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FROM SCIENCE TO THE ARTS:
GERTRUDE STEIN'S WRITING, 1894-1914

DISSERTATION

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

By
Carolyn E. Cutler, Bachelor Music Education, M.A.

*****

Ohio State University
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ABSTRACT

Gertrude Stein initially intended to pursue a career in science. As an undergraduate, she did research in a psychological laboratory. She completed almost four years of a medical education. She did not get her medical degree because she ceased going to classes in her final term, yet during those years she had experienced success in her pursuit of a scientific career.

Following her failure in medical school, Stein left the United States for Paris. As she and her brother Leo became art collectors, Gertrude found a career for herself as a writer. As the paintings on the walls of their home became more and more avant garde, so did Gertrude's writing. Along with the influence of the artists and their paintings around her, many of the innovations Stein made in her writing can be traced to ideas she learned about language through her early scientific training.

The period in Stein's life of 1894 to 1914 marked her shift from being a college freshman writer to being one of the most inventive authors of the twentieth century. Chapter One discusses Stein's earliest extant writings, those composed between 1894 and 1902. Some of intellectual and historical contexts in which Stein was writing are presented: the scientific ideas she was learning and the conditions she faced in medical school.

The second chapter discusses Stein's apprenticeship as a writer, the period of time from 1903 to 1906. Between 1906 and 1914, Stein's work went through three major stylistic shifts. Her long novel, The Making of
Americans, which is analyzed in Chapter Three, begins with her early writerly style of creating fiction. Chapter Four considers texts written in the "insistent" style, many of which were written between 1910 and 1911. Chapter Four also discusses the shift between "insistent" writing and "lively words" writing, the last major stylistic shift Stein made before World War I. Chapter Five analyzes works of the "lively words" style.

One of the concerns that remains in Stein scholarship is that of "reading" Stein. Chapter Six considers what constitutes "good" readings of Stein texts.
In memory of my father
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FIELDS OF STUDY

Interdisciplinary Graduate Program:

Music, Art, and Literature in Europe, 1900-1935

Semiotics
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Gertrude Stein's first professional intentions were scientific in nature, as her biographers (e.g., Mellow, Wineapple) state. As an undergraduate at Radcliffe, she did research in a psychological laboratory with Leon Solomons; their research was eventually published. She completed almost four years of a medical education at Johns Hopkins Medical School, during which she did research on the human brain. She did not get her medical degree because she ceased going to classes in her final term. Prior to that term, her grades had been, at the very least, adequate; she had experienced success in her pursuit of a scientific career.

Following her failure in medical school, Stein went through an excruciating period of time not only trying to figure out what she was going to do with her life but also coping with a difficult relationship. She left the United States for Paris, which became her home for the rest of her life. She began living with her brother Leo who had had his own career struggles, but who, for the moment, had settled on being an artist. As she and Leo became art collectors, buying new paintings by their contemporaries, e.g., Matisse and Picasso, Gertrude found a career for herself as a writer. As the paintings on the walls of their home became more and more avant garde, so did Gertrude's writing. Yet along with the influence of the artists and their paintings around her, many of the innovations Stein made in her writing can
be traced to ideas she learned about language through her early scientific training.

The period in Stein's life of 1894 to 1914, a mere twenty years, marked her shift from being a college freshman writer (albeit not an ordinary writer even at the age of 20, to the chagrin of her writing teacher) to being one of the most inventive writers of the twentieth century. The story of this dissertation is how Stein moved from scientist to author, from freshman writer to avant garde artist, from a relatively traditional user of language to someone who systematically exploited the materials of her medium. Ultimately, Stein's work furnishes her readers with opportunities to reconsider that which is all too often overlooked in the everyday use of language -- what this medium is, how its components work, and where some of its boundaries lie.

One of the themes in Stein's long novel, *The Making of Americans*, is that of liberation, of the freedom of a person to be who she is. Over the course of her development as a writer and a person, Stein engaged with limitations--the limitations of science for women, the limitations of feminist ideas and goals for surviving the harsh realities of medical school, the limitations of society's acceptance of lesbian relationships, the limitations of language, and even the limitations of the printed lines in the notebooks she used. What emerges about Stein in relation to these limitations is a pattern (a repeating, she would call it): she became adept at using limited tools in unlimited ways. Despite what science said about Stein as a woman, she used its concerns with language as a way of knowing and writing. Despite her disavowal of feminism *per se*, she, more than many self-described feminists, developed a life that was not constrained by patriarchal limitations for
women. Despite the pathologizing of lesbian relationships by the leading scientists of Stein's day, Stein developed and maintained a loving relationship with Alice B. Toklas for close to forty years, borrowing the idea of marriage—life-long commitment—from heterosexuality and turning it to her own ends. Despite the limitations of language, Stein found ways to renew meaning, to use a very old medium in new and exciting ways. She always used the lined notebooks—she simply stopped writing inside the lines.

Chapter One discusses Stein's earliest extant writings -- her college essays for freshman English, her published psychological work with Leon Solomons, and particularly a newly-identified essay she wrote shortly after she failed medical school. These are works composed between 1894 and 1902. Stein wrote a wide range of texts during this very early period and many of these texts formed a foundation for her later work. In the process of considering these works, I present some of intellectual and historical contexts in which Stein was writing: the scientific ideas she was learning and the conditions she faced in medical school.

The second chapter discusses what could be considered Stein's apprenticeship as a writer, the period of time from 1903 to 1906. During this time, she began to identify herself as a writer. She no longer wrote texts as a means toward some non-writerly end (e.g., satisfying the requirements of an English course or representing an idea to the scientific community). Instead, she considered the creation of the texts themselves to be a worthwhile goal. The method of her texts during this apprenticeship shifted from wholesale use of lived experience as the source of narrative (changing the names and minor details of the experiences) to the more writerly piecing together of details from a variety of sources in order to create a work of fiction. Stein no
longer writes directly about scientific ideas, but her understanding of the problem of causation in science becomes the basis for the innovations in narration she makes in the culminating book of this period of time, Three Lives.

Between 1906 and 1914, Stein's work went through three major stylistic shifts. Her long novel, The Making of Americans, which is analyzed in Chapter Three, begins with her early writerly style of creating fiction. This modernist novel primarily explores Stein's psychological concepts. The scientific influence on this novel resides in her development of a vocabulary which communicates her characters' psychological traits while impeding the reader's emotionally-based moral judgment of the characters. The novel ends with what can be considered Stein's first avant garde style, which Marianne DeKoven identifies as "insistence."

While Stein was writing the final version of The Making of Americans, she wrote numerous other texts, some of which were her first portraits of people. This use of genre, of course, reflects a direct influence of the painters around her, especially Picasso, who painted a famous portrait of Stein. Chapter Four considers texts written in the "insistent" style, many of which were written between 1910 and 1911. The influence of science in these texts resides in the extension of the "objective" vocabulary Stein began to develop in The Making of Americans. Chapter Four also discusses the shift between "insistent" writing and "lively words" writing, the last major stylistic shift Stein made before World War I.

The "lively words" style of writing is often considered quintessential Stein. It is the style of writing that upset so many readers and which continues to intrigue Stein scholars. Chapter Five analyzes two works of this
style, *Tender Buttons* and the short poem, "Susie Asado," demonstrating Stein's full-fledged exploitation of the materials with which she was working (the visual and aural elements of language).

One of the concerns that remains in Stein scholarship is that of "reading" Stein. Many books and articles reflect this concern in their titles, such as Ellen Berry's article "On Reading Stein," Elizabeth Fifer's book, *Rescued Readings: A Reconstruction of Gertrude Stein's Difficult Texts*, Bruce Kellner's article, "How to Read Gertrude Stein," and the amplified statement of the problem in Judy Grahn's book, *Really Reading Gertrude Stein*. Chapter Six considers what constitutes "good" readings of Stein texts.
CHAPTER 1

THE FEMALE SCIENTIST WRITES

Science occupied a complex position in Gertrude Stein's life and her writing. It was the basis of her first career and it shaped her writing from her early college essays to the books she wrote even after she gave up a career in medicine. At the same time, the scientific thought current during Stein's young adulthood called into question, by virtue of Stein's gender and sexuality, her ability to be a thinker and even her sanity, in a historical era in which women were not considered intelligent and homosexuality was regarded as a mental illness. Stein's earliest works -- her papers for her freshman English course, her published psychological reports, and two essays she wrote about women -- show her wholesale adoption of scientific concerns in her writing at first. The last essay of this very early period of writing (and the last piece to be considered in this chapter), the newly identified essay entitled "Degeneration of American Women," reflects Stein's struggle to resolve the differences between what Stein knew as scientific fact and the realities of her own life.

Stein's later writings, e.g., those she did after she began to be a writer (which are considered in Chapters Two through Five), are interesting because of the innovations she made in the writing process and style. In contrast, her earlier works, such as those that are analyzed in this chapter, are interesting
primarily because of the relationship between their content and the historical context in which Stein found herself. The influence of intellectual and historical contexts, which are so prominent in these early writings, continued to be significant to but less explicit in Stein’s later writings. The concerns present in Stein’s very early writings form a basis for understanding how it was she developed her innovative styles later on.

Furthermore, while many Stein scholars and biographers have discussed Stein’s problems with medical school, Stein’s difficulties have not been discussed in relation to the historical realities of medical practice in the late nineteenth century. It is critical to understand what Stein experienced, simply in terms of the material she was learning and the situations she was observing, in order to understand why she wrote as she did, particularly why she wrote the reactionary essay, the analysis of which ends this chapter, and the odd story, “Fernhurst,” which is discussed in Chapter Two. Thus, this chapter, more than any other in this dissertation, reads biographically and historically—in the interest of addressing her early work and in the interest of setting up the background for the innovations she would later make.

**Late Nineteenth-Century Ideas About Science**

For many late nineteenth-century intellectuals, the scientific method offered a relatively foolproof avenue toward knowledge. Based on rigorous ideas about how observations might take place, how one might make inferences about those observations, as well as the importance of the replicability of those observations, the scientific method promised solid information—the kind of information on which people could depend with their lives. A number of practicing scientists placed a great deal of faith in the effort. Karl Pearson (*The Grammar of Science*), for example, claimed that a
scientifically literate citizenry would improve the nation. Science was thought of as a panacea for all human ills: with time and effort, using the scientific method, human beings could discover the causes for disease as well as the causes for social problems. With this knowledge, we could eradicate so many of the problems which plague human beings. Who knows? With the eradication of disease, maybe we could even live forever.

A hundred years later, the stance on science is much more ambivalent, as recent discussions about the cloning of mammals demonstrate. One has only to think of the scientific development of the atomic bomb and the torturous experiments on human beings in concentration camps to realize that processes such as the scientific method have no inherent morals; science can accomplish great damage as well as great good. Further, with Thomas Kuhn’s insights about the role of paradigms -- *a priori* theories about causation -- in the process of asking scientific questions, designing experiments, and interpreting data, we recognize that true objectivity is impossible to attain.

Finally, not all significant constructs are observable or are inferable from observable things. For example, within the realm of psychology, how can we explain human passion through the behavioral constructs of positive reinforcement and classical conditioning? These were not questions asked by nineteenth-century science writers. They did, however, recognize a number of potential problems within the scientific process, including the fact that language itself was a slippery slope.

The scientific method is based on observation, either passive or active (experimental) observation, as Jevons (1877) points out. Yet, observation is ultimately a subjective matter because human beings are doing the observing.
The mind of man, as Francis Bacon said, is like an uneven mirror, and does not reflect the events of nature without distortion. We need hardly take notice of intentionally false observations, nor of mistakes arising from defective memory, deficient light, and so forth. Even where the utmost fidelity and care are used in observing and recording, tendencies to error exist, and fallacious opinions arise in consequence . . . If indeed we could estimate the amount of bias existing in any particular observations, it might be treated like one of the forces of the problem, and the true course of external nature might still be rendered apparent. But the feelings of an observer are usually too indeterminate, so that when there is reason to suspect considerable bias, rejection is the only safe course (402-3). [original emphasis]

Jevons goes on to suggest that scientists use a blind process for recording observations—to have them made by people who are not aware of the predictions set up by the hypothesis.

Along with the problem of bias within the process of observation, Jevons points out a problem with causal relationships between events:

Instead of A causing B, it may be our perception of A that causes B. Thus it is that prophecies, presentiments, and the devices of sorcery and witchcraft often work their own ends. A man dies on the day which he has always regarded as his last, from his own fears of the day . . . In a second class of cases, the event A may make our perception of B follow, which would otherwise happen without being perceived. Thus it was believed to be the result of investigation that more comets appeared in hot than cold summers. No account was taken of the fact that hot summers would be comparatively cloudless, and afford better opportunities for the discovery of comets (409-10). [italics original]

Jevons lists two other cases for problems with causal relations. The point is that the relationship between events is problematic.

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1I am treating all these science books as primary sources, therefore, I am not "correcting" the use of the universal "he" in these quotations. It is significant to the problems that Stein faced in her early career that these writers specifically assumed a male reader. If there is any doubt about this assumption, on page 64 of Pearson's book there is an illustration that depicts the difference between what is inside a person's head and what is outside being perceived. This picture places the reader squarely inside the head of a white male professor who has closed his right eye and is peering out of his left one; one perceives not only the room he is in, but the nose, eyebrows, mustache, and propped up legs of the professor, arranged as if that body were one's own.
Scientific observations are used to support or disprove hypotheses. Yet, the scientist, according to Jevons, must be willing to give up the hypothesis if the data do not support it. And, the scientist must be careful to suspend judgment until sufficient data are available for assessment. All in all, the scientific (or philosophic, as Jevons calls it) mind is an unusual one:

Summing up, then, it would seem as if the mind of the great discoverer must combine contradictory attributes. He must be fertile in theories and hypotheses, and yet full of facts and precise results of experience. He must entertain the feeblest analogies, and the merest guesses at truth, and yet he must hold them as worthless till they are verified in experiment. When there are any grounds of probability he must hold tenaciously to an old opinion, and yet he must be prepared at any moment to relinquish it when a clearly contradictory fact is encountered. "The philosopher," says Faraday, "should be a man willing to listen to every suggestion, but determined to judge for himself. He should not be biased by appearances; have no favourite hypothesis; be of no school; and in doctrine have no master. He should not be a respecter of persons but of things. Truth should be his primary object. If to these qualities be added industry, he may indeed hope to walk within the veil of the temple of nature" (592-3).

This state of mind was not easy to achieve as Stephen Jay Gould's account of nineteenth-century attempts at measuring human intelligence reveals; through his new analysis of craniology data gathered and published in the late nineteenth century, Gould demonstrates how researchers' biases affected their gathering of the data. And yet this idealized mind with its apparent ability to approach something called Truth, in the context of a science book that attempts to classify and to address completely the problems it raises, is seductive. We can talk ourselves into believing in our own objectivity because subjectivity is sneaky and because scientific objectivity promises so many wonderful things.
One last problem appears in Jevons' book, and that is the problem of language. Jevons discusses it in relation to the concept of analogy, which is a concept that ultimately fails:

From these and many other instances which might be adduced, we learn that analogical reasoning leads us to the conception of many things which, so far as we can ascertain, do not exist. In this way great perplexities have arisen in the use of language and mathematical symbols. All language depends upon analogy; for we join and arrange words so that they may represent the corresponding junctions or arrangements of things and their equalities. But in the use of language we are obviously capable of forming many combinations of words to which no corresponding meaning apparently exists. The same difficulty arises in the use of mathematical signs, and mathematicians have needlessly puzzled themselves about the square root of a negative quantity, which is, in many applications of algebraic calculation, simply a sign without any analogous meaning, there being a failure of analogy. (643)

Scientists were acutely aware of both meaning-making possibilities in language and also the limits of those possibilities. Perhaps it is not a coincidence that the creator in the nineteenth century of a very famous bit of linguistic nonsense, Charles Dodgson, was a mathematician.

A later book by Mivart (1898), The Groundwork of Science, uses advances in the newly-formed field of psychology in order to discuss scientific method. Throughout the book he works with eight principles, which he summarizes at the end:

The fundamental truths, the intellectual perceptions and convictions which must be employed for the cultivation of science may, then, be summarised:
(1) The first intellectual tool which must be employed is the principle which affirms that certain things can be perceived with certainty and are evident.
(2) The second principle is that nothing can both exist and not exist at the same time, and this principle serves to test the solidity of the work which the first tool enables the scientific labourer to perform.

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(3) Thirdly comes the perception and conviction (for which the second principle vouches) that there are truths which are true, not only here and now, but which must be true ever and always, and that such truths are not merely laws or conditions of our own mind, but are true objectively, being applicable to and valid for all "things in themselves" apart from the existence of any imaginable mind.

(4) Thus it is clear that there are objective relations, corresponding with subjective ones.

(5) The perception and conviction that not only our actions, sensations, imaginations, reminiscences, emotions, perceptions, and conceptions, are known to us, but also our own substantial and continuous personal existence.

(6) The perception and conviction that we have the faculty of knowing not only present external existences but what is external to our present experience, memory showing us such experience and enabling us to recognise it as such, so that in each of us subject and object become identified.

(7) We must also make use of the principle which upholds and supports the process of inference or reasoning, namely, the perception that if certain premises be true, then whatever logically follows from them must be true likewise.

(8) Finally, there is the principle of causation, which assures us that every new existence, state, or condition, and every existence which does not contain the principle of its being within itself, demands a cause for its existence.

It is these fundamental truths which constitute the intellectual instruments, by the use of which all science that now exists has been elaborated, and which must be employed to develop whatever scientific truths shall hereafter come to be ascertained or established (310-11).

Much of the book consists of proof for each of these statements. However, one can see from the content of the statements that Mivart recognizes some of the same problems within science as does Jevons—in terms of what counts as observation, and how we know causal connections between events.

Like Jevons, Mivart considers the issue of language. He does this at some length and he recognizes limits to language:

... there is one form of language which exists, abundantly in low as well as in higher races of mankind, and that is metaphorical language.
But what is metaphor, and what sort of being must that have been which first employed it?

Had not the intellect the power of apprehending, through the senses, and expressing, by bodily signs, what is beyond the reach of mere sense-perception, metaphor would not and could not exist. Neither could it exist if thought was the mere outcome of language, and followed it, instead of the opposite. It is precisely because speech is too narrow for thought, and because words are too few adequately to make known the ideas of the mind, that metaphor exists. It is interesting also to note that figurative, metaphorical language is natural, and especially abundant amongst various savage and semi-savage tribes... It has, for example, been objected against the intellectual ability of the Society Islanders that they have separate words for "dog's tail," "bird's tail," "sheep's tail," etc., but no word for tail itself—i.e., tail in general. But, really, the experience of the use of that word by ourselves leads to consider the condition of these Islanders in this respect to be no great misfortune. We have our word "tail"—tail in general—and it is constantly made use of in a way which is hopelessly misleading. To use the same term, as we do, for what we call the "tails" of a peacock, a monkey, and a lobster is, so far, to be in a worse plight than that asserted of the Society Islander (203-5).

Mivart opens up this potential problem for the expression of scientific ideas without ultimately dealing with it in that particular context. His point in this passage is that human beings have the faculty of reason which transcends language and which is connected to the principles of thought outlined above that privilege logic.

Considering that the concerns of language are central to the study of Gertrude Stein, Karl Pearson's book is evocatively titled, The Grammar of Science. It was initially published in 1892, although the version I have been looking at is the third edition, published in 1911. The second edition was published in 1900. In his introduction to the third edition, Pearson states that the main changes to the book were to bring up to date what he had to say about physics as well as further information on the issue of causation.
Pearson begins by pointing out the commonality of method to all fields of science. His introductory section summarizes his general claims for science:

1. The scope of science is to ascertain truth in every possible branch of knowledge. There is no sphere of inquiry which lies outside the legitimate field of science. To draw a distinction between the scientific and philosophical fields is obscurantism.
2. The scientific method is marked by the following features: (a) Careful and accurate classification of facts and observation of their correlation and sequence; (b) the discovery of scientific laws by aid of the creative imagination; (c) self-criticism and the final touchstone of equal validity for all normally constituted minds.
3. The claims of science to our support depend on: (a) The efficient mental training it provides for the citizen; (b) the light it brings to bear on many important social problems; (c) the increased comfort it adds to practical life; (d) the permanent gratification it yields to aesthetic judgment.

The process of science that Pearson lays out is similar to that of Jevons; in fact, he makes extensive reference to Jevons' work. One factor that Pearson brings out in his defense of science is that he claims that citizens who think in scientific terms will be better for the state than citizens who do not.

Within his discussion of the claims cited above, Pearson brings out several issues in relation to language. To begin with, he suggests that the reader use his/her own engagement with scientific language to determine the quality of the science being presented:

If any such work gives a description of phenomena that appeals to [the reader's] imagination rather than to his reason, then it is bad science. The first aim of any genuine work of science, however popular, ought to be the presentation of such a classification of facts that the reader's mind is irresistibly led to acknowledge a logical sequence—a law which appeals to the reason before it captivates the imagination. Let us be quite sure that whenever we come across a conclusion in a scientific work which does not flow from the classification of facts, or which is not directly stated by the author to be an assumption, then we are dealing with bad science. Good science will always be intelligible to the
logically trained mind, if that mind can read and translate the language in which science is written. (10)

Secondly, scientific language, according to Pearson, succeeds on an aesthetic level, perhaps, more than poetic language:

The poet may give us in sublime language an account of the origin and purport of the universe, but in the end it will not satisfy our aesthetic judgment, our idea of harmony and beauty, like the few facts which the scientists may venture to tell us in the same field. The one will agree with all our experiences past and present, the other is sure, sooner or later, to contradict our observation because it propounds a dogma, where we are yet far from knowing the whole truth. Our aesthetic judgment demands harmony between the representation and the represented, and in this sense science is often more artistic than modern art. (17)

The aspect of Pearson's work which is still much in use today, particularly in quantitative psychological and educational research, has to do with his notions of causality, or the relationships between two events. According to Minium and Clarke, around 1896, Pearson developed a mathematical way of understanding the strength of the relationship between two events which can be plotted as x and y on a graph and which form a straight line. The example from which Pearson began this work in Galton's laboratory was the relationship between parents' and children's heights. When data of this sort are plotted on a scattergram with one variable on the x axis and one on the y, the data tend to organize themselves around a straight line of an angle which reveals the strength of the relationship between the two variables. Pearson found a mathematical way of expressing this relationship, which is referred to as the "Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient."

The interesting aspect of correlation is that it does not imply causality, and Pearson was very clear about this. In other words, one can find causally-
unrelated phenomena that nevertheless demonstrate a high level of correlation. For example, one might find a high correlation between having drunk milk as a child and the behavior of robbing banks, that is, that a high percentage of bank robbers had drunk milk as children. But that does not mean that drinking milk leads to or causes bank robberies. Assertions about causation must take place on logical grounds. This idea is along the lines of what Jevons had to say about causation, but Pearson takes it further, denying that there is necessarily any causal relation between events unless that causal relation can be deduced logically.

Language poses a problem for science in that it is always metaphorical, and one is never quite sure that what one says carries the same meaning for another person as the meaning one intends. Different languages may give a person access to different concepts, as in whether there is the concept of a "tail" in a given language, which might have a significant influence on how observations are represented. Logic relies on language; logic plays an extremely important role in the determination of relationships between observed events, which means that the only resource available for communicating ideas about causality is a medium which is inclined to the imprecisions of metaphor.

Stein's First Writing: the Radcliffe Themes

The idea that first year college students should take a writing course is an old one. Like so many freshmen since her time, Gertrude Stein took a year-long writing course which required her to write a combination of short themes and long themes. By this period of time in her life, Stein had begun to save papers which were important to her, especially letters and most or all of the themes she wrote at Radcliffe; later in her life she donated these
materials to the Beinecke Rare Books and Manuscripts Library. They have also been published, with the professor's comments, in Rosalind Miller's book, *Gertrude Stein: Form and Intelligibility*. They serve as a starting point for understanding where Stein began as a writer and thinker. The roots of Stein's later writing can be seen in these themes—in terms of some of her writing strategies and even, occasionally, content. Stein's freshman writing experiences also reflect intellectual conflicts present during the period of time in which she was going to school.

The education of women during Gertrude Stein's childhood and youth was a controversial topic. On the one hand, there was a feminist movement which supported education for women. The Seneca Falls Convention of women took place in 1848. The depletion of men during the Civil War added fuel to the fire, both necessitating that women work and demonstrating women's abilities to do so. Soon, a number of colleges opened their doors to women; Harvard College created the "Harvard Annex" (later it was called "Radcliffe") for women in 1879 (Wineapple), in which women could take classes taught by the same professors that taught the men. The Johns Hopkins Medical School, to which Gertrude Stein would later go, received a large amount of funding from a group of women with the stipulation that women be admitted to the school on an equal basis with men (Wineapple). After discussion and negotiation, the board of trustees accepted both the money and the condition. By 1880, one-third of the students in college in the United States were female (Faderman). Stein was in the first generation of American women for whom going to college was not completely unusual— and yet for women of Stein's generation, it was not something to take for granted.
On the other hand, the backlash against the feminist movement of that
time was led by people who claimed to have objective knowledge about
physical realities, scientists. By the time Gertrude Stein was born, that well-
known nineteenth-century science of head bumps, phrenology, was largely
discredited, having reached its peak in the 1850's (Russett). It was superseded
by a new science, craniology. Based on a number of different measurements
of skulls and brains, craniologists attempted to demonstrate a hierarchy of
intelligence and maturity with white males at the top, followed by white
females, followed by people of other races. Stephen Jay Gould, in his history
of intelligence assessment, recounts the ways in which the sizes of skulls were
measured. For example, some scientists used mustard seed as a measure of
volume. They did not use a blind process; in other words, the scientists
knew what kind of skulls they were measuring, which allowed them to
succumb to the temptation to stuff extra mustard seed into skulls they knew
to be white and male and to skimp on the amount of mustard seed they
poured into skulls of non-whites and/or females. Later, they began to use
lead shot in their measuring process, which was less amenable to stuffing;
Gould states that the differences in the mustard seed data and the lead shot
data reveal the effect of the scientists' preconceived notions on their attempts
at gathering information. In 1902, using the then-new statistical methods
developed by Karl Pearson, a female graduate student, Alice Lee,
demonstrated that there was no correlation between skull/brain size and
intelligence (Russett). For many years prior to this work, however, the
craniology paradigm reigned supreme and, of course, called into question
women's ability to do college-level work.
A second scientific paradigm which was problematic for women was the application of the physical law of conservation of energy to the physical and mental health of human beings. By the 1860's, according to Russett, the prevailing notion of mental health was based on the need to conserve "nerve force," to avoid depleting one's own energy. This was supposed to be particularly important for women during their reproductive years. In 1873, Edward Clarke's book, *Sex in Education, or A Fair Chance for Girls*, was published. According to Russett, this book suggests that the body cannot do two things at once; therefore, girls should avoid trying to think too much during the development of the reproductive system. This book was extremely popular; Priscilla Perkins states that this book went through "seventeen editions in thirteen years" (537).

The results of this view were not only that education was considered to be damaging, but that women were often considered to be invalids; many young women who were Stein's contemporaries had taken "rest cures," remaining in bed for a period of months. While Stella Kaufman (a friend of Alice B. Toklas) seemed to enjoy aspects of the rest cure she took, such as being waited on hand and foot by a sympathetic female nurse (according to Kaufman's letters to Annette Rosenshine in the Yale Collection of American Literature) and was only annoyed by the fact that she could not attend the opera as regularly as she would have liked because of it, the rest cure, with its unmitigated boredom, also offered an invitation to madness which Charlotte Perkins Gilman recounts in the story, *The Yellow Wallpaper*. Of course, the resulting physical weakness following complete bedrest for a long period of time simply reinforced the idea of invalidism for women.
The most insidious paradigm for women in the nineteenth century, and ultimately for the 6,000,000 Jews and others killed in the concentration camps of Nazi Germany, however, was that of eugenics. The foundation of eugenics was in Darwin’s theories and the idea was to breed a better human being—who, according to the dominant paradigms of the time, would be a white Christian, since anti-semitism also was rampant among institutions of higher education. The combination of eugenics and craniology formed the basis for a seemingly unassailable set of ideas about gender and race wherein it was considered impossible for non-white people to make any kind of intellectual contribution and where the central role for white women was as passive receptacles for the sperm of white men. Add to this a few Lamarckian ideas of acquired inheritable characteristics about degeneracy, which added an economic element to the equation, and the result was a science which provided "objective" reasons for the absolute authority of white upper-class males.

While a lot of relatively privileged women did go to college, they did so amidst a cacophony of voices. On the one hand, opportunities for education were opening up and feminist voices were certainly present, encouraging their endeavors. On the other hand, what passed for knowledge was sharply opposed to education for women. In 1888, according to Russett, Helen Gardener found that not a single scientist whom she surveyed was in favor of either suffrage or equal rights for women. And the popular press reinforced the scientists by publishing articles about how education of women threatened the existence of the family. It is likely that for many women, particularly bright, ambitious women, this combination of voices would lead to some kind of internal turmoil about how to construct a life.
The cacophony of voices about college education was present for Stein at Radcliffe. As a student who eventually planned to go to medical school, Stein took a number of science courses and was exposed to current scientific thinking. Along with the "facts" that were presented in her scientific reading, there were the voices of her contemporaries, mostly young women, who encouraged Stein to embrace very traditional values. In 1896, for example, Margaret Sterling Snyder wrote Stein a letter in which she stated that she now saw herself as having been "deluded." At the time of the letter writing, Snyder felt it necessary to adopt the life of a traditional woman. Part of the purpose of her letter was to try to dissuade Stein from attending Johns Hopkins. And Stein herself wrote of the plight of the "Annex Girl" in one of her daily themes for English class:

There she stood a little body with a large head. She was loaded down with books and was evidently very dismal. Suddenly there broke forth a torrent, "I don't want to be superior," she wailed despairingly, "I am tired to death of standing with my head craned constantly looking upward. I am just longing to meet one simple soul that don't want to know everything, one weak happy naive consciousness that thinks higher education is either rot or has never heard of it." She gave a long-drawn Oh! and then collapsed the books on top of the miserable little heap. (Miller, 120)

While Priscilla Perkins wonders if the girl in this essay is hydrocephalic, the "large head" is actually a sign of intelligence—demonstrating the ascendancy of craniology in everyday life and talk. It calls into question the ability of a woman ("little body") to physically uphold a large intelligence, an acknowledgement of the "problems" of intelligence in women. How was a young woman to negotiate her own life's path between her own ambitions, the choices others around her were making, societal expectations, the
demands of the college for learning, as well as the nature of the knowledge being learned and its implications?

Wineapple describes the structure of the writing class that Stein took:

Students of English 22 were sent from the classroom to look and think and write something, anything, even a line or two, something seen or thought or truly felt, as long as it was original. Then, every two weeks, they wrote longer compositions, until the spring, when they completed the course with a more developed piece. (69)

Wineapple indicates that Frank Norris wrote his first novel in this class. It is clear that, at least for some students, this class was particularly helpful in their becoming writers. Stein's compositions are housed in the Yale collection of Stein's papers. The written comments on these papers from the instructor, the poet William Vaughn Moody, indicate that Stein's relation with this teacher was ambivalent at best. It is possible that a fine poet was not a great teacher of writing (The Columbia Encyclopedia indicates that Moody stopped teaching as soon as he had sufficient royalties from a textbook he had written). It is also possible that an admirable teacher of writing did not meet the needs of all the students in his classroom.

From the beginning, Stein was interested in using writing to explore her own psychology and the psychology of others. Priscilla Perkins suggests that Stein:

constructed textual personae by comparing herself (or apparent stand-ins for herself) explicitly to other young people, or implicitly, usually in terms of an ambiguous though seemingly hegemonic social standard of mental "normality" . . . Stein's ideologies of comparison and normality rarely have a stable value. However, they almost always work in the service of technologies of self-fashioning, sometimes playfully, sometimes with highly negative consequences for those who come out on the losing end of the comparison. (530)

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2Mellow's biography of Stein clued me in to the mysterious signer of comments on Stein's papers.
Perkins' essay focuses on the kind of identity that Stein was developing through contrasting herself with others in her college essays. As a young woman, Stein was attempting to figure out who she was, and one method she used was a comparison between herself and others. This initial comparison did not significantly challenge the status quo expectations for a person of Stein's gender, although her life later on would become completely different from that which was expected of either a middle-class young woman or of a female doctor.

The first long essay she wrote that school year, probably the first piece she wrote for the class,3 was called "In the Red Deeps," a phrase borrowed from George Eliot. Stein's essay began:

The more or less common-place incident of the outer world are well enough, for those poor unfortunates whom nature has given no inner one. As for me who have lived in my short life all the intensest pains and pleasures that human nature is capable of experiencing, I disdain to waste even a passing pen-stroke on such paltry details. (Miller)

What is important to Stein are the aspects of her inner life which she was trying to sort out. Moody probably did not know that Stein by this point had lost both her parents, and that, having grown up in California, she was a transplanted westerner in an eastern U.S. traditional culture. Moody did not understand the fundamental conflict of being female and intelligent in a world that would both support and deny her intellectual ambitions. All of these factors would make Stein's internal world not only very interesting to herself, but they would create the imperative that she figure out who she was and how she was going to live her life.

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3This piece is dated October 10, 1894, and is the earliest-dated piece in the collection of these essays. It is likely to have been the first piece that Stein wrote for that class because the professor signs his whole name at the end of his comments (W.V. Moody); in all subsequent pieces, Moody signed only his initials.
The remainder of the essay is a fearless (particularly given the social strictures placed on women of that time) exploration of difficult feelings of an adolescent girl who has found voice to her own emotions in the works of Eliot, Stevenson, and Shelley (and possibly others not mentioned directly in the essay, Edgar Allen Poe and Marie Bashkirtsev, whose diaries were popular at that time):

With this came a terrible and haunting fear of loss of self-control and consequent indulgence in those enormities I once dreamed of with so much delight. This fear of madness reached its climax one night when I went to see Mansfield play Dr. Jeckyll and Mr. Hyde. My own fear was so completely expressed and so terribly portrayed that I left at the end of the second act with the fearful story burned into my brain. No pen can describe the torments I endured during the nights that followed. How sleepless night after night I tossed until just at dawn from sheer exhaustion my brain would cease its struggle with wild fears. How listening to my sister's quiet breathing fearful thoughts would crowd upon me dreadful possibilities of dark deeds, until, distracted I would try to cool my burning head. I would knock it against the wall, in desperation anything to silence that dreadful iteration of horrible thoughts. How often have I tried to pray to heaven whose ministrations I had alas! no faith in, so even here I found no peace. (Miller)

Writing about feelings that are this strong is an emotional risk no matter what the historical context of the writer.

Moody's response to this piece was mixed between recognition of its uniqueness and strengths and rejection of not only the ways in which the ideas were expressed but also, to some extent, the ideas themselves:

An extraordinary composition. One is puzzled to decide whether it is a personal experience, related in exaggerated terms, or a study from an objective stand point of a morbid psychological state. In either case it possesses no inconsiderable degree of vividness and imaginative force. It is marred by awkward and unidiomatic uses of language; by wretched sentence structure; and by occasional patches of melodramatic writing which give a jarring effect of bathos. Rewrite. W.V. Moody (Miller)
Perhaps Stein did have feelings as strong as those represented in this essay. In that case, one of Moody's readings of the essay as "personal experience, in exaggerated terms" was a denial of the strength of those feelings; the other reading he offers is one that suggests that to have these feelings is to be insane, just the possibility that frightened Stein in the first place. Perkins identifies the problems with Moody's reading of this essay:

Perhaps without thinking about it, Moody performs an evaluation of Stein's words that doubles back onto itself and fixes Stein in an uncomfortable position. By introducing the language of pathology, he tells her, in effect, that she is writing about a diseased person who had better not turn out to be Stein herself. By creating this alternative persona for Stein (not to be confused with the textual persona that Stein creates), Moody implicitly sets up a comparison between the "real" Stein (whichever one she is) and some more- or less-normal version of herself. He subtly prescribes the brand of textual selfhood that he believes it is appropriate for a young college woman to produce in the process, he pushes her to refine her understanding of her own agency. (533-534)

From the vantage point of a hundred years later it is relatively easy to diagnose what was happening between Stein's writing and Moody's reading. Stein had access to a romantic language for expressing her inner turmoil; had she been born in the late twentieth century, she might have been able to express the same feelings in wholly different terms. Moody apparently disliked the melodramatic aspects of that language; and the parts of that language that were problematic for him impeded his ability to identify with the writer and to respond to the content of the writing.

Over the course of the academic year in which she was enrolled in this course, Stein's writing oscillated between the "paltry details" of the "outer world" and writing about inner experiences. Two contrasting essays, written within two days of each other, demonstrate this conflict in her writing:
March 21, 1895
[teacher comment: sympathetic]

It is disheartening to come back to Cambridge after a week of the
delicious, dreamy south. Baltimore, sunny Baltimore, where no one is
in a hurry and the voices of the negroes singing as their carts go lazily
by, lull you into \[x: the\]^4 drowsy \[x: waken\] reveries. It is a strangely
silent city, even its busiest thoroughfares seem still and the clanging
car-bells only blend with the peaceful silence and do but increase it. To
lie on the porch, to listen to the weird strains of Grieg's spring song, to
hear the negro voices in the distance and to let your mind wander idly
as it listeth, that is happiness. The lotus-eaters knew not the joys of
calm more completely than a Baltimorean. Let us alone for we have
the essence of contentment, quiet dreamy, slothful ease in the full
sensuous sunshine. (Miller)

March 23, 1895
[teacher comment: Last part could be made more dramatic]

He was a melancholy looking porter but strongly built. He
seemed more intelligent than most of the men in his class. One day he
told us a story of negro life in the south that impressed us deeply. He
had been a porter on a Southern train and it had been the custom to
pay off for the parlor-car chairs to the porter instead of to the conductor.
As usual about an hour after the start the porter went to collect his
fares. A roystering, Southern gentleman seeing the negro coming
down the car determined to resist an indignity. "I don't pay money to
niggers" he said haughtily. "Sorry sir but it is the rule of the road."
"Rule be damned" was the insolent reply, "don't you dare to ask a
Southern gentleman for money you --" The porter persisted quietly,
and again demanded his money. He was assailed with more oaths and
foul words and now he seized his opponent [sic] by the collar and
forcibly put him off the car. When the train came back over the road, it
was rumored that a large body of men were lying in wait for the
courageous porter. The conductor hid him in a dressing-room and
there he heard the angry crowd hunt through the train swear
vengeance on his devoted head. He escaped that time but had to leave
the road and never more return to his native state. (Miller)

The first essay has been used by DeKoven (quoted in Hovey) as an indication
of Stein's racism. Yet the racism in this essay must be understood in the

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^4 Material in brackets with an "x" (e.g., \[x: \]) refers to changes made in the manuscript—
material which Stein crossed out in her process of revision.
context both of the writing class for which the essay was written and the second essay.

In the first essay, Stein attempts to make a description of something in a way that would not raise any eyebrows, particularly those of Moody. Her description is marked by a clichéd use of language—with the mind "wander[ing] idly as it listeth" and the "delicious, dreamy south." Another aspect of Stein's conforming language in this essay is the racial stereotypes. The essay is "successful," in that Moody's comment is "sympathetic." He does not suggest that the essay has any shortcomings.

The second essay, by contrast, begins with a racial stereotype, that the man about whom the essay is written is "more intelligent than most of the men in his class." This kind of statement, based on scientific ideas of Stein's day, is intended to set the white reader at ease, in order to counterbalance the remainder of the essay, an examination of white racism. The introduction to the person about whom Stein is writing addresses a white reader's potential objection about the possibility of intelligence in an African American person.

