his
wife. The mother is a scold and she makes life miserable for Lena:
Irish Mary had often said to Lena she never did see how Lena could ever want to have anything to do with Herman Kreder and his dirty stingy parents. (p. 268)

But Irish Mary cannot change Lena's passive acceptance of life. The Kreders are "dowdy and loose and foul in your clothes so as to save... in washing":

...and Lena began soon with it to look careless and a little dirty, and to be more lifeless with it, and nobody ever noticed much what Lena wanted, and she never really knew herself what she needed. (p. 269)

When Lena's first baby is due, Herman becomes excited by the idea of fatherhood, and he tries to protect Lena from his mother's scoldings. When the baby is born, Lena is worn out and lifeless, and it is Herman who cares for the baby boy. Even though Herman moves his family into a house nearby (an environment in which Lena could dominate), Lena remains passive, careless, and lifeless. Herman becomes lively; he takes care of the household and of the two other children when they arrive. He is not interested in Lena; he cares only about his children. When the fourth baby is due, Lena goes to the hospital:

Lena seemed to be going to have much trouble with it. When the baby was come out at last, it was like its mother lifeless. While it was coming, Lena had grown very pale and sicker. When it was all over, Lena had died, too, and nobody knew just how it had happened to her.

Herman lived on, happy and content "alone now with his three good, gentle children"--all that is left of gentle Lena's existence.
In "The Gentle Lena," Stein's tone is even, the color (or mood) monochromatic, and the texture of the prose surface unroughened except in the short descriptive passage of the dirty, German household of the old Kreders. "The Gentle Lena" is gentled onto the page in a monologue which re-creates the monotony of Lena's uneventful, passive existence. Lena's strongest emotion, "a gentle stir within her" when the servant girls tease her, becomes fear when she is pregnant:

Poor Lena was not feeling any joy to have a baby. She was scared the way she had been when she was so sick on the water. She was scared now every time when anything would hurt her. She was scared and still and lifeless, and sure that every minute she would die. (p. 276)

Lena is most responsive and resistant in her fear. She is almost animated by the fear that "every minute she would die." But even this animation fades. When she has the other babies, "Lena was not so much scared now . . . she did not seem to notice very much when they hurt her."

Stein's apparent sympathetic use of "Poor Lena" is not an identification with Lena's plight. It is a statement of fact—a naming of the situation. At this point in her history, the "gentle Lena," who had been appealing in her dreamy, passive innocence, has become "poor" or pitiful and lifeless. Stein's prose consistency in Lena's history is achieved through a more determined distancing from her subject. Since she had known and been affectionately known to the model for the good Anna, that rendering was both affectionate and sympathetic. Stein had not known the model for Lena, but had heard
Lena's story. In retelling it, Stein remained the impersonal narrator just as she had been the impersonal audience.

With "The Gentle Lena," Stein's prose method became more eccentric. "The Good Anna," the Flaubertian "demonstration" of the species in the specific had been enriched by the discovery that by repetition of key words and phrases, she could suggest the personality revealed from within the consciousness of the character (an inner life or environment) as well as the behavior observed without. The barren prose style of "The Gentle Lena" does not merely represent Lena's nature; it is Lena's nature. The prose is an inert prose, rising only now and then above the solid mass of its dull, declarative sentences when a more lively aggressive consciousness appears. The German cook for whom Lena works, Lena's friend Irish Mary, the Aunt, the cousins, the scolding mother-in-law, and even the sullen, quiet Herman Kreder whom Lena marries, enliven the prose style when they are introduced into the narrative. These other characters are often represented as demanding, scolding, or questioning, or even taunting -- none of which is possible for Lena. The vitality of the aunt's challenge and Lena's passive response in the following, for example, realize the spoken personality of each as directly as possible, revealing both the inner environment or consciousness of the character and the observed behavior:
"Why you stand there so stupid, why don't you answer, Lena?" said Mrs. Haydon one Sunday, at the end of a long talking that she was giving Lena about Herman Kreder, and about Lena getting married to him.

"Yes, Ma'am," said Lena. (p. 252)

Lena's nature, at first frightened and resisting, then contented and less resisting, gradually fades as the more colorful, vigorous characters are introduced. Lena's response to the scolding of the friendly cook is passive; she responds to the aunt with anxiety; and to her mother-in-law who is foul-smelling and dirty by becoming careless and dirty and unable to know "herself what she needed."

A single, mild self-defense which fades into acquiescence to her strong-willed aunt signalled Lena's loss of will and surrender of her own life:

"I didn't hear you say you wanted I should say anything to you. I didn't know you wanted me to say nothing. I do whatever you tell me it's right for me to do. I marry Herman Kreder, if you want me." (p. 253)

By juxtaposing Lena, who cannot articulate dislike or suffering or even "what she needed," against characters who articulate their hatred of her and their demands upon her, Lena ceases to exist.

Stein had realized a literary convention which could express the subjective life or the inner life at ebbtide. Stein's aesthetic seems to have been rooted in William James's philosophy. He had conceived
of the subjective life as flowing, and Stein represents Lena's consciousness as flowing away,\textsuperscript{10} or ebbing. James had written:

> It (consciousness) is nothing jointed; it flows. A 'river' or a 'stream' are the metaphors by which it is most naturally described. In talking of it hereafter, let us call it the stream of thought, of consciousness, or of subjective life.\textsuperscript{11}

"The Gentle Lena" was a valuable exercise: the borrowing from Flaubert ceased. So did Stein's pretense at an intimacy with her audience like the jarring direct addresses in "The Good Anna" which may have been her imitative bow to Henry James, who used "our young lady" and "our young woman" in The Wings of the Dove.

\textsuperscript{10} A student has suggested to me that LENA "flows" into GENTLEness even in the title: The GENTLENA.

"Melanctha: Each One As She May"

The barren style and the drab, even texture of the prose in "The Gentle Lena" resulted from Stein's effort to reveal the inertia of Lena's consciousness. But the prose style of "Lena" could not accommodate the greater complexity and vigor of Melanctha's consciousness. This story was to be a revelation of the "subjective life."

The style which revealed Lena could not used to reveal Melanctha Herbert, "a graceful, pale yellow, intelligent attractive negress," who was "bright and learned so much in school [that] she ain't no common nigger either" (p. 86).12

Melanctha Herbert's search for "wisdom" (experience) through her relationships with Rose Johnson, Jane Harden, Jeff Campbell, and Jem Richards required a more sophisticated management of the stylistic device of repetition. Used in both direct discourse and in exposition in the story, "Melanctha" became a coarser prose texture than "Lena" with the narrative elements more deeply buried. Lena's story is reported directly; Melanctha's surfaces. In "Melanctha," not one rhythm like the "gentle" rhythm of Lena's consciousness, for example, but a half a dozen rhythms were woven into the prose. "Melanctha" required greater length than the first two stories. It is twice as long as "The Good Anna" and four times as long as "The Gentle Lena."

Through the device of repetition, Stein establishes the individual rhythms of the subjective lives of the characters--Melanctha's fast;

12 Quotations from Three Lives Vintage Book paperback text. Page numbers refer to this edition.
Jeff's slow; Jem's fastest; Rose's dogged—as well as the accelerating or slowing rhythms (or pace) of the relationships themselves. Repetition bears the burden of "theme," for the theme is (as in all of Stein's portraits) that "there is no living down the natures we are born with." To reveal those natures required the demonstration of habitual speech and habitual action. It is Stein's knowledgable and persistent use of repetition which made "Melanctha" the unique, unconventional avant garde work that it was in 1909.

In order to project character without a sequence of events or anecdotes, Stein returned to the more direct means of expressing the individual consciousness—direct representation of dialogue—which she had used in Q.E.D. and in "The Good Anna" to a lesser degree. But this dialogue is not always accurate representation of speech as it appeared to be in Q.E.D. In "Melanctha," Stein became more skillful at dialogue which reveals the ambiguous and enigmatic nature of the character's own thought and inarticulate nature. The Black dialect, which Stein attempts, is her effort to reveal, not only Black speech patterns, but the behavior and thought patterns of the individual Black characters. Even the Black doctor, Jefferson Campbell, is revealed in diction appropriate to the street talk of the Black community. Street talk is deceptively repetitive, ambiguous, and artless, but its underlying meaning may be unequivocal and subtle. If one abstracts Stein's meaning from some passages in "Melanctha," baldly summarizing the content of the passage, it is possible to see how much of the subtle revelation of the consciousness of the character is lost. Jefferson Campbell, for example, says to Melanctha:
You see, it's just this way with me now, Melanctha. Sometimes you seem like one kind of girl to me, and sometimes you are like a girl that is all different to me, but the two kinds of girls is certainly very different to each other, and I can't see any way they seem to have much to do, to be together in you. (p. 138)

Abstracted, this passage might read:

Melanctha, you seem like two very different girls in one person.

The repetition in Jefferson's stumbling efforts to define the two kinds of girls he sees in Melanctha's personality reveal his own confusion and growing love for her. He continues:

They certainly don't seem to be made much like as if they could have anything really to do with each other. Sometimes you are a girl to me I certainly never would be trusting, and you got a laugh then so hard, it just rattles, and you got ways so bad, I can't believe you mean them hardly... and then certainly sometimes, Melanctha, you certainly is all a different creature, and sometimes then there comes out in you what is certainly a thing, like a real beauty... more wonderful than a pure flower, and a gentleness, that is more tender than the sunshine... (p. 138)

Abstracted, this passage could read:

Sometimes, you are hard and bad and sometimes you are sweet and gentle.

The subtleties of a consciousness cannot be expressed as directly as in the paraphrased examples without diluting and stripping away the
nuances of meaning expressed better in the repetitive, convoluted
dialogue which Stein invents for the characters in "Melanctha." To
reveal the bottom nature of her characters, Stein could not write in
the "literary" prose style appropriate to narrative such as she found
in Henry James's novels or even in Flaubert's. The cadence, the
limited vocabulary, and the repetitions of phrases and whole sentences
reinforce the slow rhythm of Jefferson Campbell's ruminative nature
and reveal his personality.

The obscured plot in "Melanctha" is like the plot of Q.E.D.,
which served as a first draft. Melanctha's story is as simple as her
nature is complex. She passes through adolescence with love-hate
feelings for her Black father and with indifference for her yellow
mother. She is attracted to Blacks whose behavior and compulsion is
"black." Rose Johnson is a friend who is coarse, sullen, promiscuous,
and shiftless, but Melanctha demeans herself in Rose's service.
Even after "black childish Rose" marries Sam Johnson, Melanctha comes
every day to help, and the story begins when Rose's baby arrives.
When Melanctha leaves for a few days, Rose's baby dies. Then, in a
flashback, Melanctha's history is retold: her "wanderings after
wisdom" from twelve to sixteen; her escape from her mother's watching
and her visits to the railroad yards which were "full of the excite-
ment of many men" and her escape from other men when "wisdom" comes
too close. At sixteen, Melanctha meets Jane Harden who is rough,
hard-drinking, but experienced and educated. In the second year of
their relationship, Melanctha, having learned "wisdom" from Jane,
"tried a great many men." Eventually, Melanctha's mother becomes ill,
and Dr. Jefferson Campbell, an earnest, dedicated young doctor, comes to care for Mrs. Herbert. At first, he and Melanctha have no interest in each other. He assures her that he "ain't got any use for all the time being in excitements and wanting to have all kinds of experience all the time" (p. 117). Melanctha accuses him of being "awful scared about really feeling things way down in you," and he tells her that it is "awful dangerous being strong in love with somebody" (p. 123). Melanctha persists; Jefferson Campbell's position weakens. Finally, he admits that "perhaps I could learn a whole lot about women the right way, if I had a real good teacher" (pp. 124-5).

Eventually, Melanctha becomes the teacher, and the young doctor learns to love her. Melanctha taunts him with the words with which Helen, in Q.E.D., had taunted Adele:

"Don't you ever stop with your thinking long enough ever to have any feeling Jeff Campbell?" (p. 132)

Melanctha's answer (in the words which Helen used in Q.E.D. to answer Adele) is ambiguous:

"I certainly do care for you Jeff Campbell less than you are always thinking and more more than you are ever knowing. (p. 132)

At this point in the narrative, Stein reworks the Q.E.D. narrative, filling in the complex tentative movements of the relationship with long, ruminative dialogues for the doctor and shorter, sharper retorts
for Melanctha, revealing his slow-rhythms and Melanctha's faster rhythms.

When Jane Harden, who is now the doctor's patient, reveals Melanctha's past, the doctor is sickened and avoids Melanctha until her letter brings him back to her. He tells her of Jane Harden's revelations of the men in Melanctha's past. They continue to see each other and to enjoy the summer together until one day Jeff pushes her away from him, disgusted by her and confused by his own feelings. Although he loves her now, Jeff cannot console himself. He finally accuses her of using her "pain, like a weapon, so as to make me do things it ain't never right for me to be doing for you" (p. 172).

There is no peace between them, and now, it is Melanctha who "gives, . . . not of her need, but from her bounty to him." The positions of the two in the relationship appear to have been reversed. Melanctha, now the stronger of the two, begins again to wander and to "treat Jeff like her best friend" and "never . . . now to very often want to see him" (p. 188).

They part, but when spring comes, Jeff writes to her. They meet again, but Melanctha is no longer "to him like a religion," and they part as friends. Melanctha is free to wander, to be with Rose Harden, and to be with men. Melanctha is often "so blue" that she wants to die, but she feels safe with Rose. Then Rose marries Sam Johnson; and Melanctha meets Jem Richards whose loose, free lifestyle is like Melanctha's own, and they become engaged. Jem's betting gets him in trouble, and he begins to draw away from Melanctha. Melanctha, clinging to Rose, is rejected by Rose, and soon, by Jem Richards who tells
her, finally, that "I just don't give a damn for you any more, Melanctha." Melanctha is silent. When she is not able to find a response to Jem Richards, her dialogue ceases in the narrative. Rose Johnson reports that Melanctha may someday kill herself: "I never see nobody ever could be so awful blue" (p. 235).

Melanctha begins to work and "to live regular" after an illness, her strength dwindling as her real wisdom increases. She is sent to a home for poor consumptives and "there Melanctha stayed until she died." But she had ceased to live on the page when she was rejected by Jem Richards. Her consciousness in the story, ceases at the moment her "excitements" end. In "Melanctha," just as in "The Gentle Lena" and "The Good Anna," the moment of death—when consciousness ceases—is a relatively unimportant moment. The moment is simply reported and not recreated.

Summary

Stein admitted, in 1937, to a friend that "I took it [Q.E.D.] and changed it around and made a man out of one of the women and it became "Melanctha." Since no one had read Q.E.D. or would read it until after Stein's death, Q.E.D. remained the unknown first draft of "Melanctha." But Stein's artistic invention is clear. When the reader compares passages from Q.E.D. with passages from "Melanctha," it becomes obvious that Stein could have, had her aesthetic demanded

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it, manipulated the "Melanctha" narrative within a conventional narrative form. However, even expository passages express each character's diction and "bottom nature" in what appears to be unconventional narrative prose in "Melanctha."

In Q.E.D.:

Adele realized that Helen demanded of her a response and always before that response was ready. Their pulses were differently timed. She could not go so fast and Helen's exhausted nerves could no longer wait. Adele found herself constantly forced on by Helen's pain. She went further than she could in honesty because she was unable to refuse anything to one who had given all. It was a false position. (p. 104)

In "Melanctha" (Three Lives):

Jeff saw now he had to go so fast, so that Melanctha never would have to wait any to get from him always all that she ever wanted. He never could be honest now, he never could be now, any more, trying to be really understanding, for always every moment now he felt it to be a strong thing in him, how very much it was Melanctha Herbert always suffered. (p. 162)

Although the characters play the same "role" in the two versions, these expository passages represent in the prose itself the rhythm of each character's nature. Adele in Q.E.D. is verbal, quick, intuitive. Jefferson Campbell is slow, ruminative, cautious. The passage from "Melanctha" continues for three pages before the Jefferson Campbell character reaches, in his circuitous, ponderous manner, the conclusion reached by the Adele character in the five words, "It was a false position."
The readers of Three Lives who did not have access to Q.E.D. until 1951 could not have known that (1) Stein again had used the Q.E.D. narrative ("the intensive and exhaustive study of relations in a triangle") and (2) that she was artistically capable by 1906 of invention which permitted her to show the same emotional responses of like natures (the Adele character and the Jefferson Campbell character) in a diction and prose style appropriate to the character's environment. In fact, readers of Three Lives believed that the Black characters in "Melanctha" were known to Stein just as the Anna character had been, in fact, known to Stein. Some readers have assumed that Stein's internship in the Baltimore clinic, when she had been required to deliver nine babies in the Black ghetto, had introduced her to the Melanctha and Jefferson Campbell characters. But it is evident that "Melanctha" was a re-working of Q.E.D. and not a "case history" of a Black woman known to Stein. Stein herself made it clear that even the "incidents" in "Melanctha" were not simply reportage:

Practically every afternoon Gertrude Stein went to Montmartre, posed and then later wandered down the hill usually walking across Paris to the rue de Fleurus . . . During these long poses and these long walks Gertrude Stein meditated and made sentences. She was then in the middle of her negro story Melanctha Herbert, the second story of Three Lives and the poignant incidents that she wove into the life of Melanctha were often these she noticed in walking down the hill from the rue Ravignan. 14

Which "poignant incidents" Stein wove into the narrative no one knows. The servant-prostitute type which Stein diagrammed in her notebooks was probably the group to which Melanctha belonged, and this general type was probably observed by Stein in Montmartre. It is important to remember that Stein's classifications according to "bottom nature" were broad human types and never racial or societal. Therefore, a "Melanctha" type was as easily observed in Paris as in a Baltimore clinic. What Stein did take from her Baltimore experiences was the memory of the Black dialect which she was able to represent so accurately that Richard Wright, reading "Melanctha," wrote that he "began to hear the speech of my grandmother, who spoke a deep, pure Negro dialect." When Wright later read the story to semi-literate Negro stockyard workers in the 1930's, he reported:

They understood every word. Enthralled, they slapped their thighs, howled, laughed, stomped, and interrupted me constantly to comment upon the characters.15

Written just forty years after the end of the Civil War, "Melanctha" treated Blacks, not as stereotypes, but as human types. While minor characters in the story are stereotypical, the more important characters are finely drawn, complex natures revealed through the dialogue assigned to them. Stein's observation of Black, male behavior appears to be no more racist in tone than is Richard Wright's. It is interesting that she used "black" in a period when

15 Richard Wright quoted by Carl Van Vechten in the introduction to "Melanctha: Each One As She May" in the Selected Writings, p. 338.
"colored" and "negro" were terms preferred by Blacks and whites alike. And her use of the phrase "black power" predated the political use of the phrase by Blacks in the Civil Rights movements of the 60's by half a century.

A case might be made for the implicit feminism in these histories of lower class servant women whose "good," "gentle," and "lost" natures are traditional female roles in fiction. But Stein was not concerned with feminism as a cause. Like other privileged women living in the first decade of the twentieth century, she could not fail to be aware of the roles to which uneducated, poverty-mired women were condemned. Although there is no surfacing of blatant feminism in Three Lives as there was in Fernhurst, the total work is sympathetic to women. But it would be more accurate to assign the thematic focus of Three Lives to a behavioral demonstration than to a societal one. It is the habits of behavior and of thought which keep Anna, Lena, and Melanctha "in their place" rather than the demands of society.

Stein had revealed in Lena the inarticulate nature of the "pure servant female" type. In Anna, who appeared in Stein's notebook as "upper class servant," Stein had realized the more articulate nature of the type who could, within narrow boundaries, dominate her environment. Melanctha, reflecting the complexity possible in the type, was simply another manifestation of "pure servant female" whose nature touches, at some point, the prostitute type in Stein's system of bottom natures. Melanctha was the most interesting type and resulted

16 Stein Notebook (d-9), YCAL.
in a dense, and, consequently longer narrative in order to reveal the puzzling quality of such complex natures. But Melanctha's nature is no better revealed than the other two when Stein's aesthetic—to reveal the rhythm of the spoken personality as directly as possible—is considered.

The Manuscript of *Three Lives*

*Three Lives* was finished in the spring of 1906, about a year after Stein had begun it. "Melanctha" was composed, as Stein reported later in *The Autobiography*, while she sat for her portrait by Picasso and as she walked back to her apartment after the ninety or so sittings. It seems that Stein composed the sentences in her head before she sat down to the notebooks in which she wrote the first draft. The appearance of the manuscript is evidence of the concentration and confidence which was necessary to produce an original draft which is astonishingly "clean." For example, in "The Good Anna," only thirty-seven words have been deleted; twenty-eight deleted and reinstated (usually immediately following the crossed-out word); five words changed; and four words added. The story of Melanctha, written last, is in four notebooks17 and the title page reads "Each one as she may." Only 131 words were deleted in the manuscript; 106 deleted and reinstated. Stein's claim not to have revised nor to have rewritten is corroborated by the appearance of the autograph manuscript

17 The autograph manuscript on deposit at Beinecke Library, YCAL, is in seven notebooks. "Anna" is contained in two; "Lena" in one.
as well as by other evidence. In the seven notebooks which contain the manuscript of Three Lives, a total of only 207 words were deleted or an average of about two words for every three printed pages. In comparing the autograph manuscript with the printed form, it is evident that no editorial adjustments were made either as deletions, or corrections, or in the mechanics of paragraphing and punctuation.

Publication of Three Lives

When Stein finished the book, she sent a copy of the manuscript to Hutchins Hapgood who wrote her that "The Negro story especially is extraordinary . . . the very best thing on the subject of the Negro that I have read." He also warned her that she would have "difficulties with the publishers . . . because to get their real quality, patience and culture are demanded of the reader." One publisher called the book "too unconventional" and "literary," warning Stein that some would see the book "another piece of realism; and realism nowadays doesn't go."  

It was a friend, May Bookstaver, the model for Helen in Q.E.D., who succeeded in finding the Grafton Press in New York. They agreed to print 1000 copies, 500 bound, for the sum of $660.00. Stein accepted. Although she refused the editor's suggestion of an introduction, she acquiesced to his suggestion that she change Three Histories, her title, to Three Lives.  

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19 The Flowers of Friendship (April 22, 1906), pp. 31-2.
21 Mellow, pp. 127-8; 145-7.
Three Lives was published on July 30, 1909. Her first editor seems to have felt the uneasiness which editors always acknowledged to Stein and, sometimes, to the public. He wrote her that it was "a very peculiar book" and that it would be difficult "to make people take it seriously." In the first six months, only seventy-three bound copies had been sold; seventy-eight had been distributed free.22

The mother of a friend of the Steins read Three Lives and wrote that "Nobody could have told Lena's [Lebender--a German cook whom they had all known in Baltimore and the model for Anna] life better." But suggesting that Stein had a great gift, and that she had written an impressive first book, warned that success would depend upon Stein's willingness "to use self-control and not despise her readers."23 The truth was that Stein had used such exhausting self-control in refusing the ease of writing simple narrative and, in attempting instead, to record something like the bio-rhythms of her characters in their speech and behavioral patterns, that some of her readers, lacking in self-control, became exhausted and gave up.

Three Lives was distributed without the dust jacket which appears on the copy in the Beinecke Library at Yale University. Hutchins Hapgood wrote "One Author's Comment" which was printed on the front. He warned the reader that it would require patience and leisure, openness of mind, and contemplative vitality:

22 Ibid.
23 The Flowers of Friendship (Dec. 12, 1909), p. 46.
I do not mean to say that the form is perfectly realized . . . But it is nevertheless apparent that this form is essentially necessary to the expression of this particular artist's view of the world.24

The other three comments on the back of the dust jacket stressed the unconventional nature of the book, also. One mentioned "the unconventional use of the English language" and the author's "rigorous dispassionateness," and one suggested that Stein "has pushed the method of realism as far as it would go--some doubtless will say, farther yet."

The reviews of Stein's book were favorable. Stein's favorite, found among her clippings, appeared in the Kansas City Star on December 18, 1909. The unknown reviewer intuited Stein's aesthetic in referring to "the originality of its narrative form" as the notable element in the novel. However, he too saw it as a book for a "strictly limited audience." Other respectable reviews appeared in the Washington, D.C. Herald, also in December, 1909. In January, 1910, four more reviews appeared in newspapers in Boston, Philadelphia, Chicago, and New York.25

The book was reissued in Britain in 1915 and again in 1927. The "Good Anna" (as "Hodna Anna") was published in Czechoslovakia in 1927. The Modern Library edition appeared in 1933 (after the success of The Autobiography). Other English editions were published in 1941, 1945,

24 Dust cover for Three Lives on the first edition, YCAL. Dr. Gallup knows of the existence of two other dust jackets. One is on his copy of Three Lives and the other on the copy which belonged to Edmund Wilson.


Two postscripts to the saga of Stein's first publication involve Henry James and William James. In the Beinecke Library collection of Stein's manuscripts, a pencil draft of a letter in Stein's hand requests that Harper and Company mail a package to Henry James. The date assigned to the draft is Paris, 1909. It is tantalizing to think that the package may have been *Three Lives* and that Henry James received it and read it. William James acknowledged his copy in a letter to Stein dated May 25, 1910. After admitting to a "bad conscience about 'Three Lives,'" and reminding her "how hard it is for me to read novels," he wrote that he had read "30 or 40 pages, and said 'this is a fine new kind of realism--Gertrude Stein is great!" Regretfully, he admitted to forgetting to pack the book but promised that he would finish it. However, William James died three months later.

26 Autograph draft, YCAL. (Probably dated by Dr. Gallup.)
27 *The Flowers of Friendship*, pp. 50-51.
CHAPTER III

Violating the Genre: The Making of Americans
Being a History of a Family's Progress (1906-1908)

Picasso said to me . . . they say
I can draw better than Raphael and
probably they are right, perhaps I do
draw better but if I can draw as well
as Raphael I have at least the right
to choose my way . . .

Gertrude Stein in Picasso

The Making of Americans, as Katherine Anne Porter said of it in a
1927 review, "is a very necessary book":

It precedes the war and cubism; it
precedes Ulysses and Remembrance of
Things Past.1

Its position in literary modernism is like the position of Picasso's
"Les Demoiselles d'Avignon" in modern painting. It is of the first
decade; it represents a conscious effort to redefine or to restate a
conventional form; it records the artist's struggle, and that fitful,

1 "Everybody Is a Real One," The Days Before. (New York, Harcourt
ugly struggling remains as the object itself; it did not come to the attention of the public until long after its composition and after the public had "accepted" less heroic objects of modernism; and neither Stein's nor Picasso's aesthetic development can be comprehended without an understanding of the aesthetic from which these compositions grew and to which these compositions led.

Picasso finished "Les Demoiselles" in the spring of 1907, but it was not exhibited until thirty years later in 1937. It was, however, seen in his studio by his friends and patrons. Stein's novel was finished in 1911, but it was not published until 1925—thirteen years later. But it was known to exist; it had been rejected by publishers before World War I. Stein's friends had read parts of it. Other writers and critics knew of it, but who had read it is uncertain.

Both Stein and Picasso, in this period, were intent upon redefining conventional forms. Stein recorded Picasso's aesthetic intention:

Picasso said to me once with a good deal of bitterness, they say I can draw better than Raphael and probably they are right, perhaps I do draw better but if I can draw as well as Raphael I have at least the right to choose my way and they should recognize it, that right, but no, they say no. [My italics]

Obviously, "to choose my way" was to paint in a non-academic, unconventional style. Picasso did not intend to "represent" life—

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2 In Stein's Picasso (Boston: Beacon Press, 1959) published in 1938, she assigned 1906 as the date of "Les Demoiselles" which would mean it was begun shortly after Picasso finished her portrait.

3 Ibid., p. 16.
paint a narrative to be "read." Nor did he intend a painting style in "the manner of" those painters whom he admired. To draw as well as Raphael, he felt, gave him the freedom to express his own aesthetic. In "Les Demoiselles," his struggle to escape conventional, representative painting remains for all the world to see. Stein understood what he was attempting, and she understood his struggle:

I was alone at this time in understanding him, perhaps because I was expressing the same thing in literature.4

She writes that Picasso's struggle was "appalling." Her own long novel, The Making of Americans, in which literary conventions are ignored, in which her struggling attempts to realize her developing aesthetic, "ugly." The "appalling" failure, and success, of it represent the most important ten years of her development. By the time she began to copy her final draft in 1908, she had left behind "influences" and chosen her "way" which would anger, as well as appall, readers.

It is clear from her own lectures and from personal letters to publishers and friends that Stein considered The Making of Americans to be her most important work. Although she wrote to Carl Van Vechten that it was "funny and youthful, there are moments when I think I should prune it out,"5 critics who understood her aesthetic, agree with Katherine Anne Porter that to "shorten it would be to mutilate its vitals."6 Its length, however, (925 pages) turned away even Stein fanciers--and still does.

4 Ibid.
5 Elizabeth Sprigge, Gertrude Stein: Her Life and Work, p. 137.
6 The Days Before, p. 36.
The beginning of The Making of Americans predates both Q.E.D. and Three Lives. Her notebooks, begun in the London winter of 1902, are the tentative first steps toward the novel. That summer, Stein had met some Americans against whom she had been forced to defend America, the "American mind," and American economic-political ideas in a vigorous and continuing America vs. England debate. It was probably Bernard Berenson, Harvard-educated connoisseur of Italian painting, and also a student of William James, who was the center of the group. The Steins found it difficult to persuade the Englishmen and the "renegade Americans" that their own enthusiastic Americanism was not a pose and that they (the Steins) intended to return to America. Stein's defense of America and middle class morality is seen in the self-conscious rhetoric of Q.E.D. Still working by fits and starts in her notebooks, she had begun Three Lives in February, 1905 and finished it in February, 1906, having put aside a first draft of The Making of Americans--five chapters--begun in 1903. Like Q.E.D., these five discarded chapters are straight-forward narration in which the self-conscious author intrudes. The discarded draft begins:


These five chapters are reprinted in Fernhurst, Q.E.D., and Other Early Writing.
It has always seemed to me a rare privilege this of being an American, a real American and yet one whose tradition it has taken scarcely sixty years to create.

In this draft, Stein was conscious of an audience, and at the beginning of Chapter II, she admonished, "Bear it in mind, my reader," and in the following paragraph of that chapter, exclaimed, "I throw myself on the mercy of the public."

Perhaps, it was the revelation of "Melanctha"—an accomplishment praised by those who read it in manuscript—as well as Stein's new close friendship with Picasso and her knowledge of his aesthetic efforts to redefine painting—that sent her back to work on The Making of Americans in the summer of 1906 in Fiesole—again in the company of the Bernard Berenson circle and her brother Leo. But her aesthetic had changed, and this is most easily understood by looking closely at the five discarded chapters of 1903 before looking into the final version.

Five Chapters (1903): The Early Draft

It is obvious that Stein intended her novel to be a history of the Dehnings. The model for the Dehning family was the New York branch of Stein's own family, and her notebooks make it clear that her cousin, Bird Stein, was to be the model for its unhappy heroine. Stein had taken it upon herself to advise her cousin from afar, but Bird Stein had gone her own way, married an opportunist, later divorced him and married the attorney-friend who advised her. Stein had been
disconcerted by what she felt was Bird's inappropriate behavior—both a dull conventionality unlike Stein's own behavior and, at the same time, a lack of true, upright middle-class idealism. Stein's point of view in the five chapters, consequently, is unclear.

Bourgeois ideals in the draft appear to be from Julia's (Bird Stein's) point of view, but the undisguised critical nature of the passages which explore Julia's poor taste and lack of style—evidence of Julia's dull conventionality—appear to be the author's point of view. The author even addresses a passage to "Brother Singulars"—evidence of Stein's own "singularity" and disdain for the very middle class ideals she calls a "privilege" in her opening paragraph.

Brothers Singulars we are misplaced into a generation that knows not Joseph. We flee before the disapproval of our cousins, the courageous condescension of our friends who gallantly agree to sometimes walk the streets with us, we fly to the kindly comfort of an older world accustomed to take all manner of strange forms into its bosom . . .

In this discarded version of The Making of Americans, the plot is achieved through the narration of Julia Dehning's struggle to win her father's approval of her engagement to Henry Hersland—a "form" of "our noble order" of Brothers Singular but "a poor thing and hardly even then our own ":

Hersland was well put together to impress a courageous, crude young woman ambitious both for passion and position and with a strain of romance.

10 Autograph manuscript, YCAL. (All quotations here are from the manuscript in the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, YCAL.)
Julia Dehning is crude and dull, ambitious and romantic; Henry Hersland is of the "noble order":

Hersland brought with him the world of art and things, a world to her but vaguely known. He knew that some things made by men are things of beauty and he spoke this knowledge with interest and conviction.

He awakens in Julia "a real desire this longing for culture," but in her father, Abraham Dehning, and in her cousins and uncles, distrust and disapproval.

The Dehnings are prosperous, handsome, and "had good instincts." The father, Abe, has the habit of rubbing his nose and of saying of his wife, "Milly she is the girl for me." The children—Julia, Bertha, George, and Hortense—have an easy, pleasant life, indulged by their mother to "middle class" luxuries like tutors, music lessons, and horses. The father worries that they will amount to nothing and the children, with good will, defend themselves with the refrain, "Just wait and see."

