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GERTRUDE STEIN, CÉZANNE AND PICASSO: THE FOURTEENTH OF JULY

by

SANDRA-LYNNE JANZEN MALLETT

A THESIS

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH

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FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH

The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research, for acceptance, a thesis entitled "Gertrude Stein, Cézanne and Picasso: The Fourteenth of July" submitted by Sandra-Lynne Janzen Mallett in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts.

Supervisor

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ABSTRACT

The question, aptly put by Janet Hobhouse, one of Stein's biographers, is whether Stein's relationship with the artists was merely one of "gilt by association."[1] In a supplement to transition magazine, the editors of the magazine and the artists, Matisse, Salmon, Braque and Tzara protested against Stein's comments on the artists and their work in The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas. They protested that Stein was "never ideologically intimate" with the new movements in art. This study finds not only that Stein understood the revolutions in art that occurred in the first decade of the twentieth century but also that she was engaged in the same movements as Cézanne and Picasso. Certainly Stein forces the comparison with art by the titles of her works, as Michael Hoffman notes:

> Analogies between the arts are one of the sure paths to critical difficulties. That such analogies must be attempted can hardly be avoided, however, when one is confronted with the "portraits," "landscapes," and "still lifes" of this period of Gertrude Stein's writing.[2]

The introduction examines some of the arguments advanced against her by the editors of transition magazine and by the artists.

The second chapter deals with Three Lives and Stein's claim to having been inspired by the work of Cézanne. She also claimed inspiration from Flaubert's work and, since the names of both men are often linked, a brief look at Flaubert's influence is also included. The major tenets of Stein's aesthetics appear to have been derived from Stein's knowledge of the work and goals of Cézanne.

Chapter III looks at The Making of Americans and its relationship to analytical cubism. Stein's fondness for Picasso is such that she never criticizes him. Picasso was a friend Stein regarded with respect throughout her life. As B. L. Reid has pointed out, his "name appears more often than anyone else's save the heroine in The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas."[3] In The Autobiography, Gertrude says, "cubism is a purely spanish conception and only spaniards can be cubists and that the only real cubism is that of Picasso and Juan Gris. Picasso created it and Juan Gris permeated it with his clarity and his exaltation. . . . americans can understand spaniards. . . . they are the only two western nations that can realize abstraction" (The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas, p. 91). In Picasso, Stein also writes of the beginning of Picasso's cubism, "I was alone at this time in understanding him, perhaps because I was expressing the same things in literature" (Picasso, p. 16). Stein never calls herself a cubist but critics have labelled The Making of Americans her first cubist work. This point requires examination.

Since the art of the new movements proceeded from an aesthetic, that is, it attempted to fulfil certain aesthetic goals, and since Stein was, as Wyndham Lewis said, "comfortably at the heart of things" and "associated with all the main activities of the time," it is conceivable that she was, in fact, intimate with the aesthetic developing around her.[4] The conclusion (Chapter IV) therefore examines very briefly some of the ideas propounded by the aesthetic philosophers which have had an influence on her writing and on the development of modern art.

In the transition supplement Marie Jolas asked of Stein, "Why has she sought to belittle so many of the artists whose friendship made it possible for her to share in the events of this epoch?" ("Testimony

against Gertrude Stein," p. 12). One answer is, perhaps, that Stein belittled the artists, because those same friends had never helped to advance Stein's career in the public eye and had never acknowledged her share, as an aesthetician and as an artist, in the development of modern art. Stein's disparaging comments about the artists in The Autobiography may have been a result of the lack of credit accorded her.

FOOTNOTES

[1]Janet Hobhouse, Everybody Who was Anybody (N.Y.: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1975), p. 167.

[2]Michael Hoffman, The Development of Abstractionism in the Writings of Gertrude Stein (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 1965), p. 161.

[3]B. L. Reid, Art by Subtraction: A Dissenting Opinion of Gertrude Stein (Norman, Oklahoma: University of Oklahoma Press, 1958), p. 153.

[4]Wyndham Lewis, Time and Western Man (1927; rpt. Boston: Beacon Press, 1957), p. 114.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

"a rose full of treachery"*

Almost [redacted] volume of art history dealing with the beginnings of modern art in the twentieth century mentions Gertrude Stein. Almost all volumes of criticism dealing with the writings of Gertrude Stein mention the names of those who have become venerated as titans in the history of modern art. In the art books the comments on Stein are related to her patronage of these artists. In the volumes of literary criticism the comments are concerned with the possibility of Stein's writing having been influenced by her association with these major artists. Stein allied her creative work with that of the artists in the G.M.P. and in her comments on her work in The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas. Her remarks in The Autobiography drew a protest from several artists who published a pamphlet denying her involvement in the formulation of the aims of the new movements in art. The extent of Stein's participation in the development of these new movements in modern art needs examination. Ben Reid in Art by Subtraction: A Dissenting Opinion of Gertrude Stein poses questions (though he does not really attempt to answer them). He writes:

> The question of Gertrude Stein's relationship to painting is another thorny one. . . . Miss Stein's lecture on "Pictures" is the most appallingly empty thing she ever wrote in her communicative manner. The fundamental questions here are

> how thoroughly she understood painting as an art and to what extent the influence of painting is operative in her creative work.[1]

These are the questions which need to be examined.

Stein wrote two of her major works during the first decade of this century, the period in which the revolution in art was beginning. It is these two works which will be examined in relation to the artists with whom she allied herself. Stein claims that Three Lives was written under the influence of Cézanne and Flaubert. It will be necessary to investigate the aims and the work of both of these men because their names are often linked by critics as joint founders of the new movement in art and literature. The Making of Americans was written after Stein had become an intimate friend of Picasso and during the years in which cubism was developed. This study will deal with the possible impetus Stein's knowledge of these two artists in particular may have given to her work. First, however, the criticism offered by the dissenting artists in their rejection of Stein as being one of them will be reviewed.

The "Testimony against Gertrude Stein" published as a special supplement to transition magazine contained denials by Eugene and Maria Jolas, André Salmon, George Braque, Henri Matisse, and Tristan Tzara. Eugene Jolas, one of the editors of transition, said that The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas was a work of "hollow tinsel bohemianism and egocentric deformations."[2] He explained that the protest was against Stein's lack of accuracy and against her claim that she was "in any way concerned with the shaping of the epoch she attempts to describe" ("TAGS," p. 2).