The remainder of the essay focuses on an outrageous racist event and it does so from the perspective of admiration for the porter who told Stein the story. Although Stein's initial move as a writer is to conform to the racist expectations of her white reader, she becomes caught up as a writer in the story of this particular man and is effective at conveying the horror of what happened to him. Her allegiance to the truth of his experience ultimately supersedes her allegiance to the codes of white expectations for her writing. Moody's comment, which indicates that the essay is lacking in something, drama, underscores Stein's written transgressions of the boundaries to which the writing teacher clearly subscribes.
The more outrageous aspects of the first essay mark Stein’s acquiescence to the language of her writing class, her use of the language she heard white people use all the time. As problematic as any form of acquiescence to racism is, it is important to recognize that Stein’s typical practice as a human being was to listen to what people had to say about their lives, and that her listening and subsequent representation of what she heard often transcended the limitations her culture attempted to impose on her. Her writing in the first essay reflects “paltry details,” that is, it remains on the surface of the experience rather than delving into the feelings and thoughts of the individuals involved. She does so in order to meet the expectations set up by the writing class, and not because it was her own tendency to remain at the surface of events. The second essay, written two days later, can be seen as a corrective to that first. The subject matter of these essays and Stein’s complex racism will become important to the discussion of Stein’s story “Melanctha,” in the book, *Three Lives* (discussed in Chapter Two).

An essay Stein wrote in December indicates that she clearly recognized the push toward conformity.

December 20, 1894
[teacher comment: shows discernment]

It is a very painful fact in human experience that each of us must go over the same old ground of mental struggle and development. To be sure it is a reflection old as the hills but it is still new for I have just rediscovered it. The most of it is, that the recognition of it as fact is of no value.

I know perfectly well that I will hold some time in the future the same opinions in large measure that I have just been combating. I know perfectly well that when my opponent was my age he held mine and yet I cannot spare myself the intervening pain and struggle.

I know I will believe, but as I don’t believe there is not help in that. Sometime I fiercely and defiantly declare that I won’t believe neither now nor in the future. “Be still you fool” then says my mocking other self, “Why struggle, you must submit sooner or later to
the ground in the same mill with your fellows. The path is straight before you can but choose to follow. Why waste your struggle in useless cries? Be still, it is inevitable." (Miller)

In this essay, she appears to acquiesce, to acknowledge that she, too, will become as the writing teacher, will hold his stereotypes and desires for certain kinds of language. There is a kind of exhaustion present in this essay. Stein knows what she does not want to do and yet she sees no way to get around the requirement that she conform.

Stein finds a humorous way to capture some of her conflict about her writing and her relationship to the writing teacher in one of the short daily themes:

A conference
English Prof. "Yes that is a very good stroke. Twittering birds always remind me of spring. Ah but let me see your description is of autumn, yes birds do twitter in autumn too not so much perhaps."
Meek girl student. "But excuse me sir my description is of mid-summer."
Professor undaunted. "Mid-summer, why yes, yes of course birds always twitter in mid-summer." (Miller)

Stein probably intended this theme to be humorous--the subject of twittering birds is even more a "paltry detail" than most outer-worldly themes and the professor's seriousness about this detail is absurdly amusing. The fact that the student is a "meek girl" calls into question the kind of writing which might be expected from the female students. Probably they were not expected to write about "morbid psychological states," which would account in part for Moody's statement that Stein's initial essay was "extraordinary." Moody's response to this theme was to write a question mark.

Toward the end of the year, Stein produced two very unusual long essays which were connected. In the first essay, "The Temptation," a young woman named Hortense goes to a church and finds herself in a huge crowd.
Soon she is pressed up against a man and she becomes very aware of his touch. Even as the crowd abates, she remains pressed close to him, not moving, aware of his touch and simultaneously aware of what her cousins (with whom she went to church) will think because her proximity to the man is quite obvious to others.

The second theme, dated a week later, recounts Hortense's interactions with her cousins about this man and her behavior. At first Hortense feels terribly guilty about the event, but the instant her cousins accuse her of being improper, she becomes indignant and no longer feels guilty. The account ends:

The next morning, according to her wont Hortense lay out on the grass basking in the sun-shine. Doubts began to assail her. Was she innocent, was she guilty? Had she been willing or had she only had a delusive sense of volition and could she really not have avoided her position. She lay there looking into the depths of the blue sky wondering and struggling.

Now the full conviction of her guilt would rush upon her and gritting her teeth muttering fiercely, she would struggle with the thought, then an apathetic feeling would succeed, and she would be certain that she had not been in the wrong.

Her old sense of isolation began to surge over her. Again she had become one apart. Again there was something that none knew beside herself, that no one else of those about her had been guilty of. The struggle continued at intervals all that day. She was outwardly as usual. In fact she herself seemed to take very little part in the war of doubts waged so hotly within her. She felt the struggle, she heard the reasons given again and again, but she herself seemed to be but an apathetic spectator. (Miller)

There are two interesting aspects of these pieces. First, the style of writing is completely different from the initial theme, "In the Red Deeps." No longer does Stein use the Romantic overstatement of emotionality that she used in her first work. Secondly, an amazing characteristic of these two themes is how Stein was able to record a number of very different emotions (guilt,
indignation, doubt, anger) and the shifts that take place between these emotions as Hortense tries to come to terms with the events and her own role in them. If an event of this sort did not happen to Stein, then her ability to imagine this kind of shift in emotions and to get it on the paper is extraordinary. If an event of this sort did happen to Stein, then her complete honesty about the event—her ability to hold off the ego's need for self-justification in order to express the emotional conflict of the main character—is extraordinary.

Moody's reaction to the two themes showed his recognition of some of the power of Stein's writing in the essays, however, there were aspects of them that he did not understand and aspects for which he did not care:

First theme: Very slow at the start. The trials and tribulations endured by your heroine in finding a vantage ground in the church do not seem sufficiently integral to deserve such elaborate recital. The vague thoughts and emotions aroused in the heroine's mind by contemplation of the crowd are indicated with considerable force, though the tone is at first awkwardly impersonal. The closing reflections suggest the cold-blooded methods of laboratory analysis. The ethical and sociological elements of the problem (if it can be called by so formal a name) are drained off in such a way as to leave it somewhat unmitigated. Revise. (Miller)

Second theme: For the sake of balance and completeness this should have been made to form part of the preceding paper. The analysis of the girl's reaction on the situation, though unpleasant in the extreme, is not without psychological interest. The laboratory atmosphere still pervades the lines and gives the work a certain artificial hardness and nakedness which is inartistic.

Your work has shown at times considerable emotional intensity and a somewhat unusual power of abstract thought. It has frequently been lacking in organisation, in fertility of resource, and in artfulness of literary method. (Miller)

Stein had abandoned the prose of Shelley and Stevenson for a voice which describes without necessarily commenting on her narrator's emotions.
Perkins suggests that some of the changes in Stein's prose were related to her responding to Moody's criticisms of "In the Red Deeps" -- that she adopted a more "objective" way of describing her heroine in order to avoid the pathologizing comments Moody made in her first essay. Another possibility is that Stein adopted a more scientific prose because of her work in William James' psychological laboratory.

Contrary to Karl Pearson's statements about the aesthetic values of scientific prose, Moody finds Stein's work "inartistic"! If Stein is not "melodramatic," then she is "cold-blooded." What's a girl to do to satisfy the literary demands of this teacher? Since the writing of this essay, a hundred years have passed, and the feminist movement has been addressing relationships between women and men placing value on women discussing exactly events of this nature and complex emotional reactions to these events. Both time and the aims of recent feminism change the understanding of the situation that Stein described in the essays from "unpleasant in the extreme" to precisely that which must be recounted in order to understand women's lives.

The English class with Moody offered Stein a chance to write creatively which she appreciated. In one of her daily themes, she stated:

Argument is to me as the air I breathe. Given any proposition I cannot help believing the other side and defending it. But I would be virtuous and would rather make a dismal failure of a description than revel in an argument. The one I get all the time, the other only in English 22. (Miller)

She used this opportunity to take risks as a writer and to explore ideas and events which were important to herself. Even the comments of her teacher which indicated his lack of empathy for the perspectives represented in her writing, did not stop her from taking these emotional risks. She must have
derived support from those of his comments which were positive and she may well have enjoyed the challenge of writing in order to see what his response would be. There is certainly a wide range of writing styles and subject matters in this group of themes.

Still, it must have been clear to Stein that writing about her feelings or about events which were important to her in some way engendered (and I use this verb deliberately) confusion in the mind of the idealized reader, the teacher of the English class. Many of her thoughts, feelings, and experiences were alien to the kind of reader to whom the university granted the authority to judge writing. One way of interpreting Stein's innovations as an author is as "protective language," a way of hiding the lesbian content of her work (e.g., Gass, in Hoffman). The roots of this need lay not with one of her first works as a writer, the lesbian novel Q.E.D., as is often thought, but instead with her experiences of writing in her English class at Radcliffe. Stein's initial attempts to cope with this problem were to switch from a Romantic prose with a highly emotional content towards a more "objective" prose with little or no emotional content, perhaps in the hope of giving her reader an opportunity to engage with events in a more scientific way—without the distortions of an emotional reaction to those events. Her reader, a poet rather than a scientist, could not make this leap with her. Scientific writing did not make it possible to write about such a highly gendered event in such a way that the reader could have some understanding of it. Scientific writing, at this point in Stein's work, could not achieve the kind of communication Stein was seeking to generate; this problem with her first year writing class foreshadows the difficulties Stein soon would have in her own participation in a scientific field.
Psychological Writing

Stein’s work in Harvard’s psychological laboratory would come back to haunt her in the 1934, when B.F. Skinner wrote an article, “Does Gertrude Stein Have a Secret?” Actually, there was no secret. Stein mentioned the work she did and her publications on “automatic writing” in her 1933 book, *The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas*. There she indicated that this research influenced *The Making of Americans*.

According to Wineapple, Stein and a graduate student named Leon Solomons designed and carried out a number of psychological experiments. The research designs for these experiments reflected late nineteenth-century faith in scientific method and the relatively primitive state of psychological research of that era. Along with their use of other students, Stein and Solomons used each other as “guinea pigs” in order to study “second personality,” which was considered an aspect of hysteria.

Neither their research focus nor their methods would be considered rigorous or appropriate by current psychological standards. Hysteria is no longer a common psychopathology, “automatic” processes are too dicey (in terms of determining whether something is truly automatic or is being controlled consciously at whatever level) for serious study, and psychologists are more likely to look for subject populations from which one can generalize one’s results (e.g., using only unsuspecting undergraduates instead of fellow psychological researchers). However, Solomons’ and Stein’s work was considered good enough at the time to be published. They were working at a time when the limits of methodology had not begun to be explored because the methodology had only recently been widely applied; further, psychology
itself was a new enough subject matter that psychological researchers were still working out what could be reasonably studied using scientific process.

Among other experiments, as Wineapple states, Solomons and Stein developed a procedure in which the subject would be given a pen and paper and would engage in "automatic writing" while being distracted in various ways by the researcher. At least for awhile, they took turns being researcher and researched. Years later, Skinner suggested that Stein's avant garde work was merely automatic writing of the type she theoretically learned in the process of doing these experiments. Stein denied this allegation in her book, *Everybody's Autobiography*, which she wrote in 1937.

Echoing Stein's assertions in *The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas*, Mellow points out the relationship between one of the published experiments and Stein's later work on her long novel, *The Making of Americans* (discussed in Chapter Three):

[The experiment] was an attempt to produce automatic writing in a larger sample of normal subjects, fifty female and forty one male students from Radcliffe and Harvard. But, interestingly, Gertrude principal concern was with the character of her subjects, which she broke down into two types. Type I, she noted, "consists mostly of girls who are found naturally in literature courses and men who are going in for law," and which she defined as "nervous, high-strung, very imaginative, has the capacity to be easily roused and intensely interested." Type II was of a different order: "more varied, and gives more interesting results. In general, the individuals, often blonde and pale, are distinctly phlegmatic. If emotional, decidedly of a weakish sentimental order." (48-49)

Stein divides people into different groups which do not seem to be intuitive to our end-of-the-millennium sensibilities. What about phlegmatic types who take literature courses? One expects opposition if people are going to be divided into two types. In any case, Stein used the idea of dividing people
into groups based on various characteristics as she drafted and made notes for *The Making of Americans*.

The other interesting aspect of this set of characteristics is that it reveals Stein's belief in the scientific paradigm of the time—that appearance was a marker of psychology. Pale, blonde people, in this paradigm, are of a particular psychological type. This kind of idea was in line with the notions behind craniology—that one could determine intelligence through physical shape and size of the head. These ideas were so common as to be unquestioned. For example, they make their appearances on occasion in Arthur Conan Doyle's Sherlock Holmes stories—Holmes, for example, concludes that a man is intelligent by the size of his hat. Yet, these ideas were in direct conflict with Stein's life as a woman and a scientist. While in the company of William James at Radcliffe, who was extremely supportive of Stein, the dissonance between scientific knowledge and Stein's life could be held at bay; as Stein began scientific work in the hostile environment of medical school, she began to engage directly with these contradictions.

**Medical School and "Degeneration in American Women"**

In 1899 and in around 1901 (or early 1902), Stein wrote two essays which were at odds with the values on which she eventually based her life and her writing. The first was "The Value of College Education for Women," in which she stated, according to Wineapple, that college education could actually contribute to women being good wives and mothers. Elyse Blankley (in Hoffman) suggests that this essay represents Stein's buying into the "New Woman," the feminist who wants equality with men through education and who feels that this education will contribute to women fulfilling the roles of
wife and mother. The second essay was apparently written just after Stein's failure in medical school.

In considering Stein's fictional work, "Fernhurst" (discussed in Chapter Two), Blankley is baffled by Stein:

While it is hard to imagine a stronger indictment of the New Woman [than that in Fernhurst], it is curious that Stein, a woman who benefited from eight years of university education would mount the attack. Stein, moreover, was directly touched by the largess of M. Carey Thomas's [who is the basis for one of the non-sympathetic characters in Fernhurst] missionary feminist spirit because Thomas's money was in part responsible for the admission of women to The Johns Hopkins School of Medicine. Yet Stein chose to lay bare with unflinching honesty the shortcomings of Thomas's philosophy, despite its dramatic impact on women's higher education. (199)

In order to understand the conflicts in Stein that led both to the writing of "Degeneration in American Women" and "Fernhurst," it is important to consider her experiences within medical school.

Given the conflicting aims between feminism and the then-current paradigms within biology, it is no surprise that the medical school to which Stein went was the site of much discord, both intellectually and in terms of Stein's personal experience. In addition to the problems of science for women, medicine as a scientific discipline was in a state of upheaval. According to Hymowitz and Weissman, during the colonial days of the United States, medicine was largely practiced by women. Male practitioners performed amputations but women took care of many other functions, particularly the birthing of babies and caring for the elderly. Hymowitz and Weissman state that these tasks were extensions of the caretaking role that women typically had.

During the nineteenth century, as Ehrenrich and English state, medicine in the United States became "professionalized," that is, it became
the provenance of male doctors who were educated at universities. Johns Hopkins was the first American medical school that was based on the German system of medical education, which consisted of four years of college and four years of medical school. As Ehrenrich and English point out, this system necessarily prevented lower class men and women of any class from becoming medical practitioners as a matter of course.

While there was a "professionalization" of medicine, this did not mean that the medical school-educated practitioners were more successful in the effort to respond to medical problems than were the lay-healers, particularly in the medical response to women's health needs. According to the National Library of Medicine's (NLM) "Caesarian Sections -- A Brief History," the first use of anesthesia in surgery took place in 1846 and revolutionized surgery in general. Yet initially there was resistance to using anesthesia in childbirth because of the Biblical idea that women were supposed to have pain when bearing children. Queen Victoria's use of chloroform during the birth of her children (1853 and 1857) paved the way for a greater acceptance of pain relief for childbirth. The resistance to the use of this technology, based on the story of Adam and Eve, illustrates the nineteenth-century male doctors' general lack of empathy and understanding for their female patients.

A second technology of childbirth introduced by the professional medical practice of the late nineteenth century was the use of forceps in difficult delivery. During this time, two types of forceps were in use: the low forceps, which are similar to the ones that are in use today, and the high forceps, designed to be inserted deep into the pelvis, which caused severe
cranial damage to the infant as well as damage to the woman. Some women were permanently crippled from having been subjected to the high forceps.

The problem of the lack of safe milk for urban women and children contributed to the need for caesarian sections. According to the NLM, many women suffered from rickets due to poor nutrition; the malformations of their pelvises made vaginal childbirth more difficult or impossible. At the same time, a caesarian-section was not a safe operation. The NLM cites a claim that, between 1787 and 1876 in Paris, not a single woman survived a caesarian operation. With antiseptic procedures and anesthesia beginning to be used in the late nineteenth century, the operation did become somewhat safer, but it was not a foregone conclusion that a woman would survive it.

According to Ehrenrich and English, in 1912, a Johns Hopkins medical school professor revealed in a study that the midwives were more competent at handling childbirth than were the educated doctors. In part, despite the awareness of the germ theory of disease, the doctors were still not careful about cleanliness, which resulted in puerperal sepsis and other possibly fatal diseases for women. The other problem the study found was that the doctors were far too likely to use aggressive surgical techniques which were dangerous to the mother and/or child. Another study, according to Ehrenrich and English, demonstrated that following the outlawing of midwives that came about during the first part of this century, there was actually an increase in infant mortality.

The state of the art and science of medicine at the end of the nineteenth century, as far as women's health was concerned, was primitive and unresponsive to the realities of women's lives. Women could not be sure that they would live through childbirth. At the same time, they did not have
many options for preventing pregnancy. Not only were the obstetrical practices problematic, but before the birth control movement that began in the 1910s and 1920s, according to Hymowitz and Weissman, women had access to relatively ineffective or unsafe methods of birth control. Since preventive measures were not likely to work, many women made themselves terribly ill or they died in illegal abortions.

In 1907, a medical school friend of Stein's who went on to practice, Emma Lootz Erving, described her servant's response to an unwanted pregnancy. The servant apparently attempted a self-induced abortion in Erving's kitchen. Erving was angry with the woman not so much for ending the pregnancy but for using unsafe methods and for doing it in Erving's kitchen. This servant woman was lucky; she worked for two doctors (Erving's husband was also a doctor) and she obviously felt that having a "miscarriage" at their house might ensure her survival. Erving herself was probably concerned with legal issues related to an abortion taking place in a doctor's house—which accounts for her response to the woman; although Erving's other letters to Stein indicate that she fundamentally identified with the woman's desire not to be pregnant.

A young woman going into medical school, having to complete obstetrics classes and the equivalent of an obstetric rotation in the slums of Baltimore, would be exposed to an overwhelming set of horrors: women permanently disabled or bleeding to death from self-induced abortions; women who were victims of domestic violence and who had no hope of removing themselves from the abusive relationship; women dying in childbirth—maybe after experiencing the agonies of the forceps; babies dying in childbirth or shortly after; women having their fourth, fifth, tenth baby in
so many years; women whose bodies were severely deformed due to malnutrition; newly-married women who had no idea how they managed to become pregnant; women and young girls made pregnant without the economic and social benefits of marriage and possibly because of incest or rape. There was nothing that could be done in the way of medical technology to change the conditions of these women's lives, to relieve their misery. And the idea of educating women to read Greek the way men did, as a form of feminist liberation, would be ludicrous in the face of these women's lives.

To top it off, according to Wineapple, the obstetrics professor at Johns Hopkins when Stein was a student, John Whitridge Williams, was particularly vile in his attitudes towards women. To be sure, his attitudes and behavior may have been his way of separating himself from the suffering that was the provenance of his specialty. One common response to unmitigateable distress is to place a great deal of emotional distance between oneself and the victim and to blame the victim for her own suffering. Whatever the reason for Williams' attitudes toward both his subject matter and the women in the classroom, his classroom behavior, which if copied by medical professors today would result in a successful lawsuit against the university, was routinely accepted. Stein complained about his behavior, her complaints did not change anything, at least one other (male) student considered her a "battle axe" (Wineapple, 141) for complaining in the first place, and this was one of the four classes (according to Mellow) that Stein failed.

The obstetrics class was not the only class Stein failed and was not the only reason she left medical school. Wineapple states that Stein's grades had begun to slip the previous year, although she was in no danger of failing
then. Stein did some work in the following summer toward being able to complete the degree later on, however, there are mixed accounts as to the adequacy of the job she did. Although Stein had intended at the beginning of medical school to focus her career on working with mentally ill women, by the time she flunked her courses, according to Wineapple, Stein was not eager to begin work in an asylum, which she apparently was supposed to do following her graduation.

Working with women who had been identified as "mentally ill" would have had many of the same drawbacks as obstetrics during that period of time. To begin with, since there were no alternatives for battered women, at least some of those women identified as "mentally ill" would have been women literally at their wits' ends about their relationships. Some of the patients may well have been women whose husbands had identified them as "mentally ill" because of their resistance to emotional and/or physical abuse.

Secondly, late nineteenth-century asylums, according to Russett, were primitive and inhumane. According to Wineapple, Alice B. Toklas later recounted a little of Stein's horror at having visited the place where she had intended to work following her graduation. The conditions of the asylum were appalling; there would have been little hope for changing the social conditions that these women found themselves in. Working in the asylum would not be at all like working in a psychological laboratory on a college campus.

5According to Okun, by the 1890's battering was illegal according to many state laws (a significant improvement over the "rule of thumb" which stated that a man could beat his wife provided the stick he used was no thicker than his thumb, and which had been the basis of laws in some states). Okun states, however, that in a practical sense, the laws did not provide women with real relief from abuse; domestic violence was not even grounds for divorce in many states.
Further, a common malady for women was hysteria, which Bernheimer (in Bernheimer and Kahane) suggests derived in part from the conflict between the Victorian ideal for women and women's own very real anger about intellectual, social, and sexual limitations placed on them by these ideals. This conflict, of course, is the same one that Stein herself was facing. While the conditions which gave rise to the problem can now be understood in relation to the social construction of gender, the medical approach to working with hysteria did nothing to address the root causes of the problem. Stein likely understood the conditions of these women's lives but she had no therapeutic tools that could address them. Further, the only theories about hysteria and other psychological problems of the women in the asylum placed herself in the same boat as the women whom she was trying to help; there was no getting around the expectations by which women were supposed to live their lives, even if these expectations drove some women to madness. Both Stein and the women who would have been her patients were helpless.

As with obstetrics, a career in working with women in the asylum would be a very difficult one, in part because the social conditions which gave rise to many of the forms of mental illness in women would have been at least somewhat comprehensible but insurmountable in terms of being able to address them. To be sure, it is probable that some people who chose to work in this field had a great deal of empathy for the women at the asylum; however, it would take a very unusual person to be able to maintain both empathy and emotional equilibrium working in the asylum over a long period of time, due to the fact that little could be done to address the problems the women were facing. Finally, the prevailing ideas about mental health for
women would have placed Stein in an awkward position of having to prescribe treatments that she herself would have abhorred to have undertaken; as Stein came to terms with her sexuality, her distance from mainstream ideas about psychiatry would have increased significantly.

Following the publication in the *Journal of the American Medical Association* of an article by George J. Engelmann called "The Increasing Sterility of American Women," Stein apparently wrote an essay, "Degeneration in American Women." The only extant copy of this essay, according to Wineapple, was typewritten and not signed, however, it bears corrections in the hand of Stein. Wineapple offers convincing historical and stylistic evidence that this essay was, indeed, written by Stein.6

In "Degeneration in American Women," Stein reviews the falling birthrate in the U.S., particularly among college-educated women, basing her review on Engelmann's article. She then defines several types of sterility and focuses the remainder of the article on women's refusal to have babies--their use of contraception, illegal abortion, marrying later in life, and having one or two children instead of half a dozen. Women are deluding themselves, she says:

> In the first place among the educated classes in this country, that is among the educated women...there is a strong tendency to what we may call the negation of sex and the exaltation of the female ideal of moral and methods and a condemnation and abhorrence of virility.

> By this statement is meant the tendency of the modern American woman to mistake her education her cleverness and intelligence for effective capacity for the work of the world. In consequence she underestimates the virile quality because of its apparent lack of intelligence. In the moral world she also finds herself the superior because on account of the characteristic chivalry of the American man the code of morality which her sheltered life has developed seems adequate for the real business of life and it is only

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6Wineapple prints this essay in an appendix to her book.
rarely that she learns that she never actually comes in contact with the real business and that when she does the male code is the only possible one. (Wineapple, 413)

This sounds like the voice of experience, that she herself went outside the "sheltered life" of women and found what she saw, presumably in the male realm of medical school, to be challenging her own moral code. First of all, it is important to ask, what is the "male code"? Is this the objectification of women practiced by Stein's obstetrics professor that makes women objects of scientific study on which one may practice unproved and aggressive medical techniques, which ultimately not only fail to address but actually contribute to the pain and difficulty of women's lives? In this essay, Stein is emphatic about the inadequacy of any approach other than that of the "male code" and yet the fact that the "mistaken" women could at least initially consider themselves as morally "superior" to men indicates that women saw some basis for making a critique of the "male code."

The essay was written during a crisis point in Stein's life, as far as her career was concerned. Having flunked out of medical school and having failed even with extra work the summer after her flunking to have made up her deficiencies as far as the school was concerned, Stein did not have a clear-cut direction for the professional part of her life. On the one hand, the message of the essay could be seen as Stein's attempt to begin to work in a field related to medicine. The essay not only supports the status quo of medical thinking in that era, it is almost an *apologia* for her previous complaints about the treatment of women in medical school. The "male code," to which she thought herself superior, was right after all.

On the other hand, with the reactionary message of the essay, Stein was advocating a life for women that it was too late for she herself to lead. By the
time of the writing of this essay, Stein had become involved in a relationship with a woman, May Bookstaver. According to Wineapple, Stein gave the draft of this essay to Alfred Hodder to read:

When giving the essay to Hodder, Stein explained that she had hated to have to write as she had, but felt forced—so Hodder told Mamie Gwinn—"sentence by sentence to believe what is practically committing mental suicide so far as her whole natural pose is concerned." (154)

Faderman offers examples of women who were in life-long relationships with women who published writings in the early part of the twentieth century that were opposed to the very lives that they themselves were leading. For instance, Jeannette Marks was in a relationship with Mary Wooley since the two met at Wellesley College in 1895; in 1911, Marks published *A Girl’s Student Days and After* which pointed out the "dangers" of lesbianism. This might have been one solution for Stein's dilemma, a solution that might have led her to have quite a successful career in a Phyllis Schlafly sort of way—and she probably would have gotten published fairly easily. Yet, since her days in William Vaughn Moody's writing class, Stein's writing stemmed from her willingness to be honest about herself. Stein never published "Degeneration in American Women," nor did she ever refer to it in later works as she did refer to others of her writings from this time period; in the *Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas* and in *Everybody's Autobiography*, Stein made reference to her published work with Leon Solomons, "Normal Motor Automatism," and in the *Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas* she also referred to *Q.E.D.*, her early first novel, written in 1903.

Thus, this essay represents one attempt, which Stein ultimately repudiated, to come to terms with the crashing together of the male world in which she had participated and the female world in which she had been born.
CHAPTER 2

THE WRITER'S ID-ENTITY

According to Ulla Dydo's notes in the Stein Reader, Stein wrote the first version of *The Making of Americans* in 1903. She also finished *Q.E.D.*, a short novel, in 1903—the manuscript for the ending of this work is dated in October, 1903. The story "Fernhurst" was written 1904-05. And *Three Lives*, what was to become Stein's first published book, was finished in Spring 1906. Across this period of time, from 1903-1906, Stein essentially served her apprenticeship in the field of writing. She moved from writing barely fictionalized accounts of real events—either those she experienced directly or those experienced by people around her—to being able to write "real" fiction—that is, making up characters and using events she knew about as starting points but not as the sole subject of her narratives.

The method of this chapter parallels Stein's shifts in her writings. What remains significant to the early version of *The Making of Americans*, *Q.E.D.*, and "Fernhurst," are their relations to Stein's life and, in turn, Stein's relations to her own historical context—as a person defined as "Other" by the intellectual paradigms of the day because of her gender, her religion, and her sexual orientation. These early works trace Stein's development of her ability to understand the people around her, her ability to love, and her disavowal of the form of feminism which had pushed her in the direction of
science in the first place and which she felt was too simplistic in concept to be a practical basis for living.

*Three Lives,* in contrast, is an artistic work, in more than one way. It reflects the beginning of a new set of influences on Stein—the paintings that hung on her wall. It is composed in the way that novelists write—characters may have some kind of relation to real people Stein knew, but they and their situations are not limited to individual historical events. To the extent that they have a basis in Stein’s life, these characters are derived from a wide variety of people whom Stein knew across many different contexts in her life. *Three Lives,* then, is the first work that for which literary analysis reveals artistic concerns possessed by someone for whom writing serves as an end in itself. This book is the site of Stein’s first engagement with the problem of narrative, the problem of causation between events which is a problem central to the concerns of scientists.

*The Making of Americans, First Version*

The 1903 version of *The Making of Americans,* which is printed in *Fernhurst, Q.E.D., and Other Early Writings,* begins to explore the making of a marriage similar to the failed marriage between Louis and Bird Sternberger. Bird was Gertrude Stein’s cousin. Prior to settling in Paris, Stein had offered a great deal of emotional support for Bird, who was going through a divorce. In fact, according to Wineapple, Bird was something of a heroine for the youthful Stein.

In the first version of *The Making of Americans,* Julia, a headstrong eighteen-year-old falls in love with Alfred Hersland. It requires a lot of effort on her part to convince her parents, particularly her father, that she should marry him. The father is not too sure what he dislikes about Alfred, but he
is not comfortable with the young man. Julia begins to focus a great deal of
time and energy working on her parents such that when she herself notices
aspects of Alfred that worry her, she chooses not to deal with them. She has
invested far too much energy in winning her parents over to back down.

For example, Alfred lets it slip that one of his reasons for marrying her
is because her father can set him up in business. She asks Alfred about it and
he explains it in such a way that she allows herself to feel less uncomfortable
about it—but it is nonetheless worrisome. It is clear to the reader that this
instance is a foreshadowing of conflicts which will surface later in the
marriage. There is a suggestion, in terms of the way Julia chooses not to deal
with her discomfort about why Hersland agreed to marry her, that had Julia
not fought so hard against her parents for this marriage, she might have
chosen to end the engagement rather than to go through with the marriage.

Five chapters of this version of the novel exist—up to the marriage of Julia
and Alfred and the beginning of a comparison of that marriage with the
marriage of Julia's sister. Stein wrote quite a bit more but in a move
somewhat unusual for her, she destroyed the other chapters; the manuscript
of this version has many pages that have been cut out of it. This draft of five
chapters eventually became part of Stein's long novel, The Making of
Americans, (discussed in Chapter Three). In 1903, however, it was one of
Stein's attempts at understanding events around her.

In this version of The Making of Americans, Alfred comes off as a bad
character and Julia is the heroine. In Stein's later writing, her
characterizations became more complex. For example, the reader comes to
understand all the characters' perspectives in "Fernhurst." The tragedy of
"Fernhurst" is that there is no way of resolving all of these perspectives; the
story is not a matter of the actions of an evil character but rather the influence of societal limitations placed on all the characters in their relationships with each other. In the later version of *The Making of Americans*, the characters of Alfred and Julia become much more complex; Alfred is no longer the villain of the story. This more complex version of the story followed Stein's own maturing as a person as well as the playing out of events between Bird and Stein. In 1903, Stein was still very much enamored of Bird/Julia and therefore not able to reflect on Louis/Alfred's perspective or Bird's own contributions to her problems. All of this changed as Stein matured and as the two women found themselves in conflict with each other.

The early version of *The Making of Americans* was abandoned and partially destroyed. The extant portion was only resurrected a few years later, after Stein had completed *Q.E.D.*, "Fernhurst," and *Three Lives*, but also after Stein had had a definitive falling out with Bird. Stein knew in 1903 that writing might become a way of understanding complex events, however, these particular events had not played themselves out enough for her to grasp.

*Q.E.D.*

Sometime during the early part of her friendship with Stein, probably in 1893, Sally Stein (Gertrude's brother Michael's wife) wrote a letter which was clearly a follow-up to a conversation the two women had:

> It seems that he [the gynecologist] has two young girls now under treatment, one of whom he feels convinced he can cure; the other he knows to be hopeless. Both are of fine family. He gives them moral lectures and *very* strong medicine effective in most cases when even the lectures fail, but when it gets to certain cases where the habit is particularly abnormal in its method and of very long practice there follows an aversion to the opposite sex, and marriage itself is of no
avail. Then there is but one resource left, and to that neither male nor female will submit; the removal of either ovaries or testicles... I wish we had spoken to him more freely when you were here, for I am sure he could have told you of many interesting cases that might have helped you in time to come, for, my dear girl, I feel more and more every day that it is the duty of such women as you to fortify the weak [men] even before the necessity actually arises. (Quoted in Wineapple, 71)

Sally's doctor, Oscar Mayer, was providing her with up-to-date information for that era in his direct antipathy toward masturbation, his more veiled antagonism toward lesbianism (women who have "an aversion to the opposite sex"), as well as his wholesale promotion of heterosexuality with or without benefit of marriage.

One aspect of the scientific construction of womanhood during the Victorian era was the pathologizing of lesbianism which began in the latter half of the nineteenth century. According to Faderman, in the early part of the nineteenth century, women had "romantic friendships" and "Boston marriages" that may even have had a sexual element to them; these relationships were considered normal enough that they did not excite any kind of negative comment. Faderman recounts literature of the period which makes reference to these kinds of relationships as if they were nothing to be surprised about.¹ Toward the middle of the nineteenth century, lesbian relationships became, in Europe, the subject of exotic literature designed to shock the bourgeoisie (the lesbian poems in Baudelaire's Les Fleurs du Mal, for instance). By the late nineteenth century, as Faderman states, there were two responses in the United States to lesbian relationships—the exotic literature, which had traveled to the United States,

¹Stein was a voracious reader who spent a significant part of her youth and young adulthood in the library. It is very possible that she had read some of the books that Faderman mentions; these books may have been ultimately another source of support for the life she would lead.
and the German medical profession characterization of "inverts" as "morbid." In 1882, Krafft-Ebing published *Psychopathia Sexualis*, which discussed lesbianism as a pathology. Havelock Ellis followed up in 1897 with *Studies in the Psychology of Sex* in which he stated, according to Faderman, that homosexuality was not necessarily pathological, however, all of his case studies that include homosexuality were of people with significant psychological problems—including the case of a lesbian murderer. Once again, the official knowledge to which Stein was exposed in detail, particularly in medical school, was at odds with what became her personal experience.

What became Stein's first lesbian relationship probably began in the summer of 1901, following the trouble she had in medical school. Not everything that Stein wrote in the way of fiction was about her own experiences; yet because so much of Stein's writing is difficult to read and interpret, this is the temptation into which it is easy for Stein scholars to fall. Bridgman, for instance, interprets the Radcliffe essay about the conference between the "meek girl student" and the English professor as being about Stein; it is hard to imagine that the writer of "In The Red Deeps" and the other college essays saw herself as meek. She was not likely to write about "twittering birds." It is more likely she was lampooning the other students around her.

Nevertheless, the novel *Q.E.D.*, from various pieces of evidence, seems to be a fairly close accounting of a relationship in which Stein found herself. First of all, with the exception of the ending of the novel, the geographical and chronological paths of the characters in the novel resemble those of Stein and the other two women in question, May Bookstaver and
Mabel Haynes. Secondly, although the letters from May Bookstaver to Stein were destroyed by Alice B. Toklas in 1932, there is a draft of a letter from Stein (YCAL, Miscellaneous papers), probably to May, which survives and parts of the text of which are quoted verbatim at various points in the story, including at the end. Finally, Leon Katz interviewed Toklas, who indicated that many of the letters between Bookstaver and Stein had been used in the book. Given these connections between Stein’s life and the text, we can assume that the emotional changes that the character, Adele, went through in the course of this relationship have some relation, and likely a close one, to those of Stein’s during the same period.

At the beginning of the novel, Adele is leaving Baltimore for Europe after some kind of considerable disappointment. This would have been June 1901, following Stein’s failure of the four courses and a decision of the Johns Hopkins faculty not to grant Stein her medical degree. On the boat, Adele finds two women, whom she knows somewhat, Helen Thomas (May Bookstaver) and Mabel Neathe (Mabel Haynes). Very quickly, Adele is drawn into a kind of friendship with Helen that she feels must be kept from Mabel and that soon becomes passionate.

\[^2\]Dydo (Stein Reader) states: “What enraged Toklas was not the love affair but the fact that when she and Stein, upon falling in love, exchanged ‘confessions,’ Stein had not told her about [her relationship with May Bookstaver.] What further enraged Toklas was to discover the verbal presence of May in many Stein works” (568). In fact, following this revelation, Stein changed all appearances of the word “may” in Stanzas in Meditation (which she was writing at the time of Toklas’ anger with her) to “can”—even when “May” was clearly the month of May.

\[^3\]In the handwritten version of this story, Mabel Neathe’s name has been changed to “Sophie,” probably because of closeness between the character’s name and Mabel Hayne’s name. This correction was not done in Stein’s hand. It is likely it was made after Stein’s death, when Alice B. Toklas was preparing the manuscript for its first publication. The later publication of the story, in 1971, restores the name “Mabel.” Bridgman uses the name “Sophie” when he discusses this story, either because he was using the original edition of the work or because he accepted the changes in the ms.
Helen taunts Adele, saying, "I am afraid...that after all you haven't a
nature much above passionettes. You are so afraid of losing your moral
sense that you are not willing to take it through anything more dangerous
than a mud-puddle" (63). Adele decides she does not want to be a coward
and she continues on with the relationship, despite her moral reservations
about being in a relationship which must be kept from Mabel. Following
Adele's return to Baltimore that fall, the fall in which Stein was doing the
research that was supposed to make up her medical school deficiencies,
Adele and Helen continue to see each other during Adele's frequent trips to
New York. Adele also remains in frequent contact with Mabel, who
eventually apprises Adele of the relationship between herself and Helen
under the guise of asking Adele what to do about it.

The fact that Helen is in a relationship with Mabel bothers Adele a
great deal. Adele's increasing passion for Helen brings them together again
and again over a period of two years, and Helen appears to return that
passion. Yet the fact that Helen allows Mabel to limit her ability to be with
Adele, in part because Mabel contributes financially to Helen's well-being
(paying for Helen's trips to Europe and buying her jewelry), ultimately
causes Adele to lose respect for Helen. There are some incredibly painful
scenes in which all three women are together and are trying to get along
with each other. Finally, Adele leaves the situation, although it is clear that
she emotionally has not resolved anything by the end of the story. While
Adele is miserable with the pain she feels in this relationship and while the
relationship is not resolved at the end of the story, there is a sense that Adele
has become a more complete human being because of her discovery of her
ability to feel as well as to think.
Both feminist ideals and scientific paradigms are intellectual constructs which have implications for one's emotional life. Feminism promised women a feeling of satisfaction if they would pursue non-traditional options; that is, they would, in theory, have a certain amount of freedom and they, in turn, could continue the work for women's emancipation. And yet Stein's experience in attempting to incorporate these intellectual ideals as the center of her life was disastrous. The relationship with May placed Stein in a position of considering not just a group of intellectual constructs (in the story, Adele's "moral sense") but also the paths opened to her because of the feelings she had about another person. At the same time, being in a duplicitous relationship went against Stein's essential honesty and contributed to the pain she felt throughout this affair.

The influence of scientific language on Q.E.D. takes place at the level of how the story is told, rather than having to do with its content. Q.E.D. is a story of passion told in a matter-of-fact voice, much like the voice Stein used for the story of Hortense. She simply presents the events as she observed them.