Both parents are proud of Julia, the eldest, and she convinces them that Henry Hersland is suitable. At last, she wins her father's approval, but she discovers that Hersland plans to use her father's wealth and reliability in order to get "big money" and take "big risks." Sickened by the revelation, she feels that she must marry him anyway, telling herself "He didn't mean it like that." They marry and Chapter IV ends.

The fifth and final chapter is unfinished. It concerns Bertha Dehning's romantic history. The first lover has a consumptive sister, and this marriage is discouraged. The next lover "had an easy, quick
success" and Bertha appears to be "doomed" as her sister Julia was doomed by her marriage to Hersland; Bertha marries "the handsomest and biggest man in the most imposing bourgeois family in their set."
The early draft ends:

This substantial family the Lohms always filled rooms very full. They blotted out all others with their solid solemn weight.

Had Stein continued this draft, the novel would have been a dull but accessible narrative. Stein seemed intent upon pursuing the theme of unhappy marriage, here, pairing the sisters who are alike in their disappointment but unlike in their responses to it.

In her notebooks of this period, Stein listed many pairs in preparation for "Two" which she wrote in 1911. The five discarded chapters are, however, the conventional prose of her apprenticeship period of 1903-04, and are, consequently, earlier than "Two" and the portraits of 1909-1912.

This early version of The Making of Americans is written on seventy-three legal sized sheets in a notebook, half of which has been cut away indicating that she had continued this version beyond the five existing chapters. About 9500 words remain: 29 words and one sentence of 19 words have been deleted; 30 words were added; and 48 words were changed—an indication of Stein's dissatisfaction with her attempts at a conventional style. Her later writing, in which she realizes the "now" of consciousness (or the continuing present) and does not concern herself with narrative, shows little evidence of word change. Her revision method becomes one almost entirely of deletion
as in *Three Lives*, and these deletions are minimal. The five chapters which represent her first attempt at her long novel appear to be the final stage of her apprenticeship as a writer.

When Stein began the novel once more, after finishing *Three Lives*, it was with a new focus. There were to be two families—the Dehnings and the Herslands—whose history was to be documented. But she writes that she is conscious of writing "for myself and strangers," indicating her attention to both her developing aesthetic and to her audience. It is the aesthetic, however, which becomes more important to her than audience.

As with the discovery of Cezanne and Flaubert which seemed to be the aesthetic motivations for her writing of *Three Lives*, Stein made the discovery, through Leo Stein's enthusiastic embrace once again, of Otto Weininger's *Sex and Character* in 1907. This book enhanced her interest in the sexual nature of character types, and she borrowed from Weininger's terminology to develop her own system of character typology. Weininger's theories were seductive, and they became available to her exactly when she needed a system for categorizing the hundreds of "bottom natures" she intended to include in her long novel:

> I was sure that in a kind of way the enigma of the universe could in this way be solved. That after all description is explanation, and if I went on and on and on enough I could describe every individual human being that could possibly exist. I did proceed to do as much as I could.\(^\text{11}\)

\(^{11}\) Gertrude Stein, *Lectures in America*, p. 142.
It had become clear to Stein that the creative struggle of the painters in Paris in this first decade of the century was redefining painting. She sensed that her own aesthetic struggle must erupt into a redefinition of the novel form which the conventional novel could not satisfy. Looking at Picasso's "Les Demoiselles d'Avignon," she could see that the monumental struggle bred a monumental monster. The painting was big and, according to convention, ugly. Picasso turned it to the wall in the studio--there was no buyer. But Picasso, poor as he was, had not been driven by "audience." It was aesthetic which became the driving force in his painting. In Stein's notebooks, she wrote that "aesthetic has become the whole of me."12 Her own monumental monster filled 97 notebooks. She understood it to be imperfect, but she recognized the discovery she had made of an inexhaustible and personal form.

The Making of Americans
Being a History of a Family's Progress 1906-190813

The final version of the novel, called by Bridgeman "a great sow of a work" and by Leon Katz "simply exasperating,"14 was begun in

12 Stein notebook, (14-7), YCAL. This entry appears in the one in which she recognizes that she has grown away from the philosophies of Leo Stein and William James. It is obvious that she has broken with her past and with Leo. Leo, it should be remembered, could not accept Cubism and "broke" with Picasso at this point.
13 The title appears in this manner on the first edition.
Fiesole in 1906. The final section was completed in October, 1911. Bridgeman points out that it "lacks formal resting places,"\(^{15}\) by which he refers to the erratic division of its 925 pages into five titled parts and into minor divisions of those parts. The minor divisions are represented only by wide spaces of blank page.

Stein begins with a parable:

> Once an angry man dragged his father along the ground through his own orchard. 'Stop!' cried the groaning old man at last, 'Stop!' I did not drag my father beyond this tree!

And follows it immediately with her thesis: "It is hard living down the tempers we are born with."

After a chauvinistic announcement that it is a "rare privilege" being an American "whose tradition it has taken scarcely sixty years to create," she states her theme:

> The old people in a new world, the new people made out of the old, that is the story that I mean to tell, for that is what really is and what I really know.

For about thirty-three pages, the author's voice, colloquial and somberly Biblical, narrates. As historian-novelist Stein proceeds to chronicle the history of a group of middle class Jews who settled in Baltimore (called Bridgeport in the novel) and in San Francisco (called Gossols)\(^{16}\) in the mid 1800's. In the present generation, their children, Alfred Hersland (the western family) and Julia Dehning

\(^{15}\) Bridgeman, p. 60.

\(^{16}\) Gossols was the city in Spain where Picasso had gone to paint in the summer of 1906; Stein used Bridgeport previously in "The Good Anna."
(the eastern family) marry. In this version of the novel, the present
generation of Herslands are to be the chief focus and three of the
five parts are to chronicle the Herslands—Martha, Alfred, and David.
David will become the "hero." However, changing some names from the
original discarded draft, (Henry Hersland becomes Alfred Hersland,
for example), Stein begins again with the Dehnings.

Julia's father, Herman Dehning is a "middle aged, good and honest"
man having made his own way in the new world. The dogmatic element in
his nature is revealed in the refrain:

Yes, I say to children, you have an easy
time of it nowadays doing nothing.

Herman Dehning's challenge to his children is a "cheerful challenge to
them," for they understand that they are to "Fight strongly against him
in the everlasting struggle of conscious unproved power in the young
against dogmatic pride in having done it, of the old ones."

Had Stein pursued a conventional narrative, the struggle of the
children against the father's "dogmatic pride of having done it" would
have been a dominant element in the plot. In both families, the father
is dogmatic and domineering, and the mother is mild-mannered and of
secondary importance to the children. Obviously, Stein's own parents
were the models for the parental roles.

Herman Dehning's children are Julia ("good looking, domineering"),
George ("who is just a lazy good for nothing," according to his father),
and Hortense, petted by the father and loyal and adoring to her brother
George. Julia is 18, George 14, and Hortense is 10. The mother, Miss
Jenny, is of little importance except that she becomes a minor character
in the struggle which develops between Julia and her father when Julia falls in love with a "Western" man, Alfred Hersland. Hersland brings with him the world of "art and things"--a man of attractive mystery and power. Julia's uncles, as well as her father, disapprove of Alfred Hersland. Although they "know nothing real against him," they do not trust him. Julia's struggle with her father is a struggle of wills and she "hastens forward slowly," pushing her advantages with tact. Her father resists but with admiration for her "theories and convictions." She is determined to win; Alfred Hersland simply waits, knowing that Julia can win the struggle with her father and that he cannot.

Eventually, Herman Dehning says to his daughter, "I don't say no Julia and I don't say yes to you." Then, "I don't say no to you and I don't say yes yet to you." Julia has won the struggle.

In this version of the novel, Stein initially uses some dialogue which permits her to reveal character, allowing her characters to "hasten forward slowly." After the first section of the novel, conventional dialogue disappears. The reader's response to the author, who remains "visible" in the narrative, is a dialogue. Thus unconventional dialogue between narrator and audience forces the participation of the audience in the work-in-progress.

Although Hersland reveals himself to Julia as the opportunist her father has feared, meaning to use her father's position for his own "big things" and "good schemes," Julia has entrapped herself and clings to her illusions that "Alfy didn't mean it like that." The first section ends with the Julia Dehning-Alfred Hersland marriage (page 33).
A space of an inch indicates that the "scene" has changed. It is with the "western family," the Herslands, that Stein will continue her narrative. But first, she addresses her reader directly:

Bear it in your mind, my reader, but truly
I never feel it that there ever can be for me
any such a creature as "my reader", no it is
this scribbled and dirty and lined paper that
is really to be to me always my receiver,—
but anyhow reader, bear it in your mind—will
there be for me ever any such a creature,—
what I have said always before to you, that
this that I write down a little each day here
on my scraps of paper for you is not just an
ordinary kind of novel with a plot and conver­
sations to amuse you, but a record of a decent
family progress respectfully lived by us and our
fathers and our mothers. [my italics] (pp. 33,34)17

Stein has indicated that this is to be no "ordinary kind of novel
with a plot and conversations to amuse you." Having taken this second
version as far as the first five discarded chapters had taken the
reader into the "plot," and having omitted the second daughter, Bertha
Dehning, from the new version, Stein may have realized, at this point,
that she could not pursue the old plot and her own developing
aesthetic. She continued:

... and so my reader arm yourself in every
kind of a way to be patient and to be eager...
and wait while I hasten slowly forwards, and love,
please, this history of this decent family's
progress. (p. 34)

17 All quotations from The Making of Americans will be indicated by
the page numbers as they appear in the complete version published
(formerly New York, now West Glover, Vermont). These reprints are
facsimile editions of the original 1925 publication.
Returning to her theme, "simple firm ordinary class traditions,"
she warns her reader that the middle class tradition is:

sordid material unillusioned unaspiring and
always monotonous for it is always there
and to be always repeated, and yet I am
strong, and I am right, and I know it, and
I say it to you and you are to listen to
it . . . (p. 34)

It is this sense of "always there" and "always monotonous" that
becomes both the aesthetic impulse of this unconventional history as
well as its tone. Eventually, the narrative will become submerged,
rising to the surface of the prose and disappearing again in the
monotonous telling and retelling of the family's "progress." Some
episodes are repeated in the novel, snagged by the narrative conscious-
ness, surfacing among the pages in the way that the narrative strain
surfaces. These episodes represent the anecdotes of the family
"history" as they are passed from one generation to the next, giving
this particular family its "aura." Flavor is the word which Stein
used in this period in her notebooks to suggest the subtle emanation of
innermost personality. One of these anecdotes appears on pages 388,
389, 393, 407, and 426. The little girl (Martha Hersland) drags an
umbrella through the muddy street, crying "I will throw the umbrella
in the mud." When no one hears her, she repeats it bitterly; then
with "desperate anger," she bursts out, "I have throwed the umbrella
in the mud."

The Hersland family which represents the "western" family is
introduced on page 34. The father, David Hersland, appears to have
been modeled upon Stein's own father, Daniel Stein, and the mother,
Fanny Hissen Hersland, upon Stein's mother (Amelia Kayser Stein). There are three children whom Stein calls Martha, Alfred (who marries Julia Dehning in the first section of the novel), and David.

Martha Hersland is gentle and "anxious to please." Her nature dooms her to failure. In her notebooks, Stein's character development of Martha indicates that some episodes were to be based upon Stein's own experiences. However, Part II, the "Martha Hersland" section of the novel--188 pages at the heart of the book--only occasionally refers to the character, submerging Martha's story beneath endless ruminations of the author's in which she examines her own literary method and aesthetic. Since Stein intended herself as the role model for Martha, this section remains vaguely autobiographical. Stein begins Part II with "I am writing for myself and strangers. This is the only way that I can do it" (p. 289), and continues: "I want readers so strangers must do it."

Into Part II, Stein drops the Fernhurst story. The Martha Redfern character of Fernhurst becomes, in The Making of Americans, Martha Hersland, muddling the characterization. In a conventional novel, this would have been a disaster. However, since the narrative is submerged, and since "plot" is unimportant, this manipulation of old material matters little.

Part III, "Alfred and Julia Hersland," reveals little of either character. In the 240 pages in this section, no details of the unhappy marriage appear, but the reader is told that, "Alfred Hersland had one way of being in him, Julia Dehning had her way of being."

Earlier, Stein had begun to address herself to the problem of "bottom
natures" (p. 343) and to the "two general kinds of them, the resisting
and the attacking kind of them" (p. 345). The theme of opposing
bottom natures which cannot "come together" in harmony, which appeared
in both Q.E.D. and in "Melanctha," is implied in this section of the
novel, but like other narrative elements, buried almost beyond recovery.

Perhaps, feeling the necessity of masking some of her portraits,
Stein began to use the indefinite "one." The "Alfred and Julia Hersland"
section of the novel is filled with portraits whose subjects are "this
one" or "each one." Efforts to sustain a narrative disappear, and
Part III ends with lists of names—the names of "all men and all
women ever having been, being in living . . ." (p. 718).

Part IV is "David Hersland." The character appears to have been
modeled upon Leo Stein. The character's early death may have been a
symbolic act for Stein since her brother's aesthetic death occurred at
this period in his refusal of Picasso's Cubism. Too, his real
departure from Stein's life and affections took place when he moved
permanently to Italy after Alice Toklas had moved into 27 Rue de Fleurus.
Like the David Hersland character, Leo Stein "died" (for Stein)
"before he came to the middle of his middle living."

David Hersland was introduced in Part I as the youngest child of
David and Fanny Hersland. Stein intended to pursue his career from
his lonely adolescence in California to his arrival in the east when he
becomes involved with Alfred's (his brother's) and Julia's marriage.
In her notebooks, she had planned for the "real drama," as she put it,
to be David Hersland and Julia--the Western tradition and the Eastern-
bourgeois tradition. From a study of the notebooks, it is apparent
that she also meant to make death thematic for the David Hersland
section of the novel, and she noted that he was to be "constantly surrounded by the thought of death." In the finished novel, this section (pp. 623-904) is dominated by David's early death at twenty-nine:

David Hersland was a dead one before he was a middle aged one. He was then never in his living an old one. He was dead before he came to the middle of his middle living. (p. 724)

Stein's notebooks indicate that she was basing this death, in part, upon Leon Solomon's death. Solomons had died at twenty-nine, having exposed himself to infection in the laboratory. In her notebooks, she writes that David Hersland "decided on cancer" and kills himself "through operation like Leon." Stein's aesthetic, however, by the time she embarked upon the final version of the novel, did not permit an explicit death scene and the anecdote was submerged beneath the demands of the new style:

He came to be a dead one and was buried there where he had come to be a dead one. (p. 904)

Leon Katz points out that in her notebooks, Stein had "completed only one sentence, "I am very nervous," for David's death scene." This sentence does not appear in the finished novel. But by the time

18 Leon Katz recovers the "story" of Stein's intended narrative in his study of her notebook entries. (See Chapter VII, "The Buried Narrative" pp. 159-194, of his unpublished dissertation.)
that David Hersland has come "to be a dead one," much of his personality and his relationships with other characters have been revealed even in this final, unconventional version.

By page 860, Stein seemed to have finished her novel and appeared to be satisfied with its composition:

Some one has done something. It is a completed thing ... It has a beginning, a middle and an end. It is all done. It is a complete thing ... Any one can see it ... some are feeling it to be a complete thing and they are telling about it as being existing ... (p. 860)

Obviously, Stein's friends were reading the manuscript. One friend wrote her that it was "the biggest conception imaginable" and another friend, who later was the "sitter" for a famous word-portrait, that it was the forerunner of "new form and expression."19

The final chapter of the novel called "History of A Family's Progress" (pp. 907-925) begins "Any one has come to be a dead one." The historian is an "existing" one, however, and it is with her struggle to reveal the universality of family living and not with the history itself that the reader has been involved. The narrative which began to disappear just after the first 150 pages has reappeared throughout the novel, rising to the surface of the prose as the author also indulges herself in ruminative digressions. The final section, Part V, ends without any narrative or novelistic conventions apparent. It is simply the author's acknowledgement of herself as the "existing" family

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19 The Flowers of Friendship, pp. 51-52. Letters from Alice Woods Ullman (Nov. 30, 1910) and Mabel Dodge (April 1911).
historian, who "remember(s) something," of the family's "existing":

Family living can be existing if not every one in the family living has come to be a dead one . . . Any family living can be one being existing and some can remember something of some such thing. (p. 925)

Summary

It was obvious that Stein lost interest in the narrative. The book became a work-in-progress and its "biography." She had become more interested in the working-out of the aesthetic than in the plot and the characters, and the new form was simply a result of her aesthetic determination that the history of family's progress was also the "history" of the work-in-progress.20

In the course of the novel, characters appeared such as the seamstress (Lillian Rosenhagen, pp. 193-198) and her sister (Cecilia, pp. 198-200). These were sharply defined since Stein's interest in bottom natures are realized in digressions which define qualities. Courage, for example, is not assigned to any specific character, but it is defined in terms of concrete experience:

It is a wonderful thing how much courage it takes even to buy a clock you are very much liking when it is a kind of one every one thinks only a servant should be owning. It is very wonderful how much courage it takes to buy bright colored handerchiefs when everyone having good taste uses white ones

20 Laurence Sterne's The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy was published in 1760. Stein read Sterne and may have found a form here which suited her content.
or pale colored ones, when a bright colored one gives you so much pleasure you suffer always at not having them. It is very hard to have the courage of your being in you, in clocks, in handkerchiefs, in aspirations, in liking things that are low, in anything . . . . It is a very difficult thing to have courage for something no one is thinking is a serious thing. (pp. 464-4)

Having the courage to buy a clock which only servants "should be owning" or having the courage to buy bright colored handkerchiefs when good taste dictates white ones may be autobiographical or not— but having the courage "for something no one is thinking is a serious thing" (the novel) is autobiographical. As the novel progresses, Stein intrudes more of her own feelings. Discouraged with her analysis, she writes: "Perhaps no one ever will know the complete history of every one. This is a sad thing" (p. 453). A few pages later, she reveals:

Sometimes I am almost despairing. Yes it is very hard, almost impossible I am feeling now in my despairing feeling to have completely a realising of the being in any one. . . . I am almost despairing for I am doubting if I am knowing it poignantly enough to be really knowing it . . . Always now I am despairing. It is a very melancholy feeling I have in me now I am despairing about really knowing the complete being of any one of each of these three of them. (p. 458)

Stein has no compunction in recording her narrative invention in one paragraph and her aesthetic problem in a following paragraph:
Now there will be some description of the being in Alfred Hersland and then after that has been a little written there will be written more history of his Gossols living and more description of those with whom he was then in his daily living. There will then be written a description of him in his Bridgeport living and of his later marrying Julia Dehning and of every one whom he knew just then. (p. 539)

To be using a new word in my writing is to me a very difficult thing. Every word I am ever using in writing has for me very existing being. Using a word I have not yet been using in my writing is to me very difficult and a peculiar feeling. Sometimes I am using new one, sometimes I feel new meanings in an old one. (p. 539)

And she even recorded both narrative and aesthetic in a single paragraph:

Alfred Hersland was of a kind in men and women as I was saying. He was the eldest son but not the eldest child as I was saying, and that had some effect on him as I was saying. I am writing everything as I am learning anything. (p. 540)

The novel is the sum of a work-in-progress and the novelist's thinking about it—both recorded without discretion as if in a writer's journal. The narrative, known to the novelist, is increasingly submerged beneath the aesthetic considerations with which she daily struggles. The Making of Americans is probably a unique literary record. It retains the vitality of the struggle of its creation which most writers relegate to the wastepaper basket or empty into personal letters and journals.
Often, she recorded autobiographical details, important to the progress of the novel and to her state of mind. When she writes of "complete disillusion in living" and of becoming "old then and not young then in their feeling," it is obvious that her disillusionment is with Leo. Forced to write for "yourself and strangers" makes "an old man or an old woman of you" (p. 485), altering both her sense of audience and her sense of self:

Disillusionment in living is the finding out nobody agrees with you not those that are and were fighting with you. Disillusionment in living is the finding out nobody agrees with you not those that are fighting for you. Complete disillusionment is when you realise that no one can for they can't change. The amount they agree with you is important to you until the amount they do not agree with you is completely realized by you. Then you say you will write for yourself and strangers, you will be for yourself and strangers and this then makes an old man or an old woman of you. [my italics] (p. 485)

Becoming even more daring than she had been in the writing of "Melanctha" in 1905-06, Stein abandoned conventional syntax. She abandoned dialogue which she had mastered in "Melanctha." The repetitions of sentences in which a single word variation established the only "movement" or narrative progression (usually states of mind) increased. The grammatical device by which she could remain within the present moment of time (which she called a "continuous present") was the present participle, and she used it increasingly in The Making of Americans as she did the simple present tense. When she appeared to lose control of the "continuous present," she depended upon a progressive tense--"As I was saying"--and upon adverbials--"now" and
"certainly"—to fix the narrative consciousness in the present.

Often the future emphatic tense is rooted in the present with "now":

"Now there will be some description."

Because she was attempting a history without a sequence of events
in an orderly progression, Stein's long novel appeared to be not only
unconventional, but an irrational violation of her genre. Hers was
not as much an "art by subtraction," however, as an art by inclusion.
She claimed this was an idea of William James:

I like a thing simple, but it must be
simple through complication. Everything
must come into your scheme; otherwise you cannot achieve real simplicity.
A great deal of this I owe to a great teacher, William James.  

At any rate, the published text is about 550,000 words.

The aesthetic solution—complication—was not altogether success-
ful. Her narrative structure, submerged for long passages and even for
pages, tugged along erratically, sank to the bottom of the prose mass.
Her portraits of "everyone" who had ever existed and would exist
blurred dangerously in the indefinite "each one" and "one" passages—a
disappointment to readers who found the portraits in Three Lives "real."
As early as 1898, in her earliest publication in The Psychological
Review, she had been capable of group portraits of a more specific,
conventional nature:

21 Kenneth Burke's phrases in "Engineering with Words," Dial, VLXXIV
(April, 1923), p. 410—"violating her genre" and "art by subtraction."
22 "A Transatlantic Interview—1946," Primer, p. 34.
A large number of my students were New Englanders [students from Harvard and Radcliffe] and with the habit of self-consciousness, the morbid fear of 'letting oneself go,' that is so prominent an element in New England character [it] was a constant stumbling block.23

The choices she made, in the process of writing her novel, were conscious choices made in order to violate convention.

Stein's novel, increasingly, became the "literally true" realization of the novel's progress. As she struggled to realize the essence of personality and to "describe every individual human being that could possibly exist" 25 in The Making of Americans, both the conventional novel form and function were violated. It was no longer simply the history of a family's progress, but it gradually became "now a history of my love of it" (p. 291). The narrative structure which she had planned remains— but submerged. The important "illuminative quality of the view of life that it [the novel] affords" 26 is blurred by the increasing domination of the "I" consciousness worrying the aesthetic considerations of the composition. She writes, about halfway into the book, "I am still hoping to be more certain in my feeling. I am waiting and waiting" (p. 541). Later, she is

23 In Vol. V, No. 3 (May, 1898), p. 299. In this article, Stein documents four cases each of two types. Her first article in 1896 was with Leon Solomons, but in this one, she analyzed her own findings.

24 "Literally true" was a title she used later for a short poem; it became an increasingly important element in her aesthetic.

25 Although Stein much later revealed this as her intention in Lectures in America (p. 142), her notebooks of the period reveal this as her overriding aesthetic consideration.

confident of her aesthetic: "Tonight I came to be certain about one group of them" (p. 726); but a few pages later: "I tell you I cannot bear this thing that I cannot be realizing" (p. 729).

The function of the novel, as well as the form, had been redefined. Stein's novel had become "the diary of an aesthetic problem worked out momently under your eyes."^27

Some critics believe the book is the first full length novel to violate the convention that a novel must contain a story. Stein had not intended it to be "just an ordinary kind of novel with a plot and conversations to amuse you," and she had revealed this to the reader at the very moment it became clear to her in the process of writing it that the conventional from (plot and dialogue) and function (entertainment) could not satisfy her aesthetic. Her aesthetic vision was modernist: it was the process and not the product which was to generate the involvement of the audience. The audience was expected to work at the novel just as the writer worked at it. Just as the novelist did not always succeed, the audience could not always succeed. The conventional audience expectation of a "story" had to be suspended and "discovery" anticipated.

^27 K. A. Porter, The Days Before, p. 36.
Publication of *The Making of Americans*

It was fortunate that other writing occupied Stein in 1911 because *The Making of Americans*, once made, could not be published. The manuscript was shipped first to New York and rejected by March of 1912. It changed hands many times, but hope for its publication dimmed with the outbreak of World War I in Europe in 1914, and the manuscript was returned to Stein in Paris. On April 16, 1923, twelve years after Stein had finished it, the manuscript went back to New York and to Carl Van Vechten. He managed to get it to his publisher, Knopf. Then in February, 1924, Ernest Hemingway announced to Stein that Ford Madox Ford wanted something of Stein's for the *transatlantic review*. Hemingway helped to copy the first fifty pages and to read proof. The first installment was printed in the April, 1924 issue and the last in December, 1924 when the magazine folded.

In the meantime, the manuscript had gone from Knopf to Liveright where it was also rejected. It was published, finally, by Contact Editions in Paris in November or December of 1925. By the end of December, 1926 (one year later), only 103 copies had been sold. About 200 more copies were sent to bookstores and only about ten of those were paid for.28 Probably, less than 300 copies reached an audience.

One review, Marianne Moore's in *Dial*,29 called "The Spare American Emotion" (Stein's phrase), was enthusiastic, calling attention to the

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28 The full story of the publication is told in detail by Donald Gallup in the appendix to *Q.E.D.*, Fernhurst, etc., pp. 175-214.
"great firmness in the method of this book," to the "distinctively American" flavor of the book, and to the "psychology which is universal."

Katherine Anne Porter, in her review, "Everybody is a Real One," also 1927, felt Stein had realized both her generations (or history) and the "essentials" in human beings. Perhaps, it is important to remember that these two sympathetic and perceptive reviews were written by women who were also writers rather than professional critics.

In 1929, a French edition for which Stein selected sixteen extracts, was published. An abridged edition was published in 1933 in Paris, and an abridged edition of 416 pages was published by Harcourt, Brace and Company in its Modern Library series in 1934, following the commercial success of The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas.

In 1965, forty years after its initial publication in 1925—and almost twenty years after Stein's death—the complete text was published by Something Else Press in New York.

Both the public and critical perception of The Making of Americans might have been more sympathetic had the book been published soon after Stein finished it in 1911. It should have been read in its natural chronological position, after Three Lives and the early portraits, as an extraordinary modernist work of the first decade. The small number of copies which reached the public in 1925-26 indicated an elitism which Stein did not intend. By 1925, Stein was known to the American public through the portraits of Matisse, Picasso, and Mabel Dodge published in Camera Work in 1912-13 and through at least twenty-eight

30 Reprinted in The Days Before.
additional publications from 1913 through 1925 in magazines like Vanity Fair, Life, Broom, and Little Review. Her extreme style in Tender Buttons had been published in 1914 and in Geography and Plays in 1922. The public might have read the long novel, or attempted it, at least, anticipating novelty. By the time the abridged edition was available in 1934, the public saw Stein as the creator of her own legend and not as the modernist whose work made the legend in the first place.

The abridged editions of The Making of Americans, as well as its initial publication in transatlantic review, which were to make it "accessible," produced only a curiosity since they prostituted the aesthetic of a work-in-progress which required the full text. It was a far more accessible work than Tender Buttons (1914) and Geography and Plays (1922), and had it been published in 1911, it would have informed critics, at least, of the direction in which Stein's aesthetic system was moving her. Perhaps even James Joyce's Ulysses, coming ten years after a publication of The Making of Americans in 1911, might not have seemed the literary extravagance that critics made it out to be. And the public, having been "appalled" by The Making of Americans, as they had been by Fauvism and Cubism in the first decade, would have been available in larger numbers as readers of Stein in the second decade of the century.
CHAPTER IV

Realizing Existing: Portraits of Anyone

Now I in my way wanted to make portraits of any one later in Tender Buttons I also wanted to make portraits of anything . . . it was necessary for me nevertheless not to realize these things as remembering but to realize the one thing as existing.

Gertrude Stein in Lectures in America

The almost clinical observations of bottom natures and the complex system of typology which filled Stein's notebooks naturally erupted into her early prose. In Three Lives, and in "Melanctha," in particular, Stein realized the "rhythm of the spoken personality as directly as possible" in the dialogue assigned to her characters. Then, abandoning dialogue as a means to achieve her aesthetic, she continued to scatter portraits in profusion through The Making of Americans. In this same period, about 1909-1911, she continued to write individual portraits without the dialogue and description that conventional narrative required. What she intended, working out an aesthetic of "knowing" rather than "describing," was to realize what she knew in the present moment, which is, as B. L. Reid determined,
"the moment of perfect knowledge, of perfect union between the artist and his subject matter" for Stein.

"Why is the present moment so important to her?" Reid posits: "For her, what is real is what is now real."\(^1\) This aesthetic denies memory. Stein said of her portrait making, "I said what I knew." A portrait is not description, Stein insisted later, because that was "remembering" and it was with the present confrontation with the subject that she was concerned.\(^2\) Her aesthetic of realization (and not re-creation) was akin to the aesthetic of the Cubist painters. In Picasso, Stein writes that she and Picasso were attempting "to express things seen not as one knows them [to be], but as they are when one sees them without remembering having looked at them."\(^3\)

The artists who frequented Stein's salon in Paris and, in particular, Matisse and Picasso, prompted the new style for her portraits in the first decade, as well as "sat" for them. Although her first portrait was one of Alice Toklas which she called "Ada," Stein wrote "Matisse," Picasso," and "Manguin a painter" in the same year, 1909. In 1911, a second portrait of Matisse, which she called "Storyette N. M." grew from an overheard conversation between Matisse and his wife which Stein recorded in a notebook.

Among early portraits of painters and sculptors were "Roche," in the style of the 1909 "Picasso" portrait, and "Braque" (1913) in the disjunctive style of "Mabel Dodge." In the twenties, Stein wrote "Jo

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1 B. L. Reid, Art By Subtraction, p. 49.
2 Lectures in America, p. 178.
3 Picasso, p. 15.
Davidson" (1922), "If I Told Him, A Completed Portrait of Picasso" (1923), "Cezanne" (1923), "Picture of Juan Gris" (1924), and "Lipschitz" (1926) among others. These subjects were all well known to Stein. In this period, perhaps because she was becoming better known to other writers, a number of portraits were of writers. "Guillaume Apollinaire" was a four-line portrait of 1912, but those of Bernard Fay, T. S. Eliot, Jean Cooteau, Edith Sitwell, Mildred Aldrich, Sherwood Anderson, Carl Van Vechten, and Hemingway were all written in the twenties.

Writing an "Autobiographical Note" for the dust cover of Geography and Plays (1922), Stein wrote that after The Making of Americans which she had "used as a study of style,"

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She began to do short things, particularly of anybody who frequented her home . . . and always she was translating the rhythm of the spoken personality as directly as possible using every form that she could invent . . .5
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"Translating the rhythm of the spoken personality" was an aesthetic more like the Fauve and Cubist portraiture of Matisse and Picasso than like the literary portraiture of Henry James or of Flaubert. Certainly, Stein's portraits were not descriptive nor associational in the conventional sense. Women friends of Stein's were subjects for some of the early portraits, but in their portraits, these women are . . .

5 "Autobiographical Note," Autograph manuscript. Beinecke Library, YCAL. This appears to be the first occasion in which Stein writes of herself in the third person as she does in The Autobiography.
not described. Hair color and stature are unknown; their "presence" is a rhythm (a bio-rhythm in today's terms) which is felt but not seen. **Mabel Dodge at the Villa Curonia** (1912), the most famous of the early portraits, is not a picture of Mabel Dodge; it is the presence or essence of Mabel Dodge as she exists in a place—the essence of which is also revealed.

Not as well known was a longer portrait, "Portrait of Constance Fletcher" (also 1912)\(^6\) which begins in the deceptively narrative manner of "Ada":

> When she was quite a young one she knew she had been in a family living and that that family living was one that any one could be one not have been having if they were to be one being one not thinking about one having been having family living.\(^7\)

About one-third of the portrait is in the "Ada" manner. The rest is in the later stylistic mode of **Mabel Dodge**:

> If they move in the shoe there is everything to do. They do not move in the shoe.

This is the style she had "invented" in the process of writing the group portraits in **The Making of Americans**. The use of the indefinite "one" here encourages the reader to think of the single one in terms of the type and not simply as a unique manifestation of the type—she is one of Stein's system of characterology had been better defined by this time, both in her notebooks and within the prose texture of **The Making of**

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\(^7\) Constance Fletcher was the author of **Kismet**, published under her pseudonym, George Fleming.
Americans, and she was realizing character in these terms, as types, as well as in terms of the "spoken personality." Complicating this already complex aesthetic system, was Stein's attempt to "express things seen not as one knows them [to be] but as they are when one sees them without remembering having looked at them"-- a literary aesthetic closer to the aesthetic of the phenomenologists and the structuralists of the second half of the century, but an aesthetic dear to the Cubist painters.