Surely Stein's lack of accuracy in specific details might be tolerated since she was writing twenty-five years after the events. As

Bridgman says, "Their rejoinders made some ludicrously inconsequential corrections of fact."[3] Matisse, for example, protests that an incident took place at Boulevard des Invalides, not in Clamart where Stein had placed it. Matisse, too, however, as Mellow points out in his biography of Gertrude Stein, even makes an error or two of his own in his protest.[4] For instance, Sally Stein did not instigate the purchase of "La Femme au Chapeau," Gertrude and Leo did. André Salmon protests being described as drunk at the Rousseau party ("TAGS," p. 14). However, though Leo Stein in his autobiography amends Gertrude's whole description of the party, he does not refute Salmon's being drunk. He merely says, "A donkey ate the flowers off Alice's hat not Salmon." Alice, moreover, twenty years later in 1967, still insists that Salmon ate the flowers. We can assume Stein was correct in describing Salmon as drunk at any rate since on that point the versions by Leo, Alice and Fernande Oliver all agree.

More important than the protest against Stein's lack of accuracy was the protest against her understanding and involvement in the modern art movements. The protests by Tzara that Stein "understood nothing" and by Braque who said, "She never went beyond the stage of a tourist" and that she "saw everything from the outside and never the real struggle we were engaged in" come to the heart of the matter ("TAGS," pp. 13 and 14). These complaints, since these two artists were not given much credit by Stein, seem to indicate that since Stein did not appreciate their work she undoubtedly did not understand the movements. Even Matisse too sums up The Autobiography as an act of personal vengeance. He claims only Sally Stein ever understood his work and says, "Stein had a sentimental attachment for Picasso. With regard to myself she has satisfied in her book an old rancor" ("TAGS," p. 7).

Tzara protests that Stein is exploiting her experiences with the artists just to make money and he is very indignant about his name having been included in it. Ironically, Stein's rebuttal to this argument that she is exploiting her familiarity with the artists is to write further about them in the next volume of her autobiography. For instance, she writes in Everybody's Autobiography, "I knew that Marie had not been pleased that I had spoken of all of them and of the old days but then I knew painters were like that."[5] But Tzara in his righteous indignation perhaps protests too much. He writes, "The depraved morals of bourgeois society are now opposed by the strong loathing which is felt by a few rare beings who have posited the problem of man's destiny and dignity with a gravity . . ." ("TAGS," p. 13). Presumably Tzara sees himself as one of these rare beings and since he was relegated by Stein to being merely "a pleasant and not very exciting cousin" and was given only five sentences in The Autobiography, his annoyance is understandable.

The envy the artists felt for one another has been recorded by many of their biographers. So that if Stein's friendship with Matisse had faded along with her appreciation for his work, or because of it, his feelings of having been displaced by Picasso may account for his own rancor against her. Though Matisse claims Braque invented cubism, Stein accords him no such credit.[6] She almost totally ignores him in The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas and in rebuttal to his complaints of the "Testimony," she demonstrates further indifference to him in Everybody's Autobiography. "We did not look at the pictures of Braque but we began talking" (EA, p. 361). She does take the time in Everybody's Autobiography, however, to point out that she considered him an imitator. She says that he "had a gift of singing and like all who sing he could mistake what he

sang as being something he had said but it is not the same thing" (EA, p. 35).

Since these artists obviously felt neglected or abused in The Autobiography, it is not being presumptuous to say that their remarks, that Stein understood nothing and was not a part of the movements in art, are weakened in credibility. She acknowledges that the painter and writer ought not to indulge in attempting to explain each other's concerns. In rebuttal to Marie Jolas she says with mock agreement, "the painter can only include what he sees, he has only one surface," though later she concedes that Marie was right, "The painter does not conceive himself as existing in himself, he conceives himself as a reflection of the objects he has put into his pictures."[7] Stein apparently feels that the artists did not understand writing either. Her immediate rebuttal to the protestors occurs in The Geographical History of America in 1936 where she writes, ". . . there are no witnesses to the autobiography of any one that has a human mind."[8]

However, the one figure noticeably absent from the protest was Picasso, her darling protégé, for Stein certainly saw herself as his protector. Watching his progress carefully, she admonishes him in her second portrait, "If I Told Him," to be careful to stick to "exact resemblance" (see page 16, Picasso, for explanations of her fears). But she makes no claims about influencing Picasso--although she flaunts her influence on several writers--and he in turn says nothing in support or denial of her comments about himself or his work. She does claim to have put Picasso before the public eye by writing about him--both in her portraits of him and in her explanatory book on his work and development. Art historians seem to concur that Stein and Leo were among the first to

appreciate, patronize, and proselytize the work of both Matisse and Picasso. (See Four Americans in Paris.) Stein revels in taking credit for this herself as "Alice" explains, "Two Americans happened to be in the heart of an art movement of which the outside world at that time knew nothing."[9] But it was five years after The Autobiography that Stein made her most grandiose claims with regard to Picasso. She says that they together, Spain and America, as she calls them, "were the natural founders of the twentieth century" (P, p. 12) and she says, "I was alone at this time in understanding him, perhaps because I was an American and, as I say, Spaniards and Americans have a kind of understanding of things which is the same" (P, p. 16). It is these two assertions, that Stein understood Picasso and that she "was expressing the same thing," which seems to demand investigation.

Stein did not come to her acquaintances with these artists accidentally. Elizabeth Sprigge, in her biography of Stein, points out, "It is important to remember that she did buy their pictures before she met them."[10] Stein's education and background in art has been documented by her biographers. See G. S. Raffel in the Primer for the Gradual Understanding of Gertrude Stein. As a youngster she had toured European museums of San Francisco which at that time had a considerable reputation for sizeable collections of art and for touring exhibits. In Everybody's Autobiography she writes of having been taken to see Millet's "The Man with a Hoe" and of the Japanese prints available in San Francisco. During university vacations Stein took trips from Baltimore to New York to see the operas and museums. According to the accounts of her biographers, her visual imagination had a rich environment. In Paris, she was well-informed of the developments in art by her associations with

Leo, Berenson, and the art dealers. Steward and Hoffman have pointed out, in their studies on Stein, that she was also well-informed of all the major activity in the intellectual climate that was developing all over Europe. So if Stein, with her background of interest in the visual arts and her friendship with the artists, could make the two claims that Spain and America ushered in the twentieth century and that she was doing the same thing in literature, these two claims are worth examining.