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4 Stein was not alone in having difficulty with this ideal. Information exists about another woman with whom Stein went to medical school: Emma Lootz Erving, with whom Stein corresponded for some thirty years. Erving had also bought into the feminist promise that a medical education allegedly offered. She completed medical school and went on to practice. Erving felt it necessary to get married in order to conform to social expectations for women, although she was certainly a reluctant bride; she married a doctor and began to practice with him. He consistently spent more money than they had so she worked long, hard hours on top of becoming a parent (which she also felt ambivalent about). Eventually, Erving's husband contracted tuberculosis, as did her younger child. Erving found herself working to earn the living for the family and caring for two extremely sick family members, as well as being a full-time, essentially single parent. Although she had "bought into" the feminist dream, she did not find her life to be that of a liberated woman. Erving felt miserable during most of her adult life and her letters to Stein are sad to read.

5 Hovey argues that an influence of scientific ideas on Q.E.D. was the association of black women and lesbians in the scientific literature of that day. Hovey states that Q.E.D.'s "sapphic primitivism" (a concept which is derived from Benstock's idea of "sapphic modernism") is interconnected with the scientific ideas about non-white women's sexuality.
Possibly this choice reflects the timing on Stein's writing of the story. At the end of the manuscript, Stein writes the date of its finishing (October 24, 1903. She then states that she still does not understand May's accusations that Stein did not love her. She declares that she still loves May. Stein wrote this story as the relationship itself was ending. The content of scientific thought of Stein's time would not have contributed to Stein's understanding of what happened between herself and May Bookstaver—the content would have rejected the relationship itself as unnatural or insane. The process of scientific thinking, however, in which one attempts to make a dispassionate account of a series of events, could help Stein to consider what happened and to contemplate why it happened. It is for this reason that Stein wrote in such an emotionally detached voice.

Stimpson reinforces this point in light of the prevailing attitudes about homosexuality:

Curiously, the books written under the immediate influence of the May Bookstaver relationship [which include Q.E.D.] are refreshingly free from The Well of Loneliness syndrome: the conviction that lesbianism is a disease, no less sinful for being fatal. Stein finds the will towards domination, ignorance, and corrupt character more immoral than homosexuality. (Bloom, 139)

The title of Radcliffe Hall's book (which is the "classic" of lesbian literature) captures Hall's "take" on lesbianism. In contrast, despite everything Stein had probably read or heard about lesbianism, and despite considerable pressure from members of her family (e.g., Sally Stein's attitudes, which are discussed in greater detail in Chapter Four), Stein focuses Q.E.D. not on pathology but on relationship problems that could easily be found in a heterosexual relationship.
In any case, Stein finished up this manuscript and put it away, never mentioning it to anyone until the 1930s, when she wrote the *Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas*. A story of this sort could not have been published at that time without becoming "sensational" in a way that would be inimical to the plot. The conflict that Adele faces is not whether lesbianism is a viable way of life but, rather, how to deal with a relationship that is not fundamentally honest. Yet publication at that time would have focused attention on the gender of the people involved and not the all-too-universal problem they faced. As with the Hortense essays, in which the subject was considered distasteful at that time but which is now a matter of everyday concern among women, Stein was 75 years ahead of her time--this book can be read now and its focus appreciated.

**Negotiating Science and Feminism: "Fernhurst"**

May Bookstaver was a feminist, and her feminism was apparently one of several points of conflict between Bookstaver and Stein. Wineapple suggests that Stein wrote the story "Fernhurst" in 1902 in the middle of her relationship with Bookstaver. Dydo suggests that the story was written between 1904 and 1905. In any case, the story is a response to feminism, whether that of May or feminism in general. Likely, the failure of the relationship with May coupled with the fact of May's feminism became the occasion for Stein to consider the problems with feminism in general.

The story of "Fernhurst" was based on events that happened at Bryn Mawr between Alfred Hodder, Mary Gwinn, and M. Carey Thomas. Thomas, who was living with Gwinn, in a relationship in which the women were at least emotionally significant to each other if not sexually involved, had employed Hodder, a married man, to be a professor. Soon, Hodder and
Gwinn became interested in each other, which was a scandal at the college. Eventually, Hodder divorced his wife and he and Gwinn married, although Stein's story did not end in the same way.

Fernhurst is a small women's college run by a dean, Helen Thornton. There is a bright, shy English teacher, Janet Bruce, who lives with Thornton, and who is introduced to the new philosophy professor, Philip Redfern. Eventually, the college girls notice the growing relationship between Redfern and Bruce; their gossip alerts Helen Thornton, who goes to Redfern's wife, asking her to keep her husband "in line." Mrs. Redfern feels helpless to do this, however, she does look for evidence of his infidelity and when she finds it, she confronts him. At the end, Philip Redfern leaves the college and never teaches again. As for the relationship between the two women, "patiently and quietly the dean worked it out and before many years she had regained all property rights in this shy learned creature [Janet Bruce]" (49).

What frames the story of the events at the college is a critique of feminism. The story begins with a narrator who discusses women's colleges in general and the attitudes of women who go to these schools:

I have seen college women years after graduation still embodying the type and accepting the standard of college girls—who were protected all their days from the struggles of the larger world and lived and died with the intellectual furniture obtained at their college... I wonder will the new woman ever relearn the fundamental facts of sex. Will she not see that college standards are of little worth in actual labor (4). This is an echo of what Stein wrote in the "Degeneration of the American Woman." She expands upon it, stating that a college graduate "spends sorrowful years in learning in after-life that her quality is not more fine nor her power greater than that of many of her more simple fellows" (6). The
end of the first section of the story carries a more personal note when the narrator states:

Had I been bred in the last generation full of hope and unattainable desires I too would have declared that men and women are born equal but being of this generation with the college and professions open to me and able to learn that the other man is really stronger I say I will have none of it (7-8).

The feminist movement of the late nineteenth century opened doors; Stein was of the first generation to be able to go through those newly-opened doors but what she found was not liberty but grave personal disappointment.

Seen in the light of this framework, "Fernhurst" is a story of the ways in which feminist theory failed to account for, much less address, the realities of women's lives. Stein's first example is the running of the college itself:

In accordance with the male ideal the college is governed by the students themselves in all matters relating to conduct but this government though in the hands of the students themselves is in truth wholly centred in the dean who dominated by a passion for absolute power administers an admirable system of espionage and influence which she interrupts with occasional bald exercise of authority and not infrequent ignominious retreats (5-6).

It is hard to desire absolute power, to cherish the ideals of liberty and honor for one's fellows and to be in a position of authority. It was in this situation that the Dean of Fernhurst found herself... It was impossible for her to be in relation with anything or anyone without controlling to the minutest detail and yet this college was to be as a man's, perfect liberty within broad limits, integrity and honor were to prevail. (17).

The feminist ideal represented here is that women have the same educational opportunities as men, including using the "male ideal" of the college students governing the everyday workings of the college.
Yet the "liberty" the young women in the college have is illusory. In reality, the Dean is in control even if there is an appearance of self-government. At the same time, all these efforts are made in the name of making advances for women. How can this illusory control be liberational? How can a feminist theory be adequate if it fails to discern the difference between real choices for the young women and the manipulation of the women by a controlling person who casts herself in the role of their liberator?

But even beyond the governmental problems of women's colleges and the fact that they do not adequately prepare women for the world that is out there, there is the problem of relations between women and men, which is Philip Redfern's struggle with both his wife and Janet Bruce. The problems began before Redfern came to Femhurst; they began when he was in college:

The college of which Redfern became a member was the typical coeducational college of the Middle West, a completely democratic institution... This Democracy was complete and included simple comradeship between the sexes. The men were simple, direct and earnest in their relations with the girls in the school, treating them with the generosity and kindliness characteristic of the Western man but never doubting for a moment their right to any learning or occupation they were able to acquire (23-4).

At this college, Redfern meets a very bright woman and they become friends. They talk in the library and eventually they take long walks together, always talking about ideas. It is all very exciting:

"You are a comrade and a woman" he cried out in his joy. "It is the new world." "Surely" she answered "there is no difference our being together only it is pleasanter and we go faster." "I know it" said Redfern "it is the new world" (26)
At one point, Redfern witnesses another man being affectionate with her and he has a strong emotional reaction. He confronts her and says that he had been tempted to attack the other man. She responds:

"Do you know that to me a Western woman it seems very strange that any one should see any wrong in his action. I have known Johnson all my life and trust in his purity as I would my own." Her courage rose with her theme. "Yes I will say it. I have never understood before why you always seemed on guard. Don't you know that so much care on your part is really an insult to a woman's honor..."

She ended steadily, he flushed and looked uneasy. It was a palpable hit, he was pierced in a vital part...They walked on, his ideals conquered his instincts, and his devotion was complete. "You wonderful Western woman" he cried out, "Surely you have made a new world" (26-7).

But even though it might be a brave new intellectual world, when it comes down to dealing with the emotional realities of married life, the old world values prevail. Redfern marries the young woman and within a couple of years he is deeply unhappy in the marriage but apparently feels unable to get out of it. The terms of marriage, as a life-long commitment no matter how the participants feel about each other, remain entrenched; despite the new world, old world marriage values remain a trap for both Redfern and his wife. Redfern's meeting with Janet Bruce shows him another possibility of the meeting of minds between men and women but that relationship is thwarted by the existence of his marriage. His wife is also placed in a very traditional position when the Dean asks her to bring her husband back in line.

At the point in her life in which Stein wrote "Fernhurst," she had been betrayed by both science and feminism. The science she knew was "mental suicide" for a woman like herself. It said that women were inferior to men mentally, physically, intellectually, and emotionally. It said that
women who were not heterosexual were mentally ill. It had a one-size-fits-all approach to the lives of women, suggesting that regardless of what intellectual and emotional characteristics and desires a woman might have she was, no matter what, to get married and to have children. It did not recognize that women might resist parenting, in part because they were consigned to being essentially single parents with sole responsibility for the children. It could not take into account the reality that, while some women do truly love men and/or having and caring for children, for other women marriage and children pre-empt the possibility of creating lives around artistic or intellectual pursuits. It said nothing about its own impact on women in terms of its technological interventions in women’s lives. Its response to women’s pain was objectification and victim blame. Science presented itself as a "truth" that in fact had nothing to do with reality.

At the same time, Stein felt deeply betrayed by feminism. Feminism had set her up for a life that was not, in fact, attainable. It promised that she was the equal if not the superior to men but gave her no strategies for coping with the intense realities of the relations between men and women, particularly in her struggle to live up to the life she was told in college she could have. It suggested the salves of education and suffrage when the women Stein saw would have been better served by decent food to eat, the possibility of jobs, birth control, doctors who remembered to wash their hands, and a liberal divorce law. It promised a new world that only extended to ideals and never to the realities of every day life. It promised liberation and delivered manipulation. Like science, feminism presented itself as a truth that had nothing to do with the realities of women’s lives.

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The lessons Stein learned at this point in her life were bitter. The two intellectual possibilities, the life made possible by scientific understanding and the life made possible with feminist ideals, were cut off for her because they could not account for so many of Stein's experiences. The result of this was emotionally very difficult for Stein to deal with because she valued honesty to such a great extent. When scholars such as Bridgman talk of the emotional turmoil in Stein's life, it is likely that the root of it came from her struggles to put together her life as a young woman and the discouragement she felt, beginning in 1901, with her failure at medical school coupled with her disillusionment about the possibilities for women. To top off her considerable professional discouragement, Stein's initial lesbian relationship had turned out to be painful.

Yet, within the ashes of her first career and her first love would be her métier, a career she would adopt. As painful as it would be, in love, she would find an avenue out of the purely intellectual life she had been leading. With the writing of Three Lives, the establishment of the art collection she made with her brother Leo, and her expatriation to Paris, Stein would soon create a satisfying and productive life for herself as well as crating a revolutionary body of work.

*Three Lives*

Q.E.D. represents a significant shift in Stein's approach to writing, because she began to use writing as a way of understanding something difficult. "Fernhurst," written after Q.E.D., but which deals with a conflict that had been significant to Stein for longer than the conflict in Q.E.D., and the essays which precede Q.E.D. represent an *a priori* approach to truth. That is, Stein did not use writing in those texts as a way of understanding events.
but rather as a way of presenting her perspective, the paradigm to which she subscribed before picking up a pen.

In contrast, Stein does not tie the events of *Q.E.D.* to some kind of intellectual framework because the events themselves defied all of her own intellectual ideals. Any truth to be found in the story occurs once all the evidence is in—and each reader must weigh that evidence. Certain questions remain unanswered in any definitive way: Did Helen love Adele? Maybe. Was Helen going to leave Mabel? Probably not. Had Adele not left Helen, what would have happened? It appears that the painful threesome could have gone on indefinitely. With *Q.E.D.*, writing came to have the possibility of discovery along with representation.

*Three Lives* is the next step in this process. In *Three Lives*, Stein became a writer in the artistic sense of that word, although she did not abandon her scientific understandings. Stein’s taking on an artistic identity occurred as she and her brother, Leo, developed the salon for which they were well known.

In 1903, the year before Gertrude Stein moved to France permanently, her brother Leo had a conversation with the cellist, Pablo Casals. According to Mellow, Leo told Casals that he was "growing into an artist" (69). Following their conversation, Leo went home, stripped nude, and began to draw himself. Soon he enrolled in an art school and went looking for a suitable studio. He settled into a place close to the Jardin du Luxembourg, 27 rue de Fleurus. It was a matter of only a few months later, as Mellow states, or it could even have been very close to the time of the conversation with Casals (as the chronology unfolds in Wineapple) that Leo—who had never stayed with any career for very long—claimed to his friend, art historian
Bernard Berenson, that he was bored with painting, or at least the paintings he had been seeing around him. Berenson offered a remedy for Leo's boredom: the Cézannes at Ambrose Vollard's gallery. Either in late 1903 or in early 1904, Leo purchased a Cézanne, "The Spring House."

The purchase of this painting was not the beginning of Leo's interest in art. For a number of years, according to both Mellow and Wineapple, he had been haunting Europe's museums, looking at paintings and sculpture. Leo's friendship with Bernard Berenson had come about because of his interest in art and the history of art. He also had a collection of Japanese prints, probably inspired by a trip to the far east he had made a few years before with his cousin, Fred Stein. In fact, he sold some of his Japanese prints in order to pay for modernist paintings, as his interests shifted in Paris.

Yet this new interest was significantly different from Leo's previous fascinations with long-dead artists and with the woodcuts. To begin with, the new painters were not that well-known and, if anything, their paintings were derided by critics and collectors instead of being sought after. Instead of only being able to buy a print—one of a run of several hundred—for a reasonable amount of money, Leo could own a whole oil painting, a unique object bearing many traces of the artist's hand. Further, since Leo had declared himself to be an artist, in collecting paintings of artists who were still alive (even though the paintings Leo bought initially were painted in the 1870's, Cézanne was still alive when Leo began buying these paintings; Cézanne died in 1906), Leo was engaging with the visions of his colleagues. He was engaging with a way of seeing that could reflect the conditions of the early twentieth century: there was no longer a need for painting to record
images, since photography could adequately do that. The new painters could record, instead, seeing—a process that was not only dependent on the external conditions of light and the existence of objects but which also had a psychological element to it. Like his sister, Leo had a compelling interest in psychology.

Not the least important in pushing Leo's interest forward was a financial factor. Very quickly after Leo began to be interested in collecting paintings, he interested not only Gertrude—who picked out pictures at Vollard's with him—Leo also interested his brother Michael and sister-in-law, Sally, both of whom had just arrived to live in Paris. Michael was the keeper of the family checkbook, who meted out income from family investments to all the siblings except Bertha (who had taken her share of the inheritance from their parents shortly after she got married). In the autumn of 1904, Michael found that there was some extra money available, which Leo describes in his book *Appreciation*:

27 Rue de Fleurus was filling with pictures, and also with visitors. My brother, who was our banker, surprised me one day when he said we had eight thousand unexpended francs. As this was regarded as criminal waste, we went at once to Vollard's. Vollard liked to sell us pictures because, as he told me, we were the only customers who bought pictures, not because they were rich, but despite the fact that they weren't . . . On this occasion I selected two Gauguins, two Cézanne figure compositions, two Renoirs, and Vollard threw in a Maurice Denis, *Virgin and Child* (194-195).

*Appreciation* was written retrospectively, in 1947, following the 1913 break-off of all relations between Gertrude and Leo (and, indeed, published after Gertrude's death). As Gertrude did to Leo in her own account of this time, *The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas*, Leo leaves out Gertrude's part of the selection of the paintings. Wineapple indicates that the evidence of the time
was that decisions about what paintings to buy were shared between Gertrude and Leo, albeit with Leo's leadership.

With their regular buying habits and the windfall of 8000 francs, the Steins had acquired a significant number of pictures in their first year of collecting contemporary art. These purchases of 1904 most likely include:

- Cézanne, "Bathers" (bought with windfall) [Wineapple, Gordon (in Museum of Modern Art Catalog, Four Americans in Paris)]
- Cézanne, "Five Apples" (may not have been bought in 1904) [Rewald, Four Americans in Paris]
- Cézanne, "Group of Bathers" (bought with windfall) [Wineapple, Gordon]
- Cézanne, "Madame Cézanne with a Fan" (a big Cézanne bought in lieu of several smaller paintings) [Wineapple, Rewald]
- Cézanne, "The Spring House" (could have been bought in late 1903) [Rewald, Gordon, Wineapple, Mellow]
- Degas, "After the Bath" drawing, (after the Salon d'Automne) [Wineapple]
- Delacroix, "Perseus and Andromeda" (after the Salon d'Automne) [Wineapple]
- Denis, "Mother in Black" (AKA: Virgin and Child) (bought with windfall) [Wineapple, Gordon, Leo Stein Appreciation]
- Gauguin, "Sunflowers" (bought with windfall) [Wineapple, Gordon]
- Gauguin, "Three Tahitians" (bought with windfall) [Wineapple, Gordon]
- Renoir, "Brunette" (bought with windfall, may not be this particular Renoir) [Wineapple, Gordon]
- Renoir, "Two Bathers" (etching) (bought with windfall, may not be this particular Renoir) [Wineapple, Gordon]
- Toulouse-Lautrec, "Au Salon: Le Divan" (after the Salon d'Automne) [Wineapple]

In his past, Leo had gone to law school and quit and had begun a Ph.D. in biology and quit. Unlike becoming a lawyer or a research scientist, goals

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Wineapple states that because of the lack of availability of records from the Barnes foundation (Dr. Barnes bought a significant number of pictures from Leo) it is difficult to tell exactly what pictures were bought when in the Stein family. I have used several secondary sources (listed in brackets) in order to identify what probably were on the walls at what time. All the pictures listed were bought by the Steins and they were all bought within one or two years of the dates that I have listed.
which take several years to accomplish, becoming an art collector was something Leo could do quickly, particularly given the windfall which allowed the purchase of seven pictures all at once. The tall blank walls of the studio filled at a rate that even an impulsive and impatient man such as Leo could appreciate. Leo rapidly moved into his position of being chief explainer of the paintings on his wall.

The next year, the collection began an important shift into that which made it a significant force in the forward motion of modernism, as is shown in this list of paintings likely to have been bought in 1905:

- Cézanne, "Bathers," 1898-1900, watercolor [Rewald]
- Cézanne, "Group of Bathers," 1892-4 [Rewald]
- Cézanne, "Montagne Sainte-Victoire," 1900-02 [Rewald]
- Cézanne, "Montagne Sainte-Victoire," c. 1890, watercolor [Rewald]
- Cézanne, "Portrait of Mme Cézanne" [Four Americans in Paris, Gordon]
- Matisse, Henri. "Woman with a Hat" [Mellow]
- Picasso, "Acrobat's family with monkey" [Four Americans in Paris, Gordon]
- Picasso, "Jeune Fille aux Fleurs" [Mellow]
- Vallotton, unidentified painting [Four Americans in Paris, Gordon]

While Cézanne is amply represented here, with the purchase of two Picassos and, more importantly at this particular point in time, the fauve Matisse, the Steins leapt into true modernism. At the end of this year, according to Flam, the Steins met Henri Matisse. While eventually it would be Sally Stein who would become the Matisse aficionado of the family, even taking painting lessons in the school he temporarily set up, for a critical period of time Matisse was on the walls at Gertrude and Leo's. The other important event of 1905 was the meeting between Gertrude Stein and Pablo Picasso. Although neither later remembered how it happened, as Wineapple states, it
was at the end of this year that Gertrude began sitting for Picasso's portrait of her.

The years 1904 and 1905 marked an important shift in Gertrude's interests and tastes. Rewald, a Cézanne scholar, states that the most important Cézanne bought by the Steins was the portrait of Mme. Cézanne, bought at the end of 1904. It was under the influence of this picture, Gertrude Stein claimed in the Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas, that she began writing Three Lives. In a letter to Mabel Weeks at the end of 1905, Stein describes her own writing of Three Lives:

I don't care there ain't any Tchaikovsky Pathetique or Omar Kayam or Wagner or Whistler or White Man's Burden or green burlap in mine at least not in the present ones. Dey is werry simple and werry wulgar and I don't think they will interest the great American public.

(Quoted in Mellow, 101)

What a contrast to the taste of the author that initial college essay mentioned in Chapter One, "In the Red Deeps," with her inflated Romantic prose! It is clear that Stein has rejected Romanticism, not only does she not write like a Romantic, she no longer finds Romantic poetry, art, or music to have anything to contribute to her work.

Early in 1905, according to Wineapple, Stein began what was to become Three Lives, which Dydo states was finished in the Spring of 1906. Although, as Wineapple states, the book was initially conceived to be an account of a young woman becoming an author, it soon moved into three accounts of women. Around May 1905, Gertrude Stein received a letter from Hortense Moses on the subject of Lena Lebender, the servant woman who had worked for Gertrude and Leo when they were in Baltimore, and whom Hortense had visited. Hortense described a conversation with Lena in which Lena wished that Leo would get sick --not deathly ill but just sick enough to
require Lena's care. If Leo were sick and had to return to the United States, then Gertrude would also return. Gertrude had not been living in Baltimore since 1903, so she had been absent from Lena's life for awhile. Some letters still exist from Lena, but they are dated much later than this, so it is hard to say whether Stein had remained in direct contact with Lena Lebender during the first part of her living in Paris. It is likely that the news from Hortense about Lena at the time in which Stein was considering the subject matter of her writing—and the reminder of how Lena both loved Gertrude and wanted to have control over Gertrude's comings and goings—led Stein to consider writing about Lena (as the Good Anna).

*Three Lives* offers accounts of the lives of two servant women (Anna and Lena) and one African American woman, Melanchta. One of the many remarkable things about these stories is that each of these women is an individual with complex thoughts and feelings. Anna, is derived from Lena Lebender; the closest character to Stein in this story is the ineffectual Miss Mathilde who cannot bring herself to discipline the girl who is working in the kitchen with Anna. Yet, while the reader is given Miss Mathilde's perspective, the majority of the story takes place from the perspective of Anna and her perspective remains clear even when it conflicts with that of Miss Mathilde. "The Good Anna" also shares details with Flaubert's story, "Un Coeur Simple," from *Trois Contes*.

Gentle Lena is very different from the Lena Lebiner, from whom her name was probably derived, in that the character Lena was very passive, while it is clear from Hortense Moses' letter that the real Lena was not at all passive. In Stein's story, which is analyzed in some detail below, this character and her last baby both die in childbirth in a hospital. It is possible
that the character was based on servant women whom Stein knew and
patients Stein met when she was making rounds.

Melanctha’s plot is an adaptation of the love triangle from Q.E.D. Jeff
Campbell is a doctor and plays Adele/Stein’s role in the story but his
perspective is not as sharply drawn as that of Melanctha. The story is about
African American characters; in the course of her medical training, Stein
had contact with African American communities in Baltimore.

Perhaps because Three Lives is one of the most "readable" (in
traditional terms) of Stein’s books, it has received a great deal of
commentary. DeKoven (in Kellner) discusses the entire project of the book,
as expressed by the epigraph, in relation to modernism:

In A Different Language I have argued that Three Lives is modernist
in its obtuse narration, detached, ironic tone, impressionist as well as
spatial temporal structures, and disruptions of conventional diction
and syntax. Stein even gave the book an epigraph from that
modernist precursor so admired by T.S. Eliot, Jules Laforgue: "Donc je
suis un malheureux et ce /n’est ni ma faute ni celle de la vie." But
clearly Stein is a modernist with a difference. "I'm a loser and it’s
nobody’s fault” is not a promising assertion for a founding work of
such a great literary movement. (81)

The word "malheureux," which DeKoven translates facetiously as "loser," is
defined in Le Robert Micro as "personne qui est dans le malheur, spécialt
dépourvue de ressources . . . indigent, miséreux" (767). In this epigraph,
Stein announces her intention to examine the lives of indigent people, not
blaming anyone, but in an effort to understand.

The project of modernism can be seen as taking a fresh look at things,
in a sense, to defamiliarize that which we take for granted, whether "that" is
an object we see every day or a person we see every day but do not
understand. For Stein, this project begins in the scientific realm of
observation, which, in the best sense, is an observation made without blame, without a sense of fault, in the interest of finding out what exists. Stein carries out this modernist project through examining three people of lower economic status, people which middle- and upper-class people not only do not understand but often fear. The epigraph signals her intent to avoid blaming the poor for their own poverty (a lesson which would be pertinent to current U.S. legislators) and instead to try to understand the qualities of their lives. The epigraph is a "promising assertion." It promises the project which Stein fulfills in the book and, in turn, Stein's project is -- despite its limitation of racism, discussed below -- a liberational one.

Donald Sutherland (in Bloom) finds there to be music in Good Anna:

In this passage the hard rage of Anna, the bland diffusion of Mrs. Lehntman, and the nasty silliness of Julia are conveyed by the rhythm of the talk I think very well. But in prose, since there can be no explicit indication of staccato or legato or speed or dolce, the exact phrasing can easily be lost by the reader. Gertrude Stein supplies some direction, not only from the natural assumptions of the scene but by such words as sharp, firm, hard, and then for Mrs. Lehntman, diffused, easy . . . But the rhythm involves much more than the matters of beat and phrasing and metrics. The physical verbal rhythm is in itself relatively simple and heavy, like the vocabulary. It would correspond to say a simple 3/4 time in comparison to the elaborate syncopations and runs and glides and suspensions of late 19th century prose, or poetry -- or to the palette of Cézanne as against an infinitely graduated impressionist palette, say that of Monet (52-53)

Even in work as early as Three Lives, there are aspects of vocabulary and sentence structure which can only be described by resorting to the two art forms which had the most profound influence on Stein, music and painting. The painting aspect of this choice that Sutherland makes could possibly be because of Stein's well-known association with Picasso and other painters--one would tend to look for the influence of painters in Stein's work because
of the famous salon of which she was a part. And, one might find influences simply because there is that expectation. But the influence of music is not one of the first things a person might assume to be significant to Stein -- until picking up her work and realizing the imperative of speaking the words aloud.

**Melanctha and Racism**

The story in *Three Lives* which has received the most comment in Stein scholarship is that of Melanctha. The most controversial aspect of it has to do with Stein's racism. Saldívar-Hull specifically cites Stein's racist stereotypes in Melanctha, and states:

> When we as feminist critics accept blatant slurs like the claim that black people speak with a "childlike vocabulary," when we do not question Steinian images of "negro sunshine" or assumptions of the "simple promiscuous unmorality of the black people," we are lulled and mesmerized by Stein's cadence and repetitions. Perhaps this is Stein's political agenda. The reader loses consciousness of the racism and classism because s/he is encouraged to think only of an aesthetic category, urged to remember that Stein wrote at a specific time, in a particular culture. But these embarrassment that feminist scholars do not discuss at any depth are at the center of "Melanctha." It is a story that appeals primarily to intellectuals who assume that everyone who reads Stein will accept the slurs in the spirit of linguistic authenticity, authorial irony, of Stein's exotic depiction of the "primitive." These are the tactics of ruling-class ideology; these are the methods the ruling class employs to retain power of the dominated. (189)

Saldívar-Hull raises significant concerns with the practices of studying Stein. Hovey problematizes racial aspects of Stein's early works (including *Q.E.D.*) by demonstrating a connection between the scientific pathologizing of African American women's sexuality as being related to lesbianism. Smedman examines some of Stein's less "representational" works which contain references to race. Ruddick reviews several newer "takes" on Stein and racism in recent scholarship.
There are many factors to consider in a discussion of Stein and racism. To begin with, one should always ask of the scholar discussing the issue, "what's it to you?" It is all too easy for scholars of European background, for example, to want to rescue Stein from rejection on the basis of racism. Defenses of Stein then become transparent ways of excusing racism. And, it is all too easy for European-American scholars such as myself to minimize the problem of racism.

A second factor, which necessarily conflicts with the first factor, is the historical context of Stein. On the one hand, there is considerable evidence that Stein was less racist than many white people of that day and age. While she did succumb to the prevailing attitudes and language about race and she could also transcend those limitations at least to some extent. On the other hand, is there ever an "acceptable" level of racism? Do we valorize someone who is merely "less racist"?

Then there is the factor of methodology. How do we assess Stein's attitudes about race? As I suggested in Chapter One, it is important to look at Stein's work in context. To analyze one of the Radcliffe essays without reference to the other is to miss important information about how Stein operated in a racialized world. We need to look in detail at Stein's manuscripts, her letters, her notes, and her published works. Of course, she was racist. And, over time, our understandings of what racism means will continue to shift.

And, in terms of methodology, what do we do about Stein's contemporaries' responses to her work, particularly African American contemporaries? This is truly a slippery slope because then we fall into the trap of placing a person, such as Richard Wright (whose enthusiastic
response to Melanctha is cited in Saldívar-Hull), into a position of being a spokesperson, representing the African American response to Melanctha or Gertrude Stein the person. Saldívar-Hull, for one, does not buy Richard Wright's endorsement of Stein.

Finally, what do we do with the information that Stein was racist? I do want to suggest one answer to that. Part of Stein's project was a liberatory one. Over the course of her early writing, she found ways of liberating herself from various kinds of strictures placed on her life and language. In the final version of *The Making of Americans*, discussed in the next chapter, Stein states:

Yes real singularity we have not made enough of yet so that any other one can really know it. I say vital singularity is as yet an unknown product with us, we who in our habits, dress-suit cases, clothes and hats and ways of thinking, walking, making money, talking, having simple lines in decorating, in ways of reforming, all with a metallic clicking like the type-writing which is our only way of thinking, our way of educating, our way of learning, all always the same way of doing, all the way down as far as there is any way down inside to us. We all are the same all through us, we never have it to be free inside us. No brother singulars, it is sad here for us, there is no place in an adolescent world for anything eccentric like us, machine making does not turn out queer things like us, they can never make a world to let us be free each one inside us. (47)

Stein finds so many pushes towards conformity, and this was especially true in adolescence. This push toward conformity is antithetical to the overall goal of making "a world to let us be free each one inside us."

One way of answering the question of what Stein's racism means is to realize that it was for her an unseen limitation on the goal of each person being free inside. The tendency of white people historically and currently to judge non-white people before knowing the individuals in question is another example of the mechanical processes Stein identifies which push
human beings into very narrow spaces. At the same time, Stein's own liberation process is instructive. She did have terrible restrictions from being Jewish, lesbian, and female. Yet, Stein's racism (and classism as Saldívar-Hull points out) is something we need to know about. If we are going to learn about what liberation is through Stein's texts, and this is a very important lesson which her writing has to offer, we must do so with the caveat that she could not imagine a non-racist form of liberation. This is a limitation of her project.

The story of "Melanctha" can be seen as a problematic enactment of Stein's liberatory project, that is, liberation of self, narrative, and language. "Melanctha" is unusual for a number of reasons. To begin with, it is a story written by a white woman about an African American character. Stein works in this story as an author of fiction, bringing knowledge gained from a variety of real experiences to the creation of a story. The story features some of the white characterizations of African American people common at that period of time (e.g., referring to one of the characters as a "childlike, good looking negress," p. 85). The style of writing is extremely unusual, as the narrative unfolds in a kind of three-steps-forward-two-steps-backwards dance.

In the 1930s, an African American man named Ulysses G. Lee wrote to Stein about The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas and various remarks she had made about African Americans in that book. Stein responded quickly, thanked him for his letter, and asked him to read "Melanctha." Lee wrote back two months later about the character Melanctha. He found that he had mixed feelings about Melanctha as a character but that he felt that the story as a whole was "inviting." He was astonished that someone of Stein's
background could have created the variety of characters in that story. Perhaps in her response to Lee, asking him to read Melanctha, Stein was seeking some kind of "certification" as a non-racist white (and therefore a person who could unproblematically critique African American communities as she did in the Autobiography). Lee did not reassure her on this point.

The fact that Stein even attempted to create these characters as well as the servant women characters indicates that she listened to these people's accounts of their lives with enough empathy that she tried to imagine their thoughts and feelings in some degree of detail. As will be made clear in the discussion of Making of Americans (Chapter Three), empathy is a psychological characteristic which Stein felt was important. People who lack empathy, the ability to stand in the shoes of another, have difficulties being free; empathy is part of Stein's project of liberation.

The best of Stein's scientific approach was that she could observe and listen to people, and then make inferences about what the events she observed might mean in the lives of the people she was writing about. Her scientific stance gave her the impetus to try, even if she did not always succeed, to get beyond preconceived ideas about people and instead to draw her own conclusions from her own observations and her attempts to understand what she saw and heard.

Lena and the Struggle with Narrative

In an undated letter to Mabel Weeks from Leo Stein, probably around the beginning of 1905, according to Wineapple, Leo explained paintings and artists:
... if this proves to be a treatise, not a letter, the responsibility will lie with the obligation that I have been under ever since the Autumn Salon, of expounding L’Art Moderne (you will observe that this is not the same thing as L’Art Nouveau). The men whose pictures we have bought—Renoir, Cézanne, Gauguin, Maurice Denis [sic, probably Leo wrote Denis and the editors of _Journey into Self_ mis-read his handwriting]... all belong... The Big Four are Manet, Renoir, Degas, and Cézanne...

Fourth comes Cézanne and here again is great mind, a perfect concentration, and great control. Cézanne's essential problem is mass and he has succeeded in rendering mass with a vital intensity that is unparalleled in the whole history of painting. No matter what his subject is—the figure, landscape, still life—there is always this remorseless intensity, this endless unending gripping of the form, the unceasing effort to force it to reveal its absolute self-existing quality of mass. There can scarcely be such a thing as a completed Cézanne. Every canvas is a battlefield and victory an unattainable ideal (_Journey Into Self_ 15-16).

We know from the biographers that Gertrude was present during Leo's "expounding," and it is likely that the content of the expounding is recorded in this letter.

In contrast to that of painting, the central problem of writing is not mass, is not the rendering in two dimensions something which in "real life" takes up three dimensions. Rather, the central problem of writing is the fourth dimension, time: narrative and its relation to the multitude of events that make up a person's life. What are the relations between events as they unfold over time? Given her scientific training, Stein was aware of the scientific questioning of the determination of causal relations.

In his lectures, _Aspects of the Novel_, E.M. Forester differentiates between story and plot:

We have defined a story as a narrative of events arranged in their time-sequence. A plot is also a narrative of events, the emphasis falling on causality. "The king died and then the queen died" is a story. "The king died, and then the queen died of grief" is a plot. The
Literary theorist Robert Scholes demonstrates that there is a problem with the idea of causality in literature as well as in science. He states, for example, that Bremond's three-part narrative structure of potential, enactment, and result can be broken down into smaller and smaller units unto infinity with any given event. Further, Scholes shows, in a series of statements of events happening across time derived from E.M. Forester, that there is no simple line of demarcation as to what constitutes narrative and what is not narrative. He states:

Consider for a moment the following verbal structures:
1. The king was healthy, but he became ill, and though he tried every medicine in the kingdom, he finally died.
2. The king was healthy but then he became ill and then he died.
3. The king was healthy but then he became ill.
4. The king was healthy but then he died.
5. The king was ill and then he died.
6. The king was ill and then the queen died.
7. The king was ill and then John Smith died.

All seven of these verbal constructs mention at least two events that take place successively in time. Number 1, though not very interesting, is clearly a narrative. Number 7 (assuming there is no connection between Smith and the king), can hardly be called a narration at all. . . But where in this graded sequence of examples do we pass from the level of narration to some inferior level? (95)

This passage explicitly and implicitly raises several questions: What kind of relations between events are sufficient for the series to be considered narrative? How do these events relate to life experience which may have qualities more like the chronology of Number 7 than the narrative of Number 1? And, should we necessarily value full-fledged narrative over "inferior" forms of chronology?
Like Cézanne, Gertrude Stein began to engage in a formal way with a problem in the art form she chose. DeKoven identifies one of the formal qualities in *Three Lives*:

... the chronological events in each heroine's life are not linked causally. Instead they are seen as a process of continual change, where one condition or state of being persists for a time and then is either suddenly transformed or gradually shifted into a different (often opposite) condition. But whether change is sudden or gradual, it is part of the natural process of life and not dependent on the will of a character or the logic of other events in the narrative (p. 33).

The struggle in Cézanne with the question of what is mass, particularly in relation to a two-dimensional surface, is analogous to the question in Stein about what is narrative in relation to human experience. There is a struggle between perspectives in the last story in *Three Lives*, "Gentle Lena." This struggle is analogous to the "battle" on the canvas that Leo identified in Cézanne's painting, is congruent with the scientific questioning of causality, and is connected to DeKoven's statement about how events are linked in the story. Each perspective assigns a different set of linkages to events.

"Gentle Lena" is the story of a young German woman who is taken to America by her aunt. The aunt had previously immigrated to the U.S., had made good, and had decided to rescue one child from her extended family in Germany. The aunt, Mrs. Haydon, chooses Lena and gets her on the boat. During the voyage, Lena is terribly ill and miserable. After they get to the U.S., Mrs. Haydon gets Lena a job taking care of the children of a Mrs. Aldrich. Some time after that, Mrs. Haydon decides it is time for Lena to get married. Mrs. Haydon finds a family, the Kreders, who are hard working and who have a very compliant son. Mrs. Haydon and the Kreders arrange the marriage between Lena and Herman Kreder. Herman Kreder does not want to get married, so he runs off to visit his married sister hours before the
wedding is to take place. Mrs. Haydon scolds Lena for not being nicer to Herman and Lena is sent back to work. The following week, Mrs. Haydon sends for Lena. Everything has been straightened out, and the wedding takes place. What had happened, unbeknownst to Lena, was that Mr. Kreder found Herman, the married sister laughed at Herman's fears, and he was talked into going through with the marriage.

Following their marriage, Herman and Lena live with the Kreders. Mrs. Kreder scolds Lena all the time. Lena gets pregnant, Herman tries to stand up for Lena, Lena has the baby, Herman begins to love his child, Lena has a couple more children, Lena stops feeling like she needs to get cleaned up and "lets herself go," she gets pregnant with a fourth child, the child is still-born, and Lena herself dies. Only the cook from Mrs. Aldrich's house misses Lena; Herman loves the three living children and takes good care of them.

There are three levels of narrative distance from events in this story. Occasionally, the narrator recounts events from several perspectives very quickly—this would be at a relatively great emotional distance from the events because the events are sketched in. The opening of the story uses this kind of distance—Lena is presented at the Aldrich house with the other servants and they tease her. They think she is an easy mark for teasing. She is unsure of what they are doing and why. The opening establishes Lena's overriding personal characteristic, her complete passivity, her inability to take action on her own behalf.

More often, the events are narrated from the perspective of a single character; the narration of these events includes that character's thoughts and ideas as well as a summary of what the character says, usually to Lena.
This level of narration is more emotionally close to the event, since it allows the reader access to thoughts and feelings. An example is the narration of how Mrs. Haydon reacts to Herman's failure to show up to the wedding:

Mrs. Haydon was very angry with poor Lena when she saw her. She scolded her hard because she was so foolish, and now Herman had gone off and nobody could tell where he had gone to, and all because Lena always was so dumb and silly. And Mrs. Haydon was just like a mother to her, and Lena always stood there so stupid and did not answer what anybody asked her... Did Lena think it gave Mrs. Haydon any pleasure, to work so hard to make Lena happy, and get her a good husband, and then Lena was so thankless and never did anything that anybody wanted (255-256).