This aesthetic of "knowing . . . without remembering" culminated in Stein's tour-de-force, Tender Buttons (1910-12), in which she "abstracted" the essence of the nature of objects, food, and rooms. These little studies are not, however, abstract since the object remains--even if in the title of each study, only. Her objects in Tender Buttons are like the fractured objects lying on a table in a Cubist still life. Broken into cubes or lines or circles, the essence which identified them remains. The objects, food, and rooms in Tender Buttons Stein called "portraits of anything." She admitted in an interview in 1946 that these portraits had not been completely satisfying: she had wanted to "make a complete picture of each word."

She spoke of the attempt in painterly terms:

I took individual words and thought about them until I got their weight and volume complete and put them next to another word, and at this same time I found out very soon that there is no such thing as putting them together without sense.

It was attempts at "making sense" of the portraits in *Tender Buttons* that confuses the aesthetic just as if the viewer were to insist upon cutting up a Cubist still-life and repasting it together in order to have its forms "make sense" in the representational manner of a nineteenth century still-life.

**The Portraits of Anyone**

"Ada" (1909)

The portrait of Alice Toklas began in a conventional narrative style:

Barnes Colhard did not say he would not do it but he did not do it. He did it and then he did not do it, he did not ever think about it. He just thought some time he might do something.

His father Mr. Abram Colhard spoke about it to every one and very many of them spoke to Barnes Colhard about it and he always listened to them.

Then Barnes fell in love.\(^9\)

The narrative continues with Barnes as the central figure: his first love refuses to marry him; his father comforts him, and they travel together; and "when he was a good deal older," he married a rich girl and managed her money well:

He had a happy life while he was living and after he was dead his wife and children remembered him.

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\(^9\) "Ada" is quoted from a *Geography and Plays* facsimile published by Something Else Press (New York, 1968), pp. 14-16. In his interviews with Alice Toklas, Leon Katz confirmed December, 1910 as the composition of "Ada." If this were true, "Picasso" and "Matisse," then, are 1911 and not 1909.
Barnes's sister is then re-introduced into the narrative, and the style of the portrait imitates the dominant style of *The Making of Americans*:

He had a sister who also was successful enough in being one being living. His sister was one who came to be happier than most people come to be in living. She came to be a completely happy one.

At this point, the narrative details become more explicit:

She was twice as old as her brother. She had been a very good daughter to her mother. She and her mother had always told very pretty stories to each other. Many old men loved to hear her tell these stories to her mother.

The portrait moves deliberately to the daughter's personality as it manifests itself to others:

Many did like the daughter but not every one as every one had liked the mother. The daughter was charming inside in her, it did not show outside in her to every one, it certainly did to some.

The narrative continues with the mother's death. The daughter takes care of the father and of the brother. Older relatives come to live with the family and to die there. Ada was unhappy "as she did not like so much dying." Finally, she inherits money from her grandfather and leaves, writing her father tender letters and "telling very nice stories indeed in them" but never returning.
The final long paragraph is happy, almost idyllic in tone:

She came to be happier than anybody else who was living then. It is easy to believe this thing. She was telling some one, who was loving every story that was charming.

At this point in the autograph manuscript of "Ada," the portrait which had been written in Alice Toklas' hand, probably copied from scraps of paper on which Stein had composed it, continues in Stein's hand and in the genderless "Someone who" style which dominates the first part of the "David Hersland" section of The Making of Americans, indicating it may have been copied in the notebook at this time from an earlier attempt. The ninety-three words which are in Stein's hand began:

Someone who was living was almost always listening. Someone who was loving was almost always listening. The one who was loving was almost always listening. The one who was loving was telling about being one then listening.

Again, the "literally true" aesthetic of The Making of Americans surfaces since the "one who was loving" is obviously Stein, and she is "almost always listening" to Ada's stories and "was telling about being [the] one then listening":

That one being loving was then telling stories having a beginning and a middle and an ending. . . Ada was then one and all her living then one completely telling stories that were charming, completely listening to stories having a beginning and a middle and an ending.

Bridgeman makes much of the possibility of a Stein-Toklas collaboration (pp. 209-213), but other manuscripts do not corroborate this.
Ada's life was again happy since her stories are listened to by someone who loved her, and she is listening, too, to stories which, having an ending, are obviously being told by a story-writer. At this point in the autograph manuscript, Alice Toklas' hand appears again, but the sentiment as well as the aesthetic which intrudes upon the narrative with the literal truth (for Stein is "telling about being [the] one then listening"), and the gerundive style, which insists upon a continuing present here, and the adverbial now quality in the use of "certainly" is Stein's prose style of the last two sections of The Making of Americans. "Ada" ends:

Trembling was all living, living was all loving, someone was then the other one. Certainly this one was loving this Ada then. And certainly Ada all her living then was happier in living than any one else who ever could, who was, who is, who every will be living.

The first portrait of Stein's was a stylistic miniature of The Making of Americans' stylistic mannerisms, even to the "sort of rhapsody at the end" with which she said she had finished The Making of Americans.12

11 Alice appears five times in the autograph manuscript; it is changed to "Ada" in the typescript prepared for the Geography and Plays publication.
12 In "A Transatlantic Interview--1946," she said, "I finished the thing [The Making of Americans] with a sort of rhapsody at the end."
"Matisse" and "Picasso" in Camera Work

These two word portraits were published by Alfred Stieglitz, the American photographer whose "291" Gallery in New York exhibited avant-garde painters, in his Camera Work in August, 1912. Stieglitz later told Carl Van Vechten that he had asked for the word-portraits "as soon as he had looked them over, principally because he did not immediately understand them."13 However, in a letter to Stein written six months before the publication, Steiglitz appeared to understand the portraits and believe them to be important to his public:

You may rest assured that I shall be exceeding careful in the proof-reading of the portraits as I realize the special significance of extreme care in this instance. You have undoubtedly succeeded in expressing Matisse and Picasso in words, for me at least. It is for that reason that I am desirous of sharing my pleasure with others.14

When the avant-garde painter, Marsden Hartley, read the portraits in that issue of Camera Work, he wrote Stein that they "seem to get as close to the subjects in hand as words can go."15 Some of the artists of the Stieglitz stable who were familiar with Stein's writing—Hartley, Demuth, Francis Picabia—were inspired to abstract portraits which were called "object" portraits. Even academic painters like William Merritt Chase were aware of Stein's writing; he read her two

13 Selected Writings of Gertrude Stein, p. 328.
14 The Flowers of Friendship (Feb. 26, 1912), p. 57.
15 The Flowers of Friendship, p. 64.
portraits at the conclusion of a lecture which he delivered on
Whistler in Baltimore in 1914.\textsuperscript{16} The general public, however, seemed
to find Stein's portraits as strange and as eccentric as they did the
works of art exhibited at the Armory Show, and her American reputation
began on that note.

The August, 1912 issue of \textit{Camera Work} was devoted to Stein's
writing. Stieglitz wrote an introduction:

\begin{quote}
But while it so happens that one of these
articles treats of Henri Matisse and the other
of Pablo Picasso; and while the text is ac-
 companied by fourteen reproductions of
representative painting and sculptures by the
artists; \textit{the fact is that these articles}
themselves, and not either the subjects with
which they deal or the illustrations that
accompany them, \textit{are the true raison d'\'etra}
of this special issue. (my italics)\textsuperscript{17}
\end{quote}

Stieglitz predicted that Stein's articles might be "regarded by many
as no less absurd, unintelligible, radical or revolutionary than the
so-called vagaries of the painters whom they seek to interpret."

He called the Stein prose the "Post-Impressionist spirit . . . found
expressing itself in literary form."

Following Stieglitz's introduction, seven full page illustrations
(black and white) of Matisse works proceeded Stein's word-portrait,
here titled "Henri Matisse." Of the Matisse works pictured, the first
two were owned by Leo and Gertrude Stein:

\textsuperscript{16} \textit{Ibid.}, pp. 93-94.
\textsuperscript{17} \textit{Camera Work: A Photographic Quarterly} edited by Alfred Stieglitz,
Special Number (August, 1912). (The copy examined is one
autographed by Stein for Carl Van Vechten--"For Carl for Carl
from Gtde"--and presented by him to YCAL.)
The "Henri Matisse" word portrait is a full three pages and is signed "Gertrude Stein." It is followed by her signed "Pablo Picasso" on two full pages. The Stein word-portraits are at the heart of the issue. Following her "Pablo Picasso" are seven black and white full page photographs of Picasso's work. The Steins owned the first and third oil paintings and, possibly, the second:

1 The Wandering Acrobats--oil painting
2 Untitled oil painting--Cubist head
3 Spanish Village--Cubist oil later called "Reservoir at Horta"
4 Portrait, M. Kahnweiler--Cubist oil
5 Drawing--Cubist figure
6 Sculpture--Cubist head front view
7 Sculpture--Cubist head side view--possibly same as No. 6

Only Stein's titles were changed; the text remained exactly as she had written it. Since this was an introduction of two unknown European artists' works, Stieglitz may have felt it appropriate to use their full names.

18 This painting appears in photographs on the walls of the Steins' Paris apartment and is usually titled "Young Acrobat On a Ball."
"Henry Matisse" (1909)

"Henri Matisse" is both more explicit and more objective than the portrait of Picasso. In both, the style is that of The Making of Americans' gerundive-participial form. Both portraits begin with the indefinite "One" as if the subject of the portrait is without gender, but the subject is clearly one individual and not one of a group. "Certainly" is the insistent adverb used in both to establish an emphatic tone. In both, Stein again used sentences which appear to be in motion with the altering or displacing of a single word from phrase to phrase or from sentence to sentence. "Matisse" begins:

One was quite certain that for a long part of his being one being living he had been trying to be certain that he was wrong in doing what he was doing . . .

Although some "said that he did not clearly express anything . . . Some were certain that he expressed something very clearly":

Some said of him that he was greatly expressing something struggling. Some said of him that he was not greatly expressing something struggling.

Matisse's struggling to express something clearly convinces some that they, too, want to express this thing (we assume, as artists) and that he is a great man: "Everyone would come to be certain of this thing."

The tone is sober and flatly objective, without the empathy and affection evident in the Picasso portrait. The two portraits reflect,
exactly, the private feelings Stein recorded in her notebooks. "A
great one," "a great man," "Certainly a great man" is the dogged
epitaph which appears, along with "greatly" and "greatness," twenty-
seven times in the portrait. But in her notebooks, the epitaph is
more explicit and angry; the assertion that "Everyone would come to
be certain of this thing" echoes her private word "conquers."

She wrote: "Matisse conquers with a brutal egotism."19

It is difficult to know if this portrait translates the rhythm of
the spoken personality as directly as possible, but the coldly clipped
declarative sentences, the stingy vocabulary, and the flat unemotional
tone appear to realize Matisse's nature.20 In a notebook entry, Stein
wrote that "Leo says Matisse's aesthetic quality is clarity,"21
and the portrait reinforces this quality using "clear" once and
"clearly" 29 times. This rigid and cold clarity is the aesthetic
which dominates Stein's language in her word-portrait of Matisse. Not
once, neither directly nor by inference, does she intrude in the
"literally true" manner in which she intrudes in the "Ada" portrait.

"Pablo Picasso" (1909)

The portrait of Picasso reverberates with Stein's private feelings.
Picasso's charm, his imitators, his need to be working, his need not to

19 Stein Notebook (C-17), YCAL.
20 Matisse, whose reputation was secured by the purchases of his work
by the three Steins and their friends, refused to alter his prices
for them when his reputation and prices soared. It appears that
he tried to retrieve some of his early work from the Steins. (Stein
Notebooks A-11 and C-8.)
21 Stein Notebook (13-11), YCAL.
be working, his aesthetic, his "real meaning," his acceptance (his art is "perplexing" and "disconcerting" like her own) are conveyed in a word portrait in which the subject is portrayed on a more human scale. The Picasso portrait is dominated by a figure "who was completely charming" and whose work "was coming to be a heavy thing, a solid thing and a complete thing." While Matisse's aesthetic quality was clarity and beauty, Stein conveys Picasso's aesthetic quality as form. Matisse "makes lovely but not significant painting," Stein noted privately, while "Pablo has emotional leap and courage." She continued her private analysis of Picasso's genius:

His laziness and his lack of continuity and his facility too quick for the content which ought to be so complete to do what he wants to do . . . His work is not because it is too strong for him to resist but because his resistance is not great enough. Cezanne resistance great but dragged along. Pablo is never dragged, he walks in the light and a little ahead of himself like Raphael. Therefore, his things often lack a base. Do him.  

Her next notebook entry was the famous first line:

One whom some were certainly following was one who was completely charming.

Picasso's meaning was celebrated; she pursued her meaning in the phrases which moved by increments to a full-blown "description":

22 Ibid., (A-14), YCAL.
23 Ibid., (13-14), YCAL.
Something had been coming out of him,
certainly it had been coming out of him,
certainly it was something,
certainly it had been coming out of him
and it had meaning,
a charming meaning,
a solid meaning,
a struggling meaning,
a clear meaning.

In Stein's portrait, this is a single paragraph, but divided into
phrases, Stein's compositional form is simplified. Each phrase and
clause steps back to repeat, not itself, but a single word or phrase
before it. Of her method, she wrote:

I built them [the word portraits] up
little by little each time I said it
it changed a little and then when I
was completely emptied of knowing that
the one of whom I was making a portrait
existed I had made a portrait of that
one.24

Stein's "Picasso," like the sitter, "is never dragged." In the
Picasso portrait, "This one" which introduces the last six of the
twelve paragraphs is both emphatic and affectionate:

This one always had something being coming
out of this one. This one was working.
This one always had been working. This
one was always having something that
was coming out of the one that was a
solid thing, a charming thing, a lovely
thing, a perplexing thing, a disconcerting
thing, a simple thing, a clear thing, a
complicated thing, an interesting thing,
a disturbing thing, a repellent thing, a
very pretty thing.

24 Lectures in America, p. 179.
The determined listing of things from "solid" to "pretty" reflects the "working" image of the artist who was "always" producing something.

Like an older sister's, Stein's affectionate approval is not given without reservations, for this artist who has "real meaning,"

. . . was not ever completely working. He did have some following. They were always following him. Some were certainly following him. He was one who was working. He was one having something coming out of him something having meaning. He was not ever completely working.

Stein's portrait of Picasso at twenty-eight ends on this note. The artist was not complicated, but his painting could be. His reputation was not secure; he was not yet a "great one" like Matisse, but his painting had "meaning."

Although the portrait of Picasso is subjective, and sympathetic, Stein does not intrude the "literally true." This aesthetic evidently was not appropriate to these portraits although she had become, by 1909, a part of Picasso's life in Paris. With hindsight, it is easy to see that the listing of "things"—solid, charming, lovely, perplexing, disconcerting, simple, clear, complicated, interesting, disturbing, repellant, pretty—anticipates the exciting abundance of the artist whose aesthetic was one of discovery and whose discovery of Cubism would redefine painting before the first World War. For a portrait of Picasso, the "continuing present" was an especially appropriate form, for continuing was the essence of his aesthetic and of his nature.

25 In her "Autobiographical Notes" for Geography and Plays, Stein wrote: "She found Picasso and they became as brother and sister." (Autograph Manuscript, Beinecke, YCAL.)
"Miss Furr and Miss Skeene" (1910?)

"Miss Furr and Miss Skeene" was first published in *Geography and Plays* in 1922. It was included in the third position after "Susie Asado" and "Ada," the portrait of Alice Toklas. In July of the following year, it was published in *Vanity Fair*.

"Miss Furr and Miss Skeene" is one of the portraits of "two" which fascinated Stein during the period. But this portrait, like "Ada," has a narrative thread which binds the twenty paragraphs together to tell a story as accessible as a conventional style could have made it. The two women were modeled upon two acquaintances of Stein's, Maud Squires and Ethel Mars.

The narrative action is uncomplicated. Helen Furr, who was cultivating her singing voice, did not find it pleasant to remain "living in the same place where she had always been living." When she met Georgine Skeene, who was also "cultivating" her voice, they went away together. Georgine Skeene liked travelling, but Helen Furr liked "to stay in a place and be gay there." Every few years, Helen Furr returned to her parents' home and Georgine Skeene visited a brother. But they always returned to the place where they were living the gay life. Eventually, they met some "dark and heavy men," and the two women sat with them and "they went with them regularly."

Finally, Miss Skeene goes to her brother's but Miss Furr remains behind, "not at all feeling any need of having Georgine Skeene". But she was "a little longer in the day than she had been." She was "always

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26 "Susie Asado" is said to be the word-portrait of a Spanish Flamenco dancer. More accurately, it appears to be the portrait of her dance.
learning little things to use in being gay" and she "came to use every way in being gay." Georgine Skeene does not return; they are never together again, and Helen Furr moves on to another place where she continues to be gay, to tell others about being gay, and "later was telling them quite often, telling them again and again."

The story is remarkable in a number of ways. Although the narrative action is clear and the characters are sharply defined, there is no dialogue. It is reported that Helen Furr "tells," and "taught" but what she tells is revealed in general terms:

. . . she was telling about using other ways in being gay, she was telling about learning other ways in being gay . . .

The repetitions in which the reader learns that the two women "were gay there" begin in the first paragraph and become a staccato rhythm, increasingly rapid and oppressive, like laughter that is too loud and continues too long:

They stayed there and were gay there, not very gay there, just gay there. They were both gay there, they were regularly working there both of them cultivating their voices there, they were both gay there. Georgine Skeene was gay there . . . . . . . . . .

. . 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. She was gay there, not gayer and gayer, just gay there . . . always she was gay there.

When Georgine Skeene leaves, the tone changes. The narrative voice appears to be revealing Helen Furr's conscious, strenuous, wearying determination not to be lonely. Her uncontrolled gaiety is replaced with a grim, determined gaiety:

Helen Furr stayed there where they had been regularly living the two of them and she would then certainly not be lonesome, she would go on being gay. She did go on being gay. She was not any more gay but she was gay longer every day than she had been being gay when they were together being gay.

The use of "gay" in the story seems not to have been an exposé of the lesbian relationship of the two women. Miss Mars and Miss Squires who frequented Stein's salon in this period (1910-11), corresponded with Stein through the thirties—long after the story appeared in Vanity Fair magazine. The "gay life" was not a reference to a homosexual lifestyle but to a lifestyle better defined as self-indulgent.28 The taboos associated with homosexuality probably would not have permitted an explicit use of the term in a publication like Vanity Fair, furthermore, as early as 1923. When "Miss Furr and Miss Skeene" was published in Vanity Fair in the July, 1923 issue, along with an article on "Contemporary English Prose" by T. S. Eliot, a

28 In popular dictionaries of the period, gay is defined as excited with merriment or merry; bright in appearance; brilliant in color; given to social pleasures or indulgence; hence, loose, licentious; as in a gay life. The Oxford English Dictionary (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972), Supplement, Vol. I, p. 1206: Of a person (homo sexual) underworld and prison slang, 1935; American euphemism for homosexual, 1955.
sombre academic contribution, the editor's sub-title ("The Tale of Two Young Ladies Who Were Gay Together and of How One Left the Other Behind") and note, which began, "This amusing short story," gave little evidence that he believed the story could be morally offensive:

It will be seen that the style . . . is exactly suited to the subject, which if it were not developed monotonously could scarcely be developed at all.29

In her private notebooks, Stein had considered the personality of Ethel Mars, and her use of gay was not euphemistic for homosexual but indicated "merry" or indulgent:

Miss Mars . . . I will not make a servant [type] they have it in common with the chic man the gayety [sic] real sensibility and gayety, when tragic became hard the type of some of the French queens.30

In another notebook entry, Stein compared the "sensibility" she found in Ethel Mars with that of Van Gogh's [suicidal] and the essence of the sensibility to be a "green acid"—a harsh, strident color Van Gogh used in paintings like "The Night Cafe."

Stein did write explicitly about homosexual relationships in "Men" (1908–1912?).31 She began the portrait:

Sometimes men are kissing. Men are some times kissing and sometimes drinking.

29 Vanity Fair (July 1923).
30 Stein Notebook (A-9), YCAL.
31 "Men" was published in Two: Gertrude Stein and Her Brother and Other Early Portraits in 1951, the first of the Yale University edition of Stein's unpublished writings. (New Haven: 1951).
Although a narrative surfaces when the men fight and consequently become lovers, Stein's use of the indefinite "one" makes it difficult for the reader to follow the intrigues developing between the three men, but the encounters are sexual:

Each one of the three of them was such a one, one drinking and talking and loving.

However, the word "gay" is not used in this portrait, nor does any other euphemism for homosexual appear in either the autograph manuscript or in the published version.

Stein's portrait of the two women, which ends with Miss Furr's "telling them quite often, telling them again and again," reveals the tragedy of Miss Skeen's desertion and of Miss Furr's determined hardening to it ("she would then certainly not be lonesome, she would go on being gay"). The portrait is a study of behavior -- that of the hysterical nature. It is accessible both as narrative and as a demonstration or case study.

Both Carl Van Vechten, Stein's literary executor, and Elizabeth Sprigge, Stein's first biographer, found "Miss Furr and Miss Skeene" charming. Bridgeman misread the story, sending Miss Skeene home to her mother. Mellow, misreading it, has Helen Furr leaving a husband to live with Georgine Skeene. However, none of Stein's critics error in appreciating the restraint of the language which was demanded by the aesthetic. Although the narrow vocabulary is stretched to its limits, the texture of the prose is enriched by repetitions.

32 Van Vechten in Selected Writings, p. 562; Sprigge, p. 87.
33 Bridgeman, p. 95.
34 Mellow, p. 133.
which express the subtleties of behavior in what the audience intuits to be a consciousness close to hysteria.

Stein's portrait of the two women realizes the hysterical behavior which friends of the models for Miss Furr and Miss Skeene witnessed. The two women were midwesterners who had gone to Paris to continue their painting and to dabble, as well, in the Parisian life. Mellow describes their behavior:

Within a year they were habitues of the local cafes. Miss Mars [Miss Furr in Stein's portrait] had dyed her hair flaming orange, and both appeared in public so heavily made up their faces had the appearances of masks.35

The "monotonous" style was, of course, the participle-gerundive style of the "Matisse" and "Picasso" portraits to which the public had been exposed in Camera Work in 1912. The style, which Stein had taken to such great lengths in The Making of Americans (not yet published in 1923 when "Miss Furr and Miss Skeene" was published), would have seemed monotonous and queer even in this small dose. The style, "exactly suited to the subject," as the Vanity Fair editor pointed out, built up the portrait of Helen Furr, in particular, "little by little" until Stein was, as she intended, "completely emptied of knowing that the one of whom I was making a portrait existed."36

35 Mellow, p. 95.
36 Lectures in America, p. 179.
CHAPTER V

Realizing Existing: Portraits of Anything

And you must not think that you do not understand because you cannot say it to yourself in other words.

Gertrude Stein in an interview with William Lundell for WJZ and NET radio on November 12, 1934.

There were other earlier portraits of "anything" before the "tour-de-force" as Stein called Tender Buttons. The essence of place was important in Stein's analysis of bottom natures, since she believed that "everyone is as his geography is." Between 1911 and her return to America in 1935, geography was an important element in her writing. Perhaps, because she was a "foreigner" living in France, she was especially conscious of the cultural differences revealed in behavior patterns. Geography and Plays (1922), which she felt was a sampling of her work from the period 1909-1922, the period of her most complex aesthetic system, included place portraits—"France," "Americans," "England," "In the Grass--on Spain," "Italians," and "Mexico--a play." In Mabel Dodge and "Sacred Emily," private domains were realized.
"Bon Marche Weather" and "Flirting at the Bon Marche," were group portraits of Parisians relieving boredom by shopping. Her "Aux Galeries Lafayette," a description of shoppers at the large Paris department store, was her first publication in a little magazine; it was written in 1911 and published in Rogue early in 1915. It was an attempt to distill the essence of place—to tell what she saw and realized as "existing" without description.

"Aux Galeries LaFayette" (1911)

Stein began her portrait of the Paris store by "counting" the shoppers until there became too many to count:

One, one, one, one.
There are very many of them. There are many of them. Each one of them is one.

With small variations, "each one is one" is repeated throughout the prose with the same monotonous "ditto" quality of the faceless mass for which painters use dots to represent figures in a parade or at the racetrack. The monotony of the "scene" and the boredom of the shoppers are revealed in a monotonous prose which itself generates feelings of boredom and monotony:

1 Picasso's "Au Bon Marche" a collage of oils and cut paper made in the spring of 1913, is included in Stein's Picasso (Plate 24). Stein's two pieces are earlier since the YCAL catalogue lists them as 1906 and 1912.
Each one is one. There are many of them.

NARRATIVE ACTION IS MISSING: DESCRIPTION SURFACES ONLY IN THE MOST

extraordinary and revolutionary exercise of this aesthetic which demanded

Tender buttons was the most

object of the place. Mabel Dodge at the Vita Curnona and "Sacred

conventional syntax would not distract her from the "essence" of the

writing, Stein began to set down descriptive studies in which

about someone and something (from which she was attempting to free her

Obvously, recognizing that the conventional syntax of sentences

content and prose style.

theme, "realized" as the one thing existing, "is present both as

momentarily distracting reading of "there are many of them", but the

especially one that one is being.

Each one is one. Each one is being the

Each one is one. There are many of them.

is one is the one that one is being.

the one each one is being, and each one is being each one, and each one is being

and each one is one, and each one

PORTRAIT OF MABEL DODGE AT THE VILLA CURNONA (1912)

AUTOGRAPH MANUSCRIPT, YCAL.
glass, if darkly, at the Villa Curonia—the rhythm of the visible world as Stein perceived it to be in one place in the immediate moment.³

In the portrait, the narrative and descriptive passages are "pale" and infrequent, but they are evident and not submerged as they are in a Cubist portrait:

The days are wonderful and the nights are wonderful and the life is pleasant.

. . . . .

Blankets are warmer in the summer and the winter is not lonely.

. . . . .

There can be the climax. There can be the same dress. There can be an old dress . . . There has been William.

But these few lines suffice to tantalize the reader whose expectations convince him that he can "read" the word-portrait as he would conventional prose portraits. The lines following them appear to be conventional in form (subject and verb) but they are semantically unconventional:

The days are wonderful and the nights are wonderful and the life is pleasant.

Bargaining is something and there is not that success. The intention is what if application has that accident results are reappearing. They did not darken. That was not an adulteration.

³ Linda Simon, Biography of Alice B. Toklas. See Note 73, p. 278. Simon believes that Mabel Dodge tried to come between Stein and Toklas but remained on the outside of that relationship "with her face against the pane." The portrait does not, however, reveal a Toklas-Dodge "battle."
Hunting for clues to the "story" of the Villa Curonia, the reader finds "blankets," and a "bottle that has all the time to stand open," and "a little raw potato," "that little wagon," a "spread that is not a piece removed from the bed" and "William."

Looking for narrative action or plot, the reader finds bargaining, breathing, beginning, and ending. Packing. Collaborating. In a single paragraph, there is swelling, attracting, sinking, darkening, disappearing, sighing. Gliding. Looking. Laughing.

There is Mabel Dodge (in the title) and the Villa Curonia (also in the title) and William (in the text). There are objects and a garden, a house, a bedroom, a wide door, and a floor. But narrative elements have been sacrificed to a series of unstable perceptions in which movement is important:

Gliding is not heavily moving. Looking is not vanishing. Laughing is not evaporating. There can be the climax. There can be the same dress. There can be an old dress. There can be the way there is that way there is that which is not that charging what is a regular way of paying. There has been William. All the time is likely. There is the condition. There has been admitting. There is not the print. There is that smiling. There is the season. There is that where there is not that which is where there is what there is which is beguiling. There is a paste.

The sense of a syntax remains in all of the subject+verb constructions, but meaning is corrupted by "senseless" clusters of words.

This portrait, like Stein's portraits of Matisse and Picasso, is coherent because subjects are followed by verbs. In Mabel Dodge,
syntax remains stable while meaning is violated and transitions ignored. It was an audacity like that of analytical cubism; and it signalled a short period in Stein's aesthetic development in which she would attempt to translate, not the rhythm of the spoken personality as directly as possible, but the rhythm of the visible world or place.

Stein was the single American literary figure associated with the painters of the Paris School and with Cubism. Aside from the revolutionary appearance of her work and its connection with the modern movement in Camera Work, Stein was memorized in two of Picasso's cubist works. In the hermetic oil painting of 1912 called "The Architect's Table," Stein's calling card appears in the lower right portion. In a pasted paper and crayon collage of 1914, called "Still Life with a Calling Card," Stein's card reading "Miss Stein/Miss Toklas/27 Rue de Fleurus" is pasted onto the lower right. The appropriate epitet one critic gave her was not surprising—the "cubist in prose."

Three hundred copies of Mabel Dodge at the Villa Curonia were printed privately by the sitter in Florence in 1912. It made Stein, like the avant garde painters exhibited in the Armory Show of 1913, notorious. Dodge brought the portrait to New York where it was published in The New York Times just before the Armory Show opened there on February 13, 1913. A month after the show closed, it was printed in a special edition of Camera Work in April, 1913 in which Dodge's "Speculations or Post-Impressionism in Prose" appeared. Dodge exhibited it once again in her autobiography, European Experiences.

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It was included in Stein's *Portraits and Prayers* (1934) and in the 1945 edition of *Selected Writings of Gertrude Stein*.

"Sacred Emily" (1913)

Having rejected conventional narration and description and corrupted the sense of meaning by joining words in "meaningless" clusters, Stein next explored the possibility of rejecting conventional syntax. However, in giving up conventional constructions like "There is" and "there are" and "there can be," Stein knew that she would lose her hold on the continuous present. Consequently, in "Sacred Emily," Stein held to the present time, not through her use of present tense verbs and adverbs, but by including daily banalities—good-bye, hello, thank-you—and recording snatches of conversation which she overheard or in which she participated while she was in the act of writing. This device appears to be very much like the Cubists' pasting the guest's calling card and the theatre ticket from last night and the scrap of today's "Le Journal" onto the canvas which they were painting. In this period (Winter 1912-13), at the beginning of Synthetic Cubism, Picasso made "Guitar and Wine Glass" in which he pasted paper fragments—a newspaper fragment reading "Le Jou," a wood-grained piece of paper and three others representing a guitar, a fragment of sheet music, a charcoal drawing of a glass—on a sheet of wallpaper. The fragments represented four still-life objects—

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5 These fragments were always pieces which fragmented even the word, so that "urnal" or "Le Jou" appeared as literary puns.
newspaper, guitar, sheet music, and wine glass, and the total canvas was an iconography for the café life.

The portrait of Madame Matisse which Stein called "Sacred Emily" is a "pasting" together of fragments, some of which represents Madame Matisse's domain (marketing, cooking, flower arranging, sewing, making a fire) and some of which represents her words or conversation. It is not intended to look like Madame Matisse but to be an iconography for the life which she led.

Madame Amelie Matisse was the self-effacing, dutiful wife of the "great man" who raised Matisse's illegitimate daughter as well as their own two sons. She was a good manager of time as well as of money, and in addition to her mothering and her housekeeping, Amelie Matisse sat for her famous husband's Fauve paintings, "The Woman With the Hat" (1905), which Leo and Gertrude Stein owned, and "The Green Line" (1905), owned by Michael and Sally Stein. Stein's word-portrait (or poem) identified the subject, in the second line, as simply the wife of a great man:

Compose compose beds.  
Wives of great men rest tranquil.

Perhaps, as it has been suggested, the shattering of syntax which rendered the portrait "abstract" rather than specific, was Stein's solution to realizing her private observations for more public consumption. However, the portrait remains "descriptive" enough.

7 Henri Matisse's infidelities were common knowledge; Andre Derain had said of Amelie Matisse, "Sainte Amelie, la grande martyre de notre siecle,"
8 Edmund Wilson made this assumption but he later reneged.
for easy identification so that it would seem more accurate to assume that Stein's style in "Sacred Emily" was the result of an aesthetic orientation inclined toward the artistic demands of literary cubism than toward the conventions of literary portraiture.

The first line of the poem--Compose compose beds--is punning in which Emily is seen making beds and compost beds. The second line extends the imagery to her subjective life: "Wives of great men rest [the bed image] tranquil [composed]." Her domain of the house and garden is away from the arenas of studio and salon and café which are not tranquil places, possibly.

In the following five lines, the market place (Emily's public arena) surfaces in three words--egg, nuts, hen--and one full line--Suppose twenty for cent:

Come go stay philip philip.
Egg be takers.
Parts of place nuts.
Suppose twenty for cent.
It is rose in hen.

Like digging into a kitchen midden, household objects surface--curtain, pin, frame, pearls, china and glass, thimble.

Madame Matisse's conversation appears in the poem in snatches and in sentences scattered among the objects like the half sentences of newspaper fragments in the Cubists' papier colles:⁹

⁹ A "Le Journal" fragment in one Picasso lithograph reads "Un Coup de The."
Come one day.

I am not missing.

I love honor and obey I do love
honor and obey I do.

I do believe it will finish, I do
believe it will finish.

How do you do I forgive you every-
thing and there is nothing to
forgive.