The Steins had begun buying work by Cézanne in 1904 and in the Autumn Salon of 1905 Gertrude and Leo found Matisse's "La Femme au Chapeau" which they purchased. Sarah and Michael Stein began then to collect Matisse's work and as Stein puts it, "The friendship with the Matisses grew apace" (AABT, p. 41). The famous Saturday night salons began then too. According to Mellow, one of Stein's biographers, they were established in order to regulate Matisse's habit of just dropping in. The Steins quickly acquired a reputation for holding these gatherings of their coterie and for collecting paintings which had outraged critics. Mellow writes:

> So familiar was the association of the Steins with everything radical in Parisian art that French art critics--horrified by the so-called infantile smears of Matisse's paintings and casting about for explanation--claimed that such work was clearly intended only for gullible and benighted Americans.[11]

Art historians credit the Steins with great foresight in encouraging the new revolutionary painters by buying their work and by supporting them. It seems that the question of whether Stein understood painting is answered by her own place as a patron in the history of modern painting. Jean Guichard-Meili, discussing Matisse's first patrons, the Stein family and Shchukin and Marcel Sembat, writes:

> . . . a small group of collectors had actively interested themselves in Matisse's work. The critical role played by these clear-sighted and courageous patrons must be underlined. Like all true lovers of art they were ahead, not only of contemporary taste, but also of the artistic discoveries immediately preceding them: while the impressionists, Gaughin and Cezanne, were still being debated, these collectors were already looking ahead and perceiving the meaning of subsequent discoveries at the very moment when these were being decided. An extremely rare gift, and one of the highest merit, since it anticipated ratification by public opinion by thirty to forty years.[12]

The question "to what extent the influence of painting is operative in her creative work" still demands an answer.

This study will be limited to Stein's two major early works, Three Lives and The Making of Americans. Chapter II will examine the ground work Stein found laid for her in the aesthetics of Cézanne and the possible influence of his theories on Three Lives. Chapter III will examine the possible influence on The Making of Americans of Picasso's theories of cubism. The conclusion will take a brief look at some of the tenets of philosophy which were a part of the intellectual climate of the time and at the aesthetic which Stein was evolving for her own work.

FOOTNOTES

*Guillaume Apollinaire, "Un Fantôme de Nuées," Calligrams, trans. Anne Hyde Greet (Santa Barbara, California: Unicorn Press, 1970), pp. 36-38. The epigraphs at the head of each chapter, and the subtitle, are from this poem which is reprinted in the Appendix. Apollinaire wrote this poem about the period before World War I when he and his friends, Picasso, Braque, Jacob and Salmon felt the new century was on the threshold of great new things. He wrote in "Tree":

> Everything is sadder than it used to be
> All earth's gods are growing old
> . . . . . .
> And new beings are arising
> Three by three (p. 11).

"Phantom of Clouds" seems to me to be about the artists whose revolutionary experiments were impressing themselves on the art world in the first decade of the twentieth century.

[1]B. L. Reid, Art by Subtraction: A Dissenting Opinion of Gertrude Stein (Norman, Oklahoma: U. of Oklahoma Press, 1958), pp. 161-62.

[2]"Testimony against Gertrude Stein," supplement to transition (The Hague: Servire Press, 1935), Feb., p. 2. Hereafter cited in text as "TAGS."

[3]Richard Bridgman, Gertrude Stein in Pieces (New York: Oxford University Press, 1970), p. 218.

[4]James R. Mellow, Charmed Circle: Gertrude Stein and Company (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1974), p. 402.

[5]Gertrude Stein, Everybody's Autobiography (1937; rpt. New York: Random House, 1973), p. 34. Hereafter cited in text as EA.

[6]In her portrait of Braque, Stein gives him very limited credit:

> Brack, Brack is the one who put up the hooks and held the things up and ate his dinner. He is the one who did more. He used his time and felt more much more and came before when he came after. He did not resemble anything more (in Geography and Plays, p. 145, c. 1922 dated 1913 by Bridgman).

[7]Gertrude Stein, Picasso (1938; rpt. Boston: Beacon Paperbacks, 1959), p. 14. Hereafter cited in text as P.

[8]Gertrude Stein, The Geographical History of America (1936; rpt. New York: Random House, 1973), p. 90. Hereafter cited in text as GHA.

[9]Gertrude Stein, The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas (1933; rpt. New York: Random House, 1960), p. 28. Hereafter cited in text as AABT.

[10]Elizabeth Sprigge, Gertrude Stein: Her Life and Work (New York: Harper and Bros. Pub., 1967), p. 59.

[11]Mellow, p. 6.

[12]Jean Guichard-Meili, Matisse (New York: Praeger Pub. Inc., 1967), p. 54.

CHAPTER II

STEIN, FLAUBERT AND CÉZANNE: THREE LIVES

"He bore his whole heredity in his face"
-- G. Apollinaire

Stein attributes the inspiration for Three Lives, her first major work, to Cézanne and Flaubert. She says, "she had begun as an exercise in literature to translate Flaubert's Trois Contes and then she had this Cézanne [portrait of Mme. Cézanne] and she looked at it and under its stimulus she wrote Three Lives" (AABT, p. 34). She also says, "Everything I have done has been influenced by Flaubert and Cézanne, and this gave me a new feeling about composition."[1] Flaubert, she explains, also "had a little of the feeling about this thing [composition]" but he was "there as a theme." Before going on to look for correspondences to Cézanne's ideas in her work it is necessary then to have a brief look at the correspondences to Flaubert's work. Even the title of Three Lives alludes to Flaubert's Three Tales. Originally she chose to call it Three Histories but was persuaded by her publisher, F. N. Hitchcock, to rename it Three Lives. (Hitchcock thought the title Three Histories was "much too formal" and was concerned that it would be "confused with his firm's 'real historical publications.'")[2]

Stein had written only Q.E.D. and Fernhurst, in an effort to come to terms with herself and her romantic entanglements, when she read Flaubert's Three Tales. Flaubert's character, Félicité, reminded Stein of the servant women Stein had known in her household in America and so

she launched into writing portraits of two of them. The possibility of a debt to Flaubert in these stories has been appraised by Stein's critics and scholars. For example, Janet Hobhouse notes, "the exercise of translating Flaubert had yielded for Gertrude new insights into the narrative form and the relation of the story-teller to his characters."[3] Brinnin, however, writes that "Only a few stylistic correspondences suggest that she had any thought of directly imitating Flaubert."[4] Ben Reid is in agreement. He writes:

> The derivation of her title is obvious, and Flaubert's simplicity of style and his sympathy for his characters were doubtless of weight in Miss Stein's approach to her first writing. She departs radically from Flaubert, however, in observing from within the minds of her people and in beginning her technique of rhythmic repetitiveness. It may be that Flaubert's contribution was finally no more than a suggestion of the possibility that she could write and a suggestion of the kind of character that she could imitate from her own experience. The question is really unanswerable and of temporary importance, for Gertrude Stein rapidly sloughed off her best but most derivative manner.[5]

Richard Bridgman is even more cynical about Stein's debt to Flaubert. He says, "To account for it, she invoked the names of Flaubert and Cézanne. For anyone then seriously concerned with literature, the respectful mention of Flaubert was mandatory. . . . Other than giving Three Lives its original impetus, Flaubert was of minimal significance for Gertrude Stein."[6]

Stein appears to have been honest in crediting Flaubert's influence as to theme, and the correspondences which are obvious in "The Good Anna" are also present in the other two portraits. Stein does share several of Flaubert's themes. All three of these stories are concerned with martyrdom and sacrifice and so are Stein's. Nearly all of his characters have difficulty because a kind of idealism thwarts their acceptance of 'things as they are.' This too can be found in Stein's

Three Lives.