The scene progresses, and the emotional stakes become higher as the level of narration zeros in on the actual words that Mrs. Haydon uses:

...Lena stood there, and never made any answer and never tried to please her aunt, or to do anything that her aunt wanted. "No, it ain't no use your standin' there cryin', now, Lena. Its [sic] too late now to care about that Herman... I am glad you got the sense to feel sorry now, Lena, anyway, and I try to do what I can to help you out in your trouble, only you don't deserve to have anybody take any trouble for you..." (256)

Yet as strong as the perspective of Mrs. Haydon is, there are some other equally strong perspectives. For example, when Lena comes back to the Aldrich house in disgrace, a fellow servant, has a strong reaction to events. Her thoughts and feelings are presented:

The girls Lena always sat with were very sorry to see her look so sad with her trouble. Mary the Irish girl sometimes got very angry with her. Mary was always very hot when she talked of Lena's aunt Mathilda, who thought she was so grand, and had such stupid, stuck up daughters. Mary wouldn't be a fat fool like that ugly tempered Mathilda Haydon, not for anything anybody could every give her. How Lena could keep on going there so much when they all always acted as if she was just dirt to them, Mary never could see. (260)
These strong, conflicting perspectives create different causal linkages between events: was the reason for Mrs. Haydon setting up the wedding for Lena's own good (as Mrs. Haydon thought) or was it another example of Mrs. Haydon's own tendency to be self-aggrandizing, as Mary thought? Was Herman a good, if passive, hard working young man or a fool? Was Lena ungrateful for all the work done on her behalf or was she a victim being manipulated into making a permanent connection with someone unworthy of her?

Lena's perspective is never presented up close. Her thoughts and feelings are occasionally revealed by the narrator. But she never speaks at length; her actual words are few in number and are presented in reaction only to the words of the other characters. Yet because the reader is presented with Mrs. Haydon's words to Lena, the reader is placed in Lena's shoes, having to listen to Mrs. Haydon's lengthy scolding. The reader then can rely on his or her own empathy (in terms of, how would I feel if someone scolded me in this fashion?) to figure out Lena's perspective about the whole situation. The only other character the reader takes on is Herman, in the scene in which his father and his sister address him about his refusal to marry Lena. His father tells him directly about how good Lena is and his sister tells him he is being very silly and funny for not wanting to get married. The reader stands in for the two characters who are not able to speak on their own behalf. Stein balances the perspectives by providing the actual words of those who have strong perspectives and directing those words to the weaker characters for whom the reader stands in.

If Cézanne's pictures ask, what is mass and how do we see it in an oil painting, then Stein's story asks a similar question, what is a narrative and
how do we understand it in the context of a written story? The initial influence of painting came to Stein, in part, because of the actual object hanging on her wall for her own contemplation over a long period of time and in part because of her brother's excellent articulation of what was at stake in these paintings, which was congruent with her early scientific understandings about causality. I am not willing to argue that Stein attempted to work out the problem of narrative on a completely conscious level, that is, I do not think it is necessarily the case that Stein began with the problem of narration and then cast about for a subject that could the occasion for the working out of the problem. Instead, I think it is more likely that as Stein settled on her subject matter, she sought ways of depicting it in narrative that would capture her sense, based on her empathic understanding of all the people in her stories, of how the events felt to those people—in particular, the connections (or lack thereof) that these people themselves would sense between the events.

Leo's articulation of the concept of struggle in Cézanne matched Gertrude's sense of the struggle in narrative about who gets to tell the story—the stronger characters who "won" by being able to control the events or the weaker characters who, in the case of Lena, lost their lives in the unfolding of events? This struggle about who determines the causal links in narrated events accounts for DeKoven's sense that *Three Lives* presents events without an ultimate sense of cause. Stein found ways of writing through the paintings surrounding her. If at first this was mediated by her brother's explanation, later it would be a more direct influence. If at first this was an accident, later it would become a deliberate way of working.
Writing and Id-Entity

Despite all its autobiographical elements, *Three Lives* marks a transition in Stein's writing. To begin with, unlike "Fernhurst" and *Q.E.D.*, *Three Lives* borrows autobiographical elements from multiple sources in Stein's life and not whole narratives from a single source. Furthermore, her own character is not so important in *Three Lives*. In "Fernhurst," the narrator—who represents Stein's perspective—frames and comments upon the entire story. Stein's character is the main character of *Q.E.D.* and is the only character who has demonstrated any kind of growth at the end of the story. But the Miss Mathilde of the "Good Anna" is not nearly as important as Anna herself or Anna's relationship with a close friend. Stein used some of her own characteristics in her portrayal of Jeff Campbell in *Melanctha*—but Campbell was also significantly different from Stein in terms of race, gender, and, ultimately, career. The most important character in this story is Melanctha, herself. Further, there is a significant stylistic shift between *Three Lives* and Stein's earlier writings. Particularly in the oddly-written "Melanctha," Stein begins to think of herself as an artist, as someone who not only has a subject matter but also someone who must think about formal elements and qualities in the process of that portrayal.

Many years after she wrote *Three Lives*, Stein wrote about being an author:

The thing one gradually comes to find out is that one has no identity that is when one is in the act of doing anything. Identity is recognition, you know who you are because you and others remember anything about yourself but essentially you are not that when you are doing anything. I am I because my little dog knows me but, creatively speaking the little dog knowing that you are you and your recognizing that he knows, that is what destroys creation. (*Gender of Modernism, "What are Masterpieces,"* p. 496).
It seems ironic that a writer who put so much of her life in her work would write that identity actually destroys the possibility of creating a masterpiece. However, Stein finds an alternative to identity as a way of explaining what an author is:

I once wrote in writing *The Making of Americans* I write for myself and strangers but that was merely a literary formalism for if I did write for myself and strangers if I did I would not really be writing because already then identity would take the place of *entity*. [My emphasis] (*Gender of Modernism*, p. 497).

Entity implies the existence of something and the property of existence is the main characteristic of that thing. Identity, in contrast, implies a sameness about that which exists, a sameness across time and space, some kind of coherence along with existence. Identity is being oneself, which implies some kind of definition of characteristics along with existence. Identity, then, is a step beyond entity, limiting entity to that which remains constant.

The play between "identity" and "entity" also suggests a Freudian concern: an identity is an entity with an "id," or an entity with a childish set of insatiable desires. In Chapter Four we will see how the change in Stein's relationship with her brother, Leo, contributed to her writing. For now it is enough to say that while Leo embraced the ideas of Freud, Gertrude certainly did not. One element of Stein's preference for entity over identity, at the time of writing "What Are Masterpieces" (1936), is a rejection of the Freudian "id," which is tied up with the differences between herself and her brother.

Between 1903 and 1906, Gertrude Stein ceased being a failed doctor and began to be a writer. She taught herself how to work within fiction--how to create the patchwork quilt of events that any fiction piece is without letting
too many of the seams show. Between 1903 and 1906, she became not just a writer, but a writer engaging with the artistic problems of her time.

One of the discoveries of the modernist painters is that of paint. With the invention of photography, the job of the painter as recorder/preserver of image came to an end. The impressionist experiments with light and seeing were interesting in their time, but what became important to the early modernist painters was the material they were using. Matisse painted a green stripe down a woman's nose, and in that stripe there is something of the nature of shadows, something of the nature of the woman in question, and something of the nature of pigment placed on a flat surface with a brush. Not only is seeing arbitrary—we know this from Cézanne's many different pictures of Mont Sainte Victoire—but the materials of painting themselves signify: a blue man and a blue guitar become "things as they are," to quote Wallace Stevens, in the modernist era.

Along with her friends the painters, Stein began to think of writing as having dimensional problems which were analogous to those of paint. She used all the resources at her fingertips in order to engage with these problems: her scientific training contributed understandings about the limitations of her medium. The pictures around her contributed an appreciation for the struggle of being an artist, of engaging with the materials and limitations of one's medium. By this point, Stein was not only a writer, but she was well-launched along the road of linguistic innovation.
CHAPTER 3

THE MAKING OF AMERICANS

*The Making of Americans* is Stein's long modernist novel, in which she accomplishes several things. She develops a psychology—a way of understanding the people around her. She creates one of the earliest "modernist" novels in the twentieth century through her incorporation of the process of writing in the novel itself. Finally, she develops an innovative scientific language of description.

This book has often been interpreted biographically. Wineapple, Bridgman, and many others have mined the book for information about Stein's parents (apparently modeled on the Herslands), Stein herself (modeled on Martha Hersland), and Bird Sternberger (Julia Dehning Hersland). In fact, one of the challenges of reading accounts of Stein's childhood is to be able to separate out information which biographers have gained through primary documents (e.g., Stein's mother's diaries) or through interviews with various family members, and information which is derived from *The Making of Americans*, information which may not be accurate because the book is, after all, fiction.

*The Making of Americans* was written after Stein had begun to use fictional methods of writing. That is, by this point she was taking incidents in "real" life and using them as starting points. For example, the problem with interpreting Martha Hersland as Stein herself is that while Stein may have
used incidents in her own childhood as things which happened to Martha, Stein also adapted the "Fernhurst" story and had Martha get married to Phillip Redfern when she finished college. The interpretation here, then, will not be biographical but instead will focus on the book as a Modernist psychological piece of fiction.

A number of scholars have noted the influence of Otto Weininger's book, *Sex and Character*, on Stein's book. This aspect of *The Making of Americans* has been well-explored by others, notably in Katz' dissertation on the development of the book. What remains to be explored are the system of psychology which Stein developed in the book, the book as a modernist novel, and, most importantly, the linguistic innovations of the book in relation to Stein's scientific training and concerns.

**Stein's System of Psychology**

Many of the psychological concepts which have become part of our everyday thinking at the end of the twentieth century were not common forms of thinking at the beginning of this century, in Stein's time. Our pop psychology culture with its self-help books, self-help groups, and television talk shows had not yet been created. It is therefore hard to tease out Stein's psychological concepts, because they are couched in such different terms from the ones used currently. Yet her novel manages to touch upon a number of important psychological characteristics, including locus of control as an aspect of a person's psychological make-up, the role of ego in human existence, the relation between human emotion and human ability to be reasonable or logical, the concept of pattern in people's lives, and the complexity of human beings.
The overall psychological concept in the book is the division that Stein makes between "dependent independent" and "independent dependent" people. While Stein discusses many characteristics that people can possess, she primarily divides people along the lines of "dependent independent" and "independent dependent." About these terms, Jayne Walker (in Bloom) states:

"Independent dependent" and "dependent independent," each self-canceling in terms of ordinary lexical meaning, each the mirror image of the other, are virtually empty signifiers. Their meaning is more specifically determined inside the text, partly by their systematic association with other pairs of words, such as "attacking" and "resisting," and partly by the cumulative effect of specific "histories" which are introduced to illustrate the two kinds." (191)

Stein's categories are not intuitive. One cannot immediately imagine how she might be dividing people across these categories the way one can imagine people being divided into the categories of almost any popular magazine's psychological quizzes. The process of coming to understand these terms, as Walker points out, is the same by which one comes to understand any term within language, and that is through association and opposition. Stein's use of opposition within her terms—that is, independent and dependent are both present within each descriptor and the descriptors are opposed to each other simply by the "privileging" of a single term through its placement within the descriptor -- makes visible what is normally invisible: one of the significatory processes of language. In a sense, all of language can be seen as "empty signifiers;" these signifiers only makes sense in context of association with other signifiers.

The following figure shows Stein's descriptions of these two characteristics, with the page numbers on which these descriptions can be found.
### Independent Dependence

<table>
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<tr>
<th>165 love only those who need them</th>
<th>165 need to own the people they need to love them.</th>
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<td>169 bottom weakness—which can be a strength in their relationships with children. Need others around to love them before they have power. Attacking is a power, except when they meet with resistance. Bottom weakness is only a power when those around them love them. They don't believe evil can destroy them—aggressive optimism</td>
<td>169 Need to own the people around them. Often have a dependent, patient way of living. Because of the dependent nature, don't have a feeling of themselves. This only happens when they resist, when they own themselves, own someone around them. This may not happen during their lifetime.</td>
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<td>172 servant girl nature with dependent weakness, no responsibility, some badness/tricks</td>
<td>174 This can be servant girl, but is differently—meekness and concealment rather than lying of the other type.</td>
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<td>178 attacking in loving</td>
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<td>189 men and women of this type have in their sense of anger/injury a sense of their own virtue. Anger and injury come from outraged virtue and goodness</td>
<td>189 injured or angry feelings come when someone does something that it is not right for them to do. Virtue not the important thing—it was the feelings of anger/injury that had to be satisfied.</td>
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<td>192 resisting is the fighting power.</td>
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<td>224 have attacking as way of fighting resisting is impatient or dull or scared or stubborn or pig-headed stupid or vacant being is a way of attacking.</td>
<td>224 resisting is the way of fighting</td>
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<td>249 love only the ones who need them, have power over others only when others have already started to love them.</td>
<td>249 own the ones they need to love them</td>
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<td>257 many who are cowardly are of the independent dependent kind. [[the kind of cowardly not connected to fearfulness.]] Mr. Hersland of this type. He was a coward without fearfulness.</td>
<td>257 cowardice is connected to fearfulness.</td>
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### Dependent Independence

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<th>165 need to own the people they need to love them.</th>
<th>165 love only those who need them</th>
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<tr>
<td>169 Need to own the people around them. Often have a dependent, patient way of living. Because of the dependent nature, don't have a feeling of themselves. This only happens when they resist, when they own themselves, own someone around them. This may not happen during their lifetime.</td>
<td>169 bottom weakness—which can be a strength in their relationships with children. Need others around to love them before they have power. Attacking is a power, except when they meet with resistance. Bottom weakness is only a power when those around them love them. They don't believe evil can destroy them—aggressive optimism</td>
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<td>189 injured or angry feelings come when someone does something that it is not right for them to do. Virtue not the important thing—it was the feelings of anger/injury that had to be satisfied.</td>
<td>189 men and women of this type have in their sense of anger/injury a sense of their own virtue. Anger and injury come from outraged virtue and goodness</td>
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<td>192 resisting is the fighting power.</td>
<td>192 attacking is the fighting power</td>
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**Figure 1:** Independent Dependent and Dependent Independent in *The Making of Americans*
The concept of independent dependent vs. dependent independent is a complex one. The salient feature of human beings, for Stein, is what happens when a person feels threatened. Does this person attack or resist? An example of an attacking person would be Mr. David Hersland, the father of Julia, Alfred, and David Hersland:

As I was saying the father David Hersland was in some ways a very splendid kind of person but he had some very uncertain things inside him. He too was very proud of his children but it was not easy for them to be free of him. Sometimes he was very angry with them. Sometimes it came to his doing very hard pounding on the table at which they would be sitting and disputing, and ending with the angry word that he was the father, they were his children, they must obey him, he was master and he knew how to make them do as he would have them. Such scenes were very hard on the little gentle mother woman who was all lost in between the angry father and the three big resentful children who knew very well what they needed to have given to them so that they could be free inside them. (45)

When Mr. Hersland does not like something that is happening, he looks outside himself to other people, and he makes an attempt to control them.

In fact, Mr. Hersland was so oriented toward controlling other people that he would completely forget his own role in events:

Sometimes in little things it would be annoying to [the children] in their early living, [Mr. Hersland's] way of beginning and then never knowing that he was full up with impatient feeling and so had stopped and wanted others to keep on going. Sometimes this would be annoying of an evening. He would want to play cards and the three of them would begin with him, to please him. The children felt it to be hard on them when they would have begun playing cards just to oblige him and after a few minutes with them he would arise in him his impatient feeling, and he would say, "here you just finish it up I haven't time to go on playing," and he would call the governess to take his hand from him and all three of the children would have then to play together a game none of them would have thought of beginning, and they had to keep on going for often he would stop in his walking to find which one was winning, and it never came to him to know that he had made the beginning and that the children were playing just because they had to, for him (129).
Not all people with "independent dependence," the primary characteristic of which is the "attacking" way of dealing with problems, were exactly like Mr. Hersland; there is a great deal of variation between people within these two broad categories. Still, when these people feel stress, they tend to look outward to understand the problem and to attempt to solve it.

In contrast, Mrs. Hersland was of the "dependent independent" group, which has "resisting" as a way of "fighting." That is, a dependent independent person tends to look inward and to resist the influence of others rather than to attempt to change the behavior of others:

Mrs. Hersland had her important feeling from servants who were with her in her middle living. Mrs. Hersland had from some of them an injured feeling, Mrs. Hersland had with some of them an angry feeling, sometimes it was with one of them sometimes with some one of the family of one of them. Mrs. Hersland had in her nothing of impatient feeling, she could have in her an injured and a bright angry feeling. Once one foreign girl had come to her from some one in Bridgepoint who had sent her because she wanted to go and this friend thought she would be a good servant for Mrs. Hersland to have with her. The girl did not want to stay, she wanted to go back to Bridgepoint, she said Mrs. Hersland should help send her, Mrs. Hersland had then an angry feeling in her, she said she did not have to help send her. The girl said she would have to help a little to send her, Mrs. Hersland said she would either not give her anything to help her or she would pay everything for her, she never would help to send her away from her, she would pay the whole thing for her, it was not right but she would pay the whole thing for her, she would do it all or nothing for her, she did not have to do anything for her, she would do the whole thing for her. (188)

Mrs. Hersland felt attacked by the young woman's request for "help," for money for the trip from California back east to Bridgepoint. Her way of dealing with the problem was to resist the young woman's solution, partial aid for the trip, and instead to substitute her own solution, even though her solution cost more than the young woman's solution.
One interesting aspect of this system is that it is easy to see the problems with both ways of being. Mr. Hersland's way of attacking was difficult to live with. Mrs. Hersland's approach might have been easier to live with, but it made her unable to set limits on Mr. Hersland; she was not able to protect her children from his excesses. In creating psychological categories, the tendency (and this will be seen in some of the psychological concepts mentioned below) is to set up one term that is desirable and an opposite term as a way of having a problem. Stein's approach did not idealize one group of people; instead, she demonstrated that every way of being has its advantages and disadvantages.

Aside from how people deal with interpersonal stress, another characteristic that is significant to the difference between dependent independent people and independent dependent people is their approach to the people they love. Stein casts this idea in terms of ownership. This concept of ownership is linked to the concept of one's orientation towards others in stressful situations. Independent dependent people, who are attacking, only love people over whom they have some kind of control. Dependent independent people, on the other hand, have a sense of ownership over the people they love.

To understand this concept, it is helpful to look at Mr. and Mrs. Hersland again:

Loving never came to be in [Mr. Hersland] impatient feeling excepting when he felt his wife as outside of him, inside him in her early living she was a tender feeling in him, she was a gentle thing inside him, she was full up with children for him, outside him in his early living she was a pleasant resistance to him, she was a little a joke to him, she could a little manage him by resisting to him, then it came to be that a little more and more she was a tender feeling in him, a little, more and more, she was outside him, she was then more a joke to him when she
Love is a tender, vulnerable feeling about another person. A person who tends to control others when under stress can only afford to have this feeling about people over whom he or she has control on a regular basis. In the beginning of their relationship, Mr. Hersland felt he had control over Mrs. Hersland; her little resistances did not threaten him—they were a "joke" to him. Later, as the children grew and began to have problems with their father, Mrs. Hersland attempted to intervene and to stop Mr. Hersland’s attacks on his children. He began to love her less, because he no longer could control her. He also loved his children less and less as they became more resistant to him. For Mr. Hersland, the control came first and after that came love.

The mother, in contrast, felt a sense of ownership over that which she loved:

Mrs. Hersland like almost all women had different things in her for loving. For her her children when they were little things around her it was not to her that they had need of her they were to her a part of her as if they were inside her, as they grew bigger and had their individual living in the house with her as they did not then need her to fight out their daily living with their father they did not feel any importance in her, they were for her then no longer a part of her, she had then weakening in her, she was a little thing then and they were so large around her, they were then struggling with themselves and with their living and with their father, she was weakening then and more and more they were not a part of her, she had not loved them because they
had need of her, they were a part of her, then they were all struggling around her, she was a little thing then with weakening in her, more and more then they forgot about her, they were all struggling then around her, they were all of them having in them their individual living, they were all big then and she was a little gentle thing and lost among them and then she died away and left them. (162-163)

Mrs. Hersland tended to focus her efforts of control on herself, rather than on others. The way love, as a vulnerable feeling, could be safe for her is also to have control over others, as with Mr. Hersland. But the only way she would be able to have control over others would be if she saw those others as an extension of herself—that is, if she had ownership over them. Then her efforts to control those whom she loved would be simply an extension of her tendency to control herself. In contrast to Mr. Hersland in whom love followed control, Mrs. Hersland loved and then felt ownership.

One might argue that there are other ways in which people deal with love—that some people might be able to love without needing to control others through direct control or through a sense of ownership. At the same time, Stein's insights into the ways of loving and controlling that she presents, are keen. She manages to capture and articulate human dynamics that are present in many, many relationships between adults and between parents and children.

Another characteristic which Stein discusses, albeit briefly, is that of what she calls "egotism." This characteristic is worth discussion as an antidote to the Stein scholars who suggest that Stein had excessive ego¹ (as if no other modernist author had any kind of ego?) as well as because of the insight Stein had into how people work:

¹Notably B.L. Reid, as well as Gilbert and Gubar, but this accusation is a subtle part of more responsible Stein critics. Marianne DeKoven suggests in A Different Language that Stein was megalomaniacal.
As I was saying many have it in them when they have more self-sacrificing, more noble being in them than ever comes out of them in living, when they have a noble sweetness in them to them and they are unpleasant or lazy even in living. Many of them who have negative egotism in them have lazy being as the bottom of them, lazy or vague or empty bottom to them. Some of them are dependent independent, some are independent dependent, all of them mostly have lazy or vague or empty or very little bottom to them. Some have much bottom in them and never get it into motion. Negative egotism then is when one has enough egotism never to follow any other leading, never to live anybody else's life in living, always to have the best reason why every condition in living is the wrong place for them and not to have enough egotism to live their own live, to do their own choosing, to really be resisting. These then never have any real choice in them, they have not resisting in them, they have very good reasons why there is no place for them, why conditions are always wrong to them. (231)

There are several kinds of egotism, which Stein mentions on page 232: active, passive, and negative. Stein never defines active and passive egotism but here we have an excellent definition of negative egotism and by implication, a definition of some kind of positive or helpful egotism:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Negative Egotism</th>
<th>Positive/Helpful Egotism</th>
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<tr>
<td>Lack of empathy for others</td>
<td>Empathy for other people</td>
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<tr>
<td>External locus of control</td>
<td>Internal locus of control</td>
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Empathy was an important personal characteristic to Stein. She had empathy; her writing in her Radcliffe themes, in *Three Lives*, and in *The Making of Americans* (as well as in other pieces) clearly demonstrates her own attempts to "follow . . . other leading[s], . . . to live anybody else's life in living," including her attempts to imagine life from the perspective of people whom others of her class and ethnicity did not respect: people who are economically deprived and African American people. She was even able to take an autocratic character such as Mr. Hersland and to show not just his tyranny, but his "splendid" characteristics.
The issue of locus of control is central to certain conceptions of mental health. A person with an external locus of control looks outside of self and, as Stein suggests in the passage above, tends to blame external conditions for the limitations on his or her life. People with an external locus of control feel they have no choice because they do not see their own influence on the conditions of their lives. A person of this sort who loses a job, for example, may focus on the unreasonable expectations of the boss, the unreliability of the car, the difficulty in a relationship which causes him or her to be in a bad mood and then creates difficulties at work. This person might not even be aware of internal causes of the job loss such as his or her own irresponsibility on the job or in taking care of the car, or his or her own irritating behavior which causes problems in the relationship.

In contrast, a person with an internal locus of control has a sense of control over his or her own life. When external conditions are bad, this person attempts to change his or her own response to them and to take responsibility for his or her own actions. A person of this sort facing some kind of job loss would attempt to learn from his or her own shortcomings and would not be likely to make the same mistake twice. People of this sort feel they have many choices about how they live their lives because they can always choose to change themselves.

To sum up Stein's definition of egotism, people with negative egotism are self-centered but have little or no self-control. People with a more helpful form of egotism can have empathy with others and do have self-control. Egotism itself is not a problematic concept in and of itself--it can help a person to create a positive life. Stein's concept of egotism is congruent with certain forms of ego psychology in which a therapist attempts to help a patient
develop a sense of self and an internal locus of control so that the patient can make active choices about how to live. Finally, Juanita Price, my co-author on several papers, including "Sexual Harassment: Deconstructing "Power," Constructing an Alternative" and "The Tyranny of The Bell Curve: Authority, Power, and Intelligence" would say that Stein's concept of positive egotism is an aspect of maturity, of a person being an adult (which, to Price, is not necessarily related to a person's physical age).

The other implication of Stein's understanding of egotism is that she adopted for herself a sense of positive egotism. She had empathy for people. She also spent her adult life making choices for herself in terms of where she lived, with whom, what she did, and who her friends would be. She did this despite the expectations for women of this particular period of time—women were encouraged to have an external locus of control and not to make choices for themselves. Having an internal locus of control means making choices about oneself which may not be pleasing to those around one—and taking responsibility for those choices.

One of the most interesting psychological concepts in The Making of Americans is what Stein calls "stupid being":

As I was saying when Mary Maxworrying was looking to a future with freedom and a dress-making undertaking and a little distinction, she had in her a sense to herself inside her, she had in her a sense of living in her, she had something of individual being in her. She had then for Mabel Linker almost an idolising feeling, this was important feeling in her. When she had despairing being in her she had only stupid being in her, she had not negative egotism then in her, she was just going on living because life was in her. All that then was in her was the impatient being that was in her stupid being and despairing feeling, not really despairing feeling, but dull being in her. Later when she had a very little anxious being in her and a good deal of impatient being in her, when Mabel Linker was taking care of her, she was nearer to negative egotism, she had excellent reasons for all injured feeling in
her, she had excellent reason why everyone should take care of her, she had excellent reason for it to be right to her that Mabel Linker should take care of her, all she had done for her and all the trouble she herself now had in her, and so it was right that she should have Mabel Linker take care of her, and that was the end of that matter to her... Mary Maxworrying then had good reason not to have toward Mabel Linker any grateful feeling. Mabel took care of her. She had come near dying, now she was through with that trouble, slowly impatient being came to be more nearly a reasonably small part of her, and this was now to her an end of that matter (232-233).

In general, Mary was the kind of person with an internal locus of control. She was trying to start a dressmaking business, which did not initially succeed. Then, without being married, Mary got pregnant. She went to a doctor, who got angry with her for being pregnant. Mabel, who was Mary's business partner, took care of Mary, especially during Mary's miscarriage, during which Mary almost died.

While Mary normally had a strong sense of herself which accompanies the internal locus of control, under the kind of stress that came along with the difficulties in her business and especially with the pregnancy, she retreated into a more external locus of control. Instead of focusing on her part of the pregnancy (she eventually married the man who made her pregnant and there is no hint that this pregnancy was the result of rape), she focused on a sense of victimization, a feeling that she did not have any kind of control over her situation. This feeling was accompanied by a sense of impatience, which was connected with what Stein calls "stupid being."

As the situation resolved, Mary had less of a sense of impatience--and here is where we get a sense of what Stein sees as the opposite of "stupid being"--"reasonably small part." "Stupid being" is unreasonable. It is emotion that is not tempered with reason. There was no reason for Mary to be impatient with Mabel. Mabel had not made Mary get pregnant, Mabel was
not the one who yelled at Mary for being pregnant, and, in fact, Mabel was doing her best to keep Mary alive.

Stein not only articulated the differences in living between people with the two different loci of control, she was also able to demonstrate what often happens under stress. As Juanita Price says, people with the most mature characteristics retreat into immaturity when feeling a significant amount of stress. They often, then, recover themselves as the stress abates. Again, this is a fascinating insight on the part of Stein.

One of the major themes in The Making of Americans is the concept of repeating: "All men and all women, if they keep on in their living, come to the repeating that makes it clear to anyone who listens to them then the real nature of them" (141). Katherine Anne Porter finds that the repetition is not simply "machine-like" (Bloom, 10) but instead it is a spiral, "a slow, everwidening, unmeasured spiral unrolling itself horizontally" (10). Similar events occur again and again—but the repetition is not exact because no person remains statically the same across time. Yet recognizing the patterns that constitute the spiral of someone's life is a good way to understand that person.

Jayne Walker points out the repetition across generations which constitutes the opening of the book:

[The book's] complete title, The Making of Americans Being a History of a Family's Progress, seems to align the novel with the optimistic view of history as revelation of human progress that dominated most eighteenth- and nineteenth-century historiography. But its opening paragraph introduces an alternative paradigm that radically challenges this idea of history:
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." (Bloom, 177)
As with the epigraph of *Three Lives*, Stein is not subscribing to a "paradigm" that every day and in every way people and history are getting better and better. Instead, her project engages with the repetition of human foibles and our attempts to live in families and communities with these foibles.

A good example of repetition and the insights to which its recognition leads, is Stein's account of the character, David Hersland. Stein recounts how he selects governesses for the education of his children:

Mr. David Hersland had in him a feeling of being as big as all the world around him. He had his ideas of educating children. He was always full up with beginning. He was as big as all the world around him. He never thought about it in himself then, it was natural to him. Each beginning was in him such a feeling.

He had first seen the first governess they had and he had had a feeling in him that was the ideal governess for his children. She was a good musician, it was necessary then to him that they should have much music in their education. She was a good scholar in french and german, he talked to her about the way he would insist always that his children should talk french and german. She was an ideal to him, she was a beginning to him, he would see to it that the children learned all this governess could teach them. . . Then there was in him a new beginning, he thought it better for their english that they should forget all the french and german the first governess had taught them. They should not spend time learning music when they needed physical training, he would have a good healthy woman, not a too well educated one, to help them with their lessons and to see that they did gymnastics and swimming. This time he wanted a big healthy woman . . . (244) [Stein did not typically capitalize the names of languages]

The pattern Stein saw in the character Mr. Hersland is that of beginning things over and over again—but not following through with them.

It is so very easy to focus on the details of a person's activities rather than to look for the more abstract patterns. The details of Mr. Hersland include that he didn't follow through with card games or with his educational plans for his children and that his beginnings could be radically different from one another. Stein has managed to get a sense through
analyzing the patterns in this person's life, of an important personality characteristic which he possessed.

The last psychological characteristic of some significance is the concept of "bottom nature," and this concept is related to the concept of repetition:

There are many millions of every kind of men, there are many millions of them and they have each one of them more or less in them of the kind of man they are and this makes a different being of each one of the many millions of that kind of them, that, the quantity in them of their kind of being, and the mixture in them of other kinds of being in them. There are many millions of each kind of men and other kinds of being are mixed up in each one of each kind of them but the strongest thing in each one of them is the bottom in them the kind of being in them that makes them. The bottom to every one then is the kind of being that makes him, it makes for him the kind of thinking, the way of eating, the way of drinking, the way of loving, the way of beginning, and the way of ending, in him. (136)

Bottom nature consists of the personality characteristics which influence how a person goes about living. The above chart about independent dependent vs. dependent independent makes it clear that one's bottom nature is a different concept from the independent/dependent continuum.

Stein has an interesting way of assessing a person's bottom nature:

Anyhow it is very hard to know of most men and to know it in many women in the middle of their living what there is in them, what there is as a bottom to them, what there is mixed up inside them. Slowly, more and more, one gets to know them as repeating comes out in them. In the middle of their living they are always repeating, everybody always is repeating in all of their whole living but in the middle of the living of most men and many women it is hard to be sure about them just what it is they are repeating, they are in their living saying many things then and it is hard to know it about them then what it is in them they are repeating that later in their living will show itself to be the whole of them to any one who wants to watch them. (139)

A person's words are misleading. As Stein points out, a person may say many things, just as Mr. Hersland had said many things about education. Mr.
Hersland's words implied that education was important to him—and that is misleading in understanding this character.

A more accurate assessment of a person can be made by watching what that person does over a period of time, watching that person's actions. By watching a person such as Mr. Hersland, Stein finds that what is part of his nature is the desire to begin things. He finds a sense of himself in the excitement of beginning and loses that sense of self when the situation calls for following through. While Mr. Hersland's words say one thing, that education is important, his actions demonstrate that education for his children was not a consistent priority in his life and that in reality it was not that important to him.

One of the ways of assessing a person's psychological health, which I was taught during my coursework for a degree in counseling, is to check for congruencies or lack thereof between a person's words and a person's actions. This might become a subject for discussion between the therapist and the client, particularly when there is a significant discrepancy. Once again, at the very beginning of the century, Stein was able to both observe and to articulate an important psychological concept, the idea that one might learn more about a person from watching that person's actions, particularly when there is a conflict between actions and words.

There are implications of the concept of "bottom nature" for the understanding of Stein herself as a person and as a writer. While interviews and other forms of personal narratives with or by people who knew her can be sources of interesting information, other people may only have observed surface features of Stein as a human being. There were several patterns of repetition that are significant to who Stein was during this early period of
writing: she had empathy for other people. Although she was aware of the expectations that society had for her as a woman, she did not allow societal expectations to limit who she could be or what she could do. She made keen and wise observations about people. These patterns of repetition can be discerned from Stein's writing in terms of content as well as by considering the conditions of mind which would lead to the ideas present in her writing. It would be very difficult, for example, for a person who was lonely, frustrated, and craving acceptance (Gilbert and Gubar's assessment of Stein) or having "deep insecurity and megalomania" (DeKoven, 48) to have thought about people as Stein obviously did.

**Writing Self Into Modernism**

Ortega y Gasset suggests that modernist painting is a radical shift from painting of the nineteenth century. He uses an analogy to explain the difference:

We have here a very simple optical problem. To see a thing we must adjust our visual apparatus in a certain way. If the adjustment is inadequate the thing is seen indistinctly or not at all. Take a garden seen through a window. Looking at the garden we adjust our eyes in such a way that the ray of vision travels through the pane without delay and rests on the shrubs and flowers. Since we are focusing on the garden and our ray of vision is directed toward it, we do not see the window but look clear through it. The purer the glass, the less we see it. But we can also deliberately disregard the garden and, withdrawing the ray of vision, detain it at the window. We then lose sight of the garden; what we still behold of it is a confused mass of color which appears pasted to the pane. Hence to see the garden and to see the windowpane are two incompatible operations which exclude one another because they require different adjustments. (84)

The shift between nineteenth-century art and twentieth-century art is that between the garden (the subject) and the windowpane (the form of the painting). Thus, the traditional approach to form in painting is that of
transparency; modernism adds a level of representation through the making visible the means of seeing, the frame of the window, as it were. Stein's novel, *The Making of Americans*, parallels this shift through the narrator, who recounts the process of writing the book.

*The Making of Americans* was written over a period of years. Its style shifts over the course of the book, as DeKoven and other scholars describe. One of the shifts has to do with the role of the narrator. Initially, the narrator's presence is marked by the direct addressing of the reader in a very traditional manner:

And so those who read much in story books surely now can tell what to expect of [Julia], and yet, please reader, remember that this is perhaps not the whole of our story either, neither her father for her, nor perhaps the living down her mother who is in her, for I am not ready yet to take away the character from our Julia, for truly she may work out as the story books would have her or we may find all different kinds of things for her, and so reader, please remember the future is not yet certain for her, and be you well warned reader, from the vain-glory of being sudden in your judgment of her. (15)

Several scholars (Katz and Wineapple, notably) have examined Stein's notebooks at the Beinecke Rare Books and Manuscripts Library and have described Stein's study of narrative during the period of time after she left medical school. She read novels and other narratives roughly in chronological order from the Elizabethan period forward, which can be seen in this use of the narrator.

The narrator shifts away from such a direct and archaic way of addressing the reader and becomes, for much of the novel, a marker of the slow turning of narrative wheels (discussed below) in which events are reiterated with small additions of information each time:

As I was saying there are many millions of every kind of men and there are many millions who have in them the kind of being David

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Hersland had in him. They have it in them some of them, as I have been saying, in all of their living, some have it in them in their eating, some have it in them in their drinking, some have it in them in business and their living, some have it in them in their loving, some have it so much in them that they have Arabian nights inside them; there are many millions of such a kind of them and this is a history of one of that kind of them, of David Hersland and the big ways he had in him.

As I was saying the father of the three of them whose lives we are soon now to be watching, Mr. David Hersland, had come to Gossols to make for himself his great fortune. There was for him, as I was saying, beginning as the whole of living, there was for him in living, eating and doctoring and educating his children and making for himself a great fortune. (121)

The "as I was saying" phrase and its variant bring an oral quality to the story, as if the narrator were recounting the story out loud and having to repeat earlier sequences to make up for digressions and disruptions which characterize everyday conversations between people.

The novel takes a truly modernist turn with a section that I call the "methodology" section, which takes place at the end of the first third of the book:

I am writing for myself and strangers. This is the only way that I can do it. Everybody is a real one to me, everybody is like someone else too to me. No one of them that I know can want to know it and so I write for myself and strangers.

Every one is always busy with it, no one of them then ever want to know it that every one looks like some one else and they see it. Mostly every one dislikes to hear it. It is very important to me to always know it, to always see it which one looks like others and to tell it. I write for myself and strangers. I do this for my own sake and for the sake of those who know I know it that they look like other ones, that they are separate and yet always repeated. There are some who like it that I know they are like many others and repeat it, there are many who never can really like it. (289)

The immediate question about this passage is: is the narrator Stein? Yes and no. Certainly Stein quoted the line "I write for myself and strangers" in many
other contexts, and truly identified with this particular thought. Yet, while one might assume that Stein is writing about her own life when the narrator suggests that the people around were not interested in the narrator's analyses of them, this assumption suggests that Stein did not have it in her to invent a narrator for whom that was true even if it was not completely true in her own life. Writer Carolyn Chute suggests, in her newly revised edition of *The Beans of Egypt, Maine*, that her own books are not autobiographical even if all the characters bear some relation to her own life. Stein's narrator and characters in *The Making of Americans* share the same status.

What I am calling the "methodology section" of *The Making of Americans* consists of almost 100 pages (pp. 298-377), during which the narrator abandons the story of the Herslands and the Dehnings and instead discusses psychology and the ways in which people may be analyzed. Occasionally the narrator uses examples of specific people, but for the most part these characters do not receive names. The methodology section is a twentieth century challenge to and expansion of the novel genre in the same way the fauve use of color both challenged and expanded painting's status as representation. Like fauve color, which brings the issue of the materials of the medium to the forefront, the methodology section exposes the psychological materials on which the novel is based.

Over the course of the novel, the narrator's mood oscillates between optimism and pessimism about the project of the novel:

Sometime when I am all through all my writing, when all my meaning, all my understanding, all my knowing, all my learning has been written, sometime then some will understand the being in all men and women.

I am all unhappy in this writing. I know very much of the meaning of the being in men and women. I know it and feel it and I am always learning more of it and now I am telling it and I am
nervous and driving and unhappy in it. Sometimes I will be all happy in it. (348)

Statements of this sort have been used to support the idea that Stein had a great deal of ego (the negative kind that gets in the way of a person’s ability to connect with other people). In fact, what is present here is something which is common to many writers, a kind of bi-polar feeling about one’s own writing. Authors write because they feel they have something to say and writers can feel very excited about their insights and ideas. At the same time, the process of writing is a process of placing words on paper, of taking ideas which seem limitless in one’s head and casting them into the boundaries of written language. The exciting set of ideas for a novel in a writer’s head becomes a morass of words on the page which fail to capture the richness and strength of the things which led to the beginning of the writing. Writers have two sets of feelings, then, about their work— that it is wonderful and interesting and also that it is terrible and awful. These feelings often happen simultaneously. Stein allows the narrator to reveal this part of the writing process. If writing were a theatrical play, the nineteenth century focused on the spectacle while Stein, writing in the twentieth century, revealed the ropes and pulleys that created the spectacle.