Ease all I can do. (appears three times)

What a surprise.

Cordially yours. (appears three times)

Now without turning around.
I will give them to you tonight.

Do you mind.

Do I make faces like that at you.

Remain seated. (appears three times)

Madame Matisse's distaff image emerges in punning beneath the public
acclaim for Henri Matisse (So great so great). This pair of lines
appears twice:

So great so great Emily.
Sew grate sew grate Emily.

And an epitath for "sacred" Amelie, companion to the "great" man,
surfaces:

Sweet and good and kind to all.
Pairs of words which, conventionally, are not paired, appear like pieces of wallpaper and string in a Cubist collage:

- Furious slippers.
- Paper peaches.
- Extra gaiters.

Short phrases appear by the dozens, violating syntax, impossible to parse, without semantic reference within the phrase, but forcing each word, because of its unconventional use, under the eye of the reader. The words may have vague semantic connections, but they cannot be read as meaningful clusters. Each word remains aloof from its neighbors and remains a single unit. Yet, each line is seen as if it were conventional form (a sentence) followed by a period:

- Melancholy do lip sing.
- Cousin tip nicely.
- Resting cow curtain.
- Night town a glass.
- Color mahogany center.

The famous line of "Sacred Emily" is a remarkable literary configuration. It was Alice Toklas,10 typing the poem, who discovered it

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10 "It was I that found it and insisted upon putting it as a device on the letter paper on the table linen and anywhere that she would permit," (The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas, p. 130). The "device" is a circular one in which the words "Rose is a rose is a rose is a rose" appear. It is the size of a quarter on the stationary. It appeared in silver on the black cloth cover of the Literary Guild edition of The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas in 1933.
among the 377 lines and evidently recognized its circular movement, curling back upon itself and away from the short phrases which appear to march on in little, straight lines all around it. It is related semantically only to the lines which immediately precede and follow it:

Night town.
Night town a glass.
Color Mahogany.
Color mahogany center.
Rose is a rose is a rose is a rose.
Loveliness extreme.
Extra gaiters.
Loveliness extreme.
Sweetest ice-cream.

[my italics]

Had "Rose is a rose is a rose is a rose" occurred at the middle of "Sacred Emily," one could make a case for the importance of its semantic clarity at the heart or "center" which is colored "mahogany" (like the heart organ) of the iconography which represents Madame Matisse. For example, one might conclude that Madame Matisse was, in her heart, as pure as a rose or was simply a rose--the metaphor for purity. Perhaps, the position of the line, reinforced by lines of repetition and rhyme which follow it (Loveliness extreme . . . Loveliness extreme. Sweetest ice-cream.) and the conventional semantic transition from "rose" to "loveliness," is more striking after the reader has been subjected to 324 lines of jarring images.

Stein seems to have felt that the famous line was a successful one. She told an interviewer that the rose was red for the first time in one hundred years in her line meaning that the rose had lost its vigor in all the hundreds of lines of prose and poetry in which it
had been used. The line, immediately perceived by Alice Toklas as epigrammatic, is quoted by people who do not know its source, its context, or its maker. Like "You are all a lost generation," the line, "Rose is a rose is a rose is a rose" has the terse, epigrammatic quality of a truism which seems to need no explication.

Other images in "Sacred Emily," which are without conventional sentence structure, without association or connotation, without semantic transition, more fully realize Stein's aesthetic to express things seen as knowing and not as remembering having looked at them. Memory is inhibited by lines which cluster words having no semantic connections like "Melancholy do lip sing" or "Cousin tip nicely." Only memory, not knowing, could express the rose as "loveliness extreme," restating from memory the response to the rose. It is ironic if the most memorable line in Stein's writing is a line which did not express the aesthetic of the piece in which it is found, and if it was, indeed, an unraveled loose end of an otherwise tightly constructed aesthetic realization.

The reader familiar with Stein's life may find bits and pieces of the "literally true" in the lines of "Sacred Emily." Stein's pet name for Toklas appears as if Stein interrupts her own writing to call out:

Pussy pussy pussy what what.

Someone else (perhaps Toklas) seems to interrupt Stein's writing to say:

11 The epigram which Hemingway quoted from Stein for The Sun Also Rises.
Put something down some day in my handwriting

Names—Henry, Willie, Lizzie, Ethel, Susie, Jack, Anne, Susan, Anna, Louise, Jane—seem to be those of friends (Stein's or Emily's?) scattered among the lines like the objects--roses, pears, apples, pearls, slippers.

Fifty-eight lines are only one word units; the two longest lines are sixteen word clusters, one of those pushing a pun very far, indeed:

**Push sea push sea push sea push sea push sea push sea push sea push sea push sea push sea.**

Each of the 377 lines is a terminated unit punctuated with a period at the end of the line; the line should be seen as a completed image. This is, perhaps, the most interesting element in "Sacred Emily." It is clearly important that the complete line should appeal to the reader visually. This seems to be born out by an examination of the manuscript of "Sacred Emily." Five complete lines are deleted while only three individual words within lines were deleted. Each line, read slowly, without the conventional expectation of connotation or meaning, forces the reader into a heightened awareness of each word as if each were seen under a magnifying glass, yet the sum of the words in the line is the object:

- Little slam up.
- Cold seam peaches.

The visual appeal of the object is an aesthetic like the painter's. Although Stein's writing of this period suggests infinite aesthetic
possibilities, Stein's medium--words--created the problem which words create--that of association which does not let each word "come out clean."

**Tender Buttons (1910-12)**

Rarely did Stein or Picasso let go of the object; therefore, neither is an abstractionist. In "Drawing in Pure Calligraphy" (1923) which is Plate No. 1 in Stein's book, *Picasso*, Picasso permitted himself an abstraction. But the *Picasso* retrospective at the Museum of Modern Art (May through Sept. 16, 1980) is clear evidence that abstraction did not interest him. One critic writes, in analyzing the 1000 works exhibited:

Picasso never painted an abstract picture in his life. . . . Nevertheless, some of his Cubist still lifes of 1911 run close to total abstraction, depending upon such slender clues as a glass or a pipestem to pull them back to reality.12

Stein does not even approach "abstraction" in *Tender Buttons* since each descriptive piece has a title, and it is clear that the title names the food, or object, or rooms described although some clues are "slender" ones. Her studies are analogous to Cubist still-lifes since they are unconventionally realized--the conventional form having been fragmented into pieces but appearing to be "all there."

Stein wrote most of *Tender Buttons* in Spain in the summer of 1912, and she finished it in Paris. "Mildred's Umbrella," for example, may have been done "from memory" in Spain although this would have denied the aesthetic principle which was to describe the object in front of her as "existing." She evidently wrote some of these on little scraps of paper and later copied them into three notebooks. Eight scraps of paper exist in Dr. Gallup's safe at Beinecke Library, but they do not reveal anything.

Notebook 1 is titled "Food/Studies in Description" and is not filled—evidence that stopping was not simply a matter of running out of pages. Notebook No. 2 is titled "Rooms/Number One," but this is deleted, evidence that "Rooms" was to have been first; it is last. Notebook No. 3 is "Objects." Three "titles" appear to have been mis-printed as lines: under "A Waist," the following were to have been titles: "Object that is in wood," "A piece of crystal;" and "A woolen object gilded."13

It has been suggested that Stein was describing that which we absorb, that which we perceive, that which encloses us; all was a part of her environment. "Objects," which has the most intensity and vitality, is divided into 58 paragraphed units, from three words to about 450 words. "Food" is divided into 51 categories in the same way—the shortest called "Dining" (the text is "Dining is west") and the longest is the initial entry called "Roastbeef" which is about 1800 words. "Rooms" is paragraphed but has no subdivisions; it is about 4000 words.

13 These and the autograph manuscripts of *Tender Buttons*, YCAL.
Efforts to paraphrase and to parse Tender Buttons, although heroic and imaginative, yield little substance. Word counts yield useless numbers. As with each of Stein's periods, there are words or phrases which reappear in the prose of the period as the "literally true" intrusion of the author's voice.

In Tender Buttons, a favorite address, presumably to herself, is "suppose" and "supposing" as if she poses a problem. "Please" surfaces. So does "tender," but no words dominate like the present participles and gerunds - being, living, etc.--or the indefinite subjects - "this one," "one" and "each one" of the portraits written before the period of Tender Buttons.

Stein said of Tender Buttons that she "wanted to make a more complete picture of each word":

I used to take objects on a table, like a tumbler or any kind of object and try to get the picture of it clear and separate in my mind and create a word relationship between the word and the things seen.  

The first "study" in Tender Buttons is "A Carafe, That is a Blind Glass":

A kind on glass and a cousin, a spectacle and nothing strange a single hurt color and an arrangement in a system to pointing. All this and not ordinary, not unordered in not resembling. The difference is spreading.

14 "A Transatlantic Interview--1946" in A Primer for the Gradual Understanding of Gertrude Stein, pp. 15-35.
Richard Bridgeman's paraphrase of Stein's "A Carafe" is clever and, ironically, longer than Stein's description:

The carafe is made of a glass tinted grey-green or purple, the color of a bruise, a "hurt" color. The carafe is a "kind" of glass container, one not so familiar as a pitcher, which is part of the immediate family of containers, but a "cousin." It is at once something to see and something through which to see, "a spectacle." Unfamiliar as its representation may be, however, it is "nothing strange." Its arrangement is part of a larger system which is not without order itself, even though it does not represent things in an ordinary way. The difference exemplified by this opening still life is "spreading," spreading in the book itself and in the world at large.15

Fortunately, few of the descriptive pieces lend themselves to such a satisfactory explication.16 For example, some pieces appear to be out of reach semantically:

Water Raining

Water astonishing and difficult altogether makes a meadow and a stroke.

Cold Climate

A season in yellow sold extra strings makes lying places.

The common articles of daily life, found in Cubist still-lifes, are the subjects for many of Stein's studies--cushion, boxes, plate, cup and

15 Bridgeman, pp. 127-128.
16 Julian Sawyer in Gertrude Stein: A Biography (New York: Arrow Editions, 1940) made an outline chart for Stein's word-portrait "Cezanne," but he admitted that his "Cezanne" robbed Stein's of its "universal essence" (p. 22).
saucer, chair, table, book. Transparent receptacles—a carafe, a seltzer bottle are singled out for titles. (Cubist still-lifes of bottles labeled "vin" and "Bass" were common.) Perhaps, her color consciousness had been heightened by rococo cubism. Colors surface in Tender Buttons—the word "color" is used often; reds are particularly numerous—red, pink, rose, scarlet—but other colors like yellow, blue, grey, green, silver, violet, and brown appear. White and images of "clean" are dominant; black and images of dirt intrude. Domestic chores like shining, washing, rubbing, and polishing appear to be activities which are pleasant and comforting. At one point, she writes, "Certainly glittering is handsome and convincing;" another time, describing "Shoes," "It shows shine." Articles of clothing are subjects for studies—umbrella, cloak, dress, hat, petticoat, handerchief, shoes, shawl.

At the end of the "Objects" section, three descriptions seem to signal a threatening, darkening mood:

Peeled Pencil, Choke
Rub her coke.

It was Black, Black Took
Black ink best wheel bale brown.
Excellent not a hull house, not a pea soup, no bill, no care, no precise no past pearl pearl goat.

This IS THIS DRESS, AIDER
Aider, why aider why whow whow stop touch, aider show, aider stop the muncher, muncher munchers.
A jack in kill her, a jack in, makes a meadowed king, makes a to let.

This section, in Notebook 3, was probably written last, and perhaps the black images and sinister mood were related to the threatening war in
Europe. "This is this dress, Aider" may be Stein word play for "This is distress, aid her" or "This is distress, Ada"—an appeal to Ada (Alice) with whom Stein's relationship had become permanent.

Although Stein used puns playfully (Mussed ash, be where), a strange punning near the end of the food section occurs: "Reality is only excretion—a nonsense." The line may be someone's observation to which Stein concludes that it is a nonsense.

Stein felt that some of the words in *Tender Buttons* had "definite associations" by which she meant that the words did not come out "clean." One critic who understood her aesthetic in *Tender Buttons* said that there was "too much meaning" in the studies.18

In the 1946 interview, from a distance of about thirty-four years, Stein attempted to explicate some of the studies like the following:

**A LITTLE BIT OF A TUMBLER**

A shining indication of yellow consists in there having been more of the same color than could have been expected when all four were bought. This was the hope which made the six and seven have no use for any more places and this necessarily spread into nothing. Spread into nothing.

To that, Stein responded:

"A shining indication of yellow . . ." suggests a tumbler and something in it. ". . . when all four were bought" suggests there were four of them. I try to call to the eye the way it appears by suggestion the way a painter can do it. This is

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17 Bridgeman supplies additional words, reading it as "reality is the creative excretion of the moment which may be regarded as nonsense" (p. 131).
difficult and takes a lot of work and concentration to do it. I want to indicate it without calling in other things.19

A "poem" that she felt was "for the most part" successful was "A Little Girl Called Pauline":

A little called anything shows shudders.
Come and say what prints all day. A whole few watermelon. There is no pope. [excerpt]

Stein remembered:

This was another attempt to have only enough to describe the movement of one of those old-fashioned automobiles, an old Ford, the movement is like that old automobile.20

Finally, Stein passed judgement on her notorious book:

This book is interesting as there is as much failure as success in it. When this was printed I did not understand this creation. I can see it now. but one cannot understand a thing until it is done. With a thing in the process of doing, you do not know what you are doing until it is done . . . Until then you are struggling.

I was not interested in what people would think when they read this poetry; I was entirely taken up with my problem and if it did not tell my story it would tell some story.21

Although Stein did not understand the book until it was done, many writers, upon seeing it, appeared to know exactly what she was doing.

19 "A Transatlantic Interview--1946" in A Primer, p. 25.
20 Ibid., p. 24.
21 Ibid., pp. 29-30.
The infinite possibilities which challenged Stein in *Tender Buttons* excited them, but a strong sense of audience inhibited them from taking up the challenge.

In *Tender Buttons*, Stein had violated syntax. When she said that some of the words she used had "definite associations," implying that those associations did not allow words to be fresh, she meant that she had attempted to avoid using familiar word clusters and pairings. She attempted to re-new words dulled by use in conventional patterns. The hundreds of surprising juxtapositions of common words in *Tender-Buttons* poked fun at conventional syntax and semantics: tender buttons, careless water, round color, sudden spoon, laugh white, a piece of coffee, glazed glitter, it shows shine, dining is west. The surrealistic imagery of the incongruous, revealed over and over, testifies to the consistency of Stein's method:

from "Objects":

A BLUE COAT

A blue coat is guided guided away, guided and guided away that is the particular color that is used for that length and not any width not even more than a shadow.

from "Food":

PASTRY

Cutting shade, cook spades and little last beds, make violet, violet when.
from "Rooms":

A window has another spelling, it has "f"
all together, it lacks no more then and this
is rain, this may even be something else, at
any rate there is no dedication in splendor.
There is a turn of the stranger.

As one critic puts it, she had gone beyond semantics.22

22 Weinstein, pp. 47-67.
CHAPTER VI

Realizing Audience

She always however made her chief study people and therefore the never ending portraits.

Gertrude Stein in
The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas

The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas

The necessity to express her own intense, subjective feelings about people and their behavior—even to make a "study" of personality almost before psychology became a proper science—was evident in Stein's college themes written between 1884 and 1896.¹ Even then she wrote about her father's tyranny at home which made father figures, forever, unpleasant to her; about a fellow boarder's "royal air" which earned the boarder a finger bowl at the dinner table; about Professor William James who was "too great to worship logic as his God." But in writing of her own response to Professor William Vaughn Moody's criticism of her essays, seeing herself as a woman who, when criticized, "immediately gets hysterical and thinks she is calm,"² she required the objectivity which a persona released. The result was a self-portrait with the pale

¹ See Bridgeman for a Stein Chronology, pp. 357-358.
under tone of irony more easily rendered in the third person.

Once she had determined to become a writer, it appears that Stein thought of her craft in terms of literary portraiture and that she "objectified" her subjects. Her notebooks, begun in 1902, are evidence of her efforts at objectivity as is her writing of the first three decades. After Three Lives, the unconventional form which her writing took, appeared to deny the expectations of a conventional audience, although she always insisted that she wanted readers.

In 1921, she was asked to write a dust cover blurb for Geography and Plays. Attempting to realize herself as the "legend," she again assumed a persona. She began the "Autobiographical Notes" exactly the way, a decade later, she would begin The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas, but assuming an impersonal third person voice:

Gertrude Stein was born in Allegheny Penna. the seventh child of substantial people.

The prose in the "Notes," for the most part, is conventional. The authorial voice remains distant. Stein's rhetorical mannerisms surface occasionally as in "became an interested and interesting student of psychology," but the whole comes off as a perceptive interview in which Stein has been quoted indirectly. The "Gertrude Stein" or object of the piece assumes a legendary quality precisely as Stein intended.

Most of Stein's writing of the second decade and of the twenties was the kind which appeared in Geography and Plays (1922) and later in

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3 "Autobiographical Notes." Autograph manuscript, YCAL.
Portraits and Prayers (1934). Since the aesthetic of discovery she practiced had little to do with "audience appeal," a conventional autobiography would have been almost an impossibility had she not been able, again, to "objectify" herself by taking on a persona. It would appear that she attempted, first, to coax Alice Toklas into writing the book which the publishers, and presumably an audience, wanted. She invented a title: My Twenty Five Years With Gertrude Stein.

That book would be directed toward an audience eager for the Stein which Stein could not realize in the first person. The Stein which her critics and publishers wanted was the personality who lived at 27, Rue de Fleurus, itself "one of the sights of Paris," and who was a minor legend in the history of Modernism. In a radio interview given during her lecture tour in America, Stein explained how the book came to be:

I suggested to my secretary Alice B. Toklas that she write her life story and she put it off and finally to encourage her one day I sat down in the garden and wrote a chapter then it seized me so I kept on writing . . .

"To encourage her" (Toklas) to write her autobiography, Stein wrote, as a Toklas persona, that first chapter. If Toklas were to write the book it could contain, as well as hundreds of portraits, a sympathetic and flattering portrait of the legendary Gertrude Stein.

4 Transcript: Gertrude Stein Interviewed by William Lundell. (Nov. 12, 1934), WJZ and NET." YCAL.
There are about 400 names dropped into the book painting a vast canvas of the Paris scene of 1902 to 1932. The portraits range from astringent one-liners, which are like hard-edged little etchings, such as the description of Glenway Wescott:

He has a certain syrup but it does not pour. (p. 269) 5

and of Lady Otoline Morrell:

looking like a marvellous feminine version of Disraeli and tall and strange and shyly hesitating at the door. (p. 151)

to perceptive, sympathetic portraits like that of Mildred Alrich who wrote Hilltop on the Marne:

Mildred Alrich was then in her early fifties, a stout vigorous woman with a George Washington Face, white hair, and admirably clean fresh clothes and gloves. A very striking figure and a very satisfying one in the crowd of mixed nationalities. She was indeed one of whom Picasso could say and did say, c'est elle qui fera la gloire de l'Amerique. She made one very satisfied with one's country, which had produced her . . . No one in the world could tell stories like Mildred. I can still see her at the rue de Fleurus sitting in one of the big armchairs and gradually the audience increasing around her as she talked. (pp. 147-149)

5 Page numbers shown in parentheses for The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas are for the first edition and for the facsimile edition published by The Literary Guild (New York: 1933) since Bridgeman's Index of Names corresponds to these editions. (See Bridgeman, Appendix D)
The names which Stein could drop ranged from the lively dead—
William James and Cezanne, for example—to the lively living—
Hemingway and Picasso. Published twenty-five years before the advent
of television talk-shows had revealed the American public's passion
for voyeurism, *The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas* was a cavalier
intrusion into dozens of private lives of the then-shadowy figures of
Modernism—Matisse, Picasso, Isadora and Raymond Duncan, Sherwood
Anderson, Scott Fitzgerald, Ernest Hemingway, and Gertrude Stein
herself.

Adopting the persona of Alice Toklas was a stroke of genius.
The job to be done was not a "confessions," but a slightly droll view
of the Modernist scene such as a spinster of fifty-six, unconventional
and articulate, living on the edge of the Bohemian life in Paris,
might have of the first three decades of the movement. At the center
of the stage were to be Picasso as painter and Stein as writer.
Toklas, as narrator, could accomplish the fabrication which presented
Picasso as the living legend he had become by 1932 while propelling
Stein into the living legend she was about to become when the book
was published. Picasso and Stein appear on the scene more than any
other figures. Stein is ever-present as the sun around which Toklas
and dozens of adoring satellites revolve. Picasso, as another sun on
the Modernist horizon, appears fifty-seven times, treated always with
sympathy and affection and with the same gentle irony with which Stein
views herself.
It was not difficult, Stein said later of the feat, "to recreate the point of view of somebody else" in The Autobiography. Stein had lived with Toklas since 1909 during which time she had practiced translating "the rhythm of the spoken personality as directly as possible, using every form that she could invent." This time, the form was autobiography, and the literary invention was the authorial voice or "spoken personality" so accurately realized as Alice Toklas's that friends were not sure which woman had written the book. The "bottom nature" which emerges is that of Toklas's--often malicious, usually precise, and "endlessly diligent"--while the "endlessly indolent" personality of Stein surfaces as the legend not yet quite discovered by the world.

A careful examination of the autograph manuscripts at Yale, reveal that there is no justification for the contention that Alice Toklas was the real author of The Autobiography. The fifteen notebooks which comprise the autograph manuscript in the Beinecke Collection at Yale University are in Stein's hand. The red pencil notations are, as obviously, in Toklas's. There are no more and no less than the average deletions and additions found in most Stein manuscripts. The red pencil marks are Toklas's corrections; some were changed in the published draft. For example, Toklas wrote "1926" over the incorrect "1928" date for Stein's Oxford lectures. Other Toklas suggestions were ignored. In red, Toklas crossed out these two sentences which appeared, however, in the published text:

7 These descriptive phrases appear in Sprigge, p. 173.
And now just this year for reasons best known to themselves Who's Who has added Gertrude Stein's name to their list. The Atlantic Monthly needless to say has not.

Toklas crossed out a comment of her own made to Alfred North Whitehead at the beginning of World War I when Stein and Toklas were guests of the Whiteheads in England; but Stein included it anyway:

At last my nerves could bear it no longer and I blurted out, why do you say that, why do you not say that you are fighting for England, I do not consider it a disgrace to fight for one's country. (p. 186)

Sometimes, Toklas's red pencil took its toll. At the end of Chapter IV when Stein discovers the manuscript of Q.E.D. and gives it to Louis Bromfield to read, the chapter ended in manuscript:

she handed him the manuscript and said to him, you read it. When we return to Paris this autumn, I [Toklas] will read it.

But "When we return to Paris this autumn, I will read it," does not appear in the published text, nor does the clause which followed "It [The Making of Americans] was over a thousand pages long and I was typewriting it." Toklas red-pencilled, "and I enjoyed every minute of it."

Other Toklas notations such as "have already typed this earlier" bring to life the "endlessly diligent" Toklas in Stein's manuscript. But there is no evidence in the original manuscripts that Toklas had
more than a minor part in editing the book. It is clear, too, from a comparison of the autograph manuscript with the published text, that no editor touched the original draft and that the published edition followed the draft not only to the letter but to the eccentric use and mis-use of the comma. The tone of The Autobiography which is conversational, and the chronology which is disorderly, a beginning again and again (a Stein aesthetic), remained unedited.

Stein edited her own material in manuscript. A paragraph on Dos Passos was deleted; in it, a young woman called Dos Passos a "fat head." Another fifty-one words were deleted in which a French servant girl named Jeanne who tells "endless stories of French village life" (page 204 in the published text) is described as a fool. In Chapter Two, two pages concerning another servant, Helene, were deleted. Most interesting are twelve leaves of a first draft of Chapter One which Stein discarded.

Stein began the first draft with the same first two paragraphs which appear in the final draft. However, after "I mayself have no liking for violence," the prose disintegrates into a vague ruminative style:

but in spite of that which is what I wish to say I have had more occasion to feel what violence is and when I do feel so I can and have . . .

8 Toklas's memoire, What Is Remembered (1963), and her letters, Staying on Alone (1973), reveal her intelligence and diligent nature. Invention of the literary sort which The Autobiography reveals is not evident.

9 Autograph manuscript, YCAL.
which rambles on for about 170 words when "I led in my childhood and youth the gently bred existence of my class and kind" surfaces. This is followed by about 350 words beginning:

I had an aunt who was charming and she used to say. . . 10

It is obvious that Stein had lost, at this moment, her point of view (the Toklas persona) and that she was describing her own aunt who "afterwards was so large that she was unable to leave her carriage without part of the door being removed." 11 Another 300 words follow trailing off into the gerundive style, ruminative, indolent, vague, and without the crisp phrasing demanded by the Toklas persona which characterizes the final draft. However, once Stein had "locked" the Toklas persona in place, that persona appeared to release Stein from the aesthetic system which denied audience expectations, under which she had labored since The Making of Americans. Having once again taken a conventional form--autobiography--to violate in an unconventional realization of that form, Stein wrote rapidly:

Everyday during those beautiful six weeks of unusually dry and sunny days, in the morning and in the afternoon, I sat and on a little double decked table as near the sunny wall as I could get I wrote about five hours a day. This is a very unusual thing for me to do because although I always write I do not write very long at a time but I wrote without excitement and steadily and in six weeks the autobiography was done. 12

10 Ibid.
11 Ibid.
Whether writing "without excitement" was due to the Toklas persona which demanded the carefully crisp exposition of a "secretary" who could furnish names and dates and places "steadily," or whether it was due to an acknowledgement of her failure as the true literary Cubist, Stein, bowing to something that looked like convention, that "smelled of the museums," finished her first commercial success in October of 1932.

Stein's first title appears in the manuscript as "Twenty five years with Grte Stein"—then as "Autobiography by Alice Babette Toklas."
The chapter divisions as they appear in the published version appear in the manuscript when she had completed about one-half of the book. It appears that she intended to end with Part VI "The War," but a Part VIII "After the war--1919-1932" of about seventy-three printed pages was added. The chapters divide the autobiography into seven parts, two of which document the histories of Stein and Toklas before their meeting in Paris in 1907. One part details Stein's life and career in Paris (1903-1907) and four parts relate the "history" of their life together: "My Arrival in Paris," "1907-1914," "The War," and "After the War--1919-1932."

Even in Part I, "Before I Came to Paris," which is Alice Toklas's history (only three pages and six lines long), Stein makes an appearance as the creator of "Ada" a nice irony since Stein is again creating "Ada" as the narrative consciousness of the present work.

Part II, "My Arrival in Paris," begins "This was the year 1907." Stein's Three Lives was being printed and "she was deep in The Making of Americans." Picasso had finished her portrait, Matisse had finished "Bonheur de Vivre," and the heroic age of Cubism had dawned. Helen,
the Steins' first cook, was on the scene as was Leo Stein. "And on all the walls right up to the ceiling were pictures" (p. 10), Toklas begins her life-long sitting-with-wives-of-geniuses when she sits with Picasso's mistress, Fernande. Soon, Toklas is visiting the Picassos with Stein and arranging to have French lessons with Fernande. The chapter ends with the book's premise:

And now I will tell you how two americans happened to be in the heart of an art movement of which the outside world at that time knew nothing. (p. 34)13

Part III is "Gertrude Stein in Paris--1903-1907," Stein's life with Leo, their discoveries of Matisse and Picasso, their Saturday evenings holding court at No. 27, Stein's posing for Picasso, and Stein's own literary efforts as she wrote Three Lives and The Making of Americans are shared as Toklas might have shared them with a friend:

she had then the habit of beginning her work at eleven o'clock at night and working until the dawn. She said she always tried to stop before the dawn was too clear and the birds too lively because it is a disagreeable sensation to go to bed then... But often the birds and the dawn caught her and she stood in the court waiting to get used to it before she went to bed. (p. 50)

In this chapter, for example, as in others, time is not chronological. Guillaume Apollinaire's death, which occurred at the end of World War I,
is reported as is the rupture between Matisse and Stein which probably was foreshadowed in this 1907 period.

Part IV, "Gertrude Stein Before She Came to Paris," follows Stein haphazardly from her birth in Allegheny, Pennsylvania to Europe (at age two or so) and back to America when she was about seven. Then, Stein's family go to California and something of her erratic education is documented, as is her mother's death when she is fourteen and her father's when she is seventeen. She becomes "one of a group of Harvard men and Radcliffe women" (p. 95) and meets William James. Woven into the narrative are later incidents like the letter proposing that he send Stein a copy of James' marginal notes from the man who stole James' copy of *Three Lives* from Harvard (p. 99). The chapter ends with Stein's defection from medical school when she joins Leo in Paris, and her writing a "short novel [Q.E.D.]." Immediately, in the conversational tone in which one makes asides, Stein weaves in an incident which does not follow chronologically the "short novel" for thirty years. However, these events, out of sequence, but related, are juxtaposed within the paragraph:

The funny thing about this short novel is that she completely forgot about it for many years . . . . This spring just two days before leaving for the country she was looking for some manuscript of *The Making of Americans* that she wanted to show Bernard Fay and she came across these two carefully written volumes of this completely forgotten first novel. She was very bashful and hesitant about it, did not really want to read it. Louis Bromfield was at the house that evening and she handed him the manuscript and said to him, you read it. (p. 104)
In this manner, the past and present stream together. The tone of the book is unified by this "haphazard" revelation of the past within the present. And, of course, the natural, slightly askew syntax of casual, daily speech reinforces the reader's sense of the present in which the past is only recalled.

The fifth part is titled simply "1907-1914. This is the heart of the book. One hundred and four pages precede it, and one hundred and thirty-five pages follow. In these seventy pages, Alice Toklas arrives upon the scene and can then report as an involved observer the most important years in the history of modern painting and the most exciting period in Stein's development as a writer. This part begins:

And so life in Paris began and as all roads lead to Paris, all of us are now there, and I can begin to tell what happened when I was of it. (p. 105)

For Toklas, the new life was reading proof of Three Lives, typing The Making of Americans, and sitting with the wives of geniuses--"The geniuses came and talked to Gertrude Stein and the wives sat with me. How they unroll, an endless vista through the years. I began with Fernande . . ." (p. 105). Picasso, in this chapter, returns from a summer in Spain with some Spanish landscapes:

. . . and one may say that these landscapes, two of them still at the rue de Fleurus and the other one in Moscow in the collection that Stchoukine founded and that is now national property, were the beginning of cubism.

Matisse's successes begin with a "great show of his pictures in Berlin"
(p. 114); the "the very small sprinkling of americans [on] Saturday evenings" grew (p. 125). Finally, there is the banquet to Rosseau, reported in dozens of memoirs since Stein's, but none as lively with as many lively images. In this account, Picasso's purchase of a Rosseau (a large portrait of a woman) in Montmartre is the occasion for honoring the painting and the painter. Appolinaire was to bring Rosseau, and everyone was to write poetry and songs. They met at a cafe and got drunk, the food never arrived, but Toklas and Fernande went shopping to find "substitutes," and finally they all gathered at Picasso's and the guest of honor arrived — an anticlimax!

How well I remember their coming.
Rosseau a little small colourless frenchman with a little beard, like any number of frenchmen one saw everywhere.

In this period before the war, Stein and Toklas spend many weeks in Spain—Madrid, Cuenca, Granada, Avila—and the period of the "Spanish poetry" and Tender Buttons, Stein's "cubist" period, comes to an end as does the heroic age of Cubism. Helene (the maid) leaves; Leo has gone to Italy; and the pictures have been divided:

Gertrude Stein kept the Cezannes and the Picassos and her brother the Matisse and Renoirs, with the exception of the original Femme au Chapeau. (p. 172)

In short in this spring and early summer of nineteen fourteen the old life was over. (p. 175)

Roger Shattuck's account in The Banquet Years (Vintage, Revised 1968) has neither the immediacy nor the entertaining quality of Stein's.
Part Six is "The War." The world war has brought the old life to an end. It is a strange period in which friends like Braque are wounded and Stein drives a truck for The American Fund for French Wounded, coming back at last to Paris to see the procession march past the Arc de Triomphe in victory until "it all finally came to an end . . . and peace was upon us" (p. 236).

The final part, chapter seven, is "After the War 1919-1932." It chronicles the days after the war when Stein and Toklas were "constantly seeing people." But the cast of characters was changing. Matisse had moved to Nice, Apollinaire was dead, Braque and Picasso had quarreled, and Juan Gris was dying. Hemingway, who became her "pupil," appeared on the Paris scene, twenty-three and "extraordinarily good-looking." This final chapter presents a new cast of characters including Sir Francis Rose whose fuzzy, romantic oil paintings replace others on the Stein salon walls, gradually, until there are thirty of them. The "heroic days of Cubism" when Picasso and Stein were young are gone. Toklas's portrait has been painted by Picasso's successor, Sir Francis Rose--it is the final illustration in the book--and Picasso now "always goes into the corner and turns the canvas (Rose's) over to look at them but he says nothing" (p. 308). Toklas admits that Stein has teased her to write the book, even inventing titles--My Life with the Great, Wives of Geniuses I Have Sat With, My Twenty-Five Years with Gertrude Stein.