The story of Anna is a variation on Flaubert's "A Simple Heart." Like Félicité, Anna is a dutiful servant. The story shows Anna in her various positions as a servant. But Anna does not merely submit herself to serving her mistresses and masters. She does her job with responsibili but she wishes to manage both the households and the people she serves. Eventually she works and worries herself to death. "The Gentle Lena" is a variation on the same theme. As a servant she cheerfully does her duty but when she is given into marriage to Herman (her man), who cares little for her, she gradually withdraws from life and after bearing three children she dies in childbirth.

Melanctha is an Eve for whom there is no garden of Eden. She "wanders widely" in search of wisdom. Even the subtitle, "Each One as She May," reminds us of the Biblical Eve for whom eating the apple led to the necessity to make choices. Like Flaubert's romantic, Frédéric, in her search for the ultimate love she is led by her desire and not her reason. The story of Melanctha's relationships with men and women is one hundred-fifty pages long, and one hundred pages of those are devoted to her relationship with Jeff Campbell and the conflict between her passionate and his "tender-hearted, unpassionate and comfortable nature."[7] Melanctha is much like Mme. Bovary who has a romantic ideal and a longing for excitement. She dies of consumption--her passion has consumed her.

There is a kind of fatalism or determinism in Stein's stories as there is in Flaubert's tales. Even Stein's epigraph from Jules Laforgue suggests this: "Donc je suis un malheureux et ce n'est ni ma faute ni celle de la vie" (TL, p. 5). Hoffman says, "A very strong impression that one gets from a reading of "Melanctha" is that there has been no

equivocation possible of the pattern of her life. Melanctha could go through a thousand incarnations and in not one would her life be very different."[8] This is precisely the idea that Stein intends to convey. The characters are victimized by their own natures or personalities. Just as Félicité is doomed to be hardworking and faithful, just as Julian is doomed to suffer because of his lust for blood and power, and just as Herod Antipas is doomed by his lust, Anna is doomed by her desire to dominate, Melanctha is doomed by her romantic idealism, and Lena is doomed by her easy submission. Stein is not suggesting that the characters' lives are fated by the gods; she is suggesting that their lives are determined by the permanent and basic structures of their personalities. She uses this theme again in The Making of Americans where she tries to show that "It is hard living down the tempers we are born with."[9] For both Flaubert and Stein actions and events do not depend on free will but on a force which dictates them. This force is simply the basic human nature of the characters.

In ascribing inspiration to Flaubert, however, Stein does not stop at just the thematic influence. She says she also learned about composition from his works as has been noted. Stein explains her new feeling about composition for both literature and painting. "Up to that time composition had consisted of a central idea, to which everything else was an accompaniment and separate but was not an end in itself, and Cézanne conceived the idea that in composition one thing was as important as another thing. Each part is as important as the whole" (TAI, p. 15). This can be interpreted to mean that the whole is more than just the sum of its parts. As composers both Flaubert and Cézanne use a kind of harmony and a kind of counterpoint in creating their works. Everything

in their works has a part to play in the unity of their compositions. Flaubert, for instance, uses counterpoint when he plays off Madame Bovary's rendezvous with Rodolphe against the agricultural show and when Frédéric visits the country with Rosanette during the turmoils of 1848 Paris. Stein also uses comparison with the other characters in her portraits, that is, she portrays the characters in relationship with others in order to describe them. For example, she contrasts Anna with Mrs. Lehntman or with Mrs. Drehten. Stein's concept of "decentralizing," of wanting "each one to have the same value" ("TAI," p. 16), or of wanting the "evenness of everybody having a vote" ("TAI," p. 17), seems to be just a desire for the figure and ground to be inseparable. This idea of decentralization soon becomes an important aspect of cubist theory.

Despite these remarks on composition by Stein, it is more likely that the aspects of Flaubert's composition that intrigued her were those he remarked on himself. He said that he was striving for the 'juste mot' and that he aimed for objectivity. He had fussed at great length over his sentences and paragraphs and over his precise details. Stein was to brood about the resources of the language itself. She concluded that it was not the precise descriptive word which mattered so much as it was the precise imitation of the individual's speech patterns by which a person reveals himself. Brinnin explains:

> The basis of her style was rhythmic iteration of thought and speech which, she hoped, would match the precise colorful details that give visual sharpness to Flaubert's story. The vitality of her stories would lie in the degree of deftness with which she might catch the illusion of speech and thought as they were directly perceived. She had observed, under laboratory conditions, the ways in which repeated rhythms of an individual's speech identify him, indicate his attitude toward reality and his approach to experience. She had a strong feeling that character was revealed less in

> psychological chartings than in the casual, half-conscious, spoken phrases and rhythms by which individuals articulate their feelings. Things said might make a conventional narrative but more important, she felt, was the manner in which things were said; the meaning of a really interesting story was not something imbedded in the conclusion but something alive in every moment of the telling. By recreating modes of speech she felt she could express character with a clarity and force no compilation of biographical details could match.[10]

Certainly Stein attempted the objectivity that she found in Flaubert. Flaubert strove for an objectivity or impersonality in describing his characters. Sypher says, "He aimed for no lyricism, no comments, and the author's personality absent."[11] Alan Russell supports this and puts it clearly. He writes:

> . . . he lashed himself to a scrupulous objectivity. Instead of indulging in overt satire, he forced himself to show people talking, thinking, and acting as people do talk, think, and act. He tried to eliminate himself entirely from his work.[12]

Flaubert is not always successful. His ironic and biting tone shines through. But he does make his characters talk and think and act as people do and it is this creation or recreation of the individual's own modes of thought and speech and action that enlivens his work. Along with the thematic inspiration, then, Stein may have learned a little about decentralizing, about technique fitting the subject, and about objectivity from Flaubert.

Since these correspondences to Flaubert's work can be seen in Stein's writing, we can accept her statement that his work was a source of inspiration to her. But what aspects of Cézanne's work inspired Stein, particularly since his art is in a different medium? Answering this question is not so difficult as might be expected, perhaps because Stein was not the only person to link the names of Flaubert and Cézanne.