As an aspect of narration and one of the main "ropes" of modernist writing, there is the issue of time:

There is a whole series of this kind of them that I know in living. I saw yesterday afternoon two of them together and one of these two of them did not do very much attacking and she was successful in loving and she was very dependent and very independent in the way dependent independent kind of them have it in them to be winning. (571)

At several points in the novel, Stein’s narrator brings in the time of writing—either how the narrator feels at a particular moment which is separate from
the time related to the experiences of the characters. Of course, there is another layer of time, and that is the time of the reading. "Yesterday" for the reader of the late twentieth century is not the same as the narrator's yesterday.

There are many obvious connections that can be drawn here—Henri Bergson's theories of time, other modernist writers' use of time (Virginia Woolf, T.S. Eliot), time in psychoanalysis—when the hysteric's symptoms bring to the present the trauma of the past, to name a few.

Of course, the hallmark of twentieth-century narration is that of the unreliable narrator, as in Ford Maddox Ford’s *The Good Soldier*. Stein's narrator occasionally casts doubt about characterizations:

> 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, when they are telling it when they are not telling it, it is so very very hard to know it completely in one the being in one. I know the being in Miss Dounor that I am beginning describing, I know the being in Miss Charles that I am soon going to be beginning describing, I know the being in Mrs. Redfern, I have been describing the being in that one. I know the being in each one of these three of them and I am almost despairing for I am doubting if I am knowing it poignantly enough to be really knowing it, to be really knowing the being in any one of the three of them. 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 one of these three of them Miss Dounor and Miss Charles and Mrs. Redfern. (458)

The narrator raises the most devastating existential question of the twentieth century: what are the connections between human beings (in terms of how much we can truly understand about another person) and what implications do these connections have for how we live our lives? This is the question of Freud's nephew's "fort da" game and of Lacan's mirror phase and the question in our exploration of complicity in the concentration camps. It is the
question at the basis of the various systems of government which have been adopted in our own century, from fascism to various forms of communism.

What is at stake for Stein (as the creator of a narrator who could ask this question), is summed up in the word "poignantly," which implies some kind of emotional connection and which comes from a Latin word meaning "to pierce." Can we truly pierce through our own psychological defenses, through our own sense of separation to come to understand not just intellectually but on an emotional level what another person's life means? Stein does not directly answer this question -- it is unanswerable -- but a response is implied by this 925-page book: we can try.

The narrator ceases to use the first person for the last hundred or so pages of the book. These pages are in the "insistent" style (discussed in the next chapter) and they represent the height of Stein's scientific writing (discussed in the next section), a kind of writing that does not need a sense of "I." By this point in the book, the narrator has found a voice of author-ity, a voice which Stein will use for numerous pieces.

**Style and Scientific Language in *The Making of Americans***

DeKoven discusses an astonishing aspect of the notebooks in which Stein recorded her observations of people while writing *The Making of Americans*:

The psychological analyses in the notebooks, as in the fiction they fed, are remarkable for their unflagging intricacy and persistence. Stein had a Talmudic penchant for the fine distinction: for complex, shifting analysis of concatenations of dominant and recessive features both within individuals and among the numerous, overlapping groupings she continually formed and reformed among her friends. But the notebooks are even more remarkable, given what Stein was doing at the time in her literary work, for containing virtually no references to style: they concern only prospective character, plot, and theme (49).
To the reader, the most salient feature of *The Making of Americans* is its style. Yet this was seemingly not a concern for Stein. The way to understand this contradiction is through science.

Stein has the narrator approach the process of observation and making inferences about observation as a scientist would—testing hypotheses and rejecting them on the basis of data:

Always I am learning, more and more then I am knowing many kinds in men and women, many ways of making kinds in men and women, always I am learning, always it is interesting, often it is exciting, always I am learning, sometimes I am really learning all the being in some one, always more and more each one is to me a kind of one, always then I am learning more and more of bottom ways of being resembling, always I am learning more and more of the kinds of mixing that are confusing to any one looking, always then more and more there are steadily grouping kinds of men and women to me, more and more I know where each one I am ever seeing belongs in the grouping, more and more then it all grows confusing, I am always knowing more and more and then it gets all mixed up to me all mixed up in each one all mixed up in each one I am learning, each time there is in me a clear understanding of any one and I go on to another one or back to one I was earlier understanding that one is all a confusion from the last learning, each time then when there is a clear understanding of any one it is confusing with the next one, knowing more makes more grouping necessary in men and women and then all of a sudden this new grouping is a clear thing to my understanding and then sometimes all of a sudden I lose the meaning out of all of them I lose all of them and then each one I am then seeing looks like every one I have ever known in all my looking and there is no meaning in any of my grouping and then there is in me again a beginning and always sometime there will be clearly existing kinds of men and women, grouping of them by the bottom nature in them, by the mixing of other nature or natures with the bottom nature of them and so then sometime there will be a complete history of each one who ever is or was or will be living. It is very interesting, often very exciting, mostly very confusing, always steadily increasing in meaning. (335)

Stein observes, places people in hypothetical groups, tests her hypotheses through further observation, and sometimes feels confused as she has to reconsider the hypotheses—when, as Thomas Kuhn say, a paradigm shift
must take place. Still, if she keeps at it, she will succeed in knowing a lot about people and in being able to write about them.

As she writes, Stein has concerns about language and meaning, which she is able to articulate late in the book, when it is at its most innovative:

I mean, I mean and that is not what I mean, I mean that not any one is saying what they are meaning, I mean that I am feeling something, I mean that I mean something and I mean that not any one is thinking, is feeling, is saying, is certain of that thing, I mean that not any one can be saying, thinking, feeling, not any one can be certain of that thing, I mean I am not certain of that thing, I am not ever saying, thinking, feeling, being certain of this thing, I mean, I mean, I know what I mean.

And certainly some one is right in saying such a thing, such a one some of such of them certainly are right in saying such a thing. some of such of them have it that the moment of sensibility, emotion and expression and origin is all in a state of completion and then it is a finished thing and certainly then that one was meaning something and he was saying I mean, I mean, and it was all finished and then there was another something and this one certainly very often said I mean. That one said that very often in being one being living. (782)

It is often difficult to say what one means in language.

The problem with language is that it can control the meaning one makes. Jevons states (quoted in Chapter One) that language is analogical. The analogies "carve up" the world in ways that may not work for the individual using that language. Eco discusses, for example, the ways in which different languages differentiate between various colors:

In what sense does a semantic field show the world vision belonging to a culture? Let us go back to one of the classic examples of the theory of semantic fields and examine the way in which a European civilization analyzes the color spectrum by assigning names (and therefore establishing cultural units) to various wave-lengths expressed in millimicrons . . . A preliminary and naive interpretation might propose that the spectrum, divided into wave-lengths, constitutes the referent, the object of experience to which the names of the colors refer. However, we know that the color was named on the basis of a visual
experience ... which is only translated into wave-lengths by scientific experience. (76-77)

Eco goes on to point out how some non-European cultures divide out the spectrum very differently. For example, speakers of Hindi use a single word for what Europeans call red and orange.

Stein’s observations of people often superseded the language available to her. She was in the same position as King Arthur, in T.H. White’s The Book of Merlyn, as he attempted to communicate with ants:

Later [Arthur] began to wish that he could put several other questions, such as "Do you like being a sexton?" or "Are you a slave?" or even "Are you happy?" But the extraordinary thing was that he could not ask such questions. In order to ask them, he would have had to put them into the ant language through his antennae: and he now discovered, with a helpless feeling, that there were no words for half the things he wanted to say. There were no words for happiness, for freedom, or for liking, nor were there any words for their opposites. He felt like a dumb man trying to shout "Fire!" The nearest he could get to Right and Wrong, even, was Done or Not-Done...Later on he was to discover that [these] were [the] only...qualifications in the language...which applied to all questions of value. If the syrup which Merlyn left for them was sweet, it was a Done syrup: if he had left them some corrosive sublimate, it would have been a Not-Done syrup, and that was that (pp. 51-53).

These were problems that Stein attempted to solve in the course of writing The Making of Americans.

One of the main problems with language for Stein was the centrality of the concept of gender to it. Western European languages are limited to two oppositional constructs of gender, "male," and "female." Yet other cultures, such as that of the Zuni tribe in southwestern North America, demonstrate that lived gender experience can be much more complex. Roscoe describes the gender concepts of the Zuni:

In the Zuni theory of individuation, males and females begin from the same raw material. Gender arises through "cooking" [growth and
development] and it becomes the basis for other specializations—work roles, social roles, kinship, and religion. At the same time, the Zunis recognized a danger in too much division of the sexes. The differences between men and women could become mutually exclusive, their interests at odds, the basis for mutuality undermined. The supernatural counterpart of the berdache [a person born biologically one gender who lives socially as the opposite gender], the kachina, Ko’lhamana, helps bridge this division. (63) [original italics]

Roscoe suggests that the berdache is not simply rejecting his or her biological gender in favor of a different social gender, but is actually situated between the terms of our bimodal concept of gender.

It is difficult for people of a European linguistic background to conceptualize a notion of gender which not only allows but actually benefits from the kind of complex role that berdaches played in Zuni culture. After all, the Zuni culture would refer to children in non-gendered ways (as "child") until the age of five or six when the child would receive a name. In contrast, the first question asked about a newborn child in the U.S. is, "Is it a girl or a boy?" and we expect the child to be dressed accordingly. This linguistic status, gender, is the primary category bestowed upon us at the moment of birth and reinforced throughout our early childhood. It has a profound effect on how we think about ourselves and the kinds of opportunities we will have in our lifetimes. This profound effect remains true in the late twentieth century even after close to a century of questioning aspects of our understanding of gender. In Stein's day, concepts of gender were much more rigid.2

2Much has been said about Stein's own concept of her gendered self. It is far to easy to take a surface features approach to Stein and her writing, to conclude (as Gilbert and Gubar do, for example) that Stein unproblematically identified as male. In fact, Stein's conception of herself was complex in relation to gender. While she often, but not always, used language to refer to herself in male terms, many of her actions contradicted this use of language. Unlike Radcliffe Hall, for instance, Stein never cross-dressed and she kept her hair long until she was in her fifties. She used nicknames for herself (Toklas' "husband") but she never gave herself an actual male pseudonym. She also played with gender in some of her work, as in the "sonnet" in
Stein's approach to solving this problem was to privilege a different central opposition around which her system of psychology was based, the concept of independent dependent vs. dependent independent discussed above. A person's psychological characteristics in relation to this system were, for Stein, often more significant than the person's gender. One radical aspect of Stein's system is that each term incorporates the other. She is arguing for an approach to human beings on a continuum rather than using the two concepts as a rigid way of distributing human beings.

A second problem with language has to do with the emotional content of certain words which could be useful in describing a person, but the use of which might suggest bias on the part of the observer. The word "stupid" is a good example of this. There are certain aspects of people which might be called "stupid" in the sense that they are unreasoning, as we have seen. What Stein does in order to counterbalance the emotional associations with the word is to use the linguistic innovation, "stupid being." Stein never says, in the example quoted above, that Mary is a stupid person. She says, instead, that some of Mary's actions were unreasoning—that Mary was essentially governed by her emotions at some point in her life and that at this point, she was immature.

Stein's linguistic innovations, which occur throughout the book, essentially defamiliarize language. We have to rethink the meanings of a word such as "stupid" when it is used in the phrase "stupid being." Instead of reading the word as an epithet, we return to the dictionary and find that the word means "in a stupor; stupefied . . . Slow to apprehend; dull; obtuse . . . Showing a lack of sense or intelligence" (American Heritage). We learn

the middle of Patriarchal Poetry: "To the wife of my bosom," (in Yale Gertrude Stein) a line which acknowledges her own female-ness even while referring to Toklas as a wife.
something about Mary's actions without necessarily judging Mary herself in a negative way. Perhaps we also learn something about our own actions; we can identify times in our own lives when we have possessed "stupid being," and that our emotions have overridden our good sense in ways that have a negative impact on other people.

One of the outstanding "stylistic" features of *The Making of Americans* is what one might call its repetitive quality. In order to understand what this quality is and how it works, here is an examination of the story of Mary Maxworthing and Mabel Linker, which is a rather self-contained unit of narrative within the book. Unlike the stories of the Herslands and the Dehnings, which permeate the entire text, the details of Mary and Mabel are confined into one thirty page segment of the book. Yet this section offers a microcosm of Stein's overall method for the book.

Following some description of Mary in relation to her personality characteristics (independent dependent) and other personality details, Stein gives an overview of the narrative which will be related:

Mary Maxworthing then in her later living was very successful in her business of dress-making, I don't mean to say she ever made a fortune, she never did make a fortune, she earned a very good living. She was very successful in dress-making, she never earned real distinction, she never in living did really very personal creating but she lived her own life in her living and she had a fairly successful life from her beginning to her ending. She had men who wanted her to marry them, when she was thirty-five she did marry and she married very well then, not well enough to give up dress-making but well enough to be very comfortable in living.

She had working with her Mabel Linker, she had other girls working for her but Mabel Linker was a kind of a partner. She was the daughter of a cousin of Mary's sister-in-law and was a very good almost brilliant dress-maker. Sometimes the two had a hard time keeping together, Mabel Linker was a little flighty sometimes and sometimes Mary Maxworthing had an impatient tempt, always she had a little impatient being in her. (205)
This is the first detailed narrative about Mary and Mabel. Above, in my discussion of "stupid being," I revealed some of what happened to Mabel and Mary. Yet very little of that is apparent in this introduction to the two. We are only given a rather happy ending—that Mary got along pretty well in her life—we have the result of her living.

Following this introduction to Mary and Mabel, there are two pages of discussion about psychological concepts and some foreshadowing about how the history of Mary will reveal something about stupid being. Then Stein returns to the history:

Mary Maxworthing was one of the children of an American man and woman who had made a good enough living at farming. They still had a farm and some of their children lived with them. Their name was changed some in their American living. Mary came to Gossols to work for her living when she was about sixteen. She first earned her living by taking care of children. She did not find this very amusing. She liked children but she wanted freedom. She began to think when she was about twenty-one of some other way of earning a living. She thought over everything, a little dairy to sell butter and eggs and milk and cream but she did not like that kind of work and it takes a great deal of money to begin. She thought of millinering but she was not a very good hand at hat trimming, she was good at sewing but she knew nothing about cutting and fitting. She was then about twenty-five when she came to this decision, when she decided to do dress-making. As I was saying she knew then nothing about cutting and fitting, she was very good at sewing, she had good ideas about dresses for women, she had a good sense of fashion. So then she sent for her relation Mabel Linker who lived down in the country to come and join her. She went on working at being nursery governess to earn a living for the two of them while Mabel was to learn cutting and fitting and dress-making from the beginning. Mabel Linker was soon very clever at dress-making. Soon they were ready to begin. Then they started an establishment for dress-making in that part of Gossols where richer people were living. They did not then have success with their undertaking (207-208).

The next part of the general discussion amplifies aspects of this narrative, providing some details about how the business was initially not successful.
and how Mary felt about that. The discussion also reveals some of the differences between Mabel and Mary that made their relationship difficult, especially when the business was not doing well.

Then a surprising event takes place:

As I was saying Mary Maxworth was what every one thought her. Every one had about the same estimate of her. Something happened to her that surprised every one who knew her, surprised them that it should happen to her . . . [description of Mary--that she was not reckless or wild].

She went in to the doctor, the doctor asked her a few questions and then examined her, "you know what's the matter with you", he said to her. She grew red, she had a little impatient feeling in her, she had not fear in her and no angry feeling in her. "I don't know what's the matter with me Doctor," was her answer . . . [description of Mary's impatient feelings] The doctor was a young man, he grew angry and he told her. She grew redder, she had more impatient feeling in her but she had very little shame or anxious feeling in her, she had a little more impatient feeling in her. "You'd better get him to marry you," said the doctor who was angry with her. (212)

Over the next few pages, there are details about Mary's reaction to being pregnant and also a reiteration of history of the relations between Mabel and Mary, emphasizing the differences between them and the changes in Mary's feelings toward Mabel. Mary used to idolize Mabel but had ceased doing so.

More details about the end of the story are revealed--such as the fact that the man Mary eventually married was the man who had gotten her pregnant.

Finally, Mary had a miscarriage and Mabel took care of her, which was no easy task:

As I was saying it was hard on Mabel Linker then to take care of her. Not when the baby was passing out of her for then she had a doctor and was in a hospital with a nurse taking care of her, but before, when she would not see a doctor. She would not let a doctor see her, this was impatient being in her, she would not listen to Mabel Linker or to any one else who tried to advise her, she was full up with impatient feeling. Yes, of course sometimes she was bleeding, but she did not want to pay any attention; she was full up then with impatient feeling.
Later after it was over and she knew how near she had been to dying she had for a little while less impatient feeling, she had then in her, some anxious feeling. This was the end of that thing for her. She stayed then a year or two longer with the same employer. During this time Mary Maxworthing and Mabel Linker saw very little of each other. They had had serious troubles with each other. (222)

This is probably one of the earliest graphic accounts of a miscarriage in the history of the novel.

Between each of these sections quoted here are two to several pages of discussion, which often places the events in the context of the whole history of Mabel and Mary by reiterating that history. Also Stein shows the effect of each woman's personality characteristics on their relationship and the events in which they participated in these explanatory sections. The multiple reiterations of the history as well as the explanatory sections give the feeling of repetition. Yet this is not pure repetition. The story at these points moves forward incrementally, with new facts being revealed one by one.

A story of this sort would raise all sorts of flags in the minds of readers at the beginning of this century. It is a story of a serious form of immorality by the standards of Stein's day, the kind of story which would lead many readers to make judgment against Mary Maxworthing. It contains details that in other contexts would completely offend many readers--because medical details about problems with childbirth were not openly discussed. Yet Stein does not allow this judgment process to take place because she is careful about which details are revealed when. She contextualizes details and adds information in such a way that by the end of the narrative of Mary and Mabel we know both of them well. We know their strengths and weaknesses as people. We know this information without needing to reject either Mary or
Mabel as human beings because Stein has used a scientific language from which she has removed many of the emotional associations.

In Chapter One, I quoted Jevons' summary of the mind of a good scientist, that the person is familiar with the old but does not let that familiarity close off new ideas about what is being observed. Stein knew through her own extensive reading a great deal about how language had been used in the past, but that knowledge did not prevent her from attempting to find ways of articulating her observations about people. With the Hortense stories, Q.E.D., and with some of the subject matter in The Making of Americans, Stein was writing about realities of people's lives that were nonetheless socially unacceptable as subjects of discussion. In scientific terms, Stein made observations about human beings that did not fit the paradigms of social acceptability. Her challenge as a writer was to find ways of expressing these observations while avoiding the resistance of the social paradigms to the mere existence of these observations.

The concept of style is an artistic one. Yet in the terms of this particular writing problem, Stein was not working with artistic concerns. She was using a scientific solution, which was to use words in new enough combinations (e.g., "stupid being") that the old paradigms could not truly apply and the readers' prejudices about certain events would be less likely to have been invoked. Stein writes as if she were observing a characteristic and saying to herself, "how might I cast this into words?" She made these observations as if she were the first person to do so, rather than drawing on the words and phrases of other observers to express what she was seeing.

What resulted from this practice reads as if Stein were considering style in an artistic manner, which accounts for DeKoven's surprise. Another
result of this practice is that Stein created a book that requires a significant amount of effort to read; probably many readers never actually got to the controversial bits, such as the description of the miscarriage. *The Making of Americans* did get published during her lifetime (unlike *Q.E.D.*). The controversies it incited had more to do with readers' dismay at the "style" than any of the content, which is, to some extent, a measure of the success of Stein's approach.

**The Pleasure of the Text: The Making of Americans**

Many years after the completion of *The Making of Americans*, Stein wrote a lecture about that novel, in which she discussed the project she had in mind:

> When I was working with William James I completely learned one thing, that science is continuously busy with the complete description of something, with ultimately the complete description of anything with ultimately the complete description of everything. If this can really be done the complete description of everything then what else is there to do. We may well say nothing, but and this is the thing that makes everything continue to be anything, that after all what does happen is that as relatively few people spend all their time describing anything and they stop and so in the meantime as everything goes on somebody else can always commence and go on. And so description is really unending. When I began The Making of Americans I knew I really did know that a complete description was a possible thing, and certainly a complete description is a possible thing. But as it is a possible thing one can stop continuing to describe this everything. That is where philosophy comes in, it begins when one stops continuing describing everything. (*Lectures in America*, 156-157)

While DeKoven suggests that the late style of *The Making of Americans* features a "diminution . . . of coherent, referential meaning" (51), this is actually not true. The signifiers and signifieds of language are as thoroughly tied together as ever in *The Making of Americans*. In fact, Stein's project here requires meaning to be both coherent and referential. It is just that she
presents such new ways of understanding people and she uses her method of observation as a way of writing her book.

In her book on Wittgenstein, Marjorie Perloff quotes from the preface of *Tractatus*, in which he describes the purpose of his book: "This book will perhaps only be understood by those who have already thought the thoughts which are expressed in it . . . Its object would be attained if it afforded pleasure to one who read it with understanding" (Perloff, 41). About this statement, Perloff says: "Pleasure is the word I find most remarkable here -- the pleasure of finding thoughts one has already thought" (41) [italics original]. This pleasure is present in *The Making of Americans*. It is not that one has thought specifically in terms of "stupid being" or "independent dependent," but that once Stein describes an array of characteristics, there is the pleasure of recognition. Not only do I understand the people she writes about, but I can also point to people I know in my own life who have similar characteristics and struggles.

Writing about *The Making of Americans* in the 1920s, Katherine Anne Porter (printed in Bloom) states: "I doubt if all the people who should read it will read it for a great while yet, for it is in such a limited edition, and reading it is anyhow a sort of permanent occupation" (9). Because of its length and the way in which it is written, *The Making of Americans* is not an easy "read." And yet Stein repays the diligent reader with moments of keen insight into the ways of human beings, with her courage in recounting aspects of women's lives which had often been relegated to silence, and with the opportunity to consider how it is we know about other people and how we can learn about the inner lives of other people. The pleasure of this text is not total absorption of the reader into the exciting and familiar world of a
popular novel. It is more the heady excitement of learning—of reading a scientific text in a second language, struggling to grasp the insights and to connect them to what one already knows, occasional moments of complete clarity which confirm one's own hypotheses about the text or cause one to reconsider one's ideas, and, in the end, a feeling of true accomplishment.
Beginning with her work on the final version of *The Making of Americans* in 1908, according to Dydo, Stein's writing made a quantum leap in terms of quantity and in terms of the increasing experimental quality of it. *The Making of Americans* is a 925-page book, in its printed version, which Stein wrote between 1906 and 1911. Beginning in 1908 and ending in 1912, Stein wrote a series of 24 pieces which are very difficult to pin down to a particular year, ranging from a few pages to many pages. Additionally, in 1909, Stein wrote four pieces; she wrote "Harriet Making Plans" and the relatively long "Many Many Women" in 1910, the year in which she also began "Tender Buttons"; she wrote three pieces that have been dated in 1911 ("Four Dishonest Ones," "Galeries Lafayette," and "Nadelman"); and in 1912, she wrote an additional four pieces. Between 1908 and 1912, then, Stein wrote 38 different pieces, of varying lengths. In 1913, she wrote 35 pieces alone, including "Sacred Emily," the source of the famous line, "rose is a rose is a rose." The following year, 1914, she wrote 22 pieces (maybe the war slowed her down). In any case, by 1906, Stein had begun to establish writing habits which would allow herself to be very productive.
Stein did not date her work, which means that it is hard to know exactly when she wrote certain of her pieces. In a private communication, Timothy Young, who wrote the *Registers* for both collections of Gertrude Stein materials at the Beinecke Rare Books and Manuscripts Library, stated:

I am never too sure about anything date-wise in Stein, simply because, as vividly illustrated in her writings of the mid-1930s, she worked on a number of texts at one time, overlapping, knitting together and taking apart, spinning off shoots from one long work to begin another. In a word: 'non-linear.'

By 1908, Stein had begun to establish her lifelong habit of working on several things at once.

The Beinecke *Registers* are the best source of dates across Stein's entire oeuvre because they include all pieces for which there is a manuscript. The most accurate source, however, for the pieces it does include as well as pieces mentioned in the headnotes and introduction (not everything Stein wrote, unfortunately), is the *Stein Reader*, edited by Ulla Dydo. With her careful study of Stein manuscripts over many years, Dydo has managed to assign specific years to some of the manuscripts which Young lists as having been written between 1908 and 1912.

Stein's shifts in writing style have been noted by other scholars. Of particular use are Marianne DeKoven's stylistic definitions, the names of which are derived from Stein's writing about her own writing. DeKoven describes two major styles which Stein used in her experimental writing before 1914:

The "insistent" style, roughly 1906-11, is an extension of the techniques Stein discovered in Melanctha: a reduced, simple vocabulary, emblematic keywords, incantatory rhythm, and above all, repetition. Along with these goes the inevitable diminution in
importance of plot, theme, and character--and also, for Stein, of coherent, referential meaning (51).

[In contrast to the "insistent" style, the "lively words" style is characterized as]: colorful, concrete adjectives and nouns appear in place of the privileged gerunds and participles, and simple present or past tense in place of the ubiquitous progressives. Stein also begins moving on to something new in each phrase instead of recasting the previous one (66).

The following chart uses Dydo's dates and shows some of the pieces which Stein wrote between 1903-1911. It describes these pieces using DeKoven's concepts of Stein's styles, as well as my own. DeKoven's stylistic descriptors are printed in italic type.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1903-11</td>
<td>The Making of Americans</td>
<td><em>Insistent</em> at end</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1910</td>
<td>Ada</td>
<td>Biographical at beginning, <em>insistent</em> at the end</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(December)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1911 &amp; 12</td>
<td>Portrait of Constance</td>
<td><em>Insistent</em> in the beginning, <em>lively</em> after the break, some of the <em>lively</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Fletcher</td>
<td>is Leo-speak</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1911</td>
<td>Matisse, Picasso</td>
<td><em>Insistent</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1911</td>
<td>Nadelman</td>
<td><em>Insistent</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1911</td>
<td>Miss Furr and Miss Skeene</td>
<td><em>Insistent</em> but in past tense. Strongly narrative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1911-12</td>
<td>Orta or One Dancing</td>
<td><em>Insistent</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1911-12</td>
<td>A Long Gay Book</td>
<td>Begins <em>insistent</em>, ends <em>lively</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1911-12</td>
<td>Two: GS &amp; Her Brother</td>
<td><em>Insistent</em> to a little <em>lively</em>—or away from the gerunds of <em>insistence</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>towards a Leo-speak that shares characteristics with <em>lively</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1911 ?</td>
<td>Two Women</td>
<td><em>Insistent</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1911 ?</td>
<td>Play</td>
<td><em>Insistent</em> (to the extreme)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1911</td>
<td>Bon Marche Weather</td>
<td><em>Insistent</em>, but built off of standard phrase, very pleasant weather we are</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Spring)</td>
<td></td>
<td>having, with lots of substitutions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1913</td>
<td>Article</td>
<td><em>Lively</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1913</td>
<td>Guillaume Appollinaire</td>
<td><em>Lively</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1913</td>
<td>What Happened a Five Act Play</td>
<td><em>Lively</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(April)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1913 (June)</td>
<td>One: Carl Van Vechten</td>
<td><em>Lively</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 2: Descriptions of Stein's writing in DeKoven's terms, 1903-1913
Stein's shifts in style are roughly chronological. That is, she tended to write in what DeKoven calls the insistent style before she wrote in the lively style. Yet there is a transitional period, around 1911-1912, in which she was writing in both styles.

Over the period of time between 1906 and 1914, both Stein's writing and the process she used for writing shifted considerably. In 1908, although Stein's style was unusual, her work remained well within the boundaries of traditional meaning-making processes in writing. By 1914, all this had changed; the meaning-making in her writing was not longer simply linguistic. In process, too, she shifted from a draft and craft sort of writing process to what I will call an improvisatory form of writing.

"Ada"

In September 1907, a young woman from San Francisco appeared on the Paris scene, Alice B. Toklas, who had recently escaped from the role of caring for her father, brothers, and some other male relatives. She was traveling in the company of a friend of hers, Harriet Levy, and the two had come to Paris in part at the behest of Sally Stein. Although Gertrude Stein was unknown to Alice when Alice arrived in Paris, Alice was not unknown to Gertrude. As a part of her self-initiated study of human beings, Stein had undertaken to analyze a young woman, Annette Rosenshine; part of this analysis included reading all the letters that Annette had received, including letters from Alice Toklas.

The following summer, Gertrude and Alice traveled to Italy together. In her 1922 piece, "Didn't Nelly and Lilly Love You," Stein describes the scenario (referring to herself as "he"): 

She was beset.
Climb it.
Climate.
When he arose.
Was it a rose it was a rose, was it a rose he arose and he said I know where it has led, it has led to changing a heel. We were on a hill and he was very still, he settled to come and tell would he could he did he or should he, and would he, she wound around the town. She wound around the town and he was nervous. Can we ever, Can we ever, can we ever recognize the spot.

As I have said it is an instinct, ingratitude, recognising the spot, loving her dearly, asking her to do it again and breaking her coral chain is an instinct. "Didn't Nelly and Lilly Love You."

One summer day, the two climbed a hill together and Gertrude made a declaration of love. As a result possibly of having read letters from Alice to Annette or possibly from having talked together in the months that they had known each other, Stein was aware that Alice had had some kind of emotional attachment to women in her past. Given the then-current perspectives about homosexuality as a pathology, Stein had to be somewhat circumspect in her approach to Alice, in her proposal that they marry and spend the rest of their days together. Nervous, Stein opened the topic by asking, "Didn't Nelly and Lilly love you?," a reference to two women that Alice had been involved with before coming to France. Alice agreed to a "marriage" with Stein.

Obviously, Stein and Toklas did not have the options that lesbian couples have today--of coming out to friends and family members in some kind of direct way (e.g., by writing letters stating in no uncertain terms what the relationship is). As late as 1909, Sally Stein, who was in close proximity to Gertrude and Alice since the beginning of their relationship, apparently was not aware that a relationship existed between the two women. In July of 1909, Mabel Weeks writes of Sally to Gertrude, stating that she was horrified to learn that Sally was denying to a mutual
acquaintance that there was any kind of relationship between Gertrude and Alice. Three months later, Weeks writes (in a letter which has only been partially preserved), that she had had a discussion about homosexuality with Sally — although the details of that discussion have now been lost. Given Sally's affinity for the ideas of Dr. Oscar Mayer (mentioned in Chapter Two) and given the fact that she had converted to Christian Science by this time, Sally clearly had reservations about recognizing the relationship between Gertrude and Alice. Sally's husband, Michael, the family banker, recognized the relationship insofar as his letters often addressed both women and in the 1920's he wrote a letter to Alice giving her advice about how to deal with a problem.

From existing correspondences between Stein in Paris and her friends and family members in the United States over the period of time between 1907 and 1914, there is no evidence that Stein wrote to people explicitly stating anything about her relationship with Alice. However, she and Alice had a photograph taken of themselves and made into a postcard, which was sent to some people, e.g., Etta Cone (Etta received one in 1910). Mabel Weeks was clearly taken into some kind of confidence about more than simply the existence of the relationship, as she writes in 1909, "By this time you are in Paris again, and happy. I am glad Alice likes me. You know how it is with these couples—you never feel quite solid with the wife till the husband says you'll do."

External markings of the relationship within the social circle of these two women, such as a formal marriage ceremony, were not possible. One way in which Stein chose to mark the beginning of what was to become a life-long relationship was to write a piece that was eventually
called "Ada," using a new genre for herself, the portrait. In the *Stein Reader*, Dydo states that "Ada" was written in December, 1910. According to *The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas*, this was the first portrait Stein wrote. It is also very different from the other portraits Stein wrote in that it contains narrative passages about the person being portrayed. In recent scholarship, this portrait has been the subject of some controversy.

Bridgman states, rightfully so, that part of the handwritten manuscript in the Beinecke Library for this piece is in Alice Toklas' writing. Gilbert and Gubar use this fact to suggest that Stein plagiarized this portrait, that Alice wrote it (or at least parts of it) and Stein claimed authorship of it.

Gilbert and Gubar base their assertion on Bridgman's account of the manuscript of Ada. Ulla Dydo (in Kellner) states:

Richard Bridgman speaks of examining the manuscript books of "Ada" (1910) and A Novel of Thank You (1925-1926), which also show the hand of Alice Toklas. He concludes his comment on "Ada," the loving portrait of Alice Toklas, "given the manuscript in two hands; and given the conclusion that the two people are one, the evidence is persuasive that this was a collaboration of symbolic significance, sealing the relationship between the two women" . . . Bridgman interprets the presence of Toklas's hand as evidence of collaboration in composition. What confusion of writing and love! Surely union in love is central for the two women, but union in writing, especially in the manner of Stein, including the beginning of a new piece in the hand of Toklas? The very thought is preposterous, but it is indicative of the confusion about Gertrude Stein's art and her life . . . (90)

In her headnotes to the piece, "Ada," in the *Stein Reader*, Dydo recounts how the manuscript was likely to have been written:

. . . in *The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas* . . . Stein tells the anecdote of taking the completed portrait to Toklas in the kitchen to read as a surprise. If this story is true--the *Autobiography* is replete with charming invented stories that cannot be relied on as history--Stein read the new portrait to Toklas from her draft in "the little
tiny pages" of her preliminary pocket notebook. In the manuscript of Ada Stein and Toklas joined hands by sharing the labor of copying the text from the pocket notebook. Transcribed in both hands, the manuscript of Ada links Toklas' inspiring storytelling with Stein's story writing in a testament to symbiotic relationship in which living and writing become one (100).

Dydo points out, *The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas* specifically mentions the writing of this portrait in a carnet ("I can still see the little tiny pages of the note-book written forward and back," 114). Further, carnets (very small notebooks that fit in a pocket) exist for the drafts of *Making of Americans*. Very likely there was a carnet with a draft of Ada in Stein's handwriting.

Whatever the circumstances of its writing, the style of writing in it is clearly Stein's throughout the piece. Early in the piece, there is an account of the marriage of a Barnes Colhard. His sister writes to him and says that marriage is a good idea for him; this detail is reminiscent both of Herman's sister's response to his impending marriage in "Gentle Lena" and also the arrangement of David Hersland's marriage to Fanny Hissen by David's sister in *The Making of Americans*, texts which Stein wrote prior to meeting Toklas. For some reason, Stein had a fascination with sisters who encourage brothers to marry.

Further, one aspect of the marriage of Barnes Colhard is that he did not spend the capital of an inheritance belonging to his wife. This would have been an issue significant to Stein because of her brother's management of the inheritance from their father. The income the Stein siblings had was not enormous—and Michael, being the good manager that he was, not only would not spend the capital, but he would explain to the
siblings why he was not spending the capital and why they would have to make do with the amount he gave them.

The writing in this section, despite the fact that it is in Alice Toklas' hand, relies on very general words, such as "thing" instead of referring to specific events. This is characteristic of Stein's writing style at this time.

Finally, Stein presents Alice as a person whom not every one likes:

Many were sorry later that not every one liked the daughter. 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. (Stein Reader, 102) [This section is in Alice B. Toklas' writing in the YCAL manuscript].

This way of presenting a person derives from an outside perspective of the person; it is not usual for a person to present herself in this manner.

There are some significant revisions in the manuscript. At the point at which this particular manuscript was written (this manuscript may or may not have been a first draft) there was a fictionalization of the brother and father of Alice, in the form of Barnes and Abram Colhard. It is hard to know where the name "Barnes" for the brother came from; Dr. Albert Barnes, who bought paintings from Leo Stein, did not make his first trip to Paris for the purpose of buying art, according to Anne Distel, until 1912. "Colhard" may be a pun on "Cold hard," which might be one way of interpreting a father and a brother who want Alice to take care of them instead of being happy elsewhere (despite all the "tender letters" passing back and forth between the daughter and father). At the same time, the name of the young woman in the manuscript is "Alice." This was not changed until some time later--it was not changed at the level of this particular handwritten manuscript. Dydo suggests several sources for
the name "Ada," including one from *Alice in Wonderland*. In *Tender Buttons*, there is a pun on "Ada," "Aider" ("This is the dress, aider"); Alice did quickly become Stein's "Aider."

Other changes are from the specific to the general. For example, at one point in the manuscript, Alice is referred to as an "old maid." This is changed to "that one," which keeps with Stein's practice of being very general (upon reading "Melanctha" in 1907, Mabel Weeks wrote to Stein: "You shun specific words as carefully as most people shun general ones"). This change also acknowledges that while Alice did not marry in the conventional sense, she was not, technically speaking, an old maid. In contrast to the changes made, for example, on the first page of *The Making of Americans*, in which Stein edited for clarity, the editing Stein did of Ada was in the interest of pushing language away from its usual function of meaning-making, through making language more general rather than more specific. Still, the language in this portrait operates in a fairly traditional way, especially in comparison to the writing Stein would be doing in the next few years.

Finally, along with its function as a kind of written formalization of their relationship, this portrait contains support for Alice to remain in Paris with Gertrude, where she is very happy, instead of succumbing to pressure from the father, through his letters, to return to her old life taking care of male relatives. About this portrait, Dydo states:

*Storytelling is about the intimate interaction between Toklas and Stein. Endless telling and listening to stories is the perfect writer's situation and the perfect lover's situation, each enabling the other. Ada is in a sense about audience--finding a you who listens to me. It is about speaking and hearing, writing and reading, making love in words and making words of love* (101).
"Matisse," "Picasso"

The period of time between 1901-1912 was an enormously productive and innovative one for Pablo Picasso as well as for Gertrude Stein. During this time his painting changed from the rather impressionist "Woman with a Dog" through his blue period, his rose period, and into the development of analytic and synthetic cubism. In 1905, Picasso began to paint Gertrude Stein's portrait, for which she sat 80-90 times. Like *Three Lives* and *The Making of Americans* which stretch the notion of narrative, Picasso's portrait of Stein stretches the representational traditions of painting with its mask-like face, a face which points not only to the Iberian sculpture that influenced Picasso at this time, but the odd setting of the eyes of which also points towards the multi-perspectival faces of *Les Demoiselles d'Avignon* and other cubist works that quickly followed the painting of Stein's portrait.

This period of time was also important for Matisse. According to the catalogue for the Matisse retrospective, Matisse exhibited in the first Salon d'Automne in 1903. Although, as he wrote to a friend during this period of time, he was satisfied with his work, he had significant financial struggles at this time. He had a wife and child to support. In 1904, Matisse had his first one-man show, at the gallery of Vollard, the famous modernist art dealer. Probably Gertrude and Leo saw their first Matisse in the 1904 Salon d'Automne. By 1905, Matisse's work was becoming truly avant garde, with his painting, "Luxe, Calme, et Volupté," a colorful take-off on pointillism. That summer, he painted his first "fauve" pictures. He also met the Steins for the first time. Louis Vauxcelles (in Flam) first used the term "fauve" (wild beast) to refer to the paintings of Matisse and his
cronies in his review of the Salon d'Automne of 1905. The Steins bought Matisse's picture, *Woman with the Hat*, one of the more upsetting canvasses of that exhibition.

By 1906, Gertrude's sister-in-law, Sally, had become the Matisse fan of the family. Sally and Michael Stein had bought the painting "Femme au Nez Vert." Yet Gertrude and her brother Leo in 1907 had a number of Matisses on the walls, according to a photo: *Corsican Landscape, Standing Figure, Study for Joy of Life, Small Jar, Woman with a Hat*, and *Olive Trees*. In 1908, Matisse opened a school for painting, to which Sally Stein went. Leo on the other hand, was beginning to tire of modernism; in 1908 he bought his last Matisse, *The Blue Nude*. In 1909, Matisse painted his well-known painting, *The Dance*. By 1910, Matisse's exhibitions could be called "retrospectives" and he was doing well financially and in terms of the attitudes of critics. Matisse closed his school in 1910 so he could have more time for painting.