Only in the final words of the book does Stein appear from behind the Toklas persona:
About six weeks ago Gertrude Stein said, it does not look to me as if you were ever going to write that autobiography. You know what I am going to do. I am going to write it for you. I am going to write it as simply as Defoe did the autobiography of Robinson Crusoe. And she has and this is it. (p. 310)

On the page opposite, the first page of the manuscript is reproduced, clearly revealing in Stein's handwriting, the hoax:

I was born in San Francisco, Cal.

[illustrated page, p. 311]

The frontispiece photograph by Man Ray had been the first clue to the literally true. In it, Alice Toklas stands in the lighted doorway looking into the room where Stein sits. The door which Alice holds open throws light onto the table and onto the figure of Gertrude Stein writing.

The book was Stein's first commercial success. Unpretentious and finally "accessible," the Stein book which publishers had known all along would sell, was published within the year (on Aug. 31, 1933) by Harcourt. Before publication, The Atlantic Monthly published an abridged edition of about sixty per cent of the book in four installments. Four printings of the book or 11,400 copies were sold by 1935. The Literary Guild had chosen The Autobiography for its September, 1933 selection. A British and a French edition followed in the next year; an Italian edition was published in 1938. The book was

15 This was used on the lower half of the dust cover, as well, in the first edition.
16 Mellow, pp. 353-355.
sympathetically and enthusiastically reviewed. In a *New Republic*
review, Edmund Wilson wrote that it had "something of the character
and charm of a novel" and that the reader was "forcibly struck . . .
by Hemingway's debt to Gertrude Stein." Remembering another of
Stein's portraits of two women, "Miss Furr and Miss Skeene," Wilson
wrote:

A cool and pervasive irony has always been one of the characteristics of
Gertrude Stein's writing; and there is certainly, in this portrait of two
ladies, more artistic impersonality than most of the comments I have heard
will allow. When you have read it, you take away an impression of Miss Stein
and Miss Toklas in Paris that is not in the least like anything you get from the
memoirs, say, of Margot Asquith or of Isadora Duncan, but, rather, like your
recollection of one of the households of Jane Austen.17

Wilson had touched upon the Stein aesthetic. *The Autobiography of
Alice B. Toklas* was another of the "never ending portraits" and its
appeal was that, indeed, the reader took "away an impression of Miss
Stein and Miss Toklas in Paris." They were unlike the hysterical Miss
Furr and Miss Skeene, but they were a "two" as fully and as artistically
realized.

17 Edmund Wilson, "27, rue de Fleurus" in *The Shores of Light* (New
The Lectures in America (1934-35)

The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas generated the lecture tour which Stein made exactly two years after she had finished the book. Stein and Toklas sailed for America on Oct. 17, 1934 and made a six and one-half month's tour of the United States. The "extraordinary welcome" she received as the visiting celebrity from Paris, Stein said, was because she was the author of books which people did not understand. It was her difficult, inaccessible writing which she insisted was the beginning of literary Modernism that the public, instinctively, understood was the important writing.

For the tour, Stein wrote six lectures which were published in a Modern Library edition in 1935. The six were "What is English Literature," "Pictures," "Plays" "The Gradual Making of the Making of Americans," "Portraits and Repetition," and "Poetry and Grammar." In addition, she had returned to the University of Chicago in March, 1935 to give four lectures on "Narration" which were published by the University of Chicago Press in 1935. And a lecture, "How Writing is Written," delivered to Choate School for Boys at Wallingford, Connecticut on January 12, 1935 was published in their The Choate Literary Magazine—a magazine which Stein felt was of very high literary quality.

A large amount of the material in the public lectures seems to be vague and bland. At times, it must have been difficult for audiences

18 Stein and Toklas sailed from New York for France on May 4, 1935.
to believe that the woman with the cultured Eastern girls' school voice was the eccentric "Cubist in prose" of the rue de Fleurus, for she had elected to speak about her aesthetic practices and about her writing.

Stein's first lecture in New York on Nov. 1, 1934 was to a select audience at the Museum of Modern Art. Her subject was "Pictures" and her audience was a sympathetic one. She told them that she had been asked "what do you feel about modern art." The answer was Steinian: "I answered, I like to look at it." However, the banal made the point. "One likes to be deceived but not for too long," Stein told her audience. Looking at a Cazin painting of a wheat field:

I found myself getting a little mixed as to which looked most like a field of wheat blowing in the wind the picture of the field of wheat or the real field of wheat.

Eventually, Stein realized that an oil painting is an oil painting—that it need not—perhaps should not look "real." When she discovered Cezanne, "it always was what it looked like the very essence of an oil painting." Thus, the Modernist aesthetic was perceived in Cezanne. An oil painting was an oil painting—an object—and not "reality"—a view into a room or a view out of the window. The oil painting, had a life "in and for itself." A prose work, too, need not be "reality," but could have a life in and for itself.
Whether Stein's audiences grasped much of her aesthetics is not clear. She spiced her lectures with the occasional name-dropping which had made The Autobiography successful. In the six published lectures, about 73 names and 14 titles were dropped into her text.\(^\text{19}\) Fifty of her own titles appeared, many more than once within the text of the six lectures, but Three Lives which would have been the most conventional of her writing and most sympathetically viewed by her audiences, does not appear. The aesthetic system which interested Stein was the modernist system which developed after Three Lives.

In her first lecture, Stein read from her portraits of Cezanne, Matisse, the second portrait of Picasso, "If I Told Him," and from "The Life of Juan Gris."

In another popular lecture, "Poetry and Grammar," Stein talked about her use and disuse of parts of speech. She did not like nouns and adjectives, preferring other parts of speech; nor did she like question marks which, it seemed, were "positively revolting":

\[
\ldots \text{they are ugly, they spoil the line of the writing or the printing and anyway what is the use, if you do not know that a question is a question what is the use of its being a question.}
\]

Those in the audience who had read Stein, knew that she practiced what she preached.

She put herself on record, once and for all, as to the comma:

\(^\text{19}\) See Bridgeman, Appendix D. (Bridgeman did not index the four lectures on Narration.)
What does a comma do.
I have refused them so often and left them out so much and did without them so continually that I have come finally to be indifferent to them . . . A comma by helping you along and holding your coat for you and putting on your shoes keeps you from living your life as actively as you should lead it.

In the end, Stein's reason for refusing the comma was an aesthetic one:

A long complicated sentence should force itself upon you, make you know yourself knowing it and the comma, well at most the comma is a poor period that it lets you stop and take a breath but if you want to take a breath you ought to know yourself that you want to take a breath.

In that lecture, too, Stein said what it was that she had done to the rose:

I caressed completely caressed and addressed a noun.

In "What is English Literature," she defined writing for "mammon"

which was making copies:

If you write the way it has already been written the way writing has already been written then you are serving mammon, because you are living by something some one has already been earning or has earned.

It seemed clear, that up until The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas, Stein had not written for mammon.
In the lecture on "Plays," Stein attempted to show that audience response was always behind the action on the stage, and that even the theatre curtain establishes, in the audience, the sense that "one is not going to have the same tempo as the thing that is there behind the curtain." She felt that the "nervousness" of the audience was not excitement but the tension required in trying to "go faster or to go slower so as to get together"—so as to get audience response together with stage action.

Stein's solution to this and other problems of stage "time" and audience response, she felt, had been partially solved in her own plays. In her first play, "What Happened, A Play" (1913), she had tried to "express this [narrative] without telling what happened, in short to make a play the essence of what happened." This play had been written in the manner of the Mabel Dodge portrait, and although it was five acts, it was only four and one-half pages. However, "A Curtain Raiser" (1913) was even more intriguing; it was twenty-one words.  

_Four Saints in Three Acts_ (1927) was to be performed while Stein was in America. She told her audience that she wanted it to be like a landscape with nothing inside it moving but "things are there." She had put magpies in the sky and scarecrows on the ground and nuns "very busy and in continuous movement but placid." Stein's plays were as unconventional as most of her other work had been, and the public was hardly ready for them; the theatre of the absurd and "happenings" in Central Park were thirty years away.

20 "What Happened" and "A Curtain Raiser" were in _Geography and Plays_, pp. 202-209.
21 Stein's account of the performance in Chicago is in _Everybody's Autobiography_, pp.
In the lecture which she called "The Gradual Making of the Making of Americans," Stein gave a clear exposition of her aesthetic system in the long novel, and she read from it passages, she said, "to show you how passionately and how desperately I feel about all this." She also read from "A Long Gay Book" and told her audience that neither book had accomplished her objective of describing "every kind there is of men and women." However, she did not want to try again:

or go on with what was begun because after all I know I really do know that it can be done and if it can be done why do it . . .

This lecture ended lamely. "I wonder if I at all convey to you what I mean by this thing." It was obvious that this lecture, given on the second of November as her second lecture in America to a university audience at Columbia did not convey her meaning. The press reported that twenty-five or so members of the Institute of Arts and Sciences walked out. 22

In "Portraits and Repetition," Stein posed the problem of repetition in portraits, insisting that "I never repeat that is while I am writing." Repetition "changed just a little" was not repetition. She read from her portraits and from Tender Buttons, ending the lecture hopefully but with a degree of Steinian fatalism:

I hope you quite all see what I mean. Anyway I suppose inevitably I will go on doing it.

22 Mellow, p. 386.
In her public lectures, Stein meant to dwell upon the aesthetics of her work. This was difficult rhetoric for the curious who came simply to see the curiosity, and Stein appeared to realize the problems of communicating a complex aesthetic system, the success of which she admitted was limited. However, she liked being a "lion" and she liked lecturing to young people who were more open to her and to her unconventional literary invention and unconventional aesthetics.

A lecture delivered on January 12, 1935 to an audience of young boys, ages twelve to sixteen, at the Choate School in Wallingford, Connecticut is the most direct and the least banal of her American lectures. Here, Stein defined "contemporary," first with an anecdote:

A very bad painter once said to a very good painter, "Do what you like, you cannot get rid of the fact that we are contemporaries." 23

Being contemporary was the heart of Stein's modernist aesthetic system:

. . . a writer, a painter, or any sort of creative artist, is not at all ahead of his time. He is contemporary. He can't live in the past because it is gone. He can't live in the future because no one knows what it is. He can only live in the present of his daily life. 24

Her warning was that "you who are going to express yourselves contemporarily, you will do something which most people won't want to look at." Here, she obviously felt she spoke from the experience of being both "contemporary" and unread.

24 Ibid.
Those who persisted in the 19th century idiom were like a man with his horse and carriage in New York in the snow—a nuisance:

The world can accept me now because there is coming out of your generation somebody they won't like, and therefore they accept me because I am sufficiently past in having been contemporary so they don't have to dislike me. So thirty years from now I shall be accepted.\(^\text{25}\)

She explained that struggling to free yourself, as an artist, from the past "is a drag upon you that is so strong that the result is an apparent ugliness; and the world always says of the new writer, "It is so ugly!" And they are right, because it is ugly. If you disagree with your parents, there is an ugliness in the relation.\(^\text{26}\)

But Stein assured her young audience that the ugliness made the thing more beautiful and more interesting later on.

Stein read from The Making of Americans, talked about her sense of "immediacy," denied that her writing was "automatic," and mentioned the 20th century novels in which "nothing much happens"—The Making of Americans, Proust, and Ulysses. She explained that there was no such thing as "repetition" of which she was accused, but that, as in any story-telling, there "is always a slight variation":

\(^{25}\) "How Writing Is Written, Choate Magazine, p. 6.
\(^{26}\) Ibid, p. 8.
Somebody comes in and you tell the story over again. Every time you tell that story it is told slightly differently... each time it changes just a little, until finally you come to the point where you convince him or you don't convince him.27

At the end of the lecture, she warned the young men that the problem with which their generation would have to "wrestle"—obviously an aesthetic worth pursuing was worth a "struggle" still—was that "there is no essential difference between prose and poetry."28

In this lecture, Stein had realized her audience as she seems not to have done in the public lectures with appropriate language and tone, with clarity, and without the annoying self-congratulatory references to her own writing and to her place in literary Modernism.

When she wrote later of her lecture tour in America in Everybody's Autobiography, she remembered her university audiences and her small private school audiences with pleasure. Some of the young men at Choate wrote to her when she returned to France and eventually found their way to her in Paris.

Everybody's Autobiography (1936)

After Stein returned to Paris on May 12, 1935, she seemed to have difficulty settling down to serious work. Still a celebrity, she told a reporter, "I am already homesick for America. I never knew it was so beautiful."29 However, during the following summer, still steeped in

27 Ibid., p. 13.
29 Mellow, p. 415.
a concern over "audience," she wrote The Geographical History of
America or the Relation of Human Nature to the Human Mind in which she
attempted, as she had done in one of her American lectures, with clarity
and economy, to distinguish between serving mammon (or audience)
and serving god (or pure aesthetics). It was a difficult philosophy
and even Thornton Wilder, who studied the book, making notes which he
discussed with her, admitted to "stretches I don't understand."30 The
general public, Stein's new audience, didn't understand the book at all.

Important to her aesthetic of "struggle" and "discovery" had been
her freedom from a sense of audience. As Thornton Wilder wrote in the
introduction to The Geographical History of America:

Miss Stein's theory of the audience
insists upon the fact that the richest
rewards for the reader have come from
those works in which the author ad-
mitted no consideration of an audience
into their creating mind.31

However, The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas and Stein's American tour
had forced the considerations of audience upon Stein, and before she
left America, Bennett Cerf had told her that Random House would publish
one thing of hers each year. It had become almost impossible to write
without sensing that American audience who had "discovered" her.

It was obvious that another "autobiography" would sell to her
American public who had read the first and who had followed her tour
in the American newspapers. However, she decided that it should be

30 Ibid., p. 419.
"everybody's" and not just Gertrude Stein's. The terse, precise persona of Alice Toklas which gave the first autobiography its "gay" (Stein's evaluation) and ironical tone was not appropriate to Stein who had just rediscovered her homeland which had just discovered her! The voice of the philosopher, the artist, and the lover was the voice in which Stein was to speak. Since it was to be a personal view of "everybody," it was to be conversational and even colloquial, ruminative, and serious. It was to be, and is, Stein speaking.

_Everybody's Autobiography_, is not, as Stein had predicted it might be, "rather sad." But it is a serious and somewhat sober view of America as Stein sensed the American mind and mood in the winter of 1934-35. Although there were "big" names dropped into the book---Picasso, again, along with Sherwood Anderson, Thornton Wilder, Louis Bromfield, Charlie Chaplin, Mary Pickford, Eleanor Roosevelt and dozens of others living and dead, "everybody" included the anonymous: a black man who drove Stein from Dallas to Houston, an eighty year old woman who came to listen to Stein who had read Stein for years, the girls at Miss Hockaday's school in Texas, the boys at Choate in Connecticut, a Jay Laughlin from Pittsburgh, a Jean Reeder who was a student in Columbus, Ohio, Katharine Cornell's husband, photographers everywhere, people on the New York streets, cops in Chicago, the drooping couples in a walking marathon.

Random House published the book in December, 1937. Only 3000 copies were printed. The book deserved a wider audience for its

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commonplace concerns, its cautious view of the world between the two
wars as a place where the earth was covered all over with people--
where there was very little space or time in which to be an
"individual". and where there was personal anger and frustration:

Anyway one evening we were walking and
a man came along and he said in a song
as he was walking, Piss you dog piss
against the side of the house in passing,
if it was my house I would take a gun and
shoot you . . . piss against the lamp post
in passing, a poor street cleaner has to
clean the lamp post that you have pissed
against in passing. . . (p. 97)33

and war:

All the time that I am writing the Span-
is revolution obstudes itself. Not be-
cause it is a revolution, but because I
know it all so well all the places they are
mentioning and the things there they are
destroying. (p. 88)

and the buried past:

. . . my brother led in everything. He
has always been my brother two years older
and a brother. I had always been follow-
ing . . . we had always been together and
now we were never at all together. Little
by little we never met again. (pp. 76-77)

and the present:

. . . the laws of science are like all laws
they are paper laws, as the Chinese call
them, they make believe that they do some-
ting so as to keep everyone from knowing
that they are not going on living. (p. 243)

33 Page numbers are from the first edition (New York: Random House, 1937),
All was a personal and profound philosophy of life woven into a thickly textured tapestry of "knowing" from the vantage point of her sixty-second year.

_Everybody's Autobiography_ was a sentimental journey like that of Laurence Sterne's, a Stein favorite, rather than a conventional autobiography like _The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas_ which had revealed Alice Toklas' "education."

The short introductory chapter is a paradigm for the book's method. About twenty names are woven into the prose texture, recalling scenes in Paris, in New York, in California where conversations about writing and writers and identity are woven together so skillfully that the reader is not aware of the manipulation of time and space until the end of the chapter brings him up sharply to the present:

... and as we were walking down Fifth Avenue together, a young colored woman smiled and slowly pointed and there it was a copy of the book in a shop window and she smiled and went away. (p. 8)

It is the moment when _Portraits and Prayers_ has been published—1934.

The first chapter, "What happened after The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas," returns in time to the moment when _The Autobiography_ was finished, "a beautiful and unusually dry October at Bilignin in France in nineteen thirty two followed by an unusually dry and beautiful first two weeks of November" (p. 9). Picasso was on the scene and

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34 Sterne's _A Sentimental Journey Through France and Italy_ was not in Stein's reading lists in her notebooks but Sterne's _Tristram Shandy_ was. Probably, she had read both.
Stein read it to him in French. Other painters did not take it so well, but the writers "did not really mind anything any one said about them":

> Besides writers have an endless curiosity about themselves and anything that is written about them helps to help them know something about themselves . . . (p. 31)

It is the beginning of the end for Stein's relationships with Matisse, Braque, and others portrayed in the book. But others arrive--Dali, for example, makes an appearance on the Paris scene, but although he and Stein talk, "neither of us listened very much to one another" (p. 30). It is clear that no one had taken Picasso's place.

Chapter Two, "What was the effect upon me of the Autobiography" is Stein's half-apologetic listing of her purchases with the money she has earned: a new eight cylinder Ford car, an expensive coat and two new studded collars for Basket the poodle--and her concern about what money and fame have done to her. "It is funny about money" and "it is funny about identity." These were, then, the important things that happened after The Autobiography--money and identity--because they changed both the outside and the inside person:

> As long as the outside does not put a value on you it remains outside, but when it does put a value on you then it gets inside. (p. 47)

35 Matisse, Tristan Tzara, Eugene and Maria Jolas, Braque, and Andre Salmon (a poet) authored a "Testimony Against Gertrude Stein" for a special supplement of transition (February, 1935).
It always did bother me that the American public were more interested in me than in my work. (p. 50)

This summer after the Autobiography (1933) "was not a natural summer." The owner's wife at the Hotel Bernollet nearby at Belly fell to her death; an English woman living nearby was found dead with two bullets in her head and her Basque cap "put down carefully on a rock beside her;" Stein's car was vandalized when someone (her houseman was suspect) puts water in the gas tank. In both deaths, murder was suspected. The summer of 1933 was a microcosm of the violence surfacing in the world and a foreshadowing of its arrival in even the tiny corners of France like Bilignin and in Stein's life, as well.

The following chapter, "Preparations for going to America" is the period in which "everybody was writing to me and I did not do any writing" (p. 85). The problems of identity for the creative artist were complex problems:

... the Americans in being more interested in you than in the work you have done although they would not be interested in you if you had not done the work you had done. (p. 90)

"Everybody invited me to meet somebody, and I went," Stein wrote:

I always will go anywhere once and I rather liked doing what I had never done before, going everywhere. It was pleasant being a lion ... (p. 91)

36 Stein's Blood on the Dining Room is the story of the Bernollet tragedy.
Preparing to go to America, Stein appeared to look at Europe more critically and to exhibit the "wise child" affect, as someone has called it:

There is too much fathering going on just now and there is no doubt about it fathers are depressing. Everybody nowadays is a father, there is father Musso-lini and father Hitler and father Roosevelt and father Stalin . . . (p. 133)

Fathers and fathering reminded Stein, naturally, of her own father and of her three brothers—Mike and Leo, and of Simon of whom she had not written. Now, the past surfaced and she remembered even Simon who liked being a gripman on the cable cars in San Francisco, his pockets "always full of candy for anyone and cigars for anyone." Mike, the oldest brother, was guardian to the others, and the life without a father, she admitted, was "a very pleasant one." Leo was the brother whom Stein follows: her only sister, Bertha, Stein did not like. It would seem that going back to America where her life had begun forced her own beginnings again upon Stein. And "So we left for America" the chapter ends (p. 165).

The longest chapter, "America," begins at the middle of the book. In America, Stein's past eluded her:

We went to Cambridge overnight and I spoke in Radcliffe and at the Signet Club at Harvard. It was funny about Cambridge it was the one place where there was nothing that I recognized nothing. Considering that I had spent four years there it was sufficiently astonishing that nothing was there that I remembered nothing at all . . . . I lost Cambridge then and there. (p. 187)
She flew over Allegheny, Pennsylvania (then the North Side of Pittsburgh) where she had been born and obviously felt no curiosity about it, having "lost" it before she could remember any of it.

Her lecture tour included about thirty universities "and I began to really only like that" (p. 215). But she liked the midwest and, especially Ohio:

We liked Columbus, Ohio, it had a nice climate and it was a pleasant country round about and it had a restaurant where the ladies entertained each other [The Maramor]. . . . Alice Toklas wanted to come back to live there. (p. 227)

Stein's affection for Columbus, Ohio was probably due to a "professor of English at the University of Ohio [Ohio State University] in Columbus" who had visited Stein in France and who "had taught all his classes to read me" (p. 227). Stein lectured at Ohio State and visited the Art Gallery where she was surprised by the Ferninand Howald collection:

It was all cubist and good Picassos and Juan Gris and others but really good ones. There had never been anything like that either in choice or quality or like that in any other museum. (p. 228)

Tea at the White House proved to be a disappointment, however, although Mrs. Roosevelt herself served them tea in a "passageway which

Visiting private schools like Choate in Wallingford, Connecticut, Stein felt that the teachers were "so reasonable and so sweet" to the boys that "inevitably they are convinced too soon," She seemed to feel that the young people needed more struggling in their lives—either for something or against something.

In the south, Stein was reminded of Grant, one of her American heroes. The Civil War, in her opinion, was America's romance:

. . . after all there never will be any-thing more interesting in America than that Civil War never. (p. 247)

Stein found poetry in America in Georgia:

There on the road I read buy your flour meal and meat in Georgia; . . . Was it prose or was it poetry I knew that it was interesting, buy your flour meal and meat in Georgia. (p. 254)

An old friend met her in New Orleans—Sherwood Anderson. Students in Chicago asked her to return to give more lectures. She was filmed and when she saw herself "I did not like particularly . . . it gave me a funny feeling and I did not like that funny feeling" (p. 280). By the time Stein and Toklas returned to New York, the Rockefeller Center building was finished but now, as Alice Toklas pointed out, "Gertrude Stein" had become "Miss Stein" to New Yorkers. The icing on the cake was Bennet Cerf's promise:
"... he said it very simple whatever decide each year you want printed you tell me and I will publish that thing, just like that I said, just like that, he said, you do the deciding, and so we happily very happily went on the the Champlain. (p. 295)

The final chapter, "Back Again," begins "It was all over" and the wistful tone of regret is clear:

It was all over and we were going back again, of course it was all going on being there there where we had been even if we were not there and it was as if we had not been. (p. 296)

Having been a part of the American scene even for a short time had been a thrilling experience, but Stein was resigned to the adjustments which must be made:

Come back to anything is always a bother you have to get used to seeing it as it looks all over again until it looks as it did which it does at last. (p. 297)

Soon, they were off to Bilignin and Stein was at work writing The Geographical History of America or the Relation Of Human Human Nature to the Human Mind, and "it was a mixed summer." The French army--500 men--came to Bilignin for military service; Thornton Wilder came; Stein prepared lectures for Oxford and Cambridge to be given in the winter of 1936, ten years after the successful first lectures there. The following summer (1936), Bennett Cerf came and said he was "just crazy" about this autobiography (p. 310), and Mrs. Simpson and King Edward and the abdication "cut that gloom" of what appeared to be a
dull time. Then Stein and Toklas went to London to see Stein's "The Wedding Bouquet" put on "tomorrow":

> It was tomorrow which was yesterday and it was exciting, it was the first time I had ever been present when anything of mine had been played for the first time. (p. 318)

And then yesterday and today and tomorrow again are all the present and the present is frightening:

> . . . and then we went back again to Paris and going back I saw the only thing I have ever seen from an airplane that was frightening, a wide layer of fog close to the water that went right down the middle of the Channel, but the large part near the shore was clear I do not know why but it was frightening. (p. 318)

The book ends on this note, the mood thoughtful and uneasy:

> . . . perhaps I am not I even if my little dog knows me . . . (p. 318)

_Everybody's Autobiography_ was not a sequel to _The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas_. A sequel would not have been possible without again adopting the Toklas persona. The charm of the new book, which was lost upon the public, was its affectionate "narration" of an America which Stein had not seen for thirty years. The "real" Stein was in this book—enjoying playing the lion, delighted in seeing her book in a store window on Fifth Avenue, remembering her own life in America, talking everywhere with anyone, and talking with the reader,
for the tone in *Everybody's Autobiography* is Stein's conversational tone. As she "talks," associations stream together resulting in the tangential anecdotes of ordinary conversation. Stein seems to fence with the past allowing it to come close to the present, then thrusting it away again in an effort to live only within the present moment.

Although about 300 names surface in *Everybody's Autobiography*, Hemingway's does not. But he haunts the pages of this book, a ghostly unnamed figure, subliminally realized in a dozen places. At the beginning of *Everybody's Autobiography*, Stein in conversation with Dashiell Hammett (creator of *The Thin Man* series) in California comments that once women "never could invent women," but that now "in the twentieth century it is the men who do it":

> The men all write about themselves
> they are always themselves as strong
> as weak or mysterious or passionate
> or drunk or controlled but always
> themselves as the women used to do
> in the nineteenth century. (p. 5)

Hammet seemed to feel that "in the twentieth century the men have no confidence:

> and so they have to make themselves
> as you say more beautiful more intriguing more everything . . . to hold
> on to themselves not having any
> confidence. (p. 5)

Hemingway, of course, might have been accused of writing about himself as strong, as weak, as mysterious, as passionate, as drunk, as controlled. For his novels, he appeared to have drawn heavily upon his own
experiences. Those experiences, Stein had indicated in The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas, got him into difficulty—sometimes "something breaks, his arm, his leg, or his head" or he was "yellow . . . just like the flat boatmen on the Mississippi river as described by Mark Twain." But the real problem with Hemingway was that he will never tell the story of the "real Hem" because "as he himself once murmured, there is the career, the career." Now, as she wrote Everybody's Autobiography, Hemingway's Green Hills of Africa was published. In this first person narrative of his hunting exploits, Hemingway promised "an absolutely true book" which Stein, obviously, did not believe he could deliver. She would do it, instead, in Everybody's Autobiography:

And now the last evening that Thornton Wilder was in Paris last winter we wandered about together and I told him that what worried me was narration, no one in our time had really been able to tell anything without anything but just telling that thing and that I was going to try once more to try to simply tell something. [my italics] (p. 107)

In Our Time had been Hemingway's first book. Stein seemed to be saying Hemingway's aesthetic had failed him then and still. As for the epigram of Hemingway's second book, The Sun Also Rises, which he had attributed to Gertrude Stein:

It was this hotel keeper who said what it is said I said that the war generation was a lost generation. [my italics] (p. 52)

Furthermore, the "lost generation" of Hemingway's novel was not the lost
generation of which Stein had spoken:

He said that every man becomes civilized
between the ages of eighteen and twenty-
five . . . and the men who went to war at
eighteen missed the period of civilizing
and they could never be civilized. They
were a lost generation. [my italics] (p. 52)

Perhaps, the message here was simply that Hemingway, in the war at
nineteen, "could never be civilized"? It seems that there must have
been a message for Hemingway in Stein's reference to the famous "lost
generation" epigram, and it may have been simply that not only
Hemingway's aesthetic had failed him from first (In Our Time) to last
(The Green Hills of Africa), but that his understanding of all she had
said to him in the years in which he was her "pupil" was garbled.
Some relationships, it seemed, unlike some places, could neither be
"lost" nor ignored.39

Everybody's Autobiography turned out to be just that—everybody's
autobiography. There were no "stars." No one had assumed the role
which Picasso and Stein had played in the earlier autobiography. New
names of minor stars appeared like those of Bennett Cerf and Thornton
Wilder along with names never to be heard again as well as dozens of
the unnamed. The first autobiography had bogged down, in fact, where
the reader was drowned in names of those who came for lunch and stayed
to dinner.

39 The rancor seemed to have begun with Hemingway in his The Torrents of
Spring when he was still visiting Stein in Paris (1926) and to have
continued after his death in the posthumous publication of Hemingway's
A Moveable Feast (1964), but personal letters show that the affection
continued, as well.
In Everybody's Autobiography, the Steinian way of making a sentence, or her "unguarded style" as Bridgeman calls it, made some sentences memorable. Even the most idiosyncratic syntax could not destroy Stein's meaning which appears still undestructable after more than four decades. For example, over Pittsburgh where she was born, she wrote that:

It was nice that way we went over
Pittsburgh Allegheny where I was born,
I was born and if I wanted to have it be
anything it really was not. (p. 229)

Of William James and his definition of science, she remembered:

... and he said science is not a solution
and not a problem it is a statement of the
observation of things observed and perhaps
therefore not interesting perhaps therefore
only abjectly true. (p. 242)

Of the Rockefeller Foundation restoration at Williamsburg, she wrote:

You put new where the old was and old where
the new was and that makes restoration and
perhaps some time hardly anybody can tell
but not just now ... (p. 249)

Even of serious matters that worried her, she wrote in the intuitive, unrevised way that she said was required so as not to destroy the thought:

... that is the whole business of living
to go on so that they will not know that
time is passing, that is why they get
drunk that is why they go to war, during
a war there is the most complete absence
of the sense that time is passing a year
of war lasts so much longer than any other year . . . little or big young or old dog or man everybody wants every minute so filled that they are not conscious of that minute passing. (p. 281)

In this book, there was some explanation of her aesthetic and of her method. She answered the question as to why she did not write as she talked:

. . . if they had invited Keats for lunch and they asked him an ordinary question would they expect him to answer with the Ode to the Nightingale. (p. 292)

She had answered this question in The Geographical History of America in another way:

What is the difference between conversation and writing . . . conversation is what is said and what is said is always led . . . Written writing should not be led oh no it should not be led not at all led.

Although she wanted readers, she was trying to say that she refused an audience when she wrote so that she was not "led" by their demands. Obviously, she found that in conversation, one was "led" by the desire to communicate with the other participant. Her lecturing and public acclaim were letting the outside get inside, and for a writer, this could be destructive to the demands of the aesthetic.
The Steinian prose of Everybody's Autobiography had a quality of careless spontaneity that the "Toklas" prose of The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas did not. Stein said that she wanted to "simply say what was happening which is what is narration" (p. 302). As to guarding against her own garrulous style with revisions, Stein explained that she did not leave "such a large space in between so that I could correct in between."

... I do not correct, I sometimes cut out a little not very often and not very much but correcting after all what is in your head comes down into your hand and if it has come down it can never come again no not again. (p. 311)

Stein's manuscripts bear this out precisely: that only a "little" is cut out and "not very often and not very much." The random events recorded in Everybody's Autobiography were better expressed in the "unguarded," random juxtaposition of ideas as they "come down."

Writing was, after all, the process of discovery. "Let it take you," she had told an interviewer, "don't hold back":

... write without thinking of the result in terms of a result but think of the writing in terms of a discovery. 40

Reviewers were critical of Everybody's Autobiography. They did not find it as entertaining as the first autobiography had been. Stein, however, reading it from "cover to cover" when her first copies arrived, was satisfied with the book. 41 Through the sobering considerations

41 Mellow, p. 425.
which surfaced—individualism, the social and political status of blacks in America, and expanding oppressive government in America, fascist heads of state in Europe, murder and intrigue in one's own backyard, the Spanish revolution—Stein "discovered" the late 30's. The Spanish Civil War was on the horizon, and Hitler's armies were on the move.

**Picasso (1937)**

Although she was writing for "god" in this period (Dr. Faustus Lights the Lights,\(^4^2\) for example), Stein was writing more for "mammon." In French, she wrote a little book on Picasso. Although her draft was corrected by Alice Toklas whose written French was more accurate than Stein's, Stein was forced into conventional syntax during the composition. The Steinian phrases surface, but the prose is more nearly that of conventional prose. The small book, only fifty pages,\(^4^3\) is a lucid and pleasant introduction to Picasso's art and aesthetic system. There are fifty-five illustrations, some of works which Stein owned. On the title page is a surprising little line sketch of Stein which Picasso did in 1905.