Art critics and historians often mention the two together. Meyer Schapiro, for instance, discussing the similarities between one of Flaubert's descriptions and a painting by Cézanne, says, ". . . Flaubert, like Cézanne, knew the alternatives of contemplation and despair, and bound himself in art to an exacting discipline of reality and the world."[13] Roger Fry points out that all the 'modern' artists paid homage to both of these men. He writes:

> Both were children of the Romantic movement, both shared the sublime and heroic faith in art which that movement engendered, its devotion and absolutism. Both found their way by an infinitely laborious process out of the too facile formulae of their youth to a somewhat similar position, to an art based on passionate study of actual life, but ending in a complete transformation of its data. . . . They are both protagonists in that thrilling epic of individual prowess against the hoard which marks the history of French art in the nineteenth century. And both have become in a sort the patron saints of their confraternities.[14]

Just what is it then that they shared and what did Stein find in the work of Cézanne that stimulated her creative abilities?

The first question that arises is how well Gertrude Stein understood Cézanne's work and his methods. This might be answered in part by the simple fact that Stein, led by Leo, had collected Cézanne's work before the public in general discovered him. Gertrude is proud to relate how she and Leo bought Cézanne's paintings at Vollard's shop before they had aroused public interest. She tells her version in The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas, where "Alice" writes of the collection Miss Stein had when she first met her, "The time had not yet come when there were only Cézannes, Renoirs, Matisses, and Picassos, nor as it was even later only Cézannes and Picassos. At that time there were a great deal of Matisse, Picasso, Renoir, and Cézanne but there were also a great

many other things" (AABT, p. 10). Cézanne, we are told, had earned the life-long respect of Stein.

Literary critics have examined Three Lives looking for correspondences to support Stein's claim that Cézanne's work was her inspiration Bridgman writes, "Two things about Cézanne's art impressed her, his skillfully crude depiction of elemental subjects and his attentiveness to all the details of his composition."[15] Ben Reid finds a similar conclusio He writes:

> We can trace Gertrude Stein's creative debt to painting in two main portions of her work: in Three Lives and in the period that runs roughly from 1910 to 1920. . . . Although this sort of judgment is highly speculative, one would suspect that Cézanne suggested the technique of development by successive, articulated brush strokes, the use of strong distinct colour areas, and perhaps even the basic earthy, conception of character. Again, much of this is in Trois Contes, and all of it was native to the people and the experience Miss Stein was recording.[16]

These comparisons do not reach to the heart of the matter, however. Stein was to draw the basic tenets of her aesthetic from Cézanne.

Before looking at Cézanne's influence on Three Lives, it is necessary to examine the work of Cézanne, his aims, and the critical opinions of his achievements. Even the untutored eye cannot help noticing several things in Cézanne's work which set him apart from the artists who preceded him. First of all, his technique is noticeably different from that of the past masters in that the brush strokes are obvious; there is no attempt to conceal them. His draftsmanship is clumsy and odd. Accurate drawing according to the laws of perspective had formerly been a goal for painters but in Cézanne's work an apple or a pitcher may be distorted so that it appears to lean towards another object, though somehow not alarmingly. Cézanne's knives should by reason

of his drawing fall off his tables and yet something holds them there and we do not fear their falling.

Cézanne's pictures do not tell stories; they are not anecdotal or illustrative--another departure from the previous art. His intention, that is, is not to give an illustration of country living in France or to depict a story. His planes of colour and geometric patterns force the eye to examine the form of the object. A good example of this is the Portrait of Gustave Geffroy seated at his desk. A flower in a vase on the desk leans along the same line as one arm, while behind him a row of books accents the position of his other arm. These objects accentuate the triangular form of the man. Instead of using pale colours in the background, Cézanne illuminates the background and casts a shadow on the foreground in his landscapes. He does not emphasize a light source; that is, the sunlight does not illuminate his subjects from a particular angle, as in impressionist paintings. And out of all these peculiarities, often giving the pictures the appearance of unfinished preliminary sketches, one somehow gets the impression of solidity and mass in nearly all his paintings and, more importantly, the impression that this artist has an intense feeling for each of his subjects.

We are fortunate to have Cézanne's own remarks on what he was attempting to do, and although art critics are adept at proving where he was unsuccessful in fulfilling his aims, they more often find evidence that he had achieved his goals. In his letters to young painters, Cézanne repreatedly advises them to observe their models with a fresh eye. He urges them to observe both their subject and their "means of expression." He also urges the young painter to "express himself according to his personal temperament" and to forget the way the old masters had reached

their goals and instead to "render the image of what we see." Following are excerpts from those letters:

> The Louvre is a good book to consult but it must only be an intermediary. The real and immense study that must be taken up is the manifold picture of nature (p. 236).[17]
>
> Literature expresses itself by abstraction whereas painting by means of drawing and color, gives concrete shape to sensations and perception. One is neither too scrupulous nor too sincere not too submissive to nature; but one is more or less master of one's model, and above all, of the means of expression. Get to the heart of what is before you and continue to express yourself as logically as possible (p. 237).
>
> To achieve progress nature alone counts and the eye is trained through contact with her (p. 239).
>
> I am able to describe . . . the obstinacy with which I pursue the realization of that part of nature, which, coming into our line of vision, gives the picture. Note the theme to develop is that--whatever our temperament or power in the presence of nature may be we must render the image of what we see, forgetting everything that existed before us (p. 250).
>
> The Louvre is the book in which we learn to read We must not, however, be satisfied with retaining the beautiful formulas of our illustrious predecessors. Let us go forth to study beautiful nature, let us try to free our minds from them, let us strive to express ourselves according to our personal temperaments. Time and reflection, moreover, modify little by little our vision, and at last comprehension comes to us (p. 339).

From this advice it is clear that Cézanne shared with Flaubert a belief that an almost scientific investigation into his subjects was mandatory. The "immense study of nature" or the "getting to the heart of what was before him" was as necessary for him as accurate medical or historical details were necessary for Flaubert. They also shared an insistence on the importance of form and a fastidious attention to the techniques of their respective crafts. And the importance of Cézanne's advice to "express ourselves according to our personal temperaments" to modern art

was monumental. Stein summarizes Cézanne's contribution to art in delineating her own goals. ". . . it was not solely the realism of the characters but the realism of the composition which was the important thing, the realism of the composition of my thoughts" ("TAI," p. 16). In assessing Three Lives we can find evidence that Stein also shared these concerns.