In 1910 Stein began to do what she called "portraits" of people, beginning with "Ada." Stein did not originate the literary portrait as a genre, as Steiner points out in her book about Stein's portraits. Still, this is a literary genre that originates with a genre from the visual arts; in using the literary portrait genre, Stein appropriated a painting genre to her writing. This appropriation ended up being very fruitful, as she composed 132 pieces which Steiner identifies as portraits between around 1910 and her death in 1946.1 The portrait is one genre that appears consistently

1Steiner actually dates Stein's first portraits as 1908; I am going with Ulla Dydo's date of 1910 for Ada, the first portrait. Stein was not the only non-painter, by the way, to appropriate the portrait. Later on, Virgil Thomson, under the influence of Stein, would use the portrait as a musical genre. Working the way a painter would—in silence and in the presence of his subject—Thomson would compose music.
throughout Stein’s work, from early until late. As Dydo points out, the portraits of Matisse and Picasso were not written together. However, considering the influence both painters had on Stein, it is useful to look at these portraits together.

The portrait of Matisse brings out an important issue for Stein, and that is struggle:

He certainly was clearly expressing something, certainly sometime any one might come to know that of him. Very many did come to know it of him that he was clearly expressing what he was expressing. He was a great one. Any one might come to know that of him. Very many did come to know that of him. Some who came to know that of him, that he was a great one, that he was clearly expressing something, came then to be certain that he was not greatly expressing something being struggling. Certainly he was expressing something being struggling. Any one could be certain that he was expressing something being struggling. Some were certain that he was greatly expressing this thing. Some were certain that he was not greatly expressing this thing. Every one could come to be certain that he was a great man. Any one could come to be certain that he was clearly expressing something. (Portraits and Prayers, 12)

We saw earlier that Leo had discussed Cézanne’s struggles. Probably because of Leo, the concept of struggle became very important in Gertrude’s life, and it remained so for many, many years.

In 1938, she discussed the struggle in painting that was occurring around 1908-09:

Picasso said once that he who created a thing is forced to make it ugly. In the effort to create the intensity and the struggle to create this intensity, the result always produces a certain ugliness, those who follow can make of this thing a beautiful thing because they know what they are doing, the thing having already been invented, but the inventor because he does not know what he is going to invent inevitably the thing he makes must have its ugliness (p. 9).
Her 1935 essay, "How Writing is Written," demonstrates the way in which she connected painting struggles to writing struggles:

You always have in your writing the resistance outside of you and inside of you, a shadow upon you, and the thing which you must express. In the beginning of your writing, this struggle is so tremendous that the result is ugly; and that is the reason why the followers are always accepted before the person who made the revolution. The person who has made the fight probably makes it seem ugly, although the struggle has the much greater beauty...You know that is what happens over and over again: the statement made that it is ugly--the statement made against me for the last twenty years. And they are quite right, because it is ugly. But the essence of that ugliness is the thing which will always make it beautiful. I myself think it is much more interesting when it seems ugly, because in it you see the element of the fight. The literature of one hundred years ago is perfectly easy to see, because the sediment of ugliness has settled down and you get the solemnity of its beauty. But to a person of my temperament, it is much more amusing when it has the vitality of the struggle. (Gender of Modernism, p. 490-491) [Stein's emphasis].

The content of some of Stein's portraits, especially those of her painter friends, reflects the influence of their struggles with representation on her. She then connected their struggle in the visual arts with her struggle in writing.

By 1910, Stein had very different feelings about Matisse and Picasso, and these feelings surface in her descriptions of the painters. The Matisse portrait begins with a convoluted sentence:

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 and then when he could not come to be certain that he had been wrong in doing what he had been doing, when he had completely convinced himself that he would not come to be certain that he had been wrong in doing what he had been doing he was really certain then that he was a great one and he certainly was a great one. (Stein Reader, 139)
My paraphrase: For a great part of his life, Matisse had tried to think of himself as being wrong about his painting. But he could not be sure that he was wrong. In fact he convinced himself that he was right about it and he became sure that he was actually on the right track, toward innovation and greatness—and, indeed, he was.

The statement ends with the idea that Matisse was a "great one." And if you undo the syntactical knot of the sentence, it turns out that Matisse was not "wrong," (which means he must have been right). This part of the portrait has the same kind of linguistic status as the old bromide: "I never make a mistake. Once I thought I did, but I was wrong." The use of such a difficult sentence to figure out casts a negative light on Matisse. He may not have been wrong, but in some ways Stein thought he was.

In contrast, Stein describes Picasso using the most vivid vocabulary possible in the insistent way of writing:

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 this 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. This one was one certainly being one having something coming out of him. This one was one whom some were following. This one was one who was working. (Stein Reader, 142-143)

This writing departs from the usual tendency of insistent writing to be general, through Stein's use of specific adjectives, e.g., "charming," "perplexing," and the like.

There is a struggle in Picasso that Stein presents in relation to the contradictory adjectives she uses. Yet even the "worst" adjectives, such as "repellent," seem to be a compliment, especially since they are sandwiched between extremely positive adjectives. It is an achievement to create a
piece of work which inspires such a collection of adjectives. By the time Stein wrote these portraits, she felt her artistic sensibilities to be more in line with those of Picasso than those of Matisse, and these portraits reflect this stance. Her preference for Picasso would come to fruition in her writing with her development of the "lively" words style.

"A Long Gay Book"

Dydo suggests that "A Long Gay Book" was begun while Stein was working on The Making of Americans, and that its writing continued until the spring of 1913. "A Long Gay Book" takes as its style that which ended The Making of Americans, a style which DeKoven calls "insistence." This style creates a sense of time which Stein called the "continuous present," and it does this through gerunds: most of the verbs are in the "-ing" form, creating a sense that actions are occurring at the present moment.

This "continuous present" can also be understood in the context of Stein's development of an objective, scientific language in which she could express her observations. That is, the words she uses represent the fact of continual existence of the observer (one of the conditions on which science is predicated, according to Mivart). This insistence on the present moment, in turn, is syntactically unusual to the point that the words Stein uses are defamiliarized, an extension of the defamiliarization of language that takes place in The Making of Americans. That is, they lose their emotion-laden associations, as can be seen in this passage about the relationship between love and babies:

Loving is being existing. Loving has been being existing. Loving being existing and some being ones being loving and some having been ones being loving loving is being existing. Loving is being
existing and some are ones being loving. Loving is being existing and some are ones some are loving. Loving is being existing and some are believing that loving is being existing. Loving is being existing and some are believing that babies are being existing. Babies are being existing and some are believing that loving is being existing. Babies are being existing. Loving is being existing. Some are believing that loving and babies are being existing. Any one can come to believe that babies have been existing. Some can come to believe that loving has been existing. Some babies are being living. Any one can come to believe that some babies are being living. Believing something is what some are doing. Not believing something is what some are doing. Not loving are what some are doing. Not loving are what some are doing. Being one being that one is something. Any one being that one is being that one. Loving is existing. Believing is existing. Any one is existing. Babies are existing. Anything any one has been beginning is something. Any one begun is something. Not any one is certain of being begun when they are babies. Not any one is then certain of that thing that anything is something. Some loving is existing. Some babies are existing. Loving being existing is something. Some being existing is something. Any one being existing is something. Not every one being existing is something. Everything is something. Any one can be certain that not anything is anything. Any one can be certain that loving is not existing. Any one can be certain that babies are existing. Any one can be certain of something. Some can be certain that loving is existing. Some can be certain of anything. Some can be certain that loving is existing. Some can be certain of anything. Some can be certain that babies are existing. Some can be certain of that thing. (161-162, Stein Reader)

"Being existing" is a statement of existence which exceeds the status of the word "is." In standard English, "is" suffices to express the existence of both temporary and permanent things, as in "the cat is on the window sill" (right now, but in a few minutes, that may change) or "she is a writer" (hopefully, a more permanent status for a person). "Being existing" implies a permanence of something.

The passage begins with loving as something which exists permanently. The next sentence suggests that this has been true for a long period of time. Love, according to this passage, is a part of the experience
of living and it has some kind of permanent connection to the process of living. The third sentence suggests that agents are necessary to the process of love—that "some" must love as a part of "being existing," and, again, that this process is not only currently present but has been present for a long period of time.

Not only is love a permanent part of life in some objective sense, but there are those who believe that love is a part of life. That is, an objective fact is recognized by some people in the way that the planets have revolved around the sun since their formation, but there was a period of time in which only "some" people believed that fact. Now Stein makes a paradigmatic move, in which she substitutes "babies" for "love" in otherwise identical sentences:

Loving is being existing and some are believing that loving is being existing.
Loving is being existing and some are believing that babies are being existing.

She continues this kind of substitution with sentences that follow closely: "Babies are being existing. Loving is being existing." This substitution creates a connection between babies and love which would have been shocking to the post-Victorian world had Stein expressed it in standard terms and syntax. For example, had Stein written something such as, "Love and babies are intimately connected," with the word "intimately" recalling the physical act of procreation, her readers' emotional responses to something which challenges the moral strictures of that day would have prevented them from engaging with the meaning she was making. As it is, the words she uses remain connected in an abstract way to their meanings. As readers, we have a sense of what love is and what babies
are, and we are given a sense of the connection between them, but we do not get that connection in a way that brings out our prejudices about that particular connection. Her objective language helps the reader to reserve judgment.

Stein discusses what she observes, that "believing something is what some are doing." If, however, "some" are believing, what are the rest doing? Harkening back to the scientific principle articulated in Mivart's work, that something cannot both exist and not exist, Stein tells us about those who are not included in the statement "believing something is what some are doing"—they are "not believing." Likewise, there are those who love and those who do not love. She does not leave anything to the reader's inference but reports as fully as possible.

The paradigmatic substitution strategy continues with Loving/ Believing/ Any one/ Babies being connected, possibly equated, and asserted to exist. The creation of a baby, then, is explored both from the perspective of the parents as well as from the perspective of the baby: "Anything any one has been beginning is something. Any one begun is something." To suggest that a baby is "something" is to suggest that it has a significance that is difficult to define, or to confine to a single word. The baby's perspective, that it is "something" to have been begun, harkens back to earlier parts of this piece in which Stein explores the fact that we all begin our lives as helpless babies, but we have a hard time remembering this fact. Our sense of ourselves, which develops as we become young adults, does not include the sense of having been a helpless baby. After more exploration of the idea of "something," Stein explores the issue of certainty. An individual person, "any one," as opposed to what is likely to
be the belief condition of groups of people, ("some"), can be certain of any kind of proposition, even propositions which are not true, such as the proposition that love does not exist. Yet it is more likely, because a greater number of people do it, that people believe that love exists and that there is a connection between love and babies.

"A Long Gay Book" was written over a long period of time, as is evident not only by some of the stylistic changes within the piece, which are discussed in relation to *Tender Buttons*, but also in terms of the manuscripts which contributed to it. By the time she had begun the holograph for the final version of this piece, Stein had developed the first of her more idiosyncratic ways of using notebooks. The manuscripts for *Q.E.D.* and some of her other early works reflect a fairly standard usage of notebooks, that is, the writing is more or less on the printed lines of the notebooks and the writing is perpendicular to the spine of the book. Yet the narrow lines required Stein to write small, which was not her natural style of writing.²

This manuscript is particularly interesting, since she began it with a fairly standard way of using a notebook in the first volume of the manuscript, although she wrote on the right hand page only. Part-way through the book, she abandoned the ink pen for her pencil, with which she was able to write much more quickly. At the end of the book, she turned the notebook over, and began writing sideways, parallel to the

²From the earliest manuscripts, it is clear that Stein did not possess the fine motor skills necessary for consistently neat handwriting. There are moments when she clearly tries to make her handwriting neater, when the capital letters become calligraphic in their formation, but this must have taken a lot of time. Much of her handwriting is large, sharply slanted to the right, and hurriedly formed, in short, a challenge for anyone reading her manuscripts. Alice Toklas, in contrast, had a consistent and neat handwriting, which she could do with a very fine pen.
spine of the book, on the backs of the sheets of paper that had been
previously written upon, from the back of the notebook to the front. The
other six notebooks in this manuscript follow the conventions of writing
in pencil, sideways, one side of the paper at a time, and going from front to
back to front again consistently. There is an eighth notebook that is filed
in the Stein collection at the Beinecke Library with the "A Long Gay Book"
manuscript. This notebook appears to have been written in somewhat
earlier than the "A Long Gay Book" in that Stein uses the notebook in a
conventional way (not sideways) and she writes in ink. The writing in
this notebook is an earlier draft of the opening of "A Long Gay Book"; the
changes in that draft are, for the most part, incorporated into the
holograph of "A Long Gay Book," with some changes.

Stein's shift in the way she used her notebooks paralleled her
engagement with the constructs formed the social expectations for a
person in her position: she did not reject the lined notebooks themselves
as being too rigid for the likes of herself; she did not switch, for example,
to unlined paper. She continued to use lined notebooks of various sorts
for the rest of her life. Instead, she adapted the notebooks in their
traditional form to her own use. Over time, Stein experimented with
several different ways of using notebooks, in terms of how she oriented
her writing. There is a notebook from the 1920s, a carnet (small notebook),
in which there are three texts coming together on a single page in the
center of the notebook, in three different orientations. Stein approached
the physical accouterments of her métier with new eyes, able to see all the
possibilities for the materials at hand and to make decisions for herself
about those possibilities. In the same way, Stein ultimately appropriated
the possibilities inherent to scientific writing, approaching it with the new
eyes of someone who is seeing new paintings, and using it to express
aspects of her own life that were important to her. And, in the same way,
she approached the construction of her own life, appropriating the concept
of marriage for her relationship with Alice B. Toklas, appropriating
traditional constructs of gender, both male and female, in order to
construct her own approach to being a human being.

Repetition, Sound, and Insistence

One of the more noteworthy qualities of the "insistent" style is what
many would call repetition. Yet Stein's perspective on this challenges this
idea:

In the beginning and I will read you some portraits to show you this
I continued to do what I was doing in the Making of Americans, I
was doing what the cinema was doing, I was making a continuous
succession of the statement of what that person was until I had not
many things but one thing...

I of course did not think of it in terms of the cinema, in fact I
doubt whether at that time I had ever seen a cinema but, and I
cannot repeat this too often any one is of one's period and this our
period was undoubtedly the period of the cinema and series
production...

You see then what I was doing in my beginning portrait
writing and you also understand what I mean when I say there was
no repetition. In a cinema picture no two pictures are exactly alike
each one is just that much different from the one before, and so in
those early portraits there was as I am sure you will realize as I read
them to you also as there was in The Making of Americans no
repetition. *Lectures in America*, pp. 176-77

The question of repetition is very important. It is important
because there is no such thing as repetition....All my early work was
a careful listening to all the people telling their story, and I
conceived the idea which is, funnily enough, the same as the idea of
the cinema. The cinema goes on the same principle: each picture is
just infinitesimally different from the one before. *(Gender of
Modernism*, p. 494).
It is true that each sentence in the "insistent" style draws on the material of previous sentences and extends that material just a little bit. Stein's comparison with cinema (even though she probably had not seen a moving picture when she was writing in the insistent style), in retrospect, is an apt one.

The other key here is what she says about her reading: "[There is no repetition in these portraits] I am sure you will realize as I read them to you also." Fortunately, there is a recording of Stein's reading of some of her own works. On this recording, she reads the last page of *The Making of Americans*:

Family living can go on existing. Very many are remembering this thing are remembering that family living can go on existing. Very many are quite certain that family living can go on existing. Very many are remembering that they are quite certain that family living can go on existing.

Any family living going on existing is going on and every one can come to be a dead one and there are then not any more living in that family living and that family is not then existing if there are not then any more having come to be living. Any family living is existing if there are some more being living when very many have come to be dead ones. Family living can be existing if not every one in the family living has come to be a dead one. Family living can be existing if there have come to be some existing who have not come to be dead ones. Family living can be existing and there can be some who are not completely remembering any such thing. Family living can be existing and there can be some who have been completely remembering such a thing. Family living can be existing and there can be some remembering something of such a thing. Family living can be existing and some can come to be old ones and then dead ones and some can have been then quite expecting some such thing. Family living can be existing and some can come to be old ones and not yet dead ones and some can be remembering something of some such thing. Family living can be existing and some one can come to be an old one and some can come to be a pretty old one and some can come to be completely expecting such a thing and completely remembering expecting such a thing. Family living can be existing and every one can come to be
a dead one and not any one then is remembering any such thing. Family living can be existing and every one can come to be a dead one and some are remembering some such thing. Family living can be existing and any one can come to be a dead one and every one is then a dead one and there are then not any more being living. Any old one can come to be a dead one. Every old one can come to be a dead one. Any family being existing is one having some being then not having come to be a dead one. Any family living can be existing when not every one has come to be a dead one. Every one in a family living having come to be dead ones some are remembering something of some such thing. Some being living not having come to be dead ones can be ones being in a family living. Some being living and having come to be old ones can come then to be dead ones. Some being living and being in a family living and coming then to be old ones can come then to be dead ones. Any one can be certain that some can remember such a thing. Any family living can be one being existing and some can remember something of some such thing. (925)

It is one thing to view such a mass of text on a page. It is quite another to hear Stein's musical voice render it into meaningful units, through the use of both pitch and rhythm.

To begin with, every sentence and some phrases in Stein's reading of the passage begin fairly highly pitched and descend in pitch at the ending. Stein's statements are definitive in sound. Secondary phrases can end high and with a pause, as an indication that more related information is coming. Other times, they end at a low pitch but not quite as low a pitch as at the end of the sentence.

Coupled with pitch is rhythm. In particular, she says frequently-repeated phrases such as "family living can be existing" quickly, while she draws the ends of sentences out. The phrase "some[any] such thing" comes out initially as spondees; later the individual words are not so emphasized, as the phrase is repeated. Stein reserves the spondaic rhythm for unusual syntax or important words--such as the phrase, "Any family
being existing is one having some being then not having come to be a
dead one."

One of the most interesting passages in the excerpt, in terms of
Stein's own voice, is the series of sentences which begin "Family living
can be existing." Eleven sentences begin this way; I quote them along
with my own paraphrase in brackets:

1. Family living can be existing if not every one in the family living
   has come to be a dead one. [Families exist if not everyone is dead.]
2. Family living can be existing if there have come to be some
   existing who have not come to be dead ones. [Families exist if there
   are some who are yet alive.]
3. Family living can be existing and there can be some who are not
   completely remembering any such thing. [Families exist and some
don't remember this.]
4. Family living can be existing and there can be some who have
   been completely remembering such a thing. [Families exist and some
   do remember this very well.]
5. Family living can be existing and there can be some
   remembering something of such a thing. [Families exist and some
   remember this pretty well.]
6. Family living can be existing and some can come to be old ones
   and then dead ones and some can have been then quite expecting
   some such thing. [Families exist and some are old and then they
day and some have expected this to happen.]
7. Family living can be existing and some can come to be old ones
   and not yet dead ones and some can be remembering something of
   some such thing. [Families exist and some can get old but not dead
   and some can expect death to happen.]
8. Family living can be existing and some one can come to be an old
   one and some can come to be a pretty old one and some can come to
   be completely expecting such a thing and completely remembering
   expecting such a thing. [Families exist and an individual can be
   come old or fairly old and some can truly expect this turn of events
   and they can remember this expectation.]
9. Family living can be existing and every one can come to be a dead
   one and not any one then is remembering any such thing.
   [Families exist and everyone will die and no one will remember
   this.]
10. Family living can be existing and every one can come to be a
dead one and some are remembering some such thing. [Families
exist and everyone will die yet some remember this fact.]

11. Family living can be existing and any one can come to be a dead
one and every one is then a dead one and there are then not any
more being living. [Families exist and anyone can die and then
everyone dies and there are no more people left.]

There is an overall pattern of lengthening sentences up to a climactic
sentence (# 8) with 43 words in it. Then the process falls away to sentences
9-11, which are considerably shorter.

Stein also sets up a pattern, beginning with sentences 1-6, in which
the dependent clauses end with a high pitch and the final clause ends low.
In sentence 7, she alters this by ending all the phrases low (although not so
low as the final phrase). Sentences 8-11 tend to end with lower pitches in
the phrases.

In the "Transatlantic Interview," conducted in the year of Stein's
death, Stein stated: "On the Making of Americans I had written about one
thousand pages, and I finished the thing with a sort of rhapsody at the
end" (503). The Harvard Dictionary of Music defines rhapsody:

In the 19th and 20th centuries, a title chiefly for instrumental pieces.
Borrowed from 18th century literature, it implied no particular
form, content, or compositional method . . . Liszt's 19 Hungarian
Rhapsodies (1846-86), with their loose, episodic forms (like epic
poetry, their exaggerated, contrasting moods, and their supposed
folk themes, initiated a long tradition of nationalistic rhapsodies . . .
On the other hand, Brahms's well-known Rhapsodies op. 79 for
piano depart from this tradition, the second in G minor being a
clear example of sonata form. (697)

The entire section, "History of a Family's Progress" (pages 907-925 in The
Making of Americans) is episodic, rhapsodic. Even if Stein did not
initially conceive of her work in musical terms -- she began to use musical
terms to describe her work after she became friends with the composer
Virgil Thomson (in the 1920s) -- she certainly recognized the musical aspects of her work once she acquired the vocabulary from Thomson to describe the sounds of her writing.

The effect of listening to the passage that Stein reads is very much like listening to the development section of a sonata-allegro form. There is a repeated motive "family living can be existing" which is varied in terms of how the sentences end. But even within the ending of the sentences, there are elements which appear in more than one sentence. The repetition here functions the same way the repetition of the four note motive in Beethoven's *Fifth Symphony* (for example) functions—although one can recognize the motive over and over again in a number of different permutations. In this sense, there is no strict repetition—everything is varied.

Another interesting aspect of Stein's reading of the passage has to do with her feelings about punctuation marks. From her college days and forward, Stein had an antipathy towards certain forms of punctuation, which she articulated in *Lectures in America*. She especially did not like the comma:

> I have refused [commas] so often and left them out so much and did without them so continually that I have come finally to be indifferent to them. I do not now care whether you put them in or not but for a long time I felt very definitely about them and would have nothing to do with them. As I say commas are servile and they have no life of their own, and their use is not a use, it is a way of replacing one's own interest and I do decidedly like to like my own interest my own interest in what I am doing. A comma by helping you along holding your coat for you and putting on your shoes keeps you from living your life as actively as you should lead it and to me for many years and I still do feel that way about it only now I do not pay as much attention to them, the use of them was positively
degrading . . . A long complicated sentence should force itself upon you, make you know yourself knowing it and the comma well at the most a 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. (219-221)

Stein reads her own passage beautifully, pausing for breath between all the phrases, without the aid of commas. In fact, what she is calling for is an involved kind of reading, in which the reader makes active decisions about how to read a passage. She sets this example in her own reading of her work.

In terms of linguistic meaning, this passage is a meditation on what it means to be a family—under what conditions families exist (as long as people are alive) and different kinds of people in families (people who recognize that everything will end with death and people who do not seem to anticipate this). The repeated phrase "family living can be existing" emphasizes the centrality of families to our lives; at the same time, because it is repeated so many times, it starts to become defamiliarized. That is, the sense of it starts to leave, just as a word repeated many times loses its meaning and becomes sound. The assertion of this phrase, then, leaves a question: what is this thing called family, and why is it such a central force in our lives? Some time after writing about families, losing the sense of phrases about families in the sounds, Stein will begin to exploit this process as she begins to cope with a drastic change in her own family relations.

Writing Becomes Art:
The Origins of the Lively Words Style

During the period of time from around 1908 to 1912, Stein was apparently working on several texts at once. More than one of the
"insistent" texts, the ones with lots of gerunds, feature a sudden shift in style to what DeKoven calls the "lively words" style. Here is the shift in "A Long Gay Book":

If in leaving some one is leaving then in having been disappearing some one has been disappearing and has not been saying that he has said what he said he would say if he saw what he would have seen if there had been what there would have been if there was what there was as there was not.

A tiny violent noise is a yellow happy thing. A yellow happy thing is a gentle little tinkle that goes in all the way it has everything to say. It is not what there was when it was not where it is. It is all that it is when it is all that there is. (Stein Reader, 221)

A similar kind of shift takes place in the "Portrait of Constance Fletcher":

She was filling in all her living to be a full one. She was thinking and feeling in all her living in being a full one. She was thinking and feeling all her living in being one who could be a completely full one. She was all her living a full one. She was completely filling in to be a full one and she always was a full one. She was thinking in being a full one. She was feeling in being a full one. She was thinking in feeling in being a full one. She was feeling in thinking in being a full one.

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

The language of education is not replacing the special position that is the expression of the emanation of evil. There is an expression when contemplation is not connecting the object that is in position with the forehead that is returning looking. It is not overpowering. That is cruel description. The memory is the same and surely the one who is not older is not dead yet although if he has been blind he is seeing. This has not any meaning. (263, Stein Reader)

All of a sudden, the innovations in the texts occur within the nouns, not the verbs. That is, instead of the gerunds (and even neologisms such as "being existing" are made up of verbal forms) being the source of a significant shift away from standard usage of language, the nouns become the site in which language is altered. Although in both texts the
alterations take place in relation to the nouns, there are two strategies for her choices of nouns, and these strategies have different sources for their genesis. In the "Portrait of Constance Fletcher," the nouns Stein chooses are latinate and abstract. This is a text that refuses to mean but sounds like it ought to. In fact, it sounds like the kind of non-meaning that a university undergraduate might make when attempting to impress others with his/her vocabulary. The "Long Gay Book" shift is concrete in its qualities, featuring words that are strongly visual ("yellow") or strongly aural ("tinkle").

By the time of this shift, probably around 1911, Stein was having trouble in her relationship with her brother, Leo. Although Leo had been initially enthusiastic about the art collection, by 1910, he had lost his interest in modern art. He had originally thought of Picasso as a wonderful draftsman, but did not care at all for the innovations Picasso made in painting around 1907, in the name of cubism. Further, Leo was becoming deaf, like his father. The Saturday evening gatherings to look at paintings and discuss modernism must have lost their allure because of the difficulty of understanding people in the large, echoey rooms of 27 rue de Fleurus. It is enormously frustrating for a person with even a mild hearing loss who is used to the hearing world to try to get along in a gathering of talking people.

Finally, the lives of Leo and Gertrude were simply going in two different directions, as Wineapple states. In terms of psychology, Gertrude was interested in the work of Otto Weininger, who offered support for the life Gertrude was leading. He wrote in favor of toleration of homosexuals (even if his book is enormously problematic in terms of its anti-semitism
and his attitudes about women).\(^3\) Leo was interested in Freud, who was considerably more ambivalent on the subject of homosexuality.

Gertrude by this point was very much involved with Alice Toklas, which might have made Leo uncomfortable because of the prevailing attitudes about homosexuality. In fact, Alice had moved in and was very supportive of Gertrude's work. Leo, in contrast, was involved with Nina Auzias, but was having difficulties making an emotional commitment to her. Gertrude had found work for herself; her first book, *Three Lives*, had been published (albeit privately, but it still had made a splash) and she was starting to look for a publisher for *The Making of Americans*. Leo had continued to struggle with what he wanted to do; while he talked about writing about art, he had not produced anything by 1911.

The period of time between 1910 and 1913, when Leo moved out of 27 rue de Fleurus, was one of struggle and conflict between Gertrude and Leo—and yet that difficulty led to an innovation in Gertrude’s writing, the innovation that produced two versions of what DeKoven calls "lively words"—the latinate version of "Constance Fletcher," and what I will call the "cubist" version of "A Long Gay Book." The way into this shift is through a long piece that Stein worked on from 1911 to 1912, "Two: Gertrude Stein and Her Brother."

\(^3\)In his dissertation, Katz says: "The nature of [Weininger's] influence must be carefully defined, since Stein's way of absorbing influence was aberrant and unusual . . . there is little point in looking for logical extensions of Weininger's notions in [Stein's] work, or even for the presence of his ideas in their own logical context" (269). Rather than being "aberrant," Stein's way of working with Weininger can be seen as part of her ability to avoid being limited by the limitations of others. Had there been a text available to Stein that affirmed being female, lesbian, and Jewish, this text may have influenced Stein in a less "aberrant" way. Since a text of this sort was not available, Stein patched together her own intellectual support system, including borrowing / decontextualizing Weininger's toleration of homosexuality, as well as his notion of genius, while ignoring his anti-semitism and antipathy toward women.
According to Dydo's headnotes in the Stein Reader to "Orta Or One Dancing," "Two" was:

a long double portrait of [Gertrude's] brother Leo and her sister-in-law Sarah ["Sally"] Stein. Two contrasted the excessive intellectuality that removed Leo from direct experience with the greater sensitivity to experience of Sarah, whose intellect, however, remained undeveloped (120).

The title, according to Wineapple, is somewhat deceptive. In the manuscript, Wineapple states, the title was "Leo and Sally" (343) but in an endnote Wineapple describes how Stein later changed the title:

The title appears added in Stein's hand on a typescript, evidently long after the fact; perhaps Stein forgot the original subject of the portrait or, more likely, wanted aspects of it suppressed. Moreover, she was in a coded way trying to explain her views of Leo after having excised him from The Autobiography. (475)

About this piece, Wineapple states:

By the middle of June [1912], after almost six weeks in Madrid, Gertrude had finished much of "Two." It incorporated everything she'd been thinking and feeling about Leo, even her responses to his letters... "Two" is among the most personal and variable of Gertrude Stein's early work, not only because of its autobiographical urgency but also because of its heralding the stylistic shifts that would culminate in the still-life portraits published as Tender Buttons. With its swaying rhythms, "Two" begins in the repetitive style of the early portraits. Using the ideas of "sound" as a metaphor for expression, Stein explores the "sound coming out of each one of them," or the way all characters, male and female, signify themselves. ... Superficially, the difference between these two [characters] is largely predictable, even though Stein's rhythmic use of participles can be evocative. Her male and female characters -- insofar as they are characters -- fall into stereotypical patterns. The male is deliberate and cerebral, defined in terms of vigor and intention and determination and decision. ... The female character is defined by emotion; for her, "thinking is feeling." For Stein, though, neither extreme is salutary: each is simply the inversion of the other. (349)
That "Two" is about Leo, there is no question. What is in question, in terms of the original title of the piece and the later title of the piece, is Gertrude's own place in the portrait. While the "she" of the portrait is Sally, Gertrude herself has a presence in the portrait as the observer of Leo, which her later title implies.

The approach that Stein took in writing about her brother was similar to her approach in *The Making of Americans* in writing about people whose behavior is problematic. In "Two," she attempted to use her own scientific language in order to record what was happening without making judgments about those happenings:

One can be repeating, one is repeating, repeating is being existing, if repeating is being existing he is expressing that that thing is not interesting and not being interesting it has not the meaning not the meaning of being something being existing, sound coming out of him and sounding is expressing is quite expressing that thing, is completing, is quite completing the expressing of that thing.

Repeating being existing sound coming out of him is sounding and the sound sounding is expressing that he is telling what he has been thinking. In telling what he has been thinking sound is coming out of him, and sound coming out of him and sounding repeating is existing and repeating being existing he is expressing what he has been thinking.

She is one being one and sound coming out of her and sounding is repeating that she has been feeling that she has come again to be completing feeling what she is feeling. She is one being one and being one and repeating she is being one feeling in being one feeling that she has been again completing feeling what she has been feeling. In repeating she is being one being the one having it existing that she is feeling that she is completing again feeling what she is feeling. In repeating sound sounding is expressing that she is feeling that she has been feeling again that she has been completing feeling what she has been feeling. (*Two* 55)

This section is not an account of an argument between two people; it is an account of different ways two people have of expressing themselves. And yet, Gertrude's observations about her brother's forms of expression took
place in the context of her own interactions with him and not merely through watching him interact with Sally. In this sense, the descriptions of Leo's expression can be seen as representations of how he interacted with Gertrude. The patterns of interactions between Leo and Gertrude in turn became a source for the shift toward the *Tender Buttons* style through what is implicit in this text: the experience of listening to someone else's "sounding."

The relationship between Leo and Gertrude had been a close one since they were children. In college, Gertrude wrote about the two of them as youngsters setting out to hike a long way and then getting a ride that shortened their walk considerably, but choosing not to tell the others upon their arrival—a conspiracy between the two about their adventure together. Their lives and interests paralleled one another throughout college and afterwards (Wineapple calls into question the idea that Gertrude was dependent on Leo and suggests that it might have been equally or more the other way around). And together they had created an important salon in Paris. The breaking up of this relationship was likely to have resulted in Gertrude having conflicting feelings—a sense of great loss and a sense of burgeoning freedom to create her own life.

There are many ways Stein could have written about her concerns during this break-up with Leo. She could have written in the blaming, vitriolic manner that Bird Sternberger wrote to Stein about her own divorce from Louis, for example. Gertrude could have written in order to set herself up as the victim of Leo's unreasonableness. Instead of these alternatives, Stein wrote in a way that removed even the blame that might accrue from standard kinds of word choices and simply attempted
to examine what was happening. She took an abstract approach to what was happening—that there were issues of repetition and "sound." One implication of this writing about sound and repetition is that, at some level, all attempts to communicate between Gertrude and Leo were going in circles, that neither participant was being particularly successful in convincing the other to change point of view. This perspective suggests that the conflict was not going to be resolved through talk but it does so in a way that is not blaming. Considering the difficulty of feelings that can happen between siblings, this way of writing about such a problem is mature.

At some point, Gertrude must have realized that she had ceased listening to Leo, perhaps because of the repetition of ideas and the fact that the conflicts between their perspectives were not resolvable, nor could these conflicts continue to exist in a single household. What happened when Gertrude realized she had stopped hearing his language but he had not stopped speaking, is that Gertrude began to engage with the sonic qualities of language that are separate from the communicative functions of speech. To take Gertrude's perspective during their discussions for a moment, Leo's repetition of his ideas at Gertrude could be considered to be, in the emotionally-laden term that Stein herself would not have used, haranguing. Gertrude's way of getting through these periods of time was to focus her attention on the sounds he was making. Perhaps, she was even composing sections of this piece in her head while she was attending to the sounds coming out of Leo even if she was not listening to the words.
In any case, this idea of paying attention to sounds of language, quite apart from the meaning of language, became significant to Gertrude's most innovative use of language before 1914, the "lively" words style. The "lively words" style not only features words which have strong sonic implications in terms of the connection between signifier and signified, as has been seen in "cubist" style writing. Used in works such as the 1913 Susie Asado, the "lively words" writing ultimately has what Marjorie Perloff would call a "plane of meaning" (borrowing from the visual concept of planes within cubist paintings) that is completely sonic. In other words, as is demonstrated at length in the chapter on "lively words," the sonic aspects of linguistic materials supports and subverts linguistic meanings and also creates its own meaning-making trajectory.

Leo Stein probably made one other inadvertent contribution to Gertrude Stein's "lively words" style. Throughout their letters to other people, both Gertrude and Leo play with language, adopting different kinds of voices. Some of their correspondents did the same. For example, in Gertrude's description of Three Lives to Mabel Weeks, in which she denies any Romantic influence (quoted in Chapter Three), Stein adopts a kind of lower-class immigrant voice ("dey is werry simple").

Leo's play with language often involved an elevation of discourse. For example, when he heard that Gertrude was having troubles in medical school early in 1901, he wrote: "What is all this nonmedicated rumble that issues from your quarter? Is it representative of a phase or a general condition?" (Journey Into Self, 7). Apparently, Leo's playful speech would go in a similar direction, as when he was working on a jigsaw puzzle at Mabel Dodge's house and said, "I think this angle is susceptible to a
conjunction," (quoted in Souhami, p. 104). This latinate discourse became for Leo a way of dealing with his difficult relations with his sister. A famous letter from him to Gertrude (undated, but since it deals with the splitting up of the paintings they owned together, is probably late 1912) begins: "It is impossible simply to answer yes or no to your note because there are a number of mistaken beliefs affirmed, to which a mere yes or no would not satisfactorily fit" (Journey Into Self 56). Instead of saying directly, "your assumptions are wrong," he uses passive voice and elevated discourse to express the same idea. This was probably his way of trying to keep their process of working out who was going to have what on a civilized plane as well as borrowing a sense of authority and rightness from such an intellectual form of language.

The interesting thing about highly latinate prose cast in passive voice is how easily it can cease to mean, especially if one listens to it only haphazardly. Gertrude may have realized this in her reflections on listening to her brother and failing to listen to her brother. In other words, the meaninglessness of latinate prose may have been for her an intermediate step towards the realization of the purely sonic qualities of language. In any case, the latinate lively words of the "Portrait of Constance Fletcher" are an example of a syntactically reasonable way of writing that fails to communicate in the way language normally communicates. This latinate strategy may have been an intermediate step for Stein between writing which is unusual but which does communicate (as in Stein's scientific prose) and writing which is divorced from standard linguistic meaning-making processes.
From the beginning of her writing career through the insistent writing, Stein used scientific approaches to her writing. She did this initially by writing as a scientist (in her psychological papers and essays). Later she ceased writing about science directly but used writing to record scientific observations about the people around her in order to understand them. *Q.E.D.* is a particularly heroic effort of this sort—even though Stein wrote the tale as her own disappointing affair was unraveling, she wrote in a dispassionate voice.

The initial forays into avant garde writing forms were scientific in nature. Although by this point Stein was influenced by artists around her, she continued to use her scientific approach in her neologisms and her syntax. This approach allowed her to write about deeply emotional events, such as conflicts with family members, without losing objectivity due to emotional associations with her signifiers. Using this terminology, she could present several perspectives, even perspectives that were strongly opposed to her own perspective. She could begin to understand those perspectives, even if she did not choose to allow those perspectives to have an undue influence on her own life.

With the development of the "lively" words style, Stein makes a shift away from the scientific approach and becomes a full-fledged artist. At last, she is not engaging with language as a way of understanding; rather, she is engaging with language as an entity unto itself, as a tangible thing made of sound and image. In so doing, Stein reinvents both writing and reading.
Writing as Improvisation

Stein's relation to the draft and craft process of writing was a complex one. The traditional process of crafting writing involves considering how the reader might take the meaning of the piece—and changing the words in the piece in order to make the work as clear as possible. Stein used this kind of writing process when she wrote pieces for which the primary function was communication. For example, there is a letter to Bird Sternberger which Stein wrote in response to a conflict between them over Bird's proposed use of Stein's apartment. Stein apparently wrote this letter after several attempts at getting her perspective across to Bird had failed. There are three drafts of the letter extant. The drafts show evidence of meticulous editing at the level of words in order to get just exactly the meaning across that Stein intended. For example, the word "proposition" in the first draft of this letter undergoes an interesting change. It becomes in the second draft "quality" and is then changed to "wrong." The words "proposition" and "quality" do not carry the conviction that Stein obviously felt in writing this letter. The last version of this letter is extremely clear and concise.

In her essay, "Reading the Hand Writing: The Manuscripts of Gertrude Stein" (in Kellner), Ulla Dydo describes Stein's writing process. She states that Stein wrote initially in "carnets," which were small pocket notebooks that Stein carried around with her. Then she would copy material from the carnets into cahiers, or larger notebooks (composition books). While some of these carnets have been preserved, apparently many were destroyed.