Within the first three months of its publication by the Librairie Floury in March, 1938, 7500 copies had been sold—more than double the total sales for Everybody's Autobiography. Within six months of the

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\(^4^2\) In Last Opera and Plays (New York: Random House, 1949) and The Vintage paperback (1975),

\(^4^3\) Gertrude Stein, Picasso (Boston: Beacon Press, 1959). All quotations will refer to this edition.
French edition, the British edition (Batsford) had been released. An American edition (Scribner's) was published in 1939.44

A comparison with any of a half a dozen books on Picasso will illustrate that Stein's approach, while personal and partisan, is penetrating, as well. Although her book has the disadvantage of being one of the early books on Picasso, ending with his career as she perceived it in 1938,45 it has the advantage of her intimacy with Picasso's beginnings in Paris, with the man himself, and with his developing aesthetic with which she had so closely paralleled her own aesthetic system in the first two decades. In *Picasso*, the first half of Picasso's career came under Stein's scrutiny and affectionate approval, and this is the tone of the book.46

Modernism, according to Stein, was created by "Spain" (or Picasso) and by "America" (or Gertrude Stein) in the twentieth century. It appears that the aesthetic urgency is not the same for both, however, since the painter "lives in the reflections of his pictures" while a serious writer exists in himself and not in the "reflection of his books" (p. 4):

44 Mellow, p. 429. Random House did not move quickly enough to buy out Batsford's unbound sheets.
45 Picasso lived and painted for thirty-five more years, working until dawn on the last day of his life, April 8, 1973.
46 Alfred H. Barr, Jr.'s *Picasso: Fifty Years of His Art* (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1946) appeared the year that Stein died. Pierre Daix's *Picasso* (New York: Praeger, 1965) followed twenty years after Barr's. Both are excellent and well illustrated.
. . . he is a man who always has need of emptying himself, it is necessary that he should be greatly stimulated so that he could be active enough to empty himself completely. (p. 5)

This business of "emptying himself" is important to Stein's comprehension of Picasso's aesthetic, since each time he has emptied himself of an influence or of a place or of a mood, he then moves forward into a new period. For example, Picasso's "first or Toulouse Lautrec" period occurs when he arrived in Paris and becomes more "french" than spanish. Once he had emptied himself of this early French influence, he returned to Spain, and the Blue Period followed. Then back in Paris in 1904, "he emptied himself of the blue period, of the renewal of the Spanish spirit" and began the painting of the period called the Rose or Harlequin period. It was with the first painting of the Rose Period, "The Young Girl With a Basket of Flowers" that Stein and her brother became Picasso's friends and patrons. It is soon after they had purchased this painting that Picasso asked Stein to sit for him, and her portrait foreshadows the heroic age of Cubism which ends with the first World War. Roughly, Stein sets down the periods of Picasso's painting as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Period</th>
<th>Years</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Toulouse-Lautrec period in Paris</td>
<td>1900-02</td>
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<tr>
<td>Blue Period in Barcelona</td>
<td>1901-04</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rose or Harlequin Period in Paris</td>
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<tr>
<td>Stein portrait ends Rose period, establishes beginning of Cubism</td>
<td>1905-06</td>
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<tr>
<td>Les Demoiselles and Negro period</td>
<td>1906-07</td>
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<tr>
<td>Period</td>
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<td>-------------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>Landscapes of early Cubism (Spain)</td>
<td>1908-09</td>
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<tr>
<td>Heroic Age of Cubism</td>
<td>1909-14</td>
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<tr>
<td>Negro period</td>
<td>1907-08</td>
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<tr>
<td>Green period</td>
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<td>&quot;pure Cubism&quot;</td>
<td>1910-12</td>
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<td>collage</td>
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<td>brilliant colors</td>
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<td>(rococo Cubism)</td>
<td>1914</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Parade&quot;--Picasso is accepted.</td>
<td>1917</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Realistic Period (portraits)</td>
<td>1917-20</td>
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Stein's understanding of Picasso's periods hinges, in part, upon her intimate knowledge of his personal life in these periods and, in part, upon her own notion that "geography" plays an important role in human personality. His Cubism, she posits, is due to his Spanish feeling and to Spanish landscape:

> Cubism is a part of the daily life in Spain, it is in Spanish architecture. The architecture of other countries always follows the line of the landscape... but Spanish architecture always cuts the lines of the landscape and it is that that is the basis of cubism... (p. 23)

Picasso's aesthetic at the beginning of the struggle of Cubism is much like Stein's own aesthetic in her early work—a need to express the thing seen (or the immediate) and not the thing remembered:

> ... no one had ever tried to express things seen not as one knows them but as they are when one sees them without remembering having looked at them. (p. 15)
Stein writes that she "was alone at this time in understanding him,"
perhaps because I was expressing the same thing in literature . . . (p. 16)

After the heroic age of Cubism passes, Picasso has a Classical period in which he paints large women and drapery. This is a period in which he is "seduced" by Italy, and monumental and sculpturesque paintings follow. The final periods, as Stein sees them, are roughly:

Adult Rose Period 1920-23
and Classical portraits to 1927

Pornographic--forms 1924-35
Calligraphy
Surrealist 1933

No painting 1935-37
(Spanish Civil War)

Painting again 1937

There is some special pleading for Picasso's genius:

Matisse and all the others saw the twentieth century with their eyes but they saw the reality of the nineteenth century, Picasso was the only one in painting who saw the twentieth century with his eyes and saw its reality . . . he had to do it all alone . . . (p. 22)

But Picasso is a revealing and often intuitive analysis of the painter and his painting. It is a convincing piece of critical writing. Among other ideas which seem to be original with Stein, is the "discovery" of the Green Period of 1908-09.
there was an intermediary period, before real cubism and that was a rather green period. It is less known but it is very, very beautiful, landscapes and large still-lifes, also some figures. (p. 44)

Stein owned three Green Period still-lifes. Two were illustrated: "Still-Life with Fruit and Glass" of 1908 and "Still Life with Figs" of 1909 which was later called "Vase, Gourd and Fruit on a Table."47

In Picasso, Stein isolates the "glory" of the twentieth century in a way that later became an acceptable aesthetic distinguishing the core of modernism--breakup:48

So the twentieth century is . . . a time when everything cracks, where everything is destroyed, everything isolates itself, it is a more splendid thing than a period where everything follows itself. (p. 49)

Stein's own outlaw status, it seemed, had given her a particularly strong vantage point on the Modernist scene from which to discover the outlaw Picasso.

Paris France (1939)

In the late thirties, it seemed to be increasingly difficult for Stein to ignore audience. Paris France, written in the conversational random narrative style of The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas and

47 A third Green Period painting appears on the walls of Stein's salon in photographs at 27 Rue de Fleurus, 1914-15.
Everybody's Autobiography, was published on the day that Paris fell to the German army in June, 1940. Like the World War I book, Hilltop On the Marne, which her friend Mildred Aldrich had written, it was an early glimpse for Americans of the distant war. And by writing of Paris and the France that she loved, Stein managed to convey the dignity and courage of the French "who do not want war [but] live through war calmly."

Stein begins Paris France with her earliest memories of France—talking French, being photographed, eating soup for breakfast and mutton and spinach for lunch, "and a black cat jumped on my mother's back." French cats, the reader learns immediately, "can do what they like, sit on the vegetables or among the groceries, stay in or go out." It is that sense of freedom, the reader discovers, that pervades the French and made France a good place for artists and writers to live in the early part of the twentieth century. The mood of the book is, at first, serene and domestic as when Stein writes about the relationship of French men to their mothers—"he is always a son because he is always dependent upon his mother for his strength, his morality, his hope and his despair, his future and his past" (p. 27)—or of French dogs to their owners:

... one has a great deal of pleasure out of dogs because one can spoil them as one cannot spoil one's children. If the children are spoiled, one's future is spoiled, but dogs one can spoil without any thought of the future and that is a great pleasure. (p. 33)

The collective French personality is revealed to Stein in the dozens of random encounters she details in the book. As the war accelerated, the mood of the book became more anxious. Death is, obviously, on everyone's minds, but the French look at death, as they do at daily living, with a noble imperturbability:

... it is so friendly so simply friendly and though inevitable not a sadness and though occurring not a shock. (p. 13)

The first sentence of the book, "Paris France is exciting and peaceful," introduced the Paris to which foreign artists and writers had escaped in order to give birth to the twentieth century. But as peace fails, and war comes close, and Stein is forced to remain in Bilignin for safety, Paris becomes the past.

Some of Stein's memories of Paris in the first years of the century surface—she remembers the vermin catchers and the enormous wagons used to clean out sewers, and she seems rather surprised to realize that these are no longer part of the Paris scene. One-third of the way through the book, she realized that "it is 1939 and war-time" (p. 45), and the immediacy and anxiety of the present intrude upon the random domestic anecdotes. Wishful thinking ("it is hard to believe that there is always going to be a general European war") and the fact of the war are juxtaposed:

The only thing any French soldier ever complains about is when that awful thing happens to him, he has to sleep on straw. Once more, it is not the discomfort, it is the destruction of civilization that he resents, and he is right. (pp. 40-41)
Her own sober thought that "It really takes a war to make you know a country" (p. 72) follows upon her reminiscences about her first dog, Basket. The past and the present intermingle in her narrative.

A small section in the book (pp. 80-92) appears to have been dropped into Paris France. This narrative section is about Helen Button, a "little girl" in the village. Stein's awkward introduction of the section—"I have been kind of wondering just what a child's feeling about war-time is" (p. 80) is followed with a rambling account of Helen Button's wanderings with her dog (much like Stein's own walks about the countryside with her second Basket). When Helen Button and her dog come across a dead chicken, Helen is fearful that someone will believe her dog killed the chicken, and she and the cook secretly cook it and eat it "so no one would suspect the dog."

This could only have happened to Helen in war time. (p. 87)

Another time, as they walked along, Helen and William, the dog, see a bottle standing upright in the road "not lying on its side the way a bottle in the road usually is." They do not touch it nor look at it. "That is war-time" (p. 82). War-time is also little boys riding the too-big bikes which belong to the men and older boys who have gone off to the war, and muzzles on dogs, and William near-death when he is run over by a car in the moonlight, and the sight of a wagon pulling a great, dead animal:
The enormous animal did not have a tail and it did not have any ears. It was an enormous animal and it was war-time. Helen did not really see it but she told herself about it. She said, dear me. (p. 90)

Wartime, it seemed, was filled with frightening fantasies as well as frightening realities. One day, Helen sees a man with a spy-glass. When he disappears, that is the "first thing in war-time that had made her cry" (p. 92). Then her friend, Emile and his dog go away, too. Finally, Helen began to go to school, and for her "war time was over."

The Helen Button section manuscript, would seem to mirror Stein's fears as the war becomes an immediate danger and can no longer be wished away.50

In the end, Stein appears to accept the fact of the war, and to feel the reality of England in the war for she dedicates the book to England as well as to France, both of whom have reached "middle age" in the century and are, like the century, "too old to do what is told."

Although Stein has dropped about sixty names into Paris France from Bromfield's and Mrs. Lindberg's to Balzac's and Zola's, it is the nameless and numberless French with whom she lives daily that are on her mind. Georges, a young man from the village of Bilignin where Stein and Toklas spent the war years, writes to Stein:

I hear just at this moment that we are leaving tomorrow for the front that is for a destination unknown. Let us guard our courage and hope that very soon we will be again in Bilignin and with our friends. (p. 77)

50 It is listed separately in the Yale catalogue as "Helen Button A Story of War-Time," indicating that it was not part of the Paris France manuscript.
For Stein, identification with the French country people with whom she lived during the war was complete—"ours is a mountain village" (p. 79), she wrote, and the truth was, as Bridgeman points out, "She had always been a good bourgeois." Now, she was a good bourgeois Frenchwoman.

Summary

These books of the thirties which were written by the "identity" called Gertrude Stein were meant simply to satisfy an audience and to provide Stein with some financial success and public recognition which her writing of the first three decades had not. Picasso and Paris France, although pleasant and often perceptive, lack the vigor of Stein's final work. They appeared to be postscripts to the narrative-autobiographical writing she had begun in The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas and Everybody's Autobiography. These four books were books in which Stein painted her own legendary self-portrait. Her lectures in America, in the middle of the decade, expanded her legend both for the audience who heard her and for the audience who simply followed her American tour in the interviews and articles produced for the popular press and radio.

51 Bridgeman, p. 297.
CHAPTER VII

The Forties: Feminism Emerging

Life is strife, I was a martyr all
my life not to what I won but to
what was done.

Gertrude Stein in
"The Mother Of Us All"

In the half dozen years remaining, Stein's five major works were a mixed bag. _Ida A Novel_ was published in 1941; _Mrs. Reynolds_, a second novel,¹ was not published until after Stein's death; _Wars I Have Seen_, a war journal, was published in 1945; _Brewsie and Willie_, narrative-dialogues of American G.I.'s of World War II, was published just a few days before Stein's death in July of 1946; and Stein had completed the libretto for the opera, "The Mother of Us All," in March of 1946. It was performed the following year and published in _Last Operas and Plays_ in 1949.²

The two novels are aesthetic exercises. _Ida_ is a realization of inertia and _Mrs. Reynolds_ of anxiety as a fixed state of mind. The

¹ The YCAL catalogue dates _Mrs. Reynolds_ 1940-42. It was published in _Mrs. Reynolds and Five Earlier Novelettes_ (New Haven: Yale University, 1952).
² _Last Operas and Plays_ (New York: Rinehard, 1949); also a Vintage paperback (New York: Random House, 1975).
two war books are unique in the Stein repertory but not for the same reasons. *Wars I Have Seen* is the most autobiographical of Stein's work in that genre, while *Brewsie and Willie* is Stein's Hemingwayesque fling at dialogue. And the opera, "The Mother Of Us All," a valedictory as some critics have suggested, reveals a strong feminist rhetoric not found in anything else Stein wrote (except Fernhurst) although a covert feminism surfaces in all of these writings.

Cut off from Paris and the painters during the war, there are no painterly aesthetics in these writings. Consequently, the literary aesthetic—narration—controls this writing of the forties. Too, the anxiety of the war, Stein's long separation from her friends, the difficulty of receiving news from the United States, and her own approaching seventieth birthday in February, 1944 erased from her work the playful spirit found in her writing before 1940. Death, as well as regret, seem to hover in her thoughts. These five major works do not express joy (except at the end of the war) or anticipation. People and events long "buried" in the past surfaced in *Ida*, in *Wars I Have Seen*, and in "The Mother of Us All."

In *Ida*, for example, a strange experience which Stein first wrote about in a college theme called "The Temptation" surfaces. Ida meets a family of "little aunts" (obviously like Stein's Baltimore aunts) and goes to church with them. She becomes separated from the aunts and finds herself in the midst of a group of people in the hot, dark church:

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3 Stein and Toklas spent the war years at Bilignin which is near Belley in eastern France.
... and she was close against so many, and then she stayed close against one or two ... she looked far away, but she felt something, all right she felt something. (p. 13)4

When Ida finds the little aunts, "they did not seem to be liking her very much." The sad conclusion to the anecdote is that "These were the first and last friends she ever had, and she really never went to church again not really." The incident and Stein's regret at losing the friendship of the aunts appear to have been autobiographical.

In Wars I Have Seen, the Sundays of her youth are once again remembered:

From fifteen to twenty-five it is natural to think that every Sunday is good weather. And to hope that every day will be Sunday bye and bye. (p. 28)5

But she concludes "Funny things happen." In Ida, Stein wrote in the same vein, "There was nothing funny about Ida but funny things did happen to her."

It seemed that looking back on seventy years of living, one could only conclude that life was a random affair, filled with "funny things" that happened to one; chancy and inexplicable as those funny things were, one could not count upon them to stay buried in the past. And worst of all, they surfaced buoyed by a deep sense of regret. In her final work, Susan B. (Anthony) says, "we cannot retrace our steps . . .

4 Ida A Novel was published first in 1941. Quotations are from the facsimile edition (Vintage Books, 1971).
5 Quotations from Wars I Have Seen (New York: Random House, 1945). It has not been reprinted.
we do not retrace our steps." Martyrdom, Susan B. concludes, is not to what "I won but to what was done."

The past which Stein had carefully put behind her when she left medical school for a new life in Paris seemed to overtake her as she approached seventy. In February of 1944, she noted in Wars I Have Seen, "Tired of winter tired of war," and in March, after the seventieth birthday had passed, "Spring seems to find it impossible to come." It was increasingly difficult to feel the spirit of play which had moved the moderns on and on to discovery after discovery and then on again. It must have been clear to Stein, by the end of the war, that there was little time left. The simple fact of her acceptance of that is in the final line of her final work: "My long life, my long life."

Perhaps, it was the sense of the "long life" nearing closure that forced Stein to look back upon a life of struggle with her own sexuality. The domination of her father in her early years had been unpleasant and unforgettable. His domination had been replaced by her brother Leo's. Finally, her lesbian relationship with Alice Toklas, which became a "marriage" of sorts, dominated her lifestyle—perhaps even entrapped her into accepting herself as "masculine" and denying herself a feminine role.6

In all five of the last major works of Stein's male domination and sexuality appear to overpower female natures.

6 Evidently, Picasso and Hemingway, according to the latter, agreed that Toklas "flung out into outer darkness" Stein's men friends if they threatened her relationship with Stein. (In a letter from Hemingway to W. G. Rogers, July 29, 1948. YCAL.)
In *Ida*, frightening experiences seem to involve males:

The first time she saw anything it frightened her. She saw a little boy and when he waved to her she would not look his way. (p. 8)

Again, "a man followed her and that frightened her so that she was crying just as if she had been lost" (p. 9). After the experience in the church, two men jump out at her and the little aunts as they walk home:

... and then all of a sudden some one a man of course jumped out from behind the trees and there was another with him. (p. 13)

Another time, a policeman "was looking and looking at her" (p. 15) and another time, a man dressed in soldier's clothing was stretched out by the side of the road and "his legs were kicking" and "he was rolling," but he, like the others, disappears without harming Ida. As Ida grows older, the threatening, half-dreamlike experiences with men cease when real encounters, which are less exciting and less satisfying than her fantasies, begin.

In *Mrs. Reynolds*, the other novel of the forties, Angel Harper who represents Adolph Hitler, is a strange, sexually perverted individual who has left Mrs. Reynolds' village, but whose disturbing presence remains in the curious anecdotes by which he is remembered. He liked to rub raw potatoes "over his hands and arms and face... He liked it better than soap" (p. 21); he dressed in "a very strange costume, a hat of a girl and an apron of his mother and he was playing
with water" (p. 223). In Mrs. Reynolds, Stein's own appearance and behavior appears to be like that assigned to the protagonist. Mrs. Reynolds is heavy and plump; she has dogs, reads detective stories in bed, likes to walk, to talk with her neighbors, to bring home gossip. Mr. Reynolds is unruffled and vaguely ironical. The sinister Angel Harper juxtaposed against their feminine innocence was intended to reveal the "state of mind" (p. 267) which dominated in war-time--here, a perversion of the masculine nature, which being unnatural, creates anxiety.

In Wars I Have Seen, death and war are the masculine protagonists with which Stein struggles. The father figures--Hitler, Mussolini, Stalin, Roosevelt--who are responsible for the war are equally responsible for the difficulties which women and children suffer during the war. The Americans G.I.'s who finally "save" the situation appear in Brewsie and Willie, the following book, as children themselves.

The American G.I. in Brewsie and Willie is a childlike man who whores and drinks and believes that talking is thinking. He appears to dominate women as a determined child dominates his mother. The GI's sleep with the German women, denigrate the French women who will not sleep with them, and assure themselves that their American women would have nothing to do with conquerors. Nevertheless, the Americans admire the Germans and dislike and distrust the French who refuse to "give in" to them. Full of talk and bravado, the American G.I.'s are revealed as thoughtless and domineering children whose cliché ideas make them into clichés, also.
In "The Mother of Us All," the heroic figure of Susan B. Anthony is harrangued and dominated by Daniel Webster, another verbose, domineering male figure in the mold of Daniel Stein, Stein's father. The male figures here are not as threatening as they are bombastic, boring, rigid—and threatened.

*Ida A Novel (1940)*

Stein told her friend, W. G. Rogers, in 1937, that she wanted to write a novel "about publicity":

> I want to write a novel about publicity, a novel where a person is so publicized that there isn't any personality left. I want to write about the effect on people of the Hollywood cinema kind of publicity that takes away all identity.  

Her visit in Hollywood while she was on her American lecture tour had evidently convinced her that publicity of the sort to which actresses and public figures were exposed denuded them of real personalities and forced them into an existence which was for "public consumption."

Stein probably felt, during her American lecture tour, for the first time in her life, the way in which publicity could affect public figures. It acted as a drug upon her own creative powers. Once back in France, she had had difficulty settling down to work. Publicity, it seemed, could be more consuming even than the creative act.

She finally chose as her "star," the Duchess of Windsor, a twice-divorced American woman (Bessie Wallis Warfield Simpson) for whom her lover, King Edward VIII of England, abdicated his throne on December 10, 1936. The American newspapers and popular magazines thrived on the details of Wallis Simpson's life before and after her divorce from Ernest Simpson. Stein's friends in America kept her informed when the scandal in the American press erupted after Stein's return to France in 1935. Stein's interest in Wallis Simpson may have been stimulated by the fact that Wallis Simpson had lived at 212 East Biddle Street in Baltimore, across the street from 215 where Gertrude and Leo Stein had shared a flat. It is clear from an examination of the manuscript of Ida that she sat down to write with the Duke and Duchess of Windsor, as they became after Edward's abdication, in mind:

The duke was cut off by his position from listening. And every little while he liked to be patient. They were often happy together.

It is wonderful. She was Ida; he was a duke.

When she began her novel a second time, the straight-forward narrative prose style, vaguely colloquial, was somewhat like the beginning of "Melanctha":

There was a baby born named Ida. Its mother held it with her hands to keep Ida from being born but when the time came Ida came. (p. 7)

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8 Bridgeman, p. 306.
9 Autograph manuscript of Ida A Novel, (Deleted page). YCAL.
Stein adds a problematical twin to Ida's birth who is called Ida-Ida and who disappears from the narrative until she is re-invented by Ida when Ida is "tired of being just one" (p. 10). Ida's reborn twin appears to overpower Ida, winning beauty contests and being remembered by people who seem not to recognize Ida, and Ida kills her off (in her imagination).

Ida, as a young girl, has a lively imagination. A pear tree symbolizes the dead twins an anunt had buried under a pear tree; pear trees give Ida a "funny feeling". So do the frightening experiences in which men appear and disappear mysteriously. Ida lives with a number of aunts and a great-aunt. Her dog, Love, and her piano appear to be satisfying experiences.

Eventually, Ida grows up and lives alone. The frightening, sinister experiences in which men figured, cease as Ida meets a series of army officers, marrying three times, moving from state to state. "She was good friends with all her husbands: and she "led a very easy life" (p. 62). Her life is one of inertia, but her dreams are lively. One dream is about a little boy with a large package; both are eaten by a large lion (p. 68). Another dream is "that clothes were like Spanish ice-cream" (p. 69) and another that "if you are old you have nothing to eat" (p. 70).

Much of Ida's life is in Washington. Other people talk animatedly about Ida's affairs, but Ida smiles and rests and permits gossip to accumulate around her. At the end of Part I, Ida meets Andrew who cannot decide whether to be king or rich and who has a great many names. Andrew and Ida marry. Andrew is less passive than Ida; he
walked every afternoon and "liked to hear about good luck and bad luck" (p. 122):

. . . nothing was real to him except a walk every afternoon and to say something every minute of the day. (p. 122)

"Life went on little by little for Ida and Andrew" (p. 136) and the banality of Ida's interests are revealed:

She always remembered that the first real hat she ever had was a turban made of pansies. The second real hat she ever had was a turban made of poppies. (p. 136)

Ida liked pansies and heliotropes, "then wild flowers, then she liked tube roses, then she liked orchids and then she was not interested in flowers" (pp. 136-7), and although she was "more interested in birds than in flowers," she was not "really interested in birds" (p. 137). However, Ida and Andrew were popular: "If they had any friends they had so many friends" (p. 140). Ida knew about hats; Andrew knew about cows and horses, and Andrew said "that he could not do without Ida" (p. 145). "They lived from day to day" (p. 147), but "little by little she was not there she was elsewhere" (p. 151).

The liveliest moments of the day are when Ida's and Andrew's friends arrive to talk about the clouds they have seen:

. . . this evening I saw a cloud and it looked like a hunting dog and others would say he saw a cloud that looked like a dragon, and another would say he saw a cloud that looked like a dream, and another he saw a cloud that looked
like a queen . . . They liked people to come in and tell them what kinds of clouds they had seen. (pp. 147-8)

Ida's girlhood excitement and fears, by now greatly diminished, arise only in the pleasure she registers as a passive listener when, for example, one cloud "looked like a rhinoceros" (p. 148). Ida is moved to action only once when she "took her umbrella and parasol" and went away--"That was almost an astonishment" (pp. 151-2). But nothing happens:

It is wonderful how things pile up even if nothing is added. Very wonderful. (p. 150)

Eventually, the reader is told that Ida doesn't need all of any day:

. . . she needed only a part of the day and only part of the night, the rest of the day and night she did not need. They might but she did not. (p. 148)

Finally, Ida is seen in a hat "and another hat, why not, and another dress why not . . . and Andrew is in, and they go in and that is where they are. They are there" (p. 154).

Ida's and Andrew's existence from day to day is rendered in a narrow vocabulary, in words of one and two syllables, in passive verbs, in short sentences with little description or dialogue. The narrative action, like Ida, "rests," and only occasionally rises suddenly in short sentences or phrases in which other characters dominate--"he knew Ida he said hell yes he knew Ida" (p. 32). The rhythm of Ida's existence is mirrored in the flat prose which is
stripped of vitality and of emotion. The novel is almost literally colorless. In a dream, Ida sees a field of white orchids (p. 50), and at the end of the novel, she dresses "well perhaps in black" (p. 154), but no colors are specifically named.

_Ida A Novel_ is a rendering of the passive nature. The accretions of passive verbs cling to the skeleton of the novel, adding what little substance there is. The prose style of the second part in which Ida and Andrew exist together exactly realizes their behavior. On the final page, Stein writes:

Little by little there it was.  
It was Ida and Andrew. (p. 154)

In _Ida_, Stein revealed a diminishing human personality. The young Ida feared, imagined, dreamed, wished, registered erotic responses. She acted—went places, played with her dogs, played her piano, wrote letters to an imaginary twin, joined a walking marathon, won a beauty contest, smiled, talked, liked apples, got sunburned. The older Ida does none of these; she is a mannequin dressed and posed for public viewing. She is most animated registering the passive pleasure she appears to feel when her friends describe the images they have seen in the clouds—"It was very pleasant for Ida that they came and told what the clouds they had seen looked like"—but her nature has become vapid and passive. She no longer "acts." She is acted upon.

The aesthetic which controlled Stein's prose style in _Ida_ is the aesthetic which controlled her prose style in "The Gentle Lena." The inert prose does not simply represent Ida's nature; it is Ida's nature.
In the early part of the novel, Stein moves within the consciousness of the character and represents Ida's thoughts and feelings directly:

Sometimes she thought about a husband
but she knew that a husband meant
marriage and marriage meant changes . . .

(p. 16)

Later in the novel, when Ida has become only a passive spectator to life, the narrator remains outside Ida's consciousness. The reader senses that nothing is happening within the consciousness of the character for Stein to record: there "isn't any personality left."

From an examination of the manuscripts at Yale, it appears that Stein had difficulty with the composition of Ida. Notebooks in which she attempted the narrative include a version of about sixty leaves in one, written on both sides, which she abandoned. In another notebook, twenty-five leaves written on both sides, tell Ida's story in a more conventional narrative style. In one notebook, a few leaves are clipped together with a direction in Stein's hand, "do not copy."

One notebook titled "My life with dogs" (the title has been crossed out) is clearly a piece of writing separate from the Ida composition which Stein dropped into the novel. (It begins in the published text on page 96 with "The first dog I ever remember seeing" and ends on page 106 with "Dogs cannot play in this house.") About six leaves in another notebook appear to have concluded the "My life with dogs" narrative and they were used to complete the section. The prose style in this addition is jarring since the first person is used throughout. Stein attempts patching by having Ida sitting alone--"And sitting she
thought about her life with dogs and this was it" (p. 96). The
total prose, texture of Ida, consequently, is not as consistent as
the prose texture of earlier fiction like "The Gentle Lena" or "Miss
Furr and Miss Skeene."

Ida A Novel was published in 1941. A curious post-script to Ida
is recorded by Bridgeman. Stein asked Bennett Cerf to send a copy to
the Duchess of Windsor who "later replied," according to Bridgeman,
"I hope to emerge from this literary labyrinth with some idea of Ida's
theories and ways!" Whether the Duchess knew that she had been the
model for Ida, no one seems to know.

A second curious postscript to Ida appeared on the inside flap
of the book's dust jacket. Bennett Cerf wrote:

... here it is, presented faithfully
to you by a publisher who rarely has
the faintest idea of what Miss Stein is
talking about, but who admires her from
the bottom of his heart for her courage
and her abounding love of humanity and
freedom.

Cerf's comment illustrates the position that Stein's editors seemed to
have taken from the start of her literary career. Protesting that they
did not understand her writing, failing to analyze her aesthetic system
in any single work as well as in the whole, they never "presumed" to
clarify or even to question the aesthetic intention by editing out
material such as, in Ida, the jarring "My life with dogs" section in
which the first person is used. Editors often acknowledged their

10 Bridgeman, p. 306.
confusion—and often with affectionate or faint-hearted good will and charity as did Cerf. But there does not appear to be any record of their intention to do more than publish what Stein submitted to them. Perhaps, her refusal to rewrite was known to them, and they did understand her process of composition as "spontaneous" and "literally true"—and immune, consequently, to revision.

Mrs. Reynolds (1940–1942)

Mrs. Reynolds is the longest prose fiction (266 pages) that Stein wrote except for the 925 page The Making of Americans. It was not published until 1952, (six years after her death), the second in the Yale Edition of the Unpublished Writings of Gertrude Stein. It is another novel in which Stein has violated her genre. Here, the novel's tone which is anxious and, resigned, realizes a "state of mind."

Had Stein not chosen to fictionalize Mrs. Reynolds in the third person, the work could be read much like a daily diary of anecdotes, conversations, weather reports, and private anxieties. Although a narrative skeleton is provided by the event of World War II, and Mrs. Reynolds and Mr. Reynolds pursue a daily routine within the setting of a small village in occupied France, the narrative is static. Stein intended the novel to render a "state of mind" and not a conventional "story." In an Epilogue to the novel, she makes her intention clear:

\footnote{The date of composition may extend to Hitler's death (April 30, 1945).}
This book is an effort to show the way anybody could feel these years. It is a perfectly ordinary couple living an ordinary life and having ordinary conversations and really not suffering personally . . . but over them, all over them is the shadow of two men . . . There is nothing historical about this book except the state of mind. (p. 267)\(^\text{12}\)

Both the setting and the characters are probably composites. Stein and Toklas spent half of the war as their summer home in Bilignin, a tiny village near Belley. But in 1943, their lease expired and although they attempted to sue for a renewal, they lost the case and were forced to find another house. At one point in the novel, Mrs. Reynolds says:

The house used to feel like ours said Mrs. Reynolds, and now, Well now perhaps it feels like theirs. Mr. Reynolds was too busy to answer. (p. 90)

At this point in the composition of the novel, Stein and Toklas probably had to resign themselves to the move into a house at Culoz. Culoz, on the railroad line, had been bombed, and eventually, Germans occupied houses in Culoz.\(^\text{13}\) Stein probably finished the novel or added to it after the move to Culoz on February 1, 1943 since she ends the book with the death of Angel Harper, a figure who represents Adolph Hitler. Hitler committed suicide on April 30, 1945. The only

\(^{12}\) It was reprinted in 1969 and pages noted are from this reprinted edition: *Mrs. Reynolds and Five Earlier Noelettes.* (Freeport, New York: Books for Libraries Press, 1969).
\(^{13}\) Mellow, p. 446-7.
date in the novel, however, is 1942: "all the children this year are named Christopher or Christine, Mr. Reynolds says it natural 1942 makes anybody think of 1492 and so it is natural" (p. 232).

Mrs. and Mr. Reynolds appear to be passive, "feminine" characters. Mrs. Reynolds, like Stein, appears to talk more with the other villagers and to bring back gossip and news to Mr. Reynolds. Mr. Reynolds is calm and stoic. Like Toklas, he is "too busy" with small chores to be as concerned with daily anxieties. He goes to bed early which seems to have a calming effect upon the more anxious Mrs. Reynolds who goes to bed early only to make the nights pass more quickly. The two characters, like Stein and Toklas, live through the war quietly concerned with "ordinary life" and "really not suffering personally" except for the difficulty of getting food. At one point, Mrs. Reynolds remarks that "if we all have less to eat we can get thin and tighten our belts," and then suddenly fatalistic, continues:

... and if we have still less to eat and have to die of it then if we have to die of it we can all die together.
(p. 68)

But the most difficult problem for Mrs. Reynolds seems to be the "shadow of two men." Angel Harper (Adolph Hitler) and Joseph Lane (Joseph Stalin) are known to the villagers. Their presence is felt in every page of the novel. However, Joseph Lane, who is less threatening, gets "bigger" and "then blows away," but the shadow of Angel Harper becomes increasingly sinister and frightening until he is dead; "Angel Harper was not fifty-five alive." His death which ends
the book, brightens the mood of the final pages as if the "shadow" is obiterated by sudden sunlight.