The portraits in Three Lives are evidence that Stein got "to the heart" of her models. She even acknowledges their sources in her two autobiographical books. She had come to know the immigrant servant women in her life in California and Baltimore. (Among the letters written to her is one from Lena Lebender who sent her crocheted slippers with a P.S. "Jack and Rags send love.")[18] Melanctha's prototype she had found in the public wards of the hospital while she was in medical school. Stein's "eye was trained through contact with nature" and as Haftmann says of Cézanne, she "sought out the essential reality behind the casual appearance."[19] The psychological motivations and responses of her characters would not be disputed today. Melanctha for instance has an inability to "remember right," that is, she forgets what she wants to forget. Anna is the original 'martyred mother' sacrificing herself unhappily to serve others until her frustration exhibits itself in her physical symptoms such as headaches and stomach-aches. Lena becomes depressed and withdrawn when she feels that she has been shamed and realizes that she is a chattel.

Stein, too, strove like Cézanne to "express herself according to her personal temperament" so that Leo's criticism of her work, as she phrases it, was "He said it was not it it was I."[20] Already in Three Lives Stein is using the slow pace and the meditative style that will be her signature. For instance she repeats over and over again certain phrases:

"Anna had always a firm old world sense of what was the right way for a girl to do" (TL, p. 24). "No, not one of them had any sense of what was the right way for them to do" (TL, p. 73). "It was all a peaceful life for Lena, almost as peaceful as a pleasant leisure. . . . Yes it was all a peaceful life for Lena" (TL, pp. 240 and 241). And she repeats adjectives as in "the patient Mrs. Drehten." In the midst of a predominance of simple sentences or of simple, run-on sentences, Stein includes an inverted sentence which forces the reader to pause, for example, "Still it was pleasant, all this life for Lena" (TL, p. 240). Though the slow pace and meditative style is appropriate to the characters being described, there is also a suggestion in the slow, repetitive style that Stein is already beginning to insist on "expressing herself according to her personal temperament."

Stein's sentence structure is noticeably simple, almost child-like. Her simple sentences are certainly different from the long, complex sentences of Henry James, for example, and while her style suits the characters she is describing, this approach also reminds us of Cézanne's dictum, "Let us strive to express ourselves according to our personal temperaments." It is this child-like style and/or approach that led Wyndham Lewis to call her a "faux-naif." But Roger Fry explains how the "eye" must be retrained to look at things afresh. He says:

> We were given our eyes to see things, not to look at them. Life takes care that we all learn the lesson thoroughly, so that at a very early age we have acquired a very considerable ignorance of visual appearance. . . . The sense of sight supplies prophetic knowledge of what may affect the inner fortifications, the more intimate sense of taste and touch, where it may already be too late to avert disaster. So we learn to read the prophetic message and for the sake of economy to neglect all else. Children have not learned it fully and so they look at things with some passion.[21]

Perhaps this is why Stein takes this child-like approach in much of her writing.

Stein may have chosen to reveal her ideas in what appears to be a naive or primitive style but her studies are intense and complex. Cézanne said, "I am the primitive of the new way," affirming his clumsiness. Stein and Picasso later use paraphrases of this statement as apologia. Stein writes, ". . . as Pablo once remarked, when you make a thing, it is so complicated making it that it is bound to be ugly, but those that do it after you they don't have to worry about making it and they can make it pretty . . ." (AABT, p. 23). Roger Fry protests against accusations of clumsiness and incapacity made against Cézanne and other post-Impressionists. He writes:

> Such darts, however, fall wide of the mark, since it is not the object of these artists to exhibit their skill or proclaim their knowledge, but only to attempt to express by pictorial and plastic form certain spiritual experiences; and in conveying these, ostentation of skill is likely to be even more fatal than downright incapacity. . . . most of the art here seen is neither naive nor primitive. It is the work of highly civilized and modern men trying to find a pictorial language appropriate to the sensibilities of the modern outlook.[22]

Werner Haftmann says this in another way, "To its biological task of reproducing something visible was added the new spiritual task of making something visible in the first place."[23] And though Stein may see as a child sees, her style is not merely childish. It is searching and contemplative. Just as Cézanne struggled to achieve his 'realizations' as he called them--his pure rendering of the way things appeared to him--Stein struggles to find the right phrase to express her idea. For example, when Rose finds Sam is more and more sympathetic towards Melanctha, Rose gropes through several pages of dialogue to find an excuse to be rid of Melanctha and concludes Melanctha is not "real honest

with it" (TL, p. 228). Similarly the narrator gropes through repeated and altered phrases until she hits on the accurate description.

Just as Cézanne encouraged his disciples to 'learn to read in the Louvre,' Stein claims to have studied narrative writing with some intensity from Chaucer to Henry James. And like Cézanne she was not satisfied to 'retain the beautiful formulas of her illustrious predecessors.' As narrative works, the stories of Three Lives contain few events. They are almost wholly descriptions of characters, and events are used in a flashback technique. Like Homer, who was happy that his audience was familiar with the plot so that he could develop the story along more interesting lines, Stein is not concerned with plot.

Setting, to which pages had been devoted in nineteenth-century writing as in Dickens, Conrad, or even Flaubert, is given in the most economical way possible in Three Lives. When Melanctha and Jeff talk, for instance, they sit by the fire or on the steps or wander together in the "bright fields" and woods. The most detailed description of a place occurs on the first page:

> It was a funny little house, one of a whole row of all the same kind, that made a close pile like a row of dominoes that a child knocks over, for they were built along a street which at this point came down a steep hill. They were funny little houses, two stories high, with red brick fronts and long white steps (TL, p. 11).

Even the physical description of the women is limited to those items that delineate character. We learn little more than that Anna is thin-lipped, Lena has dreamy hazel eyes and pale skin, and Melanctha is yellow-skinned.

Though the stories are tragic Stein does not give them a traditional treatment or make heroines of tragic proportions of the women. Each is a history of a woman's life, each story is concerned with the

woman's "troubles" and each ends with the relief which Stein says the climax of narration affords.[24] None of the stories ends with the uplifting of traditional tragedy. There is no enlightenment for the three women, no recognition, no acceptance. There is none of what Yeats in "Lapis Lazuli" called "gaiety transfiguring all that dread."[25] There is only pathetic endurance and, in death, relief for the women from their troubles.

Stein's three women remind us of Picasso's paintings of his Blue Period (1901-1904). The subjects of Picasso's paintings, as Jaffé notes, "were outcasts of society--blind beggars, itinerant musicians, tramps--those who spend their lives in wretched poverty or humble servitude . . . those on the fringes of society."[26] Certainly in these portraits of oppressed women, for whom opportunities are limited, Stein is not crusading for women's rights. In a letter to a friend, Stein had declared the women's movement was boring. In Three Lives she is merely presenting life as she sees it.