Dydo specifically states:
Stein was not interested in explaining how she worked, for that was her private affair. Only once, in a minor piece that is almost unknown, did she describe simply and clearly how she wrote. She spoke of a period of sterility following the success of The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas in 1933 and told of the difficult return from "outside" or "audience" writing for success to serious "inside" writing of literature:

I write the way I used to write in Making of Americans, I wander around and I come home and I write, I write in one copy-book and I copy what I write into another copy-book and I write and I write . . . I have come back to write the way I used to write and this is because now everything that is happening is once more happening inside, there is no use in the outside . . . ("And Now," 1933, ms. draft)

No one has paid attention to these words, yet they acknowledge notebooks prior to the final texts. The absence of notebooks after 1913, then, means not that there were no notebooks but merely that they were not donated to Yale or that they were destroyed. The comment in "And Now" makes it impossible to consider the manuscripts after 1913 as the first and only versions of her texts and confirms the visual impression that they are too neat and perfected to represent the first writing. (85-86)

The handwriting of various notebooks of 1910-1914 does not seem to be consistently the kind of handwriting a person would use in the process of copying. In copying a text from one place to another, one would expect there to be a sense of starting and stopping in the handwriting, as the writer's eyes would shift back to the text being copied in order to read the next words.

There is a rhythm of writing, at least in insistent texts such as "A Long Gay Book." There are starting points (often at the beginnings of paragraphs) in which the writing is relatively neat and the writing then progressively, across several pages, gets larger, messier, and slants more sharply to the right. Stein's writing at times gives the impression of having been done at a greater speed than is possible when copying text word for word. While there are notes of materials that Stein used in "A
Long Gay Book" — and she did copy those things, I would argue that some of the sections were, indeed, composed in the final handwritten manuscript. The lack of a visible process of "perfection" in some of these manuscripts comes, I think, from a shift away from "draft and craft" and towards what could be understood as an improvisatory form of writing—which can at points be based on material quoted verbatim from the carnets.

In order to understand Stein's writing process for her artistic writing, we should consider the differences in performance process between classical music and improvisatory forms of music such as jazz and certain kinds of folk music. The idea behind classical music performance is that the musician be able to play, in an expressive manner, the notes that Mozart wrote down in a style which is compatible with the music of that particular time period. The process of preparing a performance of this type involves playing a piece over and over again, going over small sections of it time and time again, in order to perfect the performance. The poet's work differs from that of the musician in that the poet creates a new combination of words while the musician plays a combination of notes that has existed for a couple of centuries. Still, this process of revisiting the notes many times in order to achieve a sense of beauty and clarity is analogous to the process of revisiting the words of a poem in order to hone them for clarity and beauty.

Classical players try to play the same notes for every performance, although they might subtly change the emphasis of the notes from performance to performance. In contrast, a jazz player who consistently played the same thing would be considered to be bad. Even playing the
"head," the signature tune, before beginning to improvise, the performer uses the notes of a given melody as mere guidelines (Off-Broadway show "Cowgirls" character Jo, trying to teach some classical musicians to perform country-western music, says, "Think of the music as a road map, not the Bible. You don't have to play every single solitary note"). The improvisatory aspect of jazz consists of a substructure that is consistent, often in the form of a chord progression and maybe an agreement among ensemble members about the order in which members will take a solo (improvise), and possibly how long each of the solos will last—a certain number of iterations of the chord progression. Certain forms of improvisation are more highly structured, such as "trading fours" in which a melodic instrument will improvise four bars in alteration with four bars of an improvised drum solo.

The improvising jazz soloist creates a unique melody over the top of this consistent substructure. The melody has to respond to the chord structure in some way. That is, it can shift in its implied harmony as the chords shift. Or it can defy the harmony. Yet this defiance must be done deliberately, in order to create in the listener the kind of delight we take in a literary work which deliberately and knowledgeably defies the genre it purports to be in. For example, there is the funny 18 line "sonnet" in the middle of Stein's poem, "Patriarchal Poetry," which she wrote during the 1920s. This sonnet makes reference in its subject matter and the shift in its subject matter to traditional sonnets. Yet it also turns the idea of the sonnet on its head because of its excessive number of excessively short

4Chords consist of notes played simultaneously. A D major chord, for example, consists of D, F#, and A. A melody which implies this chord would emphasize one or more of these three notes.
lines and the directness with which its subject matter is dealt. A writer who fails to signal that the departure from genre is deliberate runs the risk of being viewed as a very poor author; the reader may take this departure as evidence of the author's ignorance of the genre.

How does a jazz player become able to create something new and yet respond to the structural demands of the performance? Like their classical counterparts, jazz players practice. Yet their practice is more process-oriented. For example, they practice certain kinds of melodic patterns in a wide range of keys, such as major and minor scales, blues scales, modal scales, chromatic scales, and whole-tone scales. They may practice arpeggios, which are broken forms of chords (a melodic approach to chords). They might practice little melodic bits of music, called "licks," which they glean from other jazz performers or which they themselves have invented during particularly fruitful improvisatory sessions. They practice tunes, not so much to learn the tune as it is written down (the written versions of jazz tunes fail to adequately represent certain rhythms or the "blue" bending of pitch between the notes, which cannot be written down in western classical nomenclature), but in order to create their own version of it. With these patterns securely under their fingers, they can

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5 Stein's sonnet is much like W.S. Gilbert's limerick:

There was an old man of St. Bees
Who was stung in the arm by a Wasp.
When asked, "Does it hurt?"
He replied, "No it doesn't;
I'm so glad that it wasn't a Hornet.

6 For the musically uninitiated, a key is a pattern of notes in which one note is really important—the note that feels the most like an ending or resolution. You can play the same tune across several different patterns of notes. That is, if you play a tune in the key of D major, it will probably end on the note D. You can play the same tune using a different pattern of notes, and it will end on a note other than D. The process of "transposition," that is playing a tune in more than one key, is something that has to be practiced.
decide in the heat of the moment to let an improvised melody ascend a certain kind of scale and they can be fairly sure that their fingers will be able to grab the right notes for that pattern.

Improvisatory playing is not nearly as intellectually-driven as it sounds from this description. In moments of great inspiration, jazz players may not be consciously aware of chords, keys, patterns, and the like, just as a person who drives a standard shift car is often not aware of the process of putting the car into gear. Jazz players may simply be following sounds they hear in their heads in relation to the particular piece of music being played; they are composing on the spot. They may be daring, trying out something risky, like an acrobat doing a complicated flip from a trapeze. These are moments of great excitement, only made possible by intimate familiarity with the structures of music and the technique of the individual instrument. You can't follow the sounds in your head unless you know how to make them on the horn.

Stein's artistic writing process follows the lines of improvisatory musical performance, in that she wrote her more avant garde works. She practiced her "licks," in the carnets--this is especially clear in her works in the 1920s for which carnets have been preserved. When writing in her large notebooks, she would use some of these "licks" verbatim. At the same time, this work does not bear the signs of crafting for clarity. There are occasional changes, some of which are clearly made during the heat of writing--because the corrections are made in the same line as the writing (and are not inserted in the text over the line), much the way an improvising musician will "correct" a note by turning it into a very quick ornament of a note that is more congruent with the key.
Further, there are structural patterns to the styles Stein used. The "insistence" style depends on the use of gerunds; the cubist "lively words" style depends on the use of concrete words, the latinate "lively words" style depends on the use of a certain vocabulary and passive voice, the repetitive style depends on the repetition of small phrases that are rather common to everyday speech. Within each of these styles (one could almost consider them to be keys--structures which determine the "center" of the piece), Stein composed many pieces. These styles are distinctive because Stein instantiated them across many individual pieces with words and phrases that fit within these overall structural patterns. Stein did not use random words in her work.

Truly wonderful music can come from two completely different performance practices. Likewise, truly wonderful writing can result from the draft and craft traditional process. But truly wonderful writing can also result from the process of setting certain strictures to the writing and then seeing what results, of privileging the process of writing--the moment of writing performance, of elevating writing beyond its communicative function and into the status of being an art form.
CHAPTER 5

WRITING AS ART, PART II:
PAINTINGS, MUSIC, AND LIVELY WORDS

The "lively" words style is quintessential Stein—it is the most hermetic style, the one which causes people to think she is a difficult read. DeKoven and others have identified stylistic shifts after the "lively" words phase. For example, Stein began to write plays during World War I and developed a style of writing that sounds like dialogue even if it is not strongly representational. Yet none of these other styles are as impervious to traditional ways of reading as the "lively" words style. Lively words represents the culmination of years of writing in combination with the creation of a personal life which supported that writing, a shedding of certain early influences, and an embracing of later influences.

In 1914, Robert Rogers (printed in Hoffman) wrote about Tender Buttons in a review for the Boston Evening Transcript:

A page [of Tender Buttons] read aloud, quite apart from its sense or nonsense, is really rhythmical, a pure pattern of sound, as Picasso's canvases are pure patterns of color. Some feel a curious hypnotic effect in her sentences read aloud. By complicated repetition and by careful combinations does she get the effects she wishes for. And to some listeners there comes a perception of some meaning quite other than the content of the phrases. (33)

As has been made abundantly clear by Stein scholars, Tender Buttons and other lively texts are not composed of random words. And, as Rogers makes
clear here, the processes of the meanings of these lively words are complex. Stein takes language beyond the limits of linguistics, into the realms of music and the visual arts.

**Tender Buttons**

The most famous example, perhaps, of the "lively" words style is Stein's long, difficult-to-identify in terms of genre, piece, *Tender Buttons*. This piece has been read in a number of ways, as Mizejewski points out:

> These various readings, and the causes to which *Tender Buttons* has been allied, include automatic writing, literary Cubism, religious mysticism, linguistic experimentation, perceptual innovation, Jungian "mandala," post-modern narrative, and conflict with Stein's brother Leo." (34)

Mizejewski relates the piece to Alfred North Whitehead's philosophy and through this, ties the piece to the writings of other feminist modernists (Kate Chopin, Charlotte Perkins Gilman, and Virginia Woolf).

In her book on Wittgenstein, Perloff uses the idea of language games as a way of interpreting the line, "Roast potatoes for" from *Tender Buttons*:

> . . . the "withdrawal" or intermediary words [as in, "we're having roast potatoes for dinner" or "please roast these potatoes for dinner"] "from circulation" creates significant sound patterning. The final "to" of "roast" is moved forward to come between "o" and "a": "p-o-t-a." And then it happens again, chiastically: "t-o." The word "for," moreover, contains the "r-o" of "roast," only now in inverted order. The sixteen-letter unit has two a's and four o's, alpha and omega, as it were, as if to say that the potato is the staple of life and hence of articulation. Roast potatoes, after all, are everybody's food. Indeed, the sixteen-letter phrase has only seven phonemes, "simplicity" of sound thus perfectly conveying the reference to this, the "apple of the earth."

Stein thus seems to "draw a boundary," not out of a refusal to "make sense" or a predilection for pure nonsense, but because she wants to draw out specific semantic implications not normally present in culinary discourse. Obviously, if Miss Stein were telling her cook Hélène what to make for dinner, the sentence would be highly inappropriate and the cook would stare and gape, or she would ask, "For how many people?" or "For lunch or for dinner?" But "Roast

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potatoes for" is being used not in the cooking game but in the game of testing the limits of language, which is, for Stein the game that matters. And in this "poetry game," the locution makes rather good sense." (85) [original italics]

Perloff points out the centrality of sound to the game of roast potatoes. We will see that the "game of testing the limits of language" is one in which the materials of language take priority in the significatory process.

Reading *Tender Buttons* in relation to the Cubism of Picasso and Bracque is one obvious if problematic approach to "lively words" writing. Gass (in Bloom) makes an architectural reading, interpreting the cube of *Tender Buttons* as a three-dimensional object and not simply Picasso's rendering three dimensions on a two-dimensional plane. DeKoven (in Hoffman) provides a Chomskian reading of *Tender Buttons*, considering it to be in the "second degree" (p. 173) of grammaticalness. She delineates some of the problems of calling *Tender Buttons* "cubist writing," because the sign status is different between painting and writing. At the same time, DeKoven points out that Stein said in her book about Picasso (written in 1938) that she understood Picasso. DeKoven states:

Stein is touching here upon the very difference between words and paint that she is accused of ignoring or attempting to obliterate: that words are inevitably signs while painted shapes need not be. To call Stein's writing "literary cubism," to accommodate it to a critical vocabulary developed for painting is to overlook that central, defining difference: unlike paintings, Stein's experimental work is neither representational nor abstract. If a painting has a readable meaning, that meaning is referential, representational. If a painting does not have representational meaning, it is abstract; it has no strictly readable meaning. Stein's writing has readable meaning, and therefore is not abstract, but since it is seldom "about something" -- it generally has no coherent thematic content -- it is not referential, or representational. Its meaning consists rather of the connections among the lexical meanings of its words. Painting has nothing in its semantic repertoire comparable to lexical meaning, and it is precisely at that level that Steins' experimental writing operates. Because it has lexical meaning,
it is able to challenge patriarchal/logocentric thought as pictorial radicalism cannot do. (181)

DeKoven's "either/or" reading of paintings seems simplistic—something is abstract or it is representational, as if we can sort canvases into two piles. Which paintings of Mondrian go into which pile? What counts as "reading" a painting? Using Kandinsky's system (in Chipps) of color signifier = sound signified? It is true that painting and linguistic text are different. It is true, as is discussed below, that Stein is working with lexical meaning in a way that Picasso was not, and that is a difference between the lively words way of writing and cubist paintings. But the relations between painting and text remain complex. Text has visual elements that are analogous to paint; lexical meaning can be image—and there lies an important relation between Stein's work and Picasso's paintings.

Michael Edward Kaufman rejects the Cubist readings of Tender Buttons but does explore some visual aspects of the text in relation to reading it as a theory of language which brings into play, as it were, the etymologies of words, the older "habits" of words.

The "descriptions" of Tender Buttons, as the subtitle refers to them, are descriptions in the original sense -- writings. They are descriptions not of things but of words, a notion that Stein makes clear by setting the titles (for lack of a better word) in larger, heavier type. She writes not of things in words but of words as things, things with outsides and insides and histories and futures. As Picasso elucidates the essential shape of a carafe, so Stein elucidates the essential form contained in the word. She makes not a physical shape but a verbal and ideational one, and so shapes a reality of language.

She sees "A CARAFE, THAT IS A BLIND GLASS/ A kind in a glass and a cousin, a spectacle and nothing strange . . ." [Selected Works, p. 461] The heavy, dark typeface of the titles isolates the words and makes it clear that she is focusing on language (and its physical embodiment in type). (450) [boldface original]
The argument that Stein was thinking in terms of typefaces is a tricky one to make. She was certainly using in her writing process a technology that was as far away from type-setting as possible—pencil and lined paper. She herself did not "[set] the titles" in the printed version of the piece.

In the Beinecke collection of Stein's manuscripts, there are scraps of paper with lists of what became (in a somewhat revised form) titles in *Tender Buttons* and checkmarks beside these titles, as if Stein checked them off as she wrote them. These were a rough draft of what became the section, "Food" of *Tender Buttons*. She wrote the final version of these titles on the inside front cover of the manuscript book in which the work was written, much as they are printed at the beginning of "Food" in the published version of *Tender Buttons*: The words on the scraps of paper are a kind of shorthand—an outline for the work she does in *Tender Buttons*. As such, they serve a function as titles.

The actual written manuscript of *Tender Buttons*, was done in pencil on the lined paper of a bound composition book, but with the writing oriented perpendicular to the lines of the page. The initial title, "A carafe, that is a blind glass" does not even appear to be a title but more a part of the text. The next title, "Glazed glitter" has a more title-like appearance, as it is centered in the manuscript. Even if Stein was not specifically thinking in typographical terms, she did differentiate between title and the rest of the piece and that this differentiation is a visual element of the work. It certainly has significance for the reader even if Stein was not specifically manipulating that particular visual element.

The reading here of visual elements in *Tender Buttons* will ultimately be more related to Cubism, despite Kaufman's reservations with this kind of
reading. But as Mizejewski says of her reading of *Tender Buttons*, this reading does not negate the readings made by others, owing to what Mizejewski rightfully calls "the genius of the text for accommodating multiple readings" (34). There are two levels on which we can work with this text: that of linguistic signification, and that of the signification processes related to the visual arts generally and cubism specifically. Both of these ways of reading are intertwined in this writing.

**Tender Buttons and Linguistic Meaning-Making**

Although semiotic theory (e.g., Saussure) dismantles language in order to reveal its workings, separating signs from their grammatical functions, within the normal use of communicative language, as Saussure specifically states, signs function in a meaningful way within the context of syntax. Only babies can get away with saying one word "sentences." Children's linguistic abilities progress toward more complex syntactical structures because of the inherent problem of the single sign: not even the best parent can consistently determine whether "Cookie!" means "I want a cookie," or "the dog ate my cookie," or "there is a cookie." Children's single words imply a grammatical structure which they eventually are able to make more explicit.

As Stein's writing moves toward the avant garde, the signs which are interpretable by linguistic methods function as signs without being connected to extended grammatical structures. Stein's work is not childlike. Rather, it is easier to understand the idea of syntactically disconnected meaning-making processes present in the lively words style by thinking of children's early language use. This process is especially prominent in Stein's use of words which traditionally function grammatically as nouns. For example, here is a bit from *Tender Buttons*:
NOTHING ELEGANT

A charm a single charm is doubtful. If the red is rose and there is a gate surrounding it, if inside is let in and there places change then certainly something is upright. It is earnest.

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. (Selected Writings 464)

There are a number of things present in this passage: charms, gates, causes, curves, clashes, wagons, a sac, and an umbrella that was, perhaps, lost and then restored to its owner. Yet the language does not grammatically connect all the items into a single description, as in, "Outside the window I see a gate and fence surrounding a rose garden. A wagon is going around a curve. It is a noisy wagon."

Some items are more connected grammatically than others. For example, the umbrella of the title is the subject of some description. Yet we cannot conclude that this passage is "about" the umbrella. The text reverberates between all the nouns which function as unconnected signs and grammatical structures, such as the If . . . then statement, which imply some logical relationships that in turn are undone by the incongruous nouns. How do we read this passage?

Borrowing from Charles Sanders Peirce for a moment, the interpretant for Stein herself in relation to the sign, "Mildred's Umbrella," may be found in a letter written by Mildred Aldrich to Alice Toklas in 1913¹, telling Alice that she, Mildred, had come by to see if her umbrella was there. For the

¹The date of this note calls into question whether it was this particular incident which made it into Tender Buttons or not. According to the Yale Register, Tender Buttons was written between 1910-1912. However, we know that this may not be a completely accurate date. It is possible she was writing Tender Buttons in 1913. At the very least, one wonders if maybe Mildred did not have a habit of occasionally leaving her umbrella and it is on this basis that I argue that the umbrella in question belonged to Mildred Aldrich.

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reader who does not have access to this biographical information, the interpretant is different. The reader might picture a generic umbrella upon reading this title. As the reading progresses, the umbrella becomes more specific ("slender grey and no ribbon") and it becomes connected with loss, perhaps bringing to mind the reader's own struggle to keep up with umbrellas.

The question of the interpretant is an important one which the "lively" style of writing raises: how do we read Stein's work when her interpretants are so different from the ones to which we, as readers, have access? Biography provides one way into Stein's work, giving a reader access to Stein's interpretants instead of having to create new interpretants. Yet the example with the umbrella suggests that by depending solely on biography as an entree into her work, we are doing the text and ourselves as readers an injustice. Murphy points out that Tender Buttons is replete with common household items. At some level it does not matter whether or not the umbrella belonged to Mildred Aldrich; what matters is that umbrellas are easily misplaced. Stein is encouraging the reader to bring his or her own life to the text, to find personal interpretants for the signs in the text which are analogous to the interpretants that she herself had for the text.

Stein was chary about what she revealed in public about her own life (and thus the biographical information which would reveal her own interpretants for her texts was denied her first readers). For example, when Stein returned to the United States in the 1930s for the first time in thirty years, she brought along Alice Toklas as her "secretary." It is clear that Stein did not expect her readers to have exactly the same interpretants for the signs as she herself did. One way to understand this is to figure that Stein was
being exclusive—and therefore to reject Stein's work on the basis of it being incomprehensible. This is the choice made by Stein detractors, including the feminist scholars, Gilbert and Gubar.

And yet, we have to look at what we mean by incomprehensibility. Stein's text is incomprehensible if we approach the text assuming we will have the same set of interpretants as the author. If, however, we bring our own experiences to the text, our own interpretants, we can eventually construct a set of meta-interpretants that are based not so much on private language but on the experiences we all have of being human.

Stein often wrote about being a middle-class person. She liked that status and she differentiated herself as a middle-class person from the wealthy as well as from poor people. Leo also wrote about this; it is likely that this status was a subject of discussion between the two. As we saw in Chapter Two, the dealers who sold pictures liked selling to the Steins because the Steins were not wealthy. The Steins bought pictures because they truly wanted them; their middle class status gave them enough discretionary income that they could make a choice to buy pictures. But they did not have so much income that they could buy pictures and other luxury items. By buying pictures, they were limiting themselves in other areas. The dealers appreciated this aspect of choice.

How Stein was working with language was analogous to her ideas about class. Essentially, she worked with a democratic notion of language that moved away from privileging an upper-class male approach to meaning-making. She did this through letting go of the need to insure that readers' interpretants would be identical to her own. The following figure
demonstrates the linguistic meaning-making process in the "lively words" phase of her writing:
Sign:

UMBRELLA

Stein's Interpretant:
The umbrella that Mildred Aldrich left at our house the other day.

My interpretant:
I rarely carry around an umbrella because I dislike having to keep track of things.

Meta-interpretant:

Umbrellas are things which people lose; loss is not easy for people to deal with; we all dream of the possibility of restitution for our losses.

Figure 3: Interpretants for Tender Buttons

There is a privacy in the text not so much to exclude others but actually to encourage others to bring their private meanings and experiences to the text. Yet the irony of this for Stein scholarship is that the way this kind of reading process is discovered is through biography, through finding connections between Tender Buttons and a note written by Mildred Aldrich about a household item.
One way to read *Tender Buttons* for linguistic meaning, then, is to bring to the text one's own relationship to the signs in the text. If one has a knowledge of Stein's biography, that is helpful, however, the primary way of reading is to be an active reader. Like Stein's long sentences mentioned in Chapter four in connection with her antipathy for commas, *Tender Buttons* is a text which asks the reader to create meaning through connecting the text with his or her own life.

**Tender Buttons and Cubism**

Certain painters, particularly Picasso, had an influence upon Stein's writing. There is a parallel between the progression of paintings on Stein’s walls and the shifts in her writings. That is, as the paintings became less and less representational in terms of nineteenth-century traditions, Stein’s writing became more and more experimental. The paintings which surrounded Stein influenced her in terms of the genres she used. For example, she began to write literary portraits which were analogous to painted portraits. She later referred to some of her plays as "landscapes."

There is a similarity in content between some of the paintings and Stein’s work. For example, the work, *Tender Buttons* is divided into three sections, "Objects," "Food," and "Rooms." While *Tender Buttons* is not easy to read, in that it does not appear to address what are presumably its subject matters, the titles of the three sections, it is full of objects, food, and, to a lesser extent, rooms. The presence of these items corresponds to the presence of household items in cubist still-life paintings.

I am obviously not the first person to find correspondences between Stein's writing and cubist painting, as I mentioned above. Stein herself suggested that she was "doing the same thing" as Picasso. Steiner has written
about the relationship between cubist painting and writing—she
problematises this relationships. Perloff’s chapter on “Susie Asado,”
discussed below, is based on a relationship between cubism and Stein’s
writing.

Yet, there are more than simple correspondences between Stein’s
writing and the visual arts. Visual semiotics is one way to understand how
Stein’s writing makes meaning. In order to make this argument, I want to
begin with Temple Grandin’s problematisation of the notion of what
Umberto Eco calls “channels.” Eco differentiates between things which are
“matter” and things which are “energy.” Various forms of physical energy
include the optical, tactile, acoustic, and so forth. Eco does not go into detail
when he defines them and he does not think through some of the problems
the notion of discrete channels might create. Here is what he says about his
schema:

This distinction does not seem particularly useful for our present
discussion, since it would seem pretty vague to place both Beethoven’s
Ninth Symphony and Dante’s Divina Commedia among the
acoustically channelled signs, and both a road signal and Manet’s Le
déjeuner sur l’herbe among the optical signs reflected by daylight...[I]n
order to distinguish two road signals or two Manet paintings one
resorts to both space and color parameters. In the first case the
pertinent elements are the normal spatial dimensions, with features
such as “up/down,” “right/left,” “larger/smaller,” and so on; in the
second one, pertinent elements are wave-lengths, frequencies or, more
commonly speaking, cues. The fact that a road signal is enormously
simpler than a Manet painting does not matter. (175-76)

The concept of "channels," is a concept of perception. Human beings perceive
certain things through the eyes, the "optical channel," certain things through
the ears, and so forth.

Yet given the role of the brain in perception, as the site in which
perceived things begin to make sense, this notion of discrete channels of
perception is problematic. For example, when she regained her sight after having been blind since childhood, Sheila Hockens had difficulty visually recognizing objects. During this period of adjustment, she had to close her eyes in order to use her sense of touch to determine objects such as coffee cups. Only after she determined what it was with her hands could she begin to recognize it visually. Thus, although Hockens was receiving information through the optical channel, she did not have the ability to process that information or to make use of it. This suggests that the channel may be less important than "central processing," the brain.

Temple Grandin describes "sensory mixing" which happens with many people who have autism:

In people with severe sensory processing deficits [a common characteristic among people with autism], vision, hearing, and other senses mix together, especially when they are tired or upset. Laura Cesaroni and Malcolm Garber, at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education in Canada, interviewed a twenty-seven-year-old male graduate student with autism. He described difficulty hearing and seeing at the same time as his sensory channels got mixed up. Sound came through as color, while touching his face produced a soundlike sensation...Donna Williams found the world incomprehensible, and she had to fight constantly to get meaning from her senses. When she gave up trying to get meaning, she would let her attention wander into fractured patterns, which were entertaining, hypnotic, and secure. In Somebody Somewhere she writes, "This was the beautiful side of autism. This was the sanctuary of the prison." (76-77)

While the brain may typically process information from different channels in different areas, this is not always the case, particularly for some people who have autism.

Grandin further points out that it is possible that people who are identified as "normal" may have autistic characteristics. She demonstrates some connections between autistic characteristics and characteristics of people
who have been identified as geniuses, stating that the genes which cause autism may also be the genes which cause genius. There have been many instances of synaesthetic-types of thinking among artists. Rimbaud’s poem, "Voyelles," is an example of this: "A noir, E blanc, I rouge, U vert, O bleu: voyelles" (in Bishop, 229). These types of "correspondences" were also present in Baudelaire’s poetry. Kandinsky also theorized about the sounds that are associated with colors (in Chipps). Numerous painters, including Kandinsky and Mondrian, named their pictures after musical genres or constructs.

Finally, through just which channel do we process a written text? I may read Zora Neal Hurston silently, but I hear in my head the voices of her characters, particularly when she writes in dialect. When I read the calligrams of Apollinaire, I am aware of the shapes the words make on the page, as I am when I read texts on the Internet in which the author uses "emoticons," symbols to be read sideways and which show desired emotional reactions: :-) is a smily face; ;-) is a wink. These symbols give additional cues for comprehending the tone of the text, particularly to readers for whom the language of the text or the culture from which it derives is foreign. When I read a description of lush scenery or interesting events, I see those images in my head; one reason I hate films made from my favorite books is that the films are never "right" in how they depict characters or events nor are they as vivid as the pictures in my head.² This kind of channel mixing is present not only in linguistic text but in other forms, as well. For example, within music,

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²Victor Borge’s famous sketch in which he reads a text out loud with his system of audible punctuation demonstrates the different channels through which we might engage with a written text. The sketch is funny because that which we take for granted visually (quotation marks, question marks, commas, colons, and the like) becomes absurd and distracting when represented orally.
word painting and other compositional devices actually encourage channel mixing.

As DeKoven points out (quoted above) the status of the sign in painting is complex and different from that in language. DeKoven draws a sharp line between what is referential in painting (those are signs) and what is not. Yet paintings can represent non-visual things such as Mondrian’s musically-titled paintings which are very rhythmical -- these are signs even if they do not carry an iconic function analogous to visual things in the world. Or the paint itself can be considered a particular type of sign -- an index, in the Peircean sense -- of the painter’s presence. For example, the paint splashes of Jackson Pollock's work trace his dance-like motions back and forth along the canvas.

No semiotic system is completely self-contained. There can be linguistic signs in paintings and music, musical signs in paintings and texts, and visual signs in music and texts. Not to mention kinesthetic signs in all of those pursuits as well as musical, visual, and linguistic signs in dance. Some art works (film, opera, plays, ballets) bring together several of these sign systems all at once.

Further, as is seen in greater detail below, signs can function at several levels of a given work. A handwritten text, for example, bears a collection of indices of the writer’s presence, the kinesthetic traces of the writer’s bearing on what she is writing, the simple relation between signifier and signified of signs of the text itself, as well as metaphorical levels of meaning which may be present, the signs which reside in the sounds of the text as it is read out loud, and the visual relationships of the words on the page which may yield even another set of signs. Any of these levels of signification can contribute
to an overall sense of meaning in the text—or completely undercut that sense of meaning.

How might visual semiotics contribute to an understanding of Gertrude Stein's texts? To begin with, there are connections between cubist paintings and sculptures and the way Stein uses nouns in her writing. Cubism's use of abstraction to present something old (a still life) in a new way has its analogies in Stein's writing. About nouns, Stein states:

A noun is a name of anything, why after a thing is named write about it. A name is adequate or it is not. If it is adequate then why go on calling it, if it is not then calling it by its name does no good. (LIA, 209-210)

For Stein, nouns are limited in ways that are frustrating for a writer. This is part of being what she called (in a discussion with some students) a "poet in a late age." The words are old and they both mean too much and have lost their vivacity in their meaning.

Later in this same lecture, Stein states:

When I said
A rose is a rose is a rose is a rose.
And then later made that into a ring I made poetry and what did I do I caressed completely caressed and addressed a noun.
Now let us think of poetry any poetry all poetry and let us see if this is not so. Of course it is so anybody can know that. If have said that a noun is a name of anything by definition that is what it is and a name of anything is not interesting because once you know its name the enjoyment of naming it is over and therefore in writing prose names that is nouns are completely uninteresting. But and that is a thing to be remembered you can love a name and if you love a name then saying that name any number of times only makes you love it more, more violently more persistently. (231-232)

Repetition is one way to deal with the problem of nouns. The notion of caressing a noun brings to mind the process of saying it over and over again, feeling the word in one's mouth. This brings to the fore the materiality of the
word and makes it new again, not because we associate it with a certain kind of flower or a certain history of poetry but because we feel and hear this word through its repetition.

Stein also mentions a second way poetry can make nouns new again in this lecture:

So then in Tender Buttons I was making poetry but and it seriously troubled me, dimly I knew that nouns made poetry but in prose I no longer needed the help of nouns and in poetry did I need the help of nouns. Was there not a way of naming things that would not invent names, but mean names without naming them.

I had always been very impressed from the time that I was very young by having had it told me and then afterwards feeling it myself that Shakespeare in the forest of Arden had created a forest without mentioning the things that make a forest. You feel it all but he does not name its names.

Now that was a thing that I too felt in me the need of making it be a thing that could be named without using its name. After all one had known its name anything’s name for so long, and so the name was not new but the thing being alive was always new. (236-7)

The problem here is to represent through abstraction. I do not want to argue that Tender Buttons is "decodeable" in the sense that one can consistently find a summarizeable meaning for the text. At the same time, Murphy finds household items to be a central focus for this work.

In a sense, Tender Buttons can be seen as having analogous structures as a cubist still life. The somewhat abstract shapes in a painting, taken by themselves are not representational, but, in the context of the painting, add up to identifiable objects. Sometimes this happens through synecdoche, as when a musician is represented through a stylized mustache and the curvature of the body of the guitar. Sometimes it occurs through the general shaping of a conglomeration of unrelated items, as when a bicycle seat and
handlebars become a bull or a collection of what appears to be junk becomes a goat.

Likewise, in Stein's texts, items become a synecdoche of the household itself—and the importance of that homelife, although the text is not totally limited to that one meaning. Disparate items are shaped into things they are not. These are abstract items which compose the still life, abstract in the sense that the nouns are not used for their connections to signifieds but as material objects to possibly point to other signifieds. An understanding of visual semiotics, then, helps us to find visual structures in a linguistic text.

There are some words that are specifically visual. To use a Saussurian construct, the signified of some words is a visual concept. One example of this type of word is color, e.g., "blue," "red," etc. To a somewhat lesser extent, nouns which refer to objects also fit into this category; the word "umbrella" brings to mind an image of an object. These are the nouns which name something and which are uninteresting to Stein; these are the nouns which she tries to use in order to point to other things, the way a bicycle seat can point to a bull.

Since colors are unambiguously visual concepts (leaving out, for the moment, the concept of synaesthesia), while objects might or might not be considered visual, let's look at the ways in which Stein uses color in Tender Buttons. The following colors are present in Tender Buttons; the numbers indicate the number of times they appear in the text:

- purple 2
- blue 9
- green 20
- yellow 15
- straw 2 (used in conjunction with the word "color")
- gold 1, golden 2
- mustard 1

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pink 6
scarlet 1
red 31, reddening 1, redder 1, redness 1
brown 6
grey 7
white 40, whiteness 1, whiter 1, whitening 1
black 10, blackening 1

There are also some words in the text which are potentially colors but which
she does not use as colors. These include:

plum 1
rose 7
salmon 7
silver 6
lilac 3
cream 8
oyster 5

The words "orange" (6 times), "violet" (2 times), and "copper" (4 times) are
used in somewhat ambiguous contexts; it is difficult to discern whether or
not they are colors.

The first aspect of Stein's use of color is to notice how often she uses
"pure" colors, especially red, yellow, green, blue, black, and white.

Approximately 56% of the text of Tender Buttons consists of words used only
one time.\(^1\) The fact that these colors are repeated demonstrates that they are
an important part of the text. Furthermore, while she occasionally uses
words which could be considered to articulate the continuum of the spectrum
within the concept of a single color (e.g., scarlet is a particular type of red;

\(^1\) I scanned Tender Buttons into a Macintosh computer and ran optical character reading software
on the scanned material. Because OCR software is not completely accurate (any mark on the
page will be interpreted as text; unclear letters or letters which run together may be
interpreted incorrectly) I corrected the resulting text so that it matches the one in Selected
Works. Then I ran the corrected text through a Hypercard program that does word counts.
Information about what words appear in Tender Buttons, the number of times they appear, and
statistics about the words in Tender Buttons were all derived from the results of the Hypercard
program. This kind of methodology (using a word count on a text) has been used by Rob Tierney
and his associates in the analysis of research data (in the form of interviews with research
subjects) from the Apple Classroom of Tomorrow.
gold, mustard, and straw are types of yellow), the vast majority of the time, Stein uses the more generic words for colors, words which bring to mind, in the case of red, yellow, and blue, the shades of these colors one might find on a color chart.

One of the aspects of Picasso's career as a painter is the role that color played for him in his early work. He went through two periods of painting early on that are known by colors—his "blue" period and his "rose" period. Some of the analytical cubist works are rather monocolor—as in the portrait of Daniel Henry Kahnweiler. Yet color plays an important role in many of the synthetic cubist works, such as many of the still lives. For example, Picasso's "The Three Musicians" uses bright red, yellow, blue, and white—in a way that is analogous to the ways in which geometrical shapes render the figures. That is, color differentiates between the figures (the central figure is differentiated by his Harlequinesque red and yellow patterned clothing from the figure on the left who appears to be in white and blue and the figure on the right in black). But this is not a naturalistic use of color, just as the geometrical shapes suggest the three figures without rendering them naturalistically. Finally, while there are flesh tones in Picasso's early cubist work, *Les Demoiselles d'Avignon*, there are a lot of non-naturalistic reds in the work as well.

Another outstanding use of color in early modernist paintings is, of course, that of the fauve painters. While Gertrude Stein later broke with Matisse, preferring Picasso, Stein and her brothers Leo and Michael were some of the first people to collect Matisse's works. Matisse was the central painter of the collection made by Michael Stein and his wife.

To differentiate between shades of a color is to possibly render objects—in a painting or in a text—in a more "naturalistic" way. Stein uses enough of
the specific shades of color that these shades become the exception to the rule; they emphasize the existence of the "purified" colors. The concepts of these words are, in general, the colors as they would be seen on a color wheel--those shades stand for the generic concept of a particular color and are conventionally agreed to exemplify a certain region of the spectrum. Stein's use of color is also parallel to the use of color by early modernists, the very painters who were represented on the walls of her apartment. Her use of color in her writing, therefore, is a visual strategy in that it calls up visual experience in the mind of the reader.

It is one thing to identify the palette of a painter (or in this case, of a writer). It is another thing to look at how the colors are used in context. To begin with, colors in this text are not distributed randomly:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Color</th>
<th># Appears in text</th>
<th>With other colors</th>
<th>Without other colors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>purple</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>blue</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>green</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yellow</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>straw</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gold</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mustard</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pink</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>scarlet</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>red</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>brown</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>grey</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>white</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>black</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 4: Colors in Tender Buttons

That is, the majority of the time, different colors are used together in the same paragraph or within a couple of paragraphs of each other. Here is an example of one such passage:

A LONG DRESS

What is the current that makes machinery, that makes it crackle, what is the current that presents a long line and a necessary waist.

What is this current.

What is the wind, what is it.
Where is the serene length, it is there and a dark place is not a
dark place, only a white and red are black, only a yellow and green are
blue, a pink is scarlet, a bow is every color. A line distinguishes it. A
line just distinguishes it.
A RED HAT
A dark grey, a very dark grey, a quite dark grey is monstrous
ordinarily, it is so monstrous because there is no red in it. If red is in
everything it is not necessary. Is that not an argument for any use of it
and even so is there any place that is better, is there any place that has
so much stretched out.
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.
A PIANO
If the speed is open, if the color is careless, if the selection of a
strong scent is not awkward, if the button holder is held by all the
waving color and there is no color, not any color. If there is no dirt in a
pin and there can be none scarcely, if there is not then the place is the
same as up standing. (467-468)

The concept of color is prominent in here. To begin with, the word "color"
appears several times. Further, we have a lot of different colors here--white,
red, black, yellow, green, blue, pink, scarlet, and grey--practically Stein's entire
spectrum.

One "plane" of meaning (in Perloff's sense, discussed below) in this
passage is that of clothing--a dress, a hat, and a coat. The hat and the coat are
differentiated in part by color. Stein makes statements that push colors
against each other: "only a white and red are black, only a yellow and green
are blue, a pink is scarlet." One has to test these statements in one's mind and
the fact that blue and yellow make green, not the other way around, does not
remove the experience of engaging in the colors of this text. Finally, there is
the statement: "A line distinguishes it." Used in conjunction with the colors
in this passage, this line becomes a visual semiotic entity which creates
meaning through difference—the act of distinguishing. Stein’s text points to
the act of creating difference through engaging the visual imagination.

Linguistic approaches to semiotics have often been used in order to
explain works in the visual arts. As problematic as they can be, some of these
linguistic explanations do succeed in illuminating aspects of the visual arts,
through connecting an artwork with its context, through explaining
structural aspects of it, and so forth. At the same time, it is desirable to avoid
trying to read every visual work of art as if it were a linguistic text. In order to
avoid logocentrism in semiotic analysis, one can turn the tables and apply
non-linguistic semiotic analysis to linguistic works. By turning the tables on
Gertrude Stein’s text, I have demonstrated some of the ways in which visual
semiotics can illuminate a linguistic work.