The novel begins, "It takes courage to be courageous said Mrs. Reynolds." The novel then documents, as a personal diary might have, daily encounters, conversations, the weather, and village news. When chickens peck into a bag of salt and eat it, about half die—a tragedy for a small village without much food. It is too cold. Someone predicts that Angel Harper will die; Mrs. Reynolds hopes that he will drown, but she does not say it (p. 49); a little girl "shivers" when she hears Angel Harper's name (p. 55). Even banal information is savoured because it is not threatening: Mrs. Reynolds remarks that strawberries are called that because you put straw under them "to keep them dry" (p. 56); Mr. Reynolds likes his gravel "to be wet when it was brought" and to be of irregular size (p. 57). Part II ends, "Mr. and Mrs. Reynolds had a quiet life" (p. 57), but the quiet life is one of quiet desperation and resignation.

In Part III, Mrs. Reynolds continues to gather village news and to juxtapose it against her own anxieties:

There came a time when retired school-teachers fished in the lakes and the streams to get a little fish to feed their cats. (p. 63)

One day, Mrs. Reynolds sees "two little girls and a little boy playing in the dust." She thinks they are playing marbles, but she sees that they are burying a "terrible big beetle" and that he works his way out of the mound of dust each time they have covered him (p. 65). Mrs.
Reynolds "dreamed that Angel Harper was over" (p. 66), but he is not. Mr. and Mrs. Reynolds resign themselves to discomfort and even to hunger:

... they did not have much else to eat that day, that is they had potatoes and beets and water ice ... (p. 66)

The war continues; the hardships continue, and "every day there was a dark cloud ... an Angel Harper cloud said Mrs. Reynolds" (p. 68).

Angel Harper had lived in the village as a boy, and by the time he was eight, "he knew he was no Jew" (p. 74). When he was ten, he "was gentle then and liked to think of the theatre" and "to play on a child's piano with five keys" and "to cover his face with a black veil" (p. 76). When he was eleven, "he liked to sit with his back to a tree trunk" and to wear black: "He never mentioned black but he preferred it" (p. 77). At twelve, he preferred macaroons to fruit, and coffee to potatoes. At thirteen, "his voice was hoarse and he was angry that he was so old" (p. 77) and, at fourteen, "he felt better about having been thirteen".

In Part IV, the reader discovers that Angel Harper had left the village when he was sixteen. However, news of him seemed to filter back. We learn that at twenty-two he "gloomed" and at twenty-four "there was war." As Mrs. Reynolds seems to be discovering Angel Harper's past, life continues under "an Angel Harper cloud." Friends come for dinner; there are flowers on the table—"The white dahlias with the little pink rose and jasmine are lovely said a friend of the Family" (p. 80). We learn that Mrs. Reynolds liked bread and coffee
and sugar and fish but "just now there is no trout about" (p. 86). Angel Harper continues to intrude and to become the "calendar" by which the years of the war are marked off: "Angel Harper was forty-four." Part V begins with "Angel Harper was forty-six." Mrs. Reynolds becomes more anxious for his death. The days and nights pass. Part VI begins "When Angel Harper was forty-nine," and Mrs. Reynolds becomes restless and even excited. Finally, she tells Mr. Reynolds, "I have heard enough about him [Angel Harper]" and by the end of Part VI, Angel Harper was "not forty-nine - but fifty" (p. 142).14

As Angel Harper's presence becomes more oppressive--revealed in Mrs. Reynolds' disappointment that he "reaches" each consecutive birthday "alive"--Mrs. Reynolds becomes less able to act under the "cloud" of his presence:

It was the day that Angel Harper was fifty-two so Mrs. Reynolds just sat.
(p. 202)

Angel Harper's "birthdays" are a constant reminder to Mrs. Reynolds of the insecurity of daily existence. She concludes that "life is strife," yet she is not willing to give it up: "dear life," she adds (p. 56). But death is always present. A lamb dies of hunger (p. 145); a cow dies from eating too much clover (p. 258); and a villager's bees dies because the winter is too long (p. 218). When Mrs. Reynolds sees mice in a friend's garden and asks the gardener to

14 Adolph Hitler was born on April 20, 1889. He was fifty in 1939. The birthdays of Angel Harper are simply a device by which Stein pushes forward narrative time which seems to be standing still. He was 56 only 10 days before his death on April 30, 1945.
catch them, and he "killed them by squeezing them between his thumb and forefinger" (p. 200), she "did not know how she felt about it." When her friend killed some flies "that were buzzing inside in the window," Mrs. Reynolds "did not know how she felt about it."

Mrs. Reynolds finds comfort in going to bed, yet her dreams are anxious dreams. In one, a wild rabbit that wanted to become tame followed her home (p. 64); in another dream, a friend had a frog inside her and the doctor had to get it out (p. 84); in another dream, later in the novel when the mood has brightened, Mrs. Reynolds dreams of "two very large slices of ham on a silver platter" (pp. 205-6). Eventually, reality brings more anxiety than her dreams. Even summer, anxiously awaited, means worrying about whether things will grow and whether there will be rain. But all through her anxiety, Mrs. Reynolds clings to the belief that St. Odile, who prophesied death for Angel Harper will be right.

As the reader's awareness of Angel Harper's presence increases, the consciousness of Angel Harper appears to intrude in the narrative at will, so that it is no longer the villagers or Mrs. Reynolds who tell something about Angel Harper. It is now Angel Harper, remembering his own childhood in the village, who interrupts the narrative. Angel Harper remembers that when he was eleven, large green leaves smelled of "heaven and lemon" (p. 247). His memories are often expressed in rhyming phrases: When he was fifty-four "he could not shut a door" (p. 251). When he was sixteen, he had a bicycle and when he was thirteen, he dipped water out of a fountain "and carried it away to drink it" (p. 254). The memories come randomly and appear to have no
special meaning, yet the narrator appears to have no power to check them. The effect of this increasing intrusion of Angel Harper's consciousness is to inflate his presence in the novel to legendary proportions, and, at the same time, dwarfing the village and Mrs. Reynolds, menacing them simply with his "louder" and more insistent "voice."

But, at last, Angel Harper is fifty-four. His memories become disoriented and surrealistic:

... he began to feel funny about not being any more, he remembered that his grandmother who might have been his mother rode a bicycle very swiftly, when he had been fourteen. (p. 265)

And then, "Angel Harper is not fifty-five alive and Mr. Reynolds said yes" (p. 266). Saint Odile "had not been mistaken" and the last line is a joyful refrain like a child's nursery rhyme that proclaims the death of the giant:

Angel Harper was not fifty-five alive.

In a surprising acknowledgement of audience, Stein added an Epilogue to Mrs. Reynolds. The Epilogue explained her aesthetic: to realize a state of mind. The passive prose style realizes the inertia of Mr. and Mrs. Reynolds, rising (verbs brighten from passive verbs to "stopped," "stood," "sighed") when the mood (or state of mind) of Mrs. Reynolds rises from inertia to anxiety. Stronger feelings of despair or of happiness have been arrested by the wartime environment, and only at the end of the novel when Angel Harper is
declared dead, does Mrs. Reynolds become "happy":

Angel Harper is not fifty-five alive and Mr. Reynolds said yes and then they went to sleep very happily together.  
(p. 266)

The leitmotifs of the novel have to do with marking time and with time stopped (or death). Going to bed at night, noting seasonal changes, counting the birthdays of Angel Harper—all mark time as the war "moves on" somewhere else.

The non-discretionary, random journal entries become, collectively, the "war story" as Mrs. Reynolds might have told it had not Stein told it for her. The tedium of daily existence and of the prolonged passive resistance of two elderly Jewish women in occupied France during World War II is the state of mind (her own), which Stein told in Mrs. Reynolds. The novel is aesthetically demanding since it is an unconventional realization of the wartime experience.

Wars I Have Seen (June 1943-Sept. 4, 1944)

Although Mrs. Reynolds was not published, Wars I Have Seen was. About June, 1943 during the period in which she was writing Mrs. Reynolds, Stein began a conventional wartime journal which she continued for about fifteen months or until the arrival of the American armies in her village (Culoz) on September 4, 1944.  

turned from the flat canvas, which demanded a more fully realized aesthetic to the ease of three-dimensional sculpture. Stein turned from Mrs. Reynolds, the biography of a "state of mind," to the easier form of autobiography. She had written in Everybody's Autobiography that "Anyway autobiography is easy like it or not autobiography is easy for any one."  

Perhaps, the success her old friend, Mildred Aldrich, had had with A Hilltop On the Marne, a "collection" of wartime letters which was one of the first "inside stories" Americans had of occupied France in World War I, motivated Stein to write of her war experience in this conventional, autobiographical form. She appeared to be unable to dismiss the past, however, as she approached her seventieth birthday. She began Wars I Have Seen with an admission:

I do not know whether to put in the things I do not remember as well as the things I do remember. (p. 3)  

The first part of the book has the sad, slow cadence of regret. Among the memories, her brother, Michael, who had died in America in 1938, is recalled "coming home from the east as a member of the G.A.R.

he had to grow a beard to look old enough" (p. 51), and she remembers having gone out to San Francisco to see Michael "who had just been married" while she was in medical school (p. 39). She remembers her own "dark and dreadful days of adolescence, [in which both her parents had died], in which predominated the fear of death" (p. 14). Although, in the past, she had rationalized death as a necessity to make room for new generations, it was now "not a thing to be liking" (p. 24).

Leo Stein, from whom she had been separated for three decades is remembered as a part of her "legendary" childhood:

> When we went camping and dragged a little wagon and slept closely huddled together . . . we were a legend then, we were legendary then. (p. 24)

And Hemingway, who was a part of her "legendary" coming of age as a writer, whom Stein had not seen for twenty years, is remembered when Stein witnesses a German who forces a bar owner to shake hands with him:

> There were two German soldiers standing at the bar and one of them looked like Hemingway . . . like Hemingway he was drinking, he had a brandy and then he had an eau de vie and then he had a glass of sparkling white wine . . . and he looked more and more like Hemingway when he was young . . . the good-looking one who looked like Hem when he was young . . . (p. 118)

Some of what is remembered is the revealing narrative which Stein had denied her readers in the autobiographical writing of the thirties. *Wars I Have Seen* is written as a monologue with no chapters and no
breaks in the narrative other than paragraphing. The stream-of-consciousness narrative, moves easily forward and backward in time, stopping in the present, "Now in September 1943," for example. Dates are not necessarily in orderly sequence. In this war-time period, the past often becomes more real than the present and forces itself upon her. In occupied France, food is scarce, prisons fill with friends and enemies, the black market flourishes, and the threat of concentration camps looms--or a German soldier looks like a young, good-looking Hemingway. Unpredictability, mystery, and coincidence were part of daily life.

Rhymes appear randomly as they did in Mrs. Reynolds and in much of Stein's writing. Here, they are not as frequent and, consequently, not as annoying as in Mrs. Reynolds. In Wars I Have Seen, they are haphazard and more naturally conversational. The sentence, "When this you see remember me," a Stein favorite, appears randomly - almost as a plea. Occasional surreal images interrupt the narrative:

> ... everything they are repeating is a legend because it has to be a legend
> ... legs belong to them, feet belong to them, hands and fingers come easier to belong to them ... (p. 26)

Stylistic mannerisms like this appear only in the early pages, and the prose generally is conventional. Eventually, when Stein's "grace under pressure" is destroyed by the hardships of the war, resignation, bitterness, and anger follow. Then, the prose becomes livelier; the Germans become the "boches" frequently. However, Stein's humor and irony remain in tact. Reading mystery and spy stories, finding it ironical,
she admits that she changes "one reality for another, one unreality for another" (p. 47).

The passive-resisting nature which Stein, as an American Jew, found it necessary to adopt as her "persona" during the occupation in France, becomes more difficult to maintain as the war lengthens and "sad things" happen like the dentist's son, just eighteen ("and he should have been taking his entrance university examinations") going to the mountains to become part of the resistance. The news "is always someone is winning and someone is losing" (p. 57).

The Germans occupy Culoz in August, 1943, blowing up trains as they come through the tunnel (p. 67), and in September, 1943, German officers occupy Stein's house, followed by Italians:

... they said they hoped they would stay here until the end of the war and the next day they had to go away, and they went around saying good-bye to the village where they had been for eight days as if they were saying good-bye to the village in which they had been born. (p. 70)

The grapes are ripe, and the harvest is for a "victory wine" (p. 75), but there is no victory. The war, however, Stein feels "does end the nineteenth century, kills it dead, dead dead" (p. 79). "But now everybody has had enough enough" (p. 79).

The push carts like those she remembers when she first came to Paris, before autos filled the streets, are back in the streets (p. 101). They remind her of the old times, and of the old war of 1914-18 when the majority "knew who was an enemy and who was a friend" (p. 79). The twentieth century, for which she did battle, "is too troublesome
and too certain to be difficult" (p. 104). December, 1943 comes and "everybody is cross" because they all hoped the war would be over—"Oh dear they say another winter" (p. 105).

It is in this winter that Stein's seventieth birthday arrives on the third of February, 1944. But it is a horrible time because there is "an effort to round up the mountain boys (free French resistance) and as everybody's boys are there," the village is frightened and the war has become, for Stein, like the terrible "middle ages" (p. 142). By the end of February, Stein wonders "where or when or if the Americans will be coming soon" (p. 152). Even the baker bringing beans and flour late at night frightens the maid; little coffins continue to appear as warnings of death on collaborators' doorsteps; Stein's goat dies in giving birth; and "today is Monday in February nineteen forty-four":

Tired of winter tired of war but anyway they do hope and pray that it end some day. (p. 150)

March is no better. "Spring seems to find it impossible to come" (p. 156). But by the middle of March, "spring has come and with it a little courage" (p. 157), and they begin to "talk crops and potatoes, and planting, to be sure when the French people can begin to dig up the soil and plant vegetables they always feel more cheerful" (p. 157). Finally, "day before yesterday, we were waiting at the station at Culoz and among them all . . . was an American . . . only an American could wear his hat like that . . . and I said to Alice Toklas do not notice him" (p. 158). In April, in Belley, there are "a great many
German soldiers" and "suddenly" everybody seemed to hate them. The Americans are anxiously awaited, but "in destroying the Germans they will destroy France" (p. 172). The Germans, in the meantime, are executing people; bombs fall on Paris; the lilies-of-the-valley bloom and "we are all waiting for everything" (p. 175). In the country, where eggs are plentiful they wonder if Paris is starving. Stories of the German atrocities against the civil population filter in and the Germans "are like rats caught in a trap" (p. 180).

Finally, "today is the landing," and they can even buy ten packages of Camel cigarettes (p. 194), and the air is filled with buzzards and with rumors (p. 196).

The prose becomes livelier reflecting Stein's "coming to life" again as the end of the war nears. On the 4th of July, the French army is within eight kilometers. Finally, the German soldiers, many of which are fifteen and sixteen year old boys, begin to escape on women's bicycles, passing through Culoz (p. 215). Someone makes a blouse of American parachute cloth (p. 225) and "Alice Toklas has just commenced typewriting this book":

And now at half-past twelve to-day on the radio a voice said attention attention attention and the Frenchman's voice cracked with excitement and he said Paris is free. (p. 227)

On the fourth of September, Americans arrive in Culoz, and Stein's joy explodes into the prose—"What a day of days . . . There have been six of them [Americans] in the house" (p. 244).
The language and tone settles into an even-textured prose once the narrative of the present war begins. The book's appeal was a conventional appeal. The aesthetic rationale which dictated the prose style of Wars I Have Seen was that requiring conventional narrative prose. Stein had a story to tell and told it as simply as she had told the "autobiography" of Alice Toklas ten years before. But this time, the narrative voice was her own as her American public had rarely known it. The narrative voice, particularly in the final quarter of the book, was filled with a love of life and of America that, as her brother Leo wrote after her death, made her seem to be "exceedingly alive." In the Selected Writings, Carl Van Vechten included the final sixty-six pages, calling it the "final sixty-six ecstatic pages."21

Wars I Have Seen is Stein's most "accessible" book except for The Autobiography. But it is dated, as many war narratives tend to be dated by the peace that ends them, and it has not been reprinted. This, perhaps, as much as any other "proof," can be offered as the efficacy in Stein's modernist aesthetic system. The book most "conventional"--a conventional narrative conventionally realized--is the Stein work most dated. Mrs. Reynolds, on the other hand, unconventionally realized as a warstory, remains problematical and challenging.

20 Mellow, p. 470.
21 Selected Writings, pp. 640-706.
In the Epilogue to *Wars I Have Seen*, Stein writes, "Write about us they all said a little sadly, and write about them I will." In *Brewsie and Willie*, she keeps her promise. She evidently began the book about the middle of August, 1945 after she had been "liberated" and had toured U.S. Army bases in Germany, talking and listening to American G.I.'s.

The narrative is a series of conversations between American G.I.'s (enlisted men) and between American G.I.'s and American nurses. The discussions ramble, covering every sort of anxiety from going home when "we all got to scratch around and worry" (p. 27) to the French women ("mademoiselles") and German women ("frauleins"). The individual characters are realized only in dialogue assigned to them. There is no description. Although the reader is aware that Willie is abrasive and defensive (He applies "lousy foreigners" to Southerners as well as to the "frogs."), the reader is never aware of Willie's physical characteristics. Brewsie, more introspective than Willie, "likes to be liked." More anxious and more articulate than Willie, he is also faceless.

The setting is somewhere in France at the end of the war. The American soldiers speak a common language—"aint" and army slang and their bias against negroes and middle-aged wealth unite them as well as their anxiety over the economy at home, the atom bomb, and returning

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22 Bridgeman, p. 335 (see footnote).
to America to their own "middle age." They are sometimes in a bunk room or in a cafe or walking along the street. The meetings with the nurses seem to be in bars or in barracks or on the streets.

The period of waiting to be returned to the United States is the narrative skeleton on which Stein hangs the dialogues which reveal the anxieties and the pessimism which the American soldiers are facing as the time for their return nears. Home and a job means "we all got to scratch around and worry," articulating a notion of Stein's that the G.I.'s would look back upon their war experience as the best time of their lives. The form of the book, in fact, gave Stein the freedom to expand some of her notions on industrialism, on paternalistic government, on the erosion of individualism, and on American life as she had sensed it to be in 1934-35 during her American lecture tour. These notions could be articulated or even tentatively paraded in the words of the American soldiers and dropped at will without any effort at a causal analysis. Some of Stein's pet notions came out of Brewsie's mouth. For example, industrial Americans got rich because they had "our outside market right at home that is we had emigration, thousands and millions coming in every year into our country" (pp. 35-6), buying what we made, then becoming producing Americans themselves and "the more they came the more they made and like England we kept on using up our raw material and it was fine" (p. 36). But the war used up more raw material ("a hell of a lot of raw material") and "now we got to make a club to make those foreign countries buy from us" and the worst of it was that:
now we got to go home to make some
more of those things that use up the
raw materials and that nobody but our
own little population wants to buy.
(p. 37)

For the first time—and probably the last time—in their lives,
these men and women could sit around "thinking," But they all knew that
there will be no more whores and no "thinking" soon:

... there won't be any thinking over
there, no thinking over there, no
whores, no thinking ... nothing but
jobs ... (p. 107)

The book begins and ends on this note. Only Brewsie will be "somewhere"
talking, but "we won't be there to listen" (p. 111). Jo, more
optimistic than the others, suggests that things have changed--
"perhaps they will talk over there." But Willie knows nothing has changed:

Not those on the job they won't, said
Willie, not those on the job. (p. 111)

The most interesting revelation in Brewsie and Willie, perhaps,
is Stein's own reassessment of the young American male. During the
American occupation in Germany after the war's end in June, 1945,
Stein toured U.S. army bases, even Hitler's hide-a-way, Berchtesgaden,
and Hermann Goering's confiscated art were on the tour arranged by Life
magazine for her. Her report, "Off We All Went to See Germany,"
appeared in the August 6, 1945 issue of Life. On this tour, Stein
found the American G,I.'s admiration for the Germans disturbing. The
Germans, she warned the Americans, flattered and obeyed the Americans,
while the French were, as they had always been, independent. 

When she began *Brewsie and Willie*, about six weeks after her tour, she revealed the American G.I. of the second World War, not as a "lost generation," but as a generation pampered by the American "system" (the degeneration of which she blamed upon Roosevelt) into softness and dependence. Even American food had become "fluffy" food: "Soft eats make soft men" (p. 78), admits one soldier in *Brewsie and Willie*:

> We love sweets like babies, we dont love no lumps of cheese, and tough bread, no we just like to eat soft stuff, soft bread, soft ice-cream, soft chocolate, soft mush, soft potatoes, soft jam, and peanut butter, we dont except at a little meat we dont really chew. (p. 78)

The only real tough, pioneering spirit left in America is the negro spirit, which the G.I.'s admit, "makes me kind of nervous" (p. 65).

The pessimism which Willie feels is a reflection of Stein's own concerns for the economy of the United States. Like England, America will be "poor poor, and it's poor because it went industrial and the people lost their pep" (p. 64), becoming "employee-minded":

> . . . employed by the big factory owners, employed by the strikers, employed by the government, employed by the labor unions. (p. 64)

"Employee-minded" is to become dependent upon government and big business, while to "pioneer" is to be independent and assertive like the negroes who find "new ways" and "more and more own something" (p. 65).

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24 Mellow, p. 461.
Willie, loud-mouthed, dogged, defensive, resists new ideas and even Brewsie's more open-minded thinking with "Oh, get the hell out of here." This becomes the refrain which reveals his resisting-defensive nature. He is biased against blacks, the "frogs," Southerners, and new ideas. Also revealing is his "masculine" rage at being called a virgin:

I warn you right here and now if you call me a virgin again some night or some day you'll die and it won't by any enemy that will have killed you, It will have been just me. (p. 17)

Willie's real pessimism and sense of defeat is revealed finally in his admission that "no nothing's funny, nothing, not even the comics, no nothing nothing, no nothing nothing is funny" (p. 52).

Brewsie, more thoughtful, more "feminine" in nature than Willie, is always talking, foraging for the others' feelings: "I want to know why do you fellows feel the way you do" (p. 5), hoping to be accepted and unafraid to admit it, "I kind of like to be liked" (p. 18). He shares Willie's pessimism but appears to be able to find in his own nature, some degree of optimism which keeps him thinking and talking. Stein's epilogue to this book, "To Americans," in which she directly addresses her audience, reflects Brewsie's anxieties and his courage and optimism, as well: "somebody else will do it if we lie down on the job, but of all things don't stop . . ." (p. 114).

The nurses who appear at random, talking and listening, do not have dominant roles in the book. They are called "sister" by the American soldiers, and they remain bland, retiring, and faceless.
Only Pauline is independent. She resists Willie's "Let's talk about women" with "Let's not" (p. 100), but the other women appear to have no voice in the male-dominated community. All women in the war-time environment are clearly the second sex. The American soldiers "have to have wine women and song" and "think life is a movie" (p. 44). Brewsie warns them to "wait till you get home and have to treat girls in an ordinary way." Obviously, the days of "wine women and song" were coming to an end. Willie, like many of the womanizing soldiers, is a married man, freed by the circumstances of the war from the boredom of family life and marriage.

At one point in the book, feminism emerges in the comment of Janet, one of the nurses, who has been reading a book about Susan B. Anthony:

And who, said Jo, might that dame be. She is the one, said Janet, that made women vote and have the right to money they earn and to their children, before she came along women were just like Negroes, before they were freed from slavery. You can say what you like but she was pretty wonderful.

Janet believes that the liberation of women happened because Susan B. Anthony's father went "bust":

She had to go to work and she found out how little a woman had of her own, a married woman couldn't even have her own money and so she began to make a noise. (p. 89)

Janet declares her independence:
Now, she said, we got to make a noise, a loud noise, a big noise, we got to be heard. (p. 89)

Although, when Willie wants to know "Who's we," Janet answers; "all of our age all together." It is obvious that Willie has discovered one more threat with which he would have to struggle when the war has ended. In the next chapter, which is only a single paragraph, Stein appears to continue the dialogue:

What's the matter, said Willie. Well it kind of makes me cry, said Pauline. What makes you cry, said Willie, well the way you said we hadn't guts enough to make ourselves heard . . . (p. 91)

Willie's nature has revealed uncertainty and pessimism; Brewsie's nature has revealed a sober, reflective inertia which prefers "thinking" to action. But individualism and the pioneer spirit are to be found in the American negro, and the fighting spirit—"we got to make a noise"—in American women.

Brewsie and Willie, published a few days before Stein's death in July, 1946, was the immediate valedictory which her readers saw. Bridgeman suggests that its "mixture of forthright iconoclasm and compassionate distress" over the state of the Union appealed to reviewers. However, its message was lost in the post-war peace of the summer of 1946. It has never been reprinted. In its 114 pages, Stein realized again her earliest aesthetic: she revealed the inarticulate

nature, but this time, of the common American soldier—and, this
time, entirely in dialogue. Even she may have been surprised to see
how well her "ear" had revealed the American G.I. as the cliché that,
collectively, he became during the second World War. At one point,
Brewsie wondered, "do we feel alike as well as say alike, do we think
alike or dont we think at all." He gropes for the answer:

I dont think we think, if we thought
we could not articulate the same, we
couldnt have Gallup polls and have
everybody answer yes or no . . . (p. 102)

Brewsie and Willie, Stein's last book to reach her American audience,
revealed the dull, uniformity of the American G.I.'s in whose vague,
groping exchanges which they believed to be "thinking," obscurity
passed for profundity.

"The Mother of Us All" (1945-1946)

Earlier Operas and Plays

Stein wrote her first play, "What Happened, A Five Act Play," in
1913, the year in which she wrote Tender Buttons. Except that the
"scenerio" of the play is divided into five acts, its thirty-five
paragraphs (twenty-four of which are single sentences) read much like
Tender Buttons or The Portrait of Mabel Dodge. It begins:

Loud and no cataract. Not any nuisance
is depressing. (p. 205)

26 In Geography and Plays, pp. 205-209.
Act Five, only two short paragraphs, begins:

A regret a single regret makes a door way.
What is a doorway, a door way is a photograph.
(p. 209)

Some of the other plays in *Geography and Plays* had "stage directions" and character names, and some had dialogue, but none was conventional drama. One called "For the Country Entirely, A Play in Letters" addressed "Dear Mrs. Steele or "Dear Sir" and appeared to be scraps of letters. "Every Afternoon" was a dialogue of short sentences ("I get up," "I know what you mean," "I hope you do") not assigned to any speaker. It was clear that Stein meant to violate this genre, also.

For Stein, a play could be a few words or many, an act or two or five or none, a dialogue, a play on words, or playing with words, or even "private playfulness," as Kenneth Burke suggested. A "play" could be what you wanted to make it and not what it had been since the fifteenth century when a play had been what Shakespeare and that tradition had made it.

Today, we are accustomed to the "Theatre of the Absurd."
Consequently, Stein's plays do not have the scandalous, shocking quality of the unconventional any longer that they had in 1934. The "Happenings" in New York in the late 50's too, were instant landscape plays, stretching the play form to its infinite possibilities.

In her lecture on "Plays," Stein attempted to define a play as that which did not need to "tell a story" but that which told the essence of what happened:

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27 In Brinnin, *The Third Rose*, p. 326.
But in my portraits I had tried to tell what each one is without telling stories and now in my early plays I tried to tell what happened without telling stories so that the essence of what happened would be like the essence of the portraits.  

Later, she attempted to make a play a "landscape." Her "Four Saints in Three Acts" (1927) was an attempt to make a landscape of the saints' lives - "very busy and in continuous movement but placid." These static plays appear to have been realized as "happenings" by Stein. "Four Saints" was transformed into more than a happening, however, by Virgil Thomon's musical score, Frederick Ashton's choreography, the cast of black singers, and Florine Stettheimer's sets and costumes. Yards of "tufted blue cellophane" made a vast Victorian Valentine against which the tableaux--or "happenings"--were posed. One tableau, for example, showed Saint Therese painting an Easter egg. Some critics saw "Four Saints" as "inspired madness" and others as "madness" when it played in 1934.  

That Stein's aesthetic realized the play form as a kind of "circus" where there are "moments"--static and consisting of "bright filled space"--is revealed in her lecture. Speaking of a child's "feeling of the theatre" she said:

... in a way [it is] like a circus that is the general movement and light and air which any theatre has, and a great deal of glitter in the light and a great deal of height in the air, and then there are moments, a very very few moments but still moments.  

28 Lectures In America, pp. 121-122.  
29 Mellow, pp. 365-370.  
30 Lectures In America, p. 112.
For Stein, the theatre was glittering, bright filled space—and moments, only moments. It was not a simulation of reality or real life but only the essence of life revealed as a three-ring circus. The wonderful, inexplicable world of the circus where the daring young man flew through the air was the sort of ambiguity of "Four Saints in Three Acts" and of many of the plays published in Last Operas and Plays. It might not be inaccurate to suggest that the apparent spontaneity and "madness" of Stein's language in the play form was a realization of the apparent spontaneity and madness of either the circus or of life. Picasso had painted the harlequins and performers of the circus in his Rose Period. His "Young Acrobat On a Ball" which hung in Stein's salon revealed the "magic" of the circus as a reality in which there was no magic at all except "glitter in the light" and "height in the air" and the inexplicable madness of flying men and dancing bears, of innocent pleasure and of the nerve-tingling anticipation of tragedy.

"The Mother of Us All" (1945-46)

"The Mother of Us All," written almost twenty years after "Four Saints in Three Acts," was an opera for which Virgil Thomson again composed the music. Begun in the fall of 1945, just after Stein finished Brewsie and Willie, it is Stein's last full-length work. Although it has the quality of a "three-ring circus" with its historical figures from the eighteenth and nineteenth century and its scattering of Stein's friends--Virgin Thomson, Constance Fletcher, Jean Atlan,
and Donald Gallup\(^{31}\)--it rises at the end to a tragic dramatic moment when the heroine, Susan B. (Anthony), speaks from "beyond" the grave in the final aria ("We cannot retrace our steps"). Stein finished "The Mother of Us All" in March, 1946 when she was already in pain and had only about four months to live.\(^{32}\) It is these circumstances which lend support to the notion that this work was Stein's conscious valedictory in which she recognized that the circus, which is life, was over.

Virgín Thomson's score was not finished until after Stein's death. He has described his score for "The Mother of Us All":

\[
\ldots \text{an evocation of nineteenth century America, with its gospel hymns and cocky marches, its sentimental ballads, waltzes, darn-fool ditties and intoned sermons} \ldots \\
\text{a souvenir of all those sounds and kinds of tunes that were once the music of rural America.}^{33}
\]

There are about twenty-five singing roles and a chorus. Half of the roles are historical figures like Daniel Webster, John Adams, Ulysses Grant, and even Lillian Russell, the American actress. One role is designated as "G.S." and another simply as "Negro man." The central figure is Susan B. Anthony, the nineteenth century's leading American feminist and suffragette.

When Virgín Thomson read the libretto, he wrote Stein that it was "sensationally handsome and Susan B. is a fine role." In the same

\(^{31}\) Virgín Thomson was the composer; Constance Fletcher was Stein's friend who wrote Kismet; Jean Atlan was a painter, and Donald Gallup was a young Yale librarian whom Stein had met not long before.

\(^{32}\) Mellow, p. 463.

\(^{33}\) The Flowers of Friendship, p. 396, 397. (Letters from Virgín Thomson)
letter, he suggested "very little scenery but very fine clothes and they do all the time strike 19th century attitudes." In many performances, the characters are dressed in colorful period costumes and the sets are often designed to suggest nineteenth century small town America. The circus ring, a political rally, a revival meeting, a street carnival are represented as the stage-time evocative of the "essence" of historical America—the "good old days." The tone is one of nostalgia for an American 19th century vitality and innocence that seemed to disappear with the entry of America in the first World War in 1914.

Obviously, the seclusion forced upon Stein by the second World War, as well as her age (seventy-one when she began "The Mother of Us All"), had turned her thoughts inward and backward to her childhood and youth and to her "native land":

... anything touches me particularly now that is American. There is something in this native land business and you cannot get away from it...  

Although Stein had rarely indicated a feminist philosophy, considering herself "masculine" and masculine natures to be the creative natures, she probably sensed a parallel to her own struggles in the long struggle for suffrage to which Susan B. Anthony had devoted her life.

34 The Flowers of Friendship, p. 398.
35 Wars I Have Seen, p. 250
Susan Brownell Anthony, like Stein, had embarked on her "struggle" at thirty when she quit teaching. She organized the Massachusetts Women's Temperance Society and took up the antislavery cause. After the Civil War, she devoted her energies to women's suffrage, lecturing, traveling, and writing in a period when "woman's place was in the home." She wrote much of the four volume *History of Woman's Suffrage*. From 1868 to 1870, with Elizabeth Cady Stanton and the abolitionist Parker Pillsbury, she published a weekly called *The Revolution*. The issues in the newspaper were feminist issues like "divorce, prostitution, and the role of the church in the subjugation of women."