Cézanne's dictum to "treat nature by the cylinder, the sphere, the cone"--to reduce natural forms to geometrics--is the result of his search for the fundamental laws of nature's structures. Just at he reduced nature to these simple forms, Stein defines her characters by the oldest and simplest methods--as types. She uses epithets, references to the bodily humors, the symbolic values of the names of the characters themselves, and even the nationality of her characters to reveal their personalities. And just as Cézanne's reduction to simplicity of form resonates into complexity in response, so does hers. Stein explained her use of types, ". . . the realism of the people who did realism before was a realism of trying to make people real. It was not interested in making

the people real but in the essence or, as a painter would call it, value" ("TAI," p. 16).

The use of epithets ordinarily shows limits of character development as in the old ballads or folk tales, for example, "True Thomas" in "Thomas Rymer," where Thomas is characterized only by his faithfulness or loyalty.[27] Stein, however, uses epithets in a variety of ways. Sometimes she uses them literally, sometimes almost patronizingly as the reader feels the characters' friends might do, and sometimes ironically, as Homer did in his naming of "stalwart Pandarus" who was really a fool. They hint at an irony which is gradually developed. Paradoxically, Anna's "goodness" is not her dominant characteristic. On the first page we are told that she is considered a tyrant by the shopkeepers; we soon learn that she feels herself a martyr because of what she must "put up with"; we learn that she buys her friends by lending them money and providing them with good things to eat, as if by helping them, she could gain a kind of power over them; and it is pointed out that her main satisfaction is power and control over another's life.

Stein's use of the types of personalities as defined by the Renaissance humors in Three Lives also somewhat limits the character development but it is as if Stein wanted to restrict the characters somewhat in order to explore their basic nature or "essence." Melanctha's name reminds us of the melancholy temperament which is gloomy and depressed. Those with a melancholy temperament are sallow in complexion, as is Melanctha. Melanctha is restless and often depressed or "blue" as Stein puts it. Anna has the attributes of the choleric temperament which is irritable and gloomy. The roots of the word choleric comes from the Latin "cholera" meaning jaundiced and the German "cholera" meaning nausea,

and Anna's "skin stained itself pale yellow. . . . She was always tired at her work and her temper grew more difficult and fretful" (TL, p. 31). Anna has the ailments associated with the choleric temperament too. She suffers from headaches, backaches and stomach aches. Lena is described as "brown" which is suggestive of the complexion of the sanguine temperament. She "was a brown and pleasant creature. . . ." Her inner peace showed itself in the "earth made pureness of her brown, flat, soft featured face" (TL, pp. 240 and 241). She had the cheery nature of the sanguine temperament and roused the family she worked for with her singing. Stein's use of the humors, which are generally held to be obsolete physiology, may be curiously like certain twentieth-century developments in psychology. Herbert Read notes:

> Jung still distinguishes four basic types of temperament though by indicating the dynamic direction of these basic types (inward or outward) he elaborates to 8 types. Modern physiologists and psychologists have resumed and at the same time enormously elaborated the study of types, but curiously enough they do not depart essentially from the traditional categories.[28]

Stein's simplification to types has become legitimate in the new science of human nature.

Stein also delineates her characters by their names. Lena is a diminutive of Helen, which means "bright" in Greek and like her Greek ancestor, Helen of Troy, she is responsible for a war in the household of Herman 's (her man) family. Lena also suggests "leaning"; she was very impressionable and tractable. Melanctha suggests the melancholy humor, and it also suggests the pensive Romantic writers and she is certainly a romantic. Melanctha also carries a possible allusion to Philip Melancthon, a German theologican of the Reformation who was the leading representative

of Synergism, which dealt with the nature and status of the fallen man and how he might achieve "grace." Synergists believed in the Pelagian doctrine of free will and denied original sin. We should remember that the subtitle of her story is "Each One as She May." Anna's name means "grace" and she is always trying to do "what was the right way for a girl to do" in order to maintain a state of grace (TL, p. 24).

Other characters are delineated by their names as well, for example, Jem, Melanctha's "gem" of a man and her friend Jane Harden (hard one). Melanctha is carefully contrasted with Rose in the first two pages of her story, suggesting Stendahl's The Rose and the Black where the colours represent two warring factions, the clergy and the state.

Nationality is used to characterize too. Melanctha is mulatto, of two races. Her mother was white, her father black, and she has a mixture of their traits. Both Anna and Lena are 'german,' coming from a culture Stein characterizes as hard-working, clean and strong. Their "germaness" emphasizes their being immigrants in a foreign land.

These simplistic methods to delineate character do not, however, result in flat, stereotyped characters. Speaking of Three Lives and Q.E.D., Stein says she "sought to grasp 'basic natures' and struggled to find a way to externalize in words and with exactitude, all these very internal states" ("TAI," p. 43). But while she simplifies the characters to find their "basic natures" she composes complex portraits of them. Hoffman sums it up rather well. He explains:

> From Cézanne she seems to have learned that the depiction of external reality does not depend on the amount of detail included, but can be accomplished by abstracting from the welter of detail that appear to the senses the repetitive properties that constitute the sina qua non of the external object. For Cézanne this sina qua non consisted of the

> basic geometric pattern underlying each physical object. For Gertrude Stein the configuration is composed of the basic attributes that she feels make up the personality whose portrait she is creating, mainly through the conscious manifestations of personality traits.[29]

Already in Three Lives, Stein is composing portraits of her characters in their 'states of being.'

Roger Fry, speaking about one of Cézanne's portraits of Mme. Cézanne, notes: ". . . Cézanne's tendency to refer all the forms to extremely simple elements and to retain vitality by the minute impalpable play of the surface and by the quality of the contours."[30] Stein's techniques for handling language are part of the revolutionary way in which she handles her medium. In The Autobiography Stein tells us that after reading her manuscript of Three Lives the publisher sent a representative to ask her if she did not know English very well. No doubt the simplicity and the repetition were shocking in the early twentieth century. Stein assures us repeatedly that she intended to use only the simplest vocabulary. But Stein is so deliberate and self-conscious a writer that she invests her simple language with an almost frightening potency. For example, even the use of the simple article "the" in the titles of two of the stories may be taken to indicate an attitude toward the histories of "The Good Anna" and "The Gentle Lena." Stein seems to have had in mind the kind of thing Yvor Winters means when he says, "One may state it as a general law, moral as well as metrical, that an increase in complexity commonly results in a decrease of emphasis. . . ."[31]

Words like "good" and "poor" and "right" resonate with myriad connotations as well as their denotations and force the reader to examine

the judgments, standards and values they usually represent. Anna is "good" in that she does her duty and abides by her own rules of conduct such as how one should dress, but she has little tolerance of those who do not share her standards. Though she leads a "dog's life" herself, she is a cynic, treating people "like dogs." Lena is poor in her friends, in her financial dependency and in the lack of spirit necessary to cope with her trials. But her friends, who call her poor Lena, with pity, cannot understand her unhappiness since she has a good husband, children, and a home. The conversations between Melanctha and Jeff are examples of how complexity results even from the use of the simplest language for Jeff says, "I certainly do wonder Miss Melanctha, if we know at all really what each other means by what we are always saying" (TL, p. 128). The repeated use of the word "certainly" becomes, among other things, a signal of the intensity of Melanctha and Jeff's feelings and contrasts with their continual uncertainty about their relationship.