"Susie Asado"

Susie Asado is a short poem which Stein wrote in 1913:

Susie Asado

Sweet sweet sweet sweet sweet tea.
Susie Asado.
Sweet sweet sweet sweet sweet tea.
Susie Asado.
Susie Asado which is a told tray sure.
A lean on the shoe this means slips slips hers.
When the ancient light grey is clean it is yellow, it is a silver seller.
This is a please this is a please there are the saids to jelly. These are
the wets these say the sets to leave a crown to Incy.
Incy is short for incubus.
A pot. A pot is a beginning of a rare bit of trees. Trees tremble, the
old vats are in bobbles, bobbles which shade and shove and render
clean, render clean must.
Drink pups.
Drink pups drink pups lease a sash hold, see it shine and a bobolink
has pins. It shows a nail.
What is a nail. A nail is unison.
Sweet sweet sweet sweet sweet tea. (Selected Writings, 549)

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Stein detractors often accuse Stein of not revising her work. A look at Stein manuscripts reveals that this accusation is not entirely true. As Stein moved towards artistic/improvisatory writing, her patterns of revisions shifted; her revisions in the artistic manuscripts are fewer. For example, in her manuscript for this poem, Stein makes two minor revisions in the manuscript for "Susie Asado. Following "Incy is short for incubus," she starts a sentence with "Little" and then changes her mind. She also decides in favor of "sash hold" over "sack sold." Because these revisions were made in a straight line, that is, the changes are not made in a superscript over the text but rather they continue along the same line of text as the original, it is likely Stein made the revision in the process of writing this poem out the first time. The only change apparently made after the fact of this writing was the spelling of "Asado," which in the body of the manuscript was spelled "Assado." It is probable that Stein did not want the reader to think of the word "ass" when reading Susie's name.

The "sack sold" change reveals something about Stein's thinking about language. Neither version changes or contributes to some kind of unified meaning in the poem. "Sack sold" sounds harsh because of the "k" sound. In contrast, "sash hold" sounds much softer not only because it has no hard "k" but also because of the softening effect of the "sh" sound of "sash" followed by the very soft "h" of "hold." Stein moves away from harsh sounds (the "k" in "drink" and toward the softer sounds in this part of the work. Stein, then, "rehearsed" Susie Asado. Although the piece for the most part is improvisatory, she changed the sound of the piece during the writing process, much like a musician grabs for a note and then changes quickly it for one that better suits the chord changes. This improvisatory writing process is very
different from the "draft and craft" process one uses in clarifying connections between signifiers and signifieds in writing.

One of the very striking aspects of this poem is all the concrete words Stein uses. We know what sweet tea looks and tastes like. The word, "tray," is also specific, as well as "shoe," "light," "crown," "pot," "trees," "vats," and so forth. Adjectives such as "ancient" and the various colors that are in this poem can yield specific images, as do verbs such as "tremble," "shove," and "drink." Yet the question remains, what is the "thing" being treated in this poem and how do these words contribute to that "thing"? In her comparison of this poem to cubist painting, Perloff suggests that, in fact, there are several "things" (what Perloff calls "planes of meaning") being treated and that the indeterminacy of the poem occurs because no single plane is privileged or made primary to the overall meaning of the poem.

Another marked aspect of this poem is its sound. It is strongly rhythmical; in fact, although Perloff derives her concept of "planes of meaning" from cubist painting, one of the planes she mentions is actually aural; the Flamenco dancer is represented by the rhythm of the first four lines. As we saw in Chapter Four, Stein's recognition of the sonic aspects of language occurred as she considered her relationship with her brother. Although Stein's "lively words" style has strong musical elements to it, Stein did not consciously conceptualize the sonic aspects of her work as "music" until the 1920s, when she began to work with the composer, Virgil Thomson. One way in which Stein thought about the musical aspects of her work is amusing:

She [Stein] was particularly fond in these days [during the 1920's] of working in the automobile while it stood in crowded streets...She was much influenced by the sound of the streets and the movement of the
automobiles. She also liked then to set a sentence for herself as a sort of tuning fork and metronome and then write to that time and tune. (Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas, p. 206)

Music theorist, Kofi Agawu's work opens some doors in the understanding of Stein. "Susie Asado" makes an excellent site for exploring Agawu's work for several reasons. First of all, this is not a particularly long text; it has Stein's characteristic "lively words" writing in it, but it is short enough to be analyzed in detail and to be considered in totality. Secondly, there is a wonderful analysis of the "verbal planes" of this poem by Marjorie Perloff, an analysis which will be incorporated into my analysis. Finally, there is also what could be called a musical "analysis" of this poem, in the form of Virgil Thomson's musical setting of the poem. In a sense, using Thomson's composition as a form of analysis is "turnabout is fair play." So many musical texts have been analyzed by words; to confer on Thomson's work the status of "analysis" reverses this process—privileging music as a commentary on a linguistic text, for once.

"Susie Asado" was written before Stein had any contact with Thomson—they did not meet until the 1920's. Thus, one cannot argue that Thomson's ideas about music had an influence on Stein's work at this time. Still, the musical elements are there. While Thomson's contact was important to Stein and influenced her writing, I believe what Thomson did was to give Stein some ways of thinking (in language, that is articulating) about the musical elements of her work, which had been present in her work for a long time.

Within musical semiotics has been a question of "what is a sign?" The problem is that when a musical sign is defined as a single note, that definition leaves out the significance of chords and harmonic relations. When the sign
is defined as a chord, that definition leaves out the possible significance of melodic motives and the like. And all these definitions leave out the times in which timbre or dynamics might be extremely significant.

Agawu's approach to music analysis is based on a combination of a couple of systems of traditional musical analysis and linguistic semiotics of the Saussurian strand. What Agawu is trying to do is to explain both the internal processes of meaning—that is, the system of signification that comes about because of the syntagmatic connections between elements in a piece of music—and the connections between musical elements and the concepts they signify which are outside music or between pieces of music. Agawu uses Jakobson's notion of "introversive" semiotics to refer to the internal signification processes and "extroversive" semiotics to refer to the extra-musical signification processes. He uses a Saussurian approach overall in order to explain the systems of signification that occur in music, including the idea that the music of a particular era (he analyzes music of the Classic Era, the time of Mozart, Haydn, and early Beethoven) is a synchronic system of signifiers. He then examines the "play," or the moments of difference between these two axes of signification.

**Extroversive Signification**

Music can make reference to things outside of itself. It can sound like things (such as timpani sounding like thunder in Beethoven's Pastoral Symphony), and it can represent aspects of language such as phrasing and meaning of words. Music can also signify by referring to other music. Agawu’s analysis of extroversive signification is based on the idea that the music of a period is a synchronic system consisting of what he calls "topics." Topics are what jazz musicians would call "licks"—small bits of music.
(generally consisting of more than one note) which form, according to Agawu, musical signs. These signs exist in a "universe" from which composers can draw during the composition of an individual piece.

There are several kinds of topics. One type of topic refers to cultural phenomena, for example, the use of horn calls in classical-era music. The horn call figure is composed of a melody harmonized in thirds, fifths, and sixths, the way natural horns (horns without valves to change the length of pipe, and which were therefore limited in terms of which notes they could produce) would sound playing together. These horns were used on hunts; thus, their sound would bring to the mind of the listener, particularly a listener contemporary with Mozart, hunting.

Some topics are dances, such as the minuet, the gavotte, and the bourrée. Other topics were well-known musical styles in that day, such as the cadenza style. It is relatively easy to understand the signification processes of topics such as dances and hunting horns; it is harder to understand the signification process of a more purely musical topic such as "learned style." It is when Agawu puts these topics together to form what he calls a "plot," that the signification processes become clearer. Agawu describes the plot of Mozart's String Quintet in C major (K. 515):

It is tempting, in view of the extremely rich musical surface, to speculate on a plot for this movement. The movement as a whole embodies a set of contradictions in topical signification, contradictions that serve to enrich its musical meaning. First, there is the frequent but by no means exclusive "learnedness" of the movement, which reaches a climax in the development section. This self-conscious display of contrapuntal skill constitutes a high style, and contrasts with the frequent recourse to a second topical area: the decidedly low style epitomized by the musette...Furthermore, the orbit of musette includes another low-style topic, the pastoral, which appears briefly but significantly both in the exposition and at the equivalent moment in the recapitulation. The picture that we are painting is therefore of a
confrontation between high and low styles, or, phrased in operatic terms, a confrontation between high- and low-born characters. (87)

A style such as the "learned style" signifies not only a musical practice but a status within music which is analogous to social status. Although Agawu does not state this, in a similar way, the cadenza is not only a musical practice but it is also something which signifies brilliance.

How do topics work in music? Unlike language, in which signs appear one after another in a syntagm, topics in music can overlap as well as appear sequentially. Agawu gives an example of this in Mozart's Sonata in F (K. 332), about which he states:

The second period of the movement begins in measure 12, and presents a set of hunt-calls, complete with a simulation of what Koch calls a "horn duet." Here, as before, the minuet remains operative in the background, but it is, in fact, so much more present than it was at the beginning of the first period that we might refer not to a layered "minuet and hunt style," but rather, to a fused "minuet in hunt style." The continuity between the two topics results from the fact that the horn duet's intervallic pattern is entirely compatible with the meter-invariant minuet. (45)

Topics can overlap in a piece of music and be intelligible.

Topics also can be associational (in Saussure's terms). What is present in music, according to Agawu, is a syntagm, a series of signs (whether they are chronologically discrete from one another or stacked). This series of signs is drawn from the topic universe; what is present within a syntagm signifies in part because it is contrasted with what is absent—the group of signs that could have been used as a substitute. This concept has several ramifications for Agawu, particularly when it comes to introversive aspects of signification in music. At the level of extroversive signification, Agawu suggests that paradigms are central to the perception of signs:
The primary condition for the perception of topic is listener-competence. In order to be able to locate a given piece within the class of contemporary eighteenth-century discourses, the listener needs to be schooled in the idiom of the eighteenth century. To be schooled in eighteenth-century stylistic devices is to have in one's memory a series of paradigmatic [Jakobson's notion of paradigm, which is similar to Saussure's idea of the associative pole of language] classes from which one can draw in order to produce meaning from the sequence of gestures in a given work. This is not so much a linguistic ability as it is an ability to recall a certain vocabulary. (49)

This listener-competence is attained in a similar manner to language, through listening to and (hopefully) playing music.

Introversive Signification

Introversive signification is based on the ways in which musical structures gain significance in relation to one another. In identifying introversive signification processes, Agawu draws on two forms of musical analysis: rhetorical analysis and Schenkerian analysis. As Agawu states, his use of the analysis developed by Heinrich Schenker (1869-1935) is not "fundamentalist" (51); that is, Agawu is using only some basic ideas from Schenker.

Schenker demonstrated that most tonal music moves both melodically and harmonically from a tonic (I) to a dominant (V) and back to a tonic. Schenkerian analysis identifies this kind of fundamental structure in music, much the way one might identify "universal" plots within linguistic narratives. Introversive semiosis music happens only because the chords create a context for each other; the context, in turn, creates a "system of difference" that leads to signification. In other words, if one were to play the individual chords, there would be no signification process happening because any of those chords could be a tonic. It is only when the chords are played in relation to each other that there is difference.
Agawu uses the various levels of Schenkerian analysis in order to expose the beginning, middle, and end sections of a piece, and this is where the rhetorical analysis of music comes into the process of introressive signification. Agawu draws strongly on Mattheson:

It is Mattheson's belief that the rhetorical strength of a composer's musical ideas be given in a particular order, the strongest arguments at the beginning, the weaker ones in the middle, and stronger ones at the end. What is of interest here is not merely the rhetorical ploy, but the implicit recognition of a whole structure shaped by three constituent parts. (52)

Each aspect of the structure of music has a different set of requirements. In the beginning, the composer has to establish the terms of the genre s/he is using as well as to establish the uniqueness of this particular example of the genre. The middle, according to Agawu, is that which is "characterized by the absence of the crucial features of either beginning or ending...What is most palpably obvious is the feature of instability..." (62). Finally, the ending also has a function: "The primary obligation of an ending is to secure closure for the entire structure" (67). These three different functions give rise to certain significatory aspects of music. In other words, the same basic material might be used in all three positions, but might have a different set of connotations based on where it is in a piece. Each of these sections has its own beginning, middle, and ending, although a beginning does not typically have an ending of the same strength as the ending of the ending (which is, of course, the ending of the piece as a whole).

Agawu's method within the process of introversive semiosis is to show the ways in which the harmonic structures of a piece signify in relation to his "beginning, middle, and end" idea. For example, he shows ways in
which the beginning of a piece establishes what is tonic\(^4\) through both the structurally important chords within that section (both the use of tonic chords and the use of other chords—chiefly the dominant—which define the tonic via opposition) and the structurally important aspects of melody.

The introversive semiotic aspects of music are two-fold. First of all, there is the relational semiosis of harmonic structure—the tension-release established through the opposition of the dominant with the tonic. This process happens strictly through the context of an individual piece of music, since any triad can be a tonic or a dominant depending on the chords with which it is contrasted. The second aspect of introversive semiosis in music is in relation to what could be considered a "grammar" of structure—particularly in the classical era, pieces had to have a beginning, a middle, and an end. Introversive semiosis occurs when harmonic and melodic structures create and refer to the beginning-ness of the beginning, the middle-ness of the middle, and the end-ness of the end.

Play

The brilliance of Agawu's method is that he brings together multiple means of signification in music in such a way that he does not eliminate its "play." Agawu's structures of music have the advantage of elucidating aspects of significance within music without sharply limiting the experience of listening to (or playing) music to a single significatory means. This aspect of his analysis comes to the fore when he combines his concepts of introversive and extroversive semiotics in the process of analyzing a piece of music.

\[^4\text{The "tonic" chord is the chord the piece begins and ends on. The process of a piece of music, according to Schenker, is to move from tonic, to dominant (a chord which is very different from the tonic and sets up a feeling of tension in part because of this difference) and back to tonic.}\]
In his process of analyzing the first movement of Mozart's *String Quintet in C major*, (K. 515), Agawu "thinks through" (p. 80) the piece three times. Initially, he outlines general formal structures of the movement (e.g., aspects of sonata-allegro form which are present in the piece of music). In his second reading, he provides a topical analysis. Finally, in his last reading, he brings in the beginning-middle-end paradigm and harmonic analysis. Through these three "perspectives" (98), Agawu can delineate moments of "play" in the piece, moments in which there is a contradiction between structures.

Agawu not only identifies the places in which the various structures he describes reinforce each other, but his analytic method is complex enough to be able to describe and account for the contradictions between these layers/concepts--without having to resolve the contradictions into some ultimate form of likeness. In other words, the contradictions become a part of the semiotic process, an aspect of tension building within music. This allowing for contradictions between elements of music means that Agawu's analysis illuminates points of semiosis in a piece without trying to color one's entire hearing (or playing) of the piece towards a single conception of it.

*Reading "Susie Asado" Through Music*

Within linguistics, the sign has been the word. Yet this is where one tends to fall into a trap when attempting to understand what Stein was doing as a writer. In poems such as "Susie Asado," several structures function more as Agawu-ian topics than linguistic signs, which can be seen through Marjorie Perloff's analysis of the "planes of meaning" of this poem:

- Flamenco dance. Seeing a flamenco dancer inspired the poem. For Perloff, this plane is mostly rhythmical.
Susie Asado does present approximations of dance rhythms. It begins with six emphatic beats:

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Sweet sweet sweet sweet sweet tea
followed by the tripping rhythm, a kind of counterrun of
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Susie Asado
The assonance of high front diphthongs (iy) embedded in hard stops and spirants, leads up to the contrasting low back diphthong of "Susie" and then falls off in a series of diminishing vowel sounds...When the phrase is repeated, the sound is not unlike that of stamping feet accompanied by castanets. (pp. 73-74)

• Lesbian eroticism:

The title, for example, has erotic overtones. "Asado" means "roasted" in Spanish, and the notion of a "roasted susie" associated with "sweet tea" (with a pun on "sweetie") is obviously a sexual one. In the companion portrait, Preciosilla, we have the line, "Toasted susie is my ice-cream." If we follow this lead, we can trace a chain of metonymic associations: "tray sure" (pun on "treasure") [and a pun on trés cher]--"slips slips hers"—"yellow"—"This is a please"—"These are the wets"—"Incy"—"see it shine. (p. 75)

• Japanese tea:

The name "Susie Asado" sounds...much more Japanese than Spanish. We can, accordingly, take the opening lines with their pun or "sweet tea" as an image of a Japanese geisha girl, gliding back and forth gracefully as she serves tea on what seems to be a garden terrace. A series of contiguous images supports this reading: "sweet tea"—"Susie Asado"—"told tray"—"silver seller" (pun on "silver cellar")—"jelly"—"pot"—"rare bit of trees" (pun on "rarebit of cheese")—"Trees tremble"—"shade"—"sash"—"shine." If we concentrate on this code, we can observe that the poem moves from agent to act (the carrying of the tray), to that which is on the tray (silver cellars, jelly), to the "pot" the tea comes out of...(p. 75)

Perloff's analysis compares Stein's poem to cubist painting; she claims that what she calls "planes of meaning" are constructed in much the way the multiple planes in a cubist picture contribute to the referential quality of the picture. At the same time, it is important to note how many of Perloff's "planes" have a sonic quality to them, whether it is in terms of rhythm or the
articulation of words (consonants). Thus, while I am not negating what Perloff is suggesting about the connections between these "planes of meaning" and cubist painting, I am pointing out that there are also connections between Stein's handling of these planes and Agawu's notion of musical topics. These connections are underscored by the sonic qualities of Stein's poem.

Instead of looking at each word as a sign, we would do well to use Agawu's concept of topics here. The extroversive form of signification in Stein occurs at the level of topics, which are signs, and which consist of groups of words rather than the individual words themselves. The question becomes, how does one divide out the topics? Thomson's division of topics is a little different from that of Perloff.
Figure 5: Virgil Thomson's setting of "Susie Asado" (continued)
Figure 5: (continued)

clean it is yellow it is a silver seller. This is a please; this is a please

these are the saids to jelly. These are the wets these say... the wets to

leave a crown to incy. Incy is short for incen-bus.

A pot a pot is a beginning of a rare bit of trees. Trees trem-ble. The
Figure 5: (continued)

old *mis-are in bob-bles, bob-bles which shade and shave and ren-der clean

render clean must. Drink pups. Drink pups drink pups lease a sash hold

see it shine, and a bo-bo-link has pins. It shows a nail.

What is a nail. A nail is unison. Sweet sweet sweet sweet tea...
The first two lines, which are constructed in a similar way, are repeated musically, with the exception of the G on "tea" the second time. That G substitutes for an E flat in the first version of the line. The E flat is also used for the last line of the poem. By raising the pitch, Thomson is raising the emotional stakes somewhat on the repeat.

Perloff includes both "sweet sweet" and "Susie Asado" of the first two lines in the same plane of meaning—the flamenco dance plane—on the basis of the rhythm. Thomson, in contrast, divides these two parts. The "Susie Asado" section is much lower pitch-wise, and is a minor seventh (reduced to a whole step if transposed by an octave) away from the "tea" during the first occurrence and a major 11th (reduced again to a whole step in the other direction if transposed) during the second occurrence. Further, although it does not have to be, "Susie Asado" is declaimed in triplets initially, although in measure 7 Thomson sets these words using an eighth, a quarter, and three more eighth notes, preserving the syncopated sound of the phrase without using triplets. Both the somewhat dissonant interval between the two sections and the declamation in triplets appear another time, at the "to leave a crown to Incy. Incy is short for incubus." The explanatory sentence about Incy is a tritone away from the tonal-sounding resolution (at least melodically speaking) of "crown to Incy." It is also declaimed in triplets. Thus, we could call this "dissonant interval followed by triplets" an explanatory topic. The words, "Susie Asado" become an explanation for "Sweet tea," as if explaining exactly who the "sweetie" is.

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5A quick lesson in reading musical rhythm: A quarter note (,) gets one beat, an eighth note (,) gets half a beat, and a triplet (which looks like an eighth note but often has the number three near it and is usually presented in groups of three) gets one third of a beat.
Perloff's overall conception of the planes is that they intersect constantly; she pulls a word here and there from the middle of sentences in order to construct her planes. Thomson's overall approach to setting this poem is connected to his concept of the phrase. For example, the line "Susie Asado which is a told tray sure" contains material from the lesbian plane ("Asado" means "roasted" as in "toasted Susie is my ice cream" and the pun on "treasure," which in French would be "très chère") as well as the Japanese tea ceremony ("told tray"). Thomson sets that line in an overall descending line, ending firmly on a tonic note that is established by that melodic line. Thomson's different conception of topic in Stein's work does not negate Marjorie Perloff's analysis; Thomson simply adds more planes, constructed at a different "angle"—another level of indeterminacy.

Finally, another insight which Agawu's work gives to an understanding of Stein's writing is the relative importance of plot. Plot occupies a central role in the significatory aspects of linguistic texts. One of the traditional difficulties of working with Stein's avant garde writing is that there is very little in the way of the narrative type of plot on which to hang one's analysis. In fact, because of this some analysts dismiss her work as therefore meaningless while others try to limit signification in her work to a central plot, by reading her work, for example, through a biographical lens.

As we have seen, plot can be present in music and can have a signifying role. At the same time, it does not control all other signification in music—it is not necessarily central to the ways in which music signifies. In terms of "Susie Asado," and using an Agawu-type approach to topics identified by Perloff, we might say that the "plot" of this poem is about the loveliness of women—as dancers, as servers of tea, and as lovers. This plot
permeates the poem, in that the poem begins and ends with it and its elements occur throughout the poem. At the same time, having identified a plot for the poem, we must avoid reducing our understanding of the poem to this plot. There are other processes of signification that supersede plot in a way that is more musical than linguistic.

The main form of introversive semiotics in this poem has to do with word sounds, and these occur in three ways—through what I call generative sentences (which may or may not include rhyme), through consonant sounds, and through combinations of sounds found in words which generate new words. Generative sentences are a device that Stein uses throughout her work. The way this device works is that Stein repeats a sentence structure varying the words which fit within the structure or the phonemes of a particular word such that there is rhyme. "Susie Asado" contains a very short example of this: "These are the wets these say the sets," although other poems contain much longer examples. In this example, "say" is substituted for "are," perhaps because of the "s" in "sets," which is a phonemic substitution for "wets." Thomson responds to this structure by setting it as a rising sequence.

The second variety of introversive signification process is that of the consonant sounds which are prominent in Susie Asado. In the beginning, we have a preponderance of "s" sounds and to some degree, "t" sounds, although when one reads the poem out loud, it is difficult to aspirate the "t" sound on "sweet." That aspiration is held in until "tea," in which the vowel sound following the "t" in "tea" allows for that aspiration. Thomson allows for an aspirated "t" in "sweet" by giving the singer an eighth note rest after each occurrence of "sweet." This cuts the level of tension that the prolongation of the unaspirated "t" can build in an oral reading of the poem. Thomson makes up for the lack of tension with the raised pitch on "tea" the second time around.

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progresses, "s" still continues its prominence, in words such as "slips," "silver," "seller," "this," "said," "say," and "sets." But it is joined by a greater emphasis on "t" ("told," "tray," "light," "wets," "sets," "trees," etc.) and "b." Finally, there is a return to the predominant "s" at the end of the poem with the repeat of the first line. While Stein does not consistently mark beginnings, middles, and endings so clearly in her other works, here we do have strong sonic markings of the structure of the poem.

Finally, Susie Asado contains a device that is also found in Stein's other works--the generation of new words through combinations of old ones. In this case, "drink" and "bobbles" become "bobolink." There is absolutely no linguistic connection between these words--they are put together by virtue of their sound, and they become a delightful discovery because they are a surprise.

There is a certain amount of play between these levels of semiosis. As Perloff points out, on an extroversive level, there is a true multiplication of meaning such that no individual plane is privileged. While both Thomson and Perloff divide the work into different planes/topics, neither "analyst" can negate the work of the other because Stein herself does not privilege one plane over another.

"What is a nail. A nail is unison." Where the work is "nailed" together, unified, is at the level of sound, unison, introversive semiotics. In this piece, Stein uses sound to create a sense of beginning, middle, and end. She unifies the piece with the "s" sound and through allowing sound to generate words.

Why do we not simply use Jakobson's introversive semiotics here instead of Agawu's musically oriented semiotics? Because Stein's work is so
strongly sonic—more so than the concept of melopoeia in traditionally referential poetry. Agawu helps us to redefine the sign so that it can account for the signification that happens in Stein's work without requiring us to "nail" Stein's work to a single linguistic meaning. And it helps us to account for not simply the existence of but the centrality of sound to Stein's work.

**Science and Lively Words**

In her introduction to the 1993 edition of Stein's *Geography and Plays*, Cyrena Pondrom analyzes Stein's 1913 work, "Braque," which is in the lively words style:

In direct reversal of the early texts we have considered, these lines are distinguished by the foregrounding of nouns and the almost total suppression of verbs. ... In this context it is useful to remember Roman Jakobson's definition of "the two basic modes of arrangement used in verbal behavior, selection and combination." Roughly put, an almost all-noun text belongs to the mode of selection, while a text made up largely of verbs and verbals belongs to the mode of combination.... This deceptively simple formulation offers the basis of a powerful and far-reaching analysis of the functioning of texts and other semiotic systems. Metaphor, lexicon, and synchrony can be associated with the axis of selection; metonymy, grammar, and diachrony with the axis of combination. Hierarchy comes into being with acts of combination, as do narrative and history. The act of suppressing or greatly restricting the axis of combination has both aesthetic and political significance, since it refuses the traditional hierarchies of both the sentence and narrative structure and thereby simultaneously perform a challenge to cultural and political hierarchies more generally.... In fact, it is by manipulating both combination and selection that Stein undertakes to expose the fact that the process of logical thought, which are implicit in the grammar of the sentence and are dependent on appropriate selection from the lexicon, are not "natural" but are constructions of the human mind. (xxxiii-xxxiv)

What Stein is truly doing in the lively words style is dismantling for once and for all, scientific language. Pondrom's piece of the puzzle demonstrates the relationship between logic and the two poles of language (Saussure's syntagmatic and associational poles). The use of nouns not only creates the
possibility for visual semiotic systems to be present in the text, the nouns also
subvert what has always been a problem in scientific language, the arbitrary
aspects of logic. Logic is an inherent part of the creation of scientific
knowledge. For example, the only way to "prove" a causal relationship
between two events which are associated with each other is through logic.
We may observe that Event A is always associated with Event B and we may
observe that this association takes the form that Event B follows Event A
more often than random chance would allow. But we can draw no
conclusion about the relationship between these events simply through
observation; any conclusion we draw is a function of logic. This is the lesson
of Karl Pearson.

At the same time, logic is precisely where things can fall apart because
it is a function of an arbitrarily constructed system of meaning. We know
that the relation between signifier and signified is arbitrary. Further, as
Saussure points out, the concepts, the signifieds, exist only within the sign
system. If concepts existed outside of the sign system, then nothing would be
lost in translation because all languages would have an analogous set of
signifieds. A signifier from one language for a given concept would be
equivalent to the signifier in a different language for the same concept. The
same problem happens in music: one cannot write down Indian classical
music -- e.g., ragas -- using the Western system of notation because the system
of pitches and rhythms used by Indian musicians is completely different.
Scientists are completely dependent, then, on the arbitrary sign system in
which their communication with each other about their observations and
their ideas must take place.
Meaning-making systems are marvelous human constructs. We have ways of making sense of what we see, hear, and how we move, and ways of making things for others to see and hear. We have a fascinating system of meaning-making, language, which is composed of visual and aural elements but which can be analyzed as a separate system. Language is so flexible a system of signification that we can fool ourselves into believing that it conforms to something we can think of as the objective world.

Gertrude Stein's work is based in language but not completely subsumed by it. Her project with language here is to expose our assumptions about it, to call into question our objective forms of knowledge which are so thoroughly based in linguistic constructs. Perloff, writing about Wittgenstein, discusses Stein's use of nouns in her Lively Words writing. Perloff reviews a well-known passage in Stein's Lectures, one that is often passed off as a retrospective attempt to justify the *Tender Buttons* kind of writing:

And so in *Tender Buttons* and then on and on I struggled with the ridding myself of nouns, I knew nouns must go in poetry as they had gone in prose if anything that is everything was to go on meaning something.

And so I went on with this exceeding struggle of knowing really knowing what a thing was really knowing it knowing anything I was seeing anything I was feeling so that its name could be something, by its name coming to be a thing in itself as it was but would not be anything just and only as a name. (242)

Perloff presents a Wittgensteinian reading of this passage:

What Stein really means when she makes the case for the superiority of pronouns (and prepositions, conjunctions, etc.) to nouns may be glossed by Wittgenstein's remark . . . that "Physics does not use these words" . . . Physics, that is to say, can rely largely on the naming or noun function: \( e=mc^2 \); its use of pronouns is relatively minimal. (90)

More so than any other part of speech, the noun occupies a privileged position within the world of science. Verbs may be the next most privileged
kind of word, but they have the problem of time built in. An action is not permanent -- unless one has invented a perpetual motion machine.

A noun, on the other hand, has the potential to seem static, to seem to last an eternity, to seem to be observed over and over again. Over the course of Stein's writing across twenty years, the scientific project played many different roles, from being the subject of her writing to being connected in different ways to the process of her writing. Some of her innovations in writing, as we have seen, occurred as a way of working with scientific observation and getting around linguistic limits.

Stein will go on to develop a way of writing which DeKoven calls "melody." She will write long passages that are made up of words which are not the subject of physics--conjunctions, prepositions, and so forth. She will begin to write about the music of her work. DeKoven considers the Lively Words writing to be some of Stein's most successful "experimental" writing. There is a richness to this writing, perhaps derived from the musical and visual qualities coupled with the last bastion of science in Stein's work, the noun.

Stein repudiated the idea of experimental writing: "Artists do not experiment. Experiment is what scientists do; they initiate an operation of unknown factors in order to be instructed by its results. An artist puts down what he knows and at every moment it is what he knows at that moment. If he is trying things out to see how they go he is a bad artist" (quoted in Wilder, Bloom p. 27)
[Stein] had come [to the United States in the 1930s], she told [the reporters], "to tell very plainly and simply and directly, as is my fashion, what literature is." When one of the reporters asked her, "Why don't you write as you talk?" she turned to him. "Oh, but I do," she said calmly. "After all, it's all learning how to read it." (Mellow, 455)

What constitutes a "good" or "valid" reading of Stein? There are multiple answers to this question, in the form of a number of readings of Stein. Here is an editor's reading of her, a rejection letter:

April 19, 1912
Dear Madam,
I am only one, only one, only one. Only one being, one at the same time. Not two, not three, only one. Only one life to live, only sixty minutes in one hour. Only one pair of eyes. Only one brain. Only one being. Being only one, having only one pair of eyes, having only one time, having only one life, I cannot read your M.S. three or four times. Not even one time. Only one look, only one look is enough. Hardly one copy would sell here. Hardly one. Hardly one.

Many thanks. I am returning the M.S. by registered post. Only one M.S. by one post.
Sincerely yours,
A.C. Fifield (Flowers of Friendship p. 58)

Fifield is obviously responding to something of the "insistent" way of writing. With "only one look" Fifield has managed to capture enough of the text to be able to parody some of its characteristics. What Fifield does not
acknowledge, but what is implicit to this letter, is the power of Stein's text. Even after such a brief engagement with Stein's text, the editor is impelled to write an unusual letter.

There are a number of readings of Stein which would fall into this tradition of explicit rejection and implicit acknowledgment of something powerful or disturbing about Stein's texts. Writers such as B.L. Reid in the 1950s and more recently, Gilbert and Gubar, who claim that "Steinese constitutes an attack on the very idea of literature" (246) and that readers have felt "victimized by Stein's impenetrable sentences" (248), use considerably more vitriol and far less humor than editor Fifield in their responses to Stein. Alan Knight reviews the responses of critics to Stein during her day and age and states:

She challenged in language the very thing that those who vilified her believed most sacred of all in language: its intelligibility, which is the triumph of order over chaos and our consequent release from the pain of not understanding, in short, its ability to guarantee the union of sound and sense. (409-410)

Readings of this sort fail to recognize the very characteristics of Stein's work that create the impetus for anger and upset so prominent in these readings. These readings say more about the scholars' fears and boiling points than they do about Stein's work itself.

There is a pattern in some other readings of Stein. It goes something like this: ______ aspect of Stein's work is interesting or "good" but ______ is unacceptable, obtuse, impossible, etc. B.F. Skinner found value in Three Lives but dismissed Tender Buttons as "automatic writing"—uncrafted mess from Stein's subconscious. In A Different Language, Marianne DeKoven recognized Tender Buttons as a classic, but she dismissed Stanzas in Meditation and she pronounced "Patriarchal Poetry" unreadable.
The form of the resistance is the same, only the texts differ. As various texts become part of the Stein canon (not that she is canonical herself, but for Stein scholars certain texts have become canonical to the study of her work), scholars’ resistances have shifted to other, presumably less understood and less studied texts. The shifts in judgment across these readings suggest that scholars might be drawing certain kinds of conclusions about works too soon. One hopes that new readers of Stein do not become prejudiced against the less well-known texts by such judgments.

Readings of Stein that reflect less of an interest in judging the quality of texts also offer potential pitfalls. Biographical and historical readings of Stein have three problems. First of all, what would it mean that an author would need to be read primarily in relation to history or biography? While these readings can certainly illuminate texts, they cannot be the only way to approach a writer's work. Secondly, and more in relation to Stein's work specifically, biographical and historical readings can easily "nail" Stein's more indeterminate work to simplified meanings; they can fail to do justice to the play across sign systems in her work.

Finally, one of the biggest traps that biographical readings can fall into is the temptation to "pathologize" Stein. Innumerable scholars have connected characteristics of Stein's texts to alleged personal characteristics such as egocentrism and megalomania. Possibly this kind of reading arises from the fact that Stein's work is so unusual; it is tempting to see something which departs from the norm as deriving from some kind of pathology. Readings of this sort are supported by interviews with Stein's contemporaries. For example, as I stated in Chapter One, one of Stein's fellow medical students who thought of her as a "battle axe" because she complained
about the treatment of female students by the male professors. By today's standards, her complaints would be considered legitimate and not indicative of excessive anger or oversensitivity. The pathological reading dismisses Stein's seriousness as an artist, assigning the characteristics of her texts not to her ability to think about language but to something apparently beyond her control.

The multivalent forms of reading have potential problems that are the other side of the coin from the biographical and historical readings. I have suggested, in concert with both DeKoven and Perloff, that there are many ways of reading works of the "lively words" style. Virgil Thomson came up with a different set of "planes" from those that Perloff proposed and yet I suggested that these two different readings do not negate each other. The question becomes, at what point does a reading of Stein become nonsense?

The reading of a work shifts over time. Scholars approach works differently as forms of analysis become popular for awhile and then fade into the intellectual background. Scholars build on one another's readings, which can be an advantage as one scholar invents a new way of doing something that others adapt to different texts. It can also be a detriment, as when the inaccuracies of one scholar (for whatever reason) become integral to the literature on a particular author.

The availability and quality of information also shifts over time. Authors' contemporaries and family members die off and are no longer available for interviews. Collections of manuscripts become organized and/or more available with the passage of time -- or lost or destroyed with time. In the case of Stein, Timothy Young's very recent and thorough
recataloguing of the works in the Beinecke collection should make more visible a number of interesting items that have heretofore been overlooked.

How can scholars learn to "plainly and simply and directly" read Stein?

In my own reading of Stein, I tried to borrow something from the scientific method. The study of literature of literature should not become a science, in the sense of only being able to discuss observed phenomena or to work with the idea of replicability of results. In fact, there are things can and should be said about literature that do not "work" in the realm of science. For example, what I say about Stein and psychology in the chapter on The Making of Americans derives less from the scientific research of that discipline and more from the practical approaches to psychology I used in my social services work.

Rather, one might adopt a scientific attitude about texts, particularly about Stein's texts, asking first and foremost, "What is in these texts?" The problem with a priori ideas about Stein's texts is that the texts are often more complex than the ideas about them. For example, when Gilbert and Gubar claim that Stein's texts are nonsense, they deny the observation Stein made:

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 is impossible to put them together without sense. I made innumerable efforts to make words write without sense and found it impossible. Any human being putting down words had to make sense out of them. (Stein, in Gender of Modernism, p. 504)

Asking "What is in these texts?" allows the reader to find the different ways in which two words together can make meaning. With a writer as unusual as Stein, one cannot make assumptions about the contents or the meaning-making processes that are present in her texts.
This question also comes before questions about the relative qualities of the texts (compared with texts by other authors or compared with other texts by Stein). The most fruitful of the comparisons made so far are comparisons between Stein's own texts and various attempts by other writers to write in Stein's style. For example, this kind of comparison is central to Perloff's writing about indeterminacy in "Susie Asado;" Perloff compares a Stein text with one by Edith Sitwell about the same subject matter. DeKoven in A Different Language compares Stein's writing to her brother's satire of it. These comparisons yield information about what is "there" in Stein's writing. Since Stein scholarship has not yet succeeded in answering the first question about Stein's many texts (9000 pages of writing, according to Kellner), then we truly are not ready to make comparisons about relative quality of texts. Eventually we may be able to couch such comparisons in terms such as: "How does this text 'work' in comparison with another text?" "What characteristics of one style contributed to the creation of another style?" and "Why did Stein abandon one style of writing for another?"

Along with the primary question to be asked about Stein's texts, one must be prepared to use an array of analyses. Each form of analysis has its own pitfalls. Using a variety of analyses is likely to offset some of the problems a single form of analysis might have. Further, Stein wrote a wide variety of texts, even within the short period of time covered by this dissertation. What is at stake in the range of texts Stein wrote differs from period to period in Stein's life and in terms of the function of the text (e.g., the function of a letter which is to communicate a message vs. the function of a text as a piece of art). With someone as complex as Stein (and it could be
argued this is true of almost any artist, composer, or writer), no one way of engaging with her work is going to yield every significant facet.

There is a time within the scientific process for judgment — at the point of interpreting the data. Yet ideally within the scientific method all judgments are provisional. They hold up over time with the replication of the observations that led to them or they are toppled by the observation and interpretation of new data. After all, the structure of scientific method is that one can only prove hypotheses wrong; no one can prove the rightness of an idea. Likewise, at some point we can make judgments about Stein's work — that something is "better" in some way than something else. But this may not be the best question to ask before we have found out what is happening in her texts, what is there.

An analytic reading casts a spotlight on portions of a text, illuminating those areas. Yet the filter that is on the spotlight itself can change the quality of one's reading process, bringing into relief some characteristics and obscuring others. Where the spotlight is shown can change the content of the conclusions. What filters we have, where we shine the spotlight, these all shift collectively and for each person individually. Like scientists, we have only this arbitrary and paradoxical medium, language, with which to communicate to each other. While we cannot get around all of these limitations to the ideal of "objectivity" or "truth" of our illuminations, it can be helpful simply to acknowledge them.

Lionel Trilling offers a summary of what is at stake in our engagement with someone like Stein in his account of preparing to teach a class on modernist literature:

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Eventually the course fell to me to give. I approached it with an uneasiness which has not diminished with the passage of time—it has, I think, even increased. It arises, this uneasiness, from my personal relation with the works that form the substance of the course. Almost all of them have been involved with me for a long time—I invert the natural order not out of lack of modesty but taking the cue of W.H. Auden’s remark that a real book reads us. I have been read by Eliot’s poems and by Ulysses and by Remembrance of Things Past and by The Castle for a good many years now, since early youth. Some of these books at first rejected me; I bored them. But as I grew older and they knew me better, they came to have more sympathy with me and to understand my hidden meanings. Their nature is such that our relationship has been very intimate. (64)

We might very well say the same thing about Stein’s work, although we might change the emotional responses Stein, in Trilling’s scenario, would have to us: she not only was bored with us, she was angry with and insulted by us. She called into question our intelligence, our seriousness. She wondered how the shapes of our bodies and our dress habits influenced us. Sometimes she chose to ignore us, but she came to know that ignoring us would not make us go away nor would it help her to understand her time. The conglomeration of us have slowly interested her and she is beginning to understand how to read us.
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