Women did not support the suffrage movement any more than did men. Susan B. Anthony's favorite speech which she called "Woman Wants Bread, Not the Ballot!" was her own ironical acknowledgement of the failure of women to understand what the power of the vote would mean in their control of their own economic destiny. In that speech, she attempted to show women that, as disfranchised workers, they would remain "beggers":

Disfranchisement means inability to make, shape or control one's own circumstances. The disfranchised must always do the work, accept the wages, occupy the position the enfranchised assign to them. The disfranchised are in the position of the pauper. You remember the old adage, "Beggars must not be choosers;" they must take what they can get or nothing!36

Susan B. Anthony was ridiculed by audiences who were threatened by the sight and sound of a courageous, perservering, strong-minded

woman with "new" ideas who refused to be turned back. She was often the butt of vicious sexist jokes, but she had not given up the fight for women's suffrage when she died at eight-six in 1906. And her long struggle was vindicated finally on the centennial of her birth in 1920, giving American women power through the ballot.

In "The Mother of Us All," Daniel Webster represents the male antagonist. The character is pompous, verbose, egotistical, high-handed, and unbending. At one point in the opera, he informs Angel More whom he "loves" that "I cannot kneel my knees are not kneeling knees" (p. 73). He resists the enfranchisement of negroes and of women and casts his lot with the wealthy classes. It would appear that he has no redeeming characteristics. Angel More, whom he woos, is the feminine, passive nature. She says, "I am a mouse," but she protests that she is "not a martyr any more," admitting, however that her existence is one of servitude:

Darn and wash and patch, darn and wash and patch, darn and wash and patch (p. 55)

The G.S. character, at one point, remembers that "My father's name was Daniel and he had a black beard he was not tall not at all tall, he had a black beard his name was Daniel" (p. 53). Clearly, the struggle between the strong-minded woman and the Daniels of life represented for Stein her early struggle to be free of her father's

domination. In "The Mother of Us All," Daniel Webster is merely the representation of the powerful male to whom everything has been given "education, success, recognition, deference) and who freely admits "I did sleep on the gentleman's speech; and slept soundly" (p. 58), yet proclaims, "I can tell the honorable member once for all that he is greatly mistaken" (p. 58). The essence of the Daniel nature is revealed in Daniel Webster's inability to give homage—"I cannot kneel my knees are not kneeling knees" (p. 73) and in his self-glorification and disagreeable egocentricity:

Dear Angel More, dear Angel More, there have been men who have stammered and stuttered but not I, not I. (p. 76)

In his longest speech in the opera, Webster's verbosity overtakes his eloquence until, at the end, he has lost sight of the issue of suffrage and is overcome with his own eloquent cliches:

I hear that you say that the word male should not be written into the constitution of the United States of America, but I say, I say, that so long that the gorgeous ensign of the republic, still full high advanced, its arms and trophies streaming in their original lustre not a stripe erased or polluted not a single star obscured. (p. 82)

Webster's speech has been addressed to Susan B. ("I say to you, you Susan B. Anthony"), and when he has finished, her friend, Jo the Loiterer, replies: "She has decided to change her name." It would seem that the only response to men like Daniel Webster has been, for women like Susan B., to reject their own identity by changing their
names(marriage) or by taking on a new identity to mask the real one.

The other male figures in "The Mother of Us All" are no more appealing than Daniel Webster. John Adams admits to Constance Fletcher that "I would have kneeled at your feet and then I would have kissed one of your hands . . . if I had not been an Adams" (p. 62). Andrew Johnson advises, "Begin to be drunk when you can so be a bigger man than a big man" (p. 65), and he admits that "I often think, I am a bigger man than a bigger man. I often think I am" (p. 66). Virgil T. proclaims, "I sit I stand I walk around and I am grand, and you all know it" (p. 66). Donald Gallup boasts, "Last but not least, first and not best, I am tall as a man, I am firm as a clam, and I never change, from day to day" (p. 86). Even Negro Man for whom Susan B. Anthony desires suffrage, disappoints her:

Susan B. Negro man would you vote if you only can and not she.
Negro Man. You bet.
Susan B. I fought for you that you could vote would you vote if they would not let me.
Negro Man. Holy gee. (pp. 67-8)

Throughout the opera, the speeches of Susan B. reflect the position of the real historical figure. Admitting that "we suffer," she proclaims "as we suffer we grow strong" and "I know that we are beaten and as we are beaten we win" (p. 71). When Thaddeus Stevens reminds Susan B. that "humanity comes first," she responds, "You mean men come first" (p. 77). Another time, Susan B. wearily questions her duty to women:
I suppose I will be coming, is it be-
cause you flatter me, is it because if
I do not come you will forget me and
never vote my laws . . . (p. 78)

Recognizing that "a devil creeps into men when their hands are strength-
ened," she recognizes kindness in men as well as the chivalrous pose
that excuses their unthinking behavior and masks their fears:

I do not say that they haven't kind
hearts, if I fall down in a faint,
they will rush to pick me up, if my
house is on fire, they will rush in
to put the fire out and help me, yes
they have kind hearts but they are
afraid . . . They fear women, they
fear each other, they fear their
neighbor, they fear other countries.
(p. 80)

She concludes that it is out of fear that they crowd together and
follow each other "like animals who stampede":

and so they have written in the name
male into the United States constitu-
tion because they are afraid of black
men because they are afraid of women,
because they are afraid afraid. Men
are afraid. (p. 80)

Women, on the other hand, "have not any sense of danger." Like the
screaming hen who sees the eagle, women are afraid for their children
but "men are afraid for themselves, that is the real difference between
men and women" (p. 80). Men, then, are self-centered and women are
forced into self-sacrifice. Susan B. fears that women, given the vote
and the freedom it will provide them, "will become like men, they will
be afraid" (p. 81), but she "will fight for the right."
Although Stein's feminism is clearly revealed in the characterization of Susan B. and of Daniel Webster, she included between a conventional Act I and Act II, an "Interlude" which she subtitled "Susan B. A Short Story." In this conventionally paragraphed section, Stein's position is more rigid and angry:

Men said Susan B. are so conservative, so selfish, so boresome and said Susan B. they are so ugly, and said Susan B. they are gullible, anybody can convince them. (p. 60)

With her friend, Anne, she agrees that they are "poor things" and that they are "dull, monotonous, deceived, stupid, unchanging and bullies" (pp. 60-61). In Act II, which follows, Susan B. is adamant about marriage, "I could never be one of two ... and so I have never been married to any one" (p. 75). Near the end of the opera, in the final scene, Susan B. admits to disgust at heterosexual relationships:

... and if there are men and women, it is rather horrible, and if it is rather horrible, then there are children. (p. 85)

In the end, Susan B. has been forced to the "pedestal" above the crowds. The crowd meets in front of her statue, smiling and bowing to it. "Suddenly Susan B.'s voice is heard" (p. 87).

Susan B's voice. We cannot re-trace our steps, going forward may be the same as going backwards.
Susan B. finds herself "Here, in marble and gold." There are a series of silences in the final aria. Between the silences, she can only say, "my long life, of effort and strife, dear life, life is strife" and wonder "But do I want what we have got" (p. 87). The curtain closes as Susan B. repeats, "My long life, my long life," revealing, at last, what was simply and literally true.

Stein did not live to hear the Virgin Thomson score, nor, of course, to see a performance of "The Mother Of Us All." The first performance was commissioned by the Alice M. Ditson Fund of Columbia University and played in Brander Matthews Hall on May 7, 1947.38 Those who were familiar with Stein's personal history, assumed that the role of Susan B. was autobiographical and that the character of Anne could be identified as Alice Toklas. But Toklas wrote Carl Van Vechten that Stein had not felt that Susan B. "was she herself" and that Anne was Dr. Anna Howard Shaw who had campaigned with Susan B. Anthony for eighteen years.39

Now removed from the living Stein legend by more than three decades, the opera no longer excites the curiosity of its audiences in the autobiographical elements implied in the role that Stein created for Susan B., but Stein's bold feminist rhetoric emerging here after a lifetime of assuming a "masculine" role, and her choice of Susan B. Anthony as the "mother of us all" signalled a significant change in her attitude toward her own femininity.

"The Mother of Us All" is durable. It was again produced on February 29, 1980 by the Julliard School in New York. It was reviewed with enthusiasm and Stein's libretto called "wise, witty, and warmly human." Another generation seems to be discovering Stein.

Last Act.

Stein ended the opera "Four Saints in Three Acts" with the words, "Last Act. Which is a fact" in the literally true rhetoric which was a constant element in her modernist aesthetic system. Her own aesthetic "last act" was the emerging feminism in the writing of the forties. It is curious that men, whom Stein had reduced to types or painted in vaguely expressive language in the individual word-portraits of the twenties and thirties, emerge in more clearly defined portraits in the autobiographical writing beginning in 1933, and are realized, finally, in her writing of the forties in unpleasant portraits.

Stein's own sexuality had always troubled her. In one of the early notebooks (1902-08), she had written:

All women are alike. I know it, I always say it everybody always says it and yet in some ways there is nothing in it.\footnote{Stein Notebook (DB-10). YCAL.}

On the one hand, "all women are alike," and on the other, "in some ways there is nothing in it." It is not clear how Stein resolved the

\footnote{Peter G. Davis, "Opera: 'Mother of Us All.'" The New York Times (March 2, 1980), p. 56.}
ambiguity here in order to classify women in her early system of "bottom natures." But, clearly, she was seeing women as the inferior sex, writing of "left-over girlishness" and of "vanity and bridling" as female attributes in her private notebooks of 1902-08. In Three Lives, she exploited the "pure servant female" nature to which many women, in her notebooks, belonged. But when she classified herself, it was with the two most inventive male painters she knew:

Picasso and Matisse have a maleness that belongs to genius. Moi aussi, perhaps. [Italics mine.]42

In the forties, Stein was not concerned with a system of character types, in which "maleness" was a positive attribute. In Ida A Novel, the male figures are either threatening figures who frighten the young Ida or later, the insipid males to whom Ida does not respond. In Mrs. Reynolds, Angel Harper and Joseph Lane are "oppressive clouds," sinister, perverse, and frightening, under which Mr. and Mrs. Reynolds (both "feminie" natures) live from day to day. Wars I Have Seen is dominated by men who are less threatening but ineffective--the old men left in the villages, polite German soldiers, and the American G.I.'s for whom Stein's maternal affection in Wars I Have Seen becomes an objective appraisal of them as cliché thinkers and cliché talkers in Brewsie and Willie. In "The Mother of Us All," Daniel Webster represents the bombastic, domineering Daniels (the father figures) in life, and Susan B., as "the mother of us all," represents the bigger-than-life matriarchal figure. Perhaps, her own "long-suffering"

42 Stein Notebook (C-21). YCAL.
martyrdom to her literary life had given Stein a more sympathetic understanding of her own sex's difficult role in a male-dominated world in which female biology and not female "nature" doomed women to second rank.

It is possible that during the war Stein had become more aware of her own passive strength and that of other women. Too, during her lecture tour in America in 1934-35, she had sensed the paternalistic thrust of the Roosevelt administration, and she believed that the welfare system was taking away American initiative. There was too much "fathering" going on in the world, she believed, and father figures dominated and suffocated their "children" as her own father had dominated his children while he lived.

Finally, Stein seems to have become aware of the "martyrdom" which is thrust upon women who impose themselves in a world dominated by men. "I was a martyr all my life not to what I won but to what was done" seems to have been her final assessment of the situation. She had made tentative steps toward an overt feminism. Had she lived longer, the indications are that she would have pursued an aesthetic based upon feminist concerns chiefly and upon a feminist rhetoric.
CONCLUSIONS

Stein's Influence and Contribution

The world can accept me now because there is coming out of your generation somebody they won't like, and therefore they accept me because I am sufficiently past in having been contemporary so they don't have to dislike me. So thirty years from now I shall be accepted.

Gertrude Stein in a lecture to Choate School in Wallingford, Connecticut January 12, 1935

In Stein's first publication ("Cultivated Motor Automatism: A Study of Character in its Relation to Attention"—1898), she attempted to realize "the complete character of the individual" in eight case studies. As a student of William James, her primary interest was in those habits of attention which revealed the bottom nature of the individual:

In these descriptions it will be readily observed that habits of attention are reflexes of the complete character of the individual.¹

¹ In The Psychological Review (May, 1898), p. 299.
The habits of attention which she had been trained to observe remained
the essence of her portraits for fifty years. From the first portraits
in her private notebooks (1902) to the last portrait-making she did
in Brewsie and Willie (1946), it was habits of attention which told
the story she wanted to tell. In some of her best portraits, "Picasso"
and "Miss Furr and Miss Skeene," for example, she realizes the articu-
late nature without dialogue, and in Three Lives and Brewsie and Willie,
she realizes the inarticulate nature with dialogue, always revealing
"the rhythm of the spoken personality as directly as possible."

From the beginning of her prose writing her outlaw aesthetic made
it necessary for her to reject the conventions of nineteenth century
prose. It was not narrative that interested her; it was rendering the
subjective or inner life. When she could not avoid narrative in
order to accomplish her aesthetic, she submerged it. When she decided,
in the process of writing The Making of Americans, that the process
was as important as the product, she revealed the compositional process
as well as the narrative elements of character, plot, and setting. In
this violation of the genre, she had indulged in an aesthetic of the
"literally true." If she had a literary model, it was probably Sterne's
Tristram Shandy whose protagonist, revealing himself and submerging
narrative, says that he wishes his book to be a lesson: "to let people
tell their stories in their own way." This was Stein's intention: to
tell her stories in her own way.

She did not erase, rephrase, or delete the compositional struggle.
"I am almost despairing" remains at the heart of The Making of Americans
on page 458.
Having violated the novel form in The Making of Americans, she made word-portraits of people and of things (especially in Tender Buttons) in which she violated syntax and meaning. She pushed at the limits of the language, stretching it beyond convention; she violated other genres beyond recognition. (Her friends, the painters, were even taking pictures out of frames in order to free painting from "boundaries.") She denied that language had limits of sense—she made non-sense that her audience (which she also denied) remembered better than they would remember words that made sense. (Rose is a rose is a rose is a rose. Pigeons on the grass alas. There is no there there.) She discovered, in the process, that it was almost not possible to put together words that did not make sense. That was a "bother" for her like commas—which were stumbling blocks, which "when you were conceiving a sentence . . . stopped you." A comma, Stein told the young men at Choate school, "gets on your nerves."² A comma, it seemed, was another troublesome convention that took away your freedom.

The world, she warned the Choate students, would always call the new thing "ugly." Stein said, "And they are right because it is ugly." Escaping from the old habits was a drag upon you "so strong that the result is an apparent ugliness." But, she told them, "it is much more interesting when it seems ugly." (Was she thinking of Picasso's "Les

² In these Conclusions, the quotations are from:
Demoiselles d’Avignon" or of The Making of Americans?) And when the ugly thing revealed the "vitality of the struggle," she told them, "to a person of my temperament, it is much more amusing."

Did she do what she did to amuse? Her brother Leo believed that she and Picasso were playing games. E. M. Forster believed that her "playing" was more important than rewriting the Waverly Novels. B. F. Skinner thought he had made a discovery when he read of her writing in the Harvard Psychological Laboratory; he decided that her work was "automatic writing." Other critics decided that she was "experimenting."

But Edmund Wilson, who took her seriously, included her in Axel’s Castle in which he proposed Yeats as "closest to conventional literature and Gertrude Stein furthest away."

She tried to express people and objects in words freed from associations because she felt that the nineteenth century was "wont to call up other pictures" when they put down words. She wanted her words to be exact, she said, like mathematics. "I have made a great many discoveries," she said, "but the thing that I was always trying to do was this thing"—to make words exact. Not representational. Not associational. Exact. She came close in Three Lives for many writers like Sherwood Anderson and Scott Fitzgerald who cherished their copies. (Fitzgerald begged Maxwell Perkins, "I hope you are keeping my precious Three Lives safe for me."3) She felt she had done it in Tender Buttons, but only sometimes. Words, she felt, had gone stale.

with too much use and mis-use and carried "too many associations."

It was Sherwood Anderson who noticed that she "has been able to accept ridicule" and to go on telling her stories in her own way.

It was Thornton Wilder who noticed that readers "want more of the same" and only accept "idiosyncrasy" when it has been "consecrated by a long-accumulated prestige." Stein did not intend to give them "more of the same." ("If it can be done," she had said, "why do it?")

Thornton Wilder understood Stein's "Doctrine of Audience":

> It has often seemed to me that Miss Stein was engaged in a series of spiritual exercises whose aim was to eliminate during the hours of writing all those whispers into the ear from the outside and inside world where audience dwells.

Wilder pointed out that some of Stein's books were "being written before our eyes." She did not, as other writers did,

> ... suppress and erase the hesitations, the recapitulations, the connectives, in order to give us the completed fine result of her meditations. She gives us the process.

Why did she not want to please her audience with "fine" writing?

Thornton Wilder took a guess:

> It is as though she were afraid that if she went back and weeded out all these signs of groping and shaping and re-assembling, if she gave us only the completed thoughts in the best order, the truth would have slipped away like water through a sieve . . .
Stein's aesthetics did not encompass "refinement," anyway. Spontaneity, chance, chaos (Stein called it "complication"), ambiguity, boredom, absurdity, and literalness were not easily suppressed; if they were "weeded out," the creative process was lost. The "completed thoughts in the best order" was not the aesthetic intended.

It annoyed some people (and many of the critics) that she believed in herself. Stein did not think of herself as a "minor" writer. The minor poets, she said, the "precious poets of the period, are all people who are under the shadow of the past. A man who is making a revolution has to be contemporary." She had moved out from under the shadow of the past in 1905.

A man who has made a revolution deserves to be seen (if he's a painter or a sculptor or an architect) or heard (if he's a composer) or read (if she's a writer).

From the moment that Stein wrote in her notebooks that "aesthetic has become the all of me," she became an aesthetic with which we have had to deal in American modernism. Like other modernists who demanded to have their own way, Stein was forced into strident language and into a strident aesthetic stance which demanded freedom from the old, conventional ways.

Critics have suggested that Stein's influence comes through Hemingway. Her influence, for that matter, comes through Anderson, Bromfield, Wilder, Wright, Beckett, Pinter, and scores of writers who have never read Three Lives or Tender Buttons. Her outlaw aesthetic has been tamed by her followers; she expected that. Her writing
remains, however, a direct way of introducing twentieth century writing at its beginning and the aesthetics of the Modern Movement to students.
Recommendations to Teachers of English

Esthetic experience is always more
than esthetic.

John Dewey in Art As Experience

The purpose of this dissertation has been (1) to establish a
neglected American writer as artistically and historically important
to the English curriculum at both secondary and college levels, and
(2) to show her importance through analysis of her unconventional
writing, recovering her aesthetic system in a selected number of works
from each period of her writing career, providing the teacher of
English with both rationale and content.

Part I of this study sets Gertrude Stein among other Modernists,
introducing modern painting, sculpture, music, architecture, and drama.
Part I is intended to reveal the ideas which "married" the arts in the
Modern Movement, and it introduces some of the manifestoes and historical
documents of the movement which were part of the aesthetic atmosphere
in which the arts thrived before the first World War.

The seven chapters of Part II provide some classroom-tested
student reading assignments. These have been roughly divided into
seven phases of Stein's literary development, and they are presented
in chronological order. However unconventional her treatment of
genre forms appears to be, these selections are accessible for
classroom reading and as models for student assignments in composition. In general, they are intended to:

1. propell students into close reading
2. sharpen students' critical awareness
3. create an atmosphere of discovery and of exploration in the English classroom
4. encourage students to focus on literary style as a matter of choices
5. support artistic "failures" and artistic unconventionality in professional writers and in the students' own compositions

Student creativity is sometimes limited or even mutilated by the instructor's enthusiasm for "good" writing. Efforts to produce clear prescriptions for successful writing, often leave the student feeling that he has no place to go artistically. By teaching "standard" authors, we may be establishing boundaries which inhibit students' reading and inhibit their invention. Stein's writing reveals models in which there are no boundaries prescribed by convention alone.

**Recommendations for Student Reading***

1. Three Lives. This is the best known and the most accessible of Stein's fiction. It helps to bridge the literary gulf between Mark Twain and Sherwood Anderson or between Henry James and Ernest Hemingway in survey courses.

2. "Picasso" and "Matisse." These word-portraits represent Stein's earliest break from conventional character description.

*See Appendix I for Syllabus assignments based upon this dissertation. The Syllabus is for a ten weeks' course of study appropriate for a college or continuing education (adults) course.
3. **Tender Buttons.** Stein's "abstract" descriptions of objects are often called her most important contribution to Modernist writing.

4. **Picasso and Paris France.** These are two short books in which Stein reduces two legendary giants to a human scale through her subjective treatment of them.

5. **The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas.** This is the most popular and entertaining of Stein's books. In it, she makes a "legend" of herself through her third-person narrative device.

**Recommendations for Student Writing**

1. Word-portraits of Picasso, Matisse, Mabel Dodge, Miss Furr and Miss Skeene. These provide models for short, inventive word-portraits. (See Appendix II for example.)

2. **Tender Buttons.** These provide models for "abstract" descriptions of objects. (See examples in Appendix II.)

3. **Three Lives.** This provides a model for conventional narrative in which dialogue reveals the "subjective life" (or consciousness of the character.)

4. **The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas.** Stein's third-person autobiography serves as an example in which the use of persona releases the prohibition against talking about oneself. (See Appendix II for examples.)

5. **Wars I Have Seen** and **Mrs. Reynolds** provide further inventive models for autobiography: the first, a first-person memoir, and the second, a third-person realization of a "state of mind," both unconventional forms of a conventional genre—the wartime journal.

**Recommendations for Reading in Women's Studies**

Q.E.D., Fernhurst, Brewsie and Willie, The Mother Of Us All. Explicit feminist rhetoric in the first two is seen as less effective than the implicit feminist rhetoric of the last two.
Recommendations for Reading in Black Studies

"Melanctha." "Melanctha" (in Three Lives), acknowledged as the first objective treatment of Blacks in American fiction.

Recommendations for Interdisciplinary Studies

1. **Theatre.** Stein's play form which she "violated" as early as 1913, can be read as a literary "bridge" which predated both the Theatre of the Absurd and the Central Park happenings of the fifties.

2. **Music.** Stein's "Four Saints in Three Acts" and "The Mother Of Us All" were operas for which Virgil Thomson wrote the scores.

3. **Fine Arts and Art History.** Picasso is the "other" genius of The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas, the subject of Picasso (the book), and of Stein's early word-portrait. Some Modernist aesthetic values in Stein's writing appear to be related to some of Picasso's.

Recommendations for Advanced Stein Scholarship

Advanced Stein scholarship has increased in intensity and in quality since the publication in 1951 of Donald Sutherland's *Gertrude Stein: A Biography of Her Work* which was a scholarly review of her literary contribution and aesthetics. It treated her as a serious writer and ignored the trend to reveal her as a legendary but minor figure in the Modern Movement. There remain, however, areas of Stein scholarship untouched:
1. Stein's influence upon American writers who acknowledged her as influence—Hemingway, Anderson, Wright, Bromfield, Wilder, and William Carlos Williams—remains to be treated in depth.

2. Lawrence Sterne's influence upon Stein's writing has not be adequately treated, perhaps because she was insistent upon Flaubert as her literary forebear.

3. The critical bias in Stein's contemporaries has not been revealed by means of a thorough review of their language and critical attitudes.

4. Stein's own critical writing in her lectures, interviews, and popular articles should be the focus for scholarship in rhetoric and/or criticism.

5. Stein's collaboration with Virgil Thomson in two operas which have been successfully produced remains to be reviewed.

6. Stein's feminist rhetoric has been ignored, perhaps because most Stein scholarship has been in the hands of men.

7. Scholars have ignored or treated with delicacy Stein's lesbian relationships and, consequently, erotic love poems like "All Sunday" and "Lifting Belley" have remained "hermetically sealed" against explication.

8. Important to advancement of Stein studies, would be research into her aesthetic systems in her major novels—The Making of Americans, Lucy Church Amiably, Ida A Novel, and Mrs. Reynolds. Some of her compositional methods, for example, are directly revealed through a study of her autograph manuscripts at Yale University.

9. Further scholarship will be possible upon the publication of Dr. Leon Katz's book which will deal with Stein's unpublished notebooks.

After three decades of benign neglect, which has not accomplished Stein's literary death, serious scholarship in Stein studies is an
exciting possibility, not only in literature and rhetoric, but in criticism, women's studies, Black studies, and interdisciplinary studies.
APPENDIX I

A SYLLABUS BASED UPON THIS DISSERTATION

Course: Gertrude Stein: Her Writing and Modernism

Week I: Introduction: Stein's Work--An Overview
A Review of the Critical Positions Concerning Stein's Work
Setting The Modernist Aesthetic Scene in Architecture, Painting, Sculpture, and Music (four guest lectures)

Reading: Realism in Stein--a 19th Century Aesthetic Quod Erat Demonstrandum and "The Good Anna"

Week II: Reading: "The Gentle Lena" and "Melanctha" (Three Lives)

Week III: Stein's Expression of Bottom Nature

Reading: Selected early portraits ("Picasso" and "Matisse")
Selected passages, The Making of Americans

Week IV: Stein's Expression of the Object

Reading: "Aux Galeries Lafayette"
Tender Buttons

Week V: Stein's Plays and Feminism

Reading: Selected short plays; Four Saints; The Mother Of Us All

Week VI: Reading: The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas

Week VII: Stein's Literary and Art Criticism

Reading: Picasso and selections from Lectures in America

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Week VIII: Stein's Redefinition of the Novel Form

Reading: Lucy Church or Ida

Week IX: Stein's Influence

Reading: Stein's "Miss Furr and Miss Skeene";
Hemingway's "Mr. and Mrs. Eliot."
Wilder's "Introduction" to Four In America

Week X: Stein's Position in American Modernism

Reading: Some critical essays on Stein.
Axel's Castle (Edmund Wilson)

Texts: * Selected Writings of Gertrude Stein, ed. Carl Van Vechten
Gertrude Stein, Three Lives
Picasso
Lectures in America
Ida A Novel
Lucy Church Amiably

*All suggested texts are published in paperback editions.
Papers required:

(1) **One short paper** comparing a single Modernist aesthetic in painting with an aesthetic in one of Stein's stories from *Three Lives* or in Stein's *Tender Buttons*.

(Options here might be an aesthetic in Modern architecture or music rather than in painting.)

(2) **One short paper** on Stein's selected short plays or on one of the longer plays—*Four Saints* or *The Mother Of Us All*.

or

**One short paper** on **feminism** in Stein's Writing.

Bibliography required for each paper.

Final Exam: In addition to some experimental "Tender Buttons" (about six) or a third person "autobiography" (three pages) written outside of class, the final examination will cover Stein's work read in class in an essay on Modernist aesthetics for which notes from guest lectures would be appropriate.
APPENDIX II

ASSIGNMENT: WORD-PORTRAIT

This assignment is based upon Stein's portraits of Picasso, Matisse, and Mabel Dodge. The objective is to capture the "essence" of the personality. The following was a word-portrait of the teacher:

For Jane
run jane run jane run
see jane run and break the mirror
and light the lamp
so that we might see and hear and touch
and know
stein and kuh and langer et al

-- the crass in the class. Alas!

by Jean Aumuller
Summer, 1976

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An assignment based upon Stein's "found poetry" in Lecture II of Lectures on Narration: "Let's make our flour and meal and meat in Georgia." She had seen this sign in Georgia and quoting it, asked her audience, "Is that prose or poetry and why." Arranging Stein's "found poetry" into lines, so that it looks like poetry, opens up a discussion of our expectations of prose and poetry:

Let's make our flour
and meal
and meat
in Georgia.

Students find "poetry" in any book, magazine, or newspaper and arrange the lines. These are from The Ohio State University student publication:

Abducted

The duck was there Tuesday night
Frozen to the ice of Mirror Lake.
Wednesday morning it was gone
Raising fears
The duck
Had been abducted.

(Found in The Lantern, Dec. 2, 1976 in Greg Hoersten's article.
Found by Scott Barnhouse)
Breaking Away Is Hard To Do

I'll never have to "be" anywhere
or "do" anything here anymore.
I'll browse and reminisce,
remembering all the times
when I had to "go" and "do."
There will still be the numbers
and the people
and the faces
and the feet
and the seasons
and the quarters
and the places.
But it won't be the same.
So?
So what?
Damn the despair.
That's it, kill it.
It's the Real World I hear knocking.

(Found in The Lantern, Dec. 1, 1976
in Lynn Engelhardt's "Breaking Away is
hard to do." Found by Jay Jenkins)
ASSIGNMENT: TENDER BUTTONS OR

ABSTRACT DESCRIPTIONS

The following were produced by members of a Stein Studies class in Continuing Education, The Ohio State University, Spring, 1975:

an onion

Shame not shame so innocent over and over
Wet nearly always without pain. A hole in
a hole clinging vomit in the mouth.
It is a porcupine. Marble is singing
hemoraging inside out. On and on.
There is no use in milking oranges.

princess telephone

icy alphabet with umbilical coil twirl hum
silence
summon
trill

philodendrum

One and many in one having no faces.
Climbing, climbing, living, growing. None can stop it.
Green coils slither, creep over, into another one. Bury
their heads.
Not a head, a heart.
Lime hearts tangle, confuse it each awhile.
White it is awhile for now.
Tomorrow
is a new heart.
ASSIGNMENT: THIRD-PERSON SELF-PORTRAIT

The following excerpts are from a student's journal:

An interesting face, isn't it? It has been used to portray almost every masquerade. ... What lies behind it? Only its owner knows and sometimes even then it remains a mystery. A few things are sure though: confusion, loneliness, hunger, guilt, love. ... Look at how he is dressed at the moment. What do these clothes express? They are not his best but they are far from rags. They say that today I will try to impress people by not trying to look impressive. ... Hidden within this person are the secret mysteries which he admits only to himself. ... One would never know that life is a struggle for him. But since we all struggle, we can be sure that he does. ... What makes him tick? What else? Nothing within him; it is merely the fact that we were made to tick and so we tick. It is our function. So it has been determined and so he ticks on.

[Winter, 1978. The Ohio State University]
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The Yale University Edition of the Unpublished Writings of Gertrude Stein:


Volumes edited by Robert Bartlett Haas for Black Sparrow Press:


**Autograph Manuscripts and Typescripts**

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"Ada" 1908-12

_The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas_ 1932

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"The Autobiography of Rose" 1936

"Constance Fletcher" 1908-12

"A description of the fifteenth of November" (A portrait of T.S. Eliot) 1924

_Fernhurst_ 1904-05

_Ida A Novel_ 1940

"Jenny, Helen, Hannah, Paul and Peter" 1912

"A Kind of Women" 1908-12

_Lucy Church Amiably_ 1927

_The Making of Americans, 1st draft (five chapters 1903); other drafts 1906-11"

"Man Ray" 1924

"Men" 1908-12

"Oval" 1914
"Picasso" 1909

Portrait of Mabel Dodge at the Villa Curonia 1912

"Quod Erat Demonstrandum" 1903

"Sacred Emily" 1913

Tender Buttons 1910-12

Three Lives 1905-06

"Useful Knowledge Among Negroes" 1925

"What Happened A Play" 1913

Autograph Letters, YCAL.

Letters from Ernest Hemingway to Gertrude Stein: January ? 1923; November, 1923; August, 1924.

Letter from Ernest Hemingway to W. G. Rodgers: July 29, 1948.


Letters from Gertrude Stein to Sir Francis Rose, 1932 to 1946.

Letters from Carl Van Vechten to Gertrude Stein, 1933-34.

Typescripts, YCAL.

Typescript of "Ada"

Typescripts of Gertrude Stein's Notebooks (1902-08) made by Leon Katz.

Typescript of an interview with Gertrude Stein by William Lundell on November 12, 1934 for WJZ and NET.

Typescript of Gertrude Stein's lectures on Narration.

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Interviews


Dr. Leon Katz, Professor, Dept. of Drama, University of Pittsburgh Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania August 11 and 16, 1978 October 18, 1979

Miss Isabel Wilder, Hamden, Connecticut June 22, 1979
The following are available at Beinecke Library, YCAL:

Recording: Panel Discussion on Gertrude Stein.


Participants: William B. Rogers (author When This You See Remember Me)

Leon Katz (Stein scholar and writer)

Edward Burns (edited letters of Alice B. Toklas, Staying on Alone)

James W. Tuttleton, Moderator

Recording: William Lundell interviewing Gertrude Stein.

November 12, 1934. (Typescript available, YCAL)

Recording: Gertrude Stein reading from her own work.


Some comments by Stein are made between her readings of the following:

excerpts from The Making of Americans
"Matisse"
"If I told him, a completed portrait of Picasso"
"She bowed to her brother"
"George Hugnet"
"Description of the 15th of November"
"A Valentine for Sherwood Anderson"
"Portrait of Christian Bernard"

Movie: Home movies of Gertrude Stein, Alice Toklas, and others.

Made in 1927 (?) by Julian Stein at Garches (Michael Stein's villa in France) and at the Hotel Pernollet in Belley, France. (3 minutes)