Stein's use of simple diction and almost contorted syntax seems the result of a clown-like pose. She seems like Picasso's Harlequins in their worlds of illusion. But as with most clowns this simplicity is only an illusion for behind the simplicity is a serious intention. In her child-like clown-like approach she is re-evaluating the language. Dante posed as an innocent to create his heaven and hell. Stein looks at the world with the fresh vision of a child and sets about to "forge the consciousness of her race."[32] Just as Cézanne and Matisse used primary colours and tried to make colour "autonomous," that is, to make colour, as Fry explains, not just an "adjunct to form, as something imposed upon form but as the direct exponent of form," Stein is here beginning a life-long campaign to awaken language.[33] Edith Sitwell describes this for us:

> In the hands of the minor craftsman of the last twenty-five years of the nineteenth century, and the first decade of this, language, as we have seen, had settled down into stagnant rhythmic patterns, and patterns to which our eyes, our minds, were so accustomed that we no longer noticed them; they were unliving and insignificant. Language had become, not so much an abused medium, as a dead and outworn thing, in which there was no living muscular system. Then came the rebirth of the medium, and this was effected, as far as actual vocabularies were concerned, very largely by such prose writers as Mr. James Joyce and Miss Gertrude Stein. . . . the anarchic breaking up and rebuilding of sleepy families of words and phrases, for which Miss Stein is responsible, the creation of a new vocabulary, for which Mr. Joyce is responsible, must, in the future, affect poetry very greatly.[34]

Stein says, "I began to play with language then" ("TAI," p. 17). In playing with language in Three Lives, with grammatical constructions and syntax and rhythm, Stein is attempting to recharge the language. Hoffman lists the various contortions into which she puts language. He notes that she "wrenches words from their ordinary lexical meanings," uses "idiosyncratic punctuation," "drops the capitals on proper nouns," "uses no connectives and reorders sentences."[35] Despite the high praise which has been accorded Three Lives as a book in which character development is accomplished by imitation of the characters' speech and thought processes, this character development is not what we notice at first. It is, rather, the words and the language patterns which obtrude themselves onto our consciousness. Sutherland explains that the two go hand in hand:

> Gertrude Stein in this work [Three Lives] tried to coordinate the composition of the language with the process of consciousness, which, we have seen, was to her a close reflex of the total living personality. If this was to be done at least two serious things had to happen to the language: First the word had to have not its romantic or literary meaning but the immediate meaning it had to the contemporary using it, a literal axiomatic meaning confined to the simple situations

> of the average life. . . . The second necessity was to destroy nineteenth century syntax and word order, which could not follow the movement of a consciousness moving naturally, this movement being, in the early twentieth century, of the utmost importance.[36]

Just as Cézanne had discovered that he could "retain vitality" by the "minute impalpable play of the surface," Stein was discovering that she could retain vitality and create movement by her use of simple language, and by various syntactical devices. Along with these elements, she toyed with the use of repetition to create movement and vitality. She explains her use of "incremental repetition" in "Portraits and Repetition." She says:

> Is there repetition or is there insistence . . . but once started expressing this thing, expressing any thing there can be no repetition because the essence of that expression is insistence, and if you insist you must each time use emphasis and if you use emphasis it is not possible while anybody is alive that they should use exactly the same emphasis.[37]

Stein's use of repetition makes the words reverberate with maximum meaning for with the insistence there is often altered meaning. The repetition of phrases like "good Anna" are intended to force the reader to examine these judgments. This is one of the reasons that Thornton Wilder, one of Stein's supporters, finds in Three Lives "a challenge to a livelier collaboration on the part of the reader."[38] The insistence or repetition forces the reader to be objective. Stein's repeated confidential asides, like those of Homer, keep us at a distance from the action. For example, the repetition of the pointing finger, "Remember Mrs. Lehntmann was the romance in Anna's life." Just as Brecht (as well as modern French movie directors) uses techniques of alienation, such as making the stage effects obvious in productions of plays, Stein, too, is

attempting to keep the reader from becoming sentimentally involved. She is already exploring what will become a permanent part of her aesthetic, that the object should be communicated to the reader but that the reader should be kept aware that this is a work of art and not an imitation of life. This brings us to two more aspects of her technique which need to be mentioned--the use of repetition to create immediacy and the role of the narrator. Together these two techniques led to the creation of an "autonomous" composition.

Stein's repetition and her attempt to write in the present tense were ways of dealing with time and sequence. She says that in Three Lives she got only so far as a "prolonged present" on her way to the "continuous present" she used in The Making of Americans (LAMN, p. 25). Brinnin explains that this is how she created a sense of "immediacy":

> William James had said that the utmost of rationality was the "feeling of the sufficiency of the present moment," and her own experience had confirmed his observation. Immediacy, then, would be the first and final thing to achieve. To experience her meaning one would not depend on following tensions of plot development or absorbing details highlighting aspects of dress, deportment or décor. Meaning would come by participation in the struggle within character that gives character its peculiar force. She would attempt to create a continuous present, demanding from the reader a continual arrest of attention, a prolonged dwelling on ideas that could otherwise be stated in a moment.[39]

And Brinnin finds that Stein succeeds in creating a sense of immediacy. He writes, "Immediacy is one of the results, a continual sense of hearing and overhearing the particular quality of consciousness that belongs to each subject."[40] Stein tells us in The Making of Americans that she discovered her "basic natures" by attending to "the repeating that comes out from them" (MA, p. 191). In a sense she is simply trying to recreate the process by which she learned the "basic nature." To some extent,

Stein is here doing with words what Cézanne did with colour as he tried to render solidity on a flat canvas. He called his new means of creating depth "modulating." He built up layers of colour to structure an object and to create a feeling of "life" inside the object. For instance, he uses brush strokes of overlaid colours to render a round object. Stein is building up layers of "repeated being," trying to create a sense of the present.

Stein's interest in composition, in the architecture of a composition, led her to the other important technique. This was to make the narrator seem a part of the stories. Stein's narrators speak and think in the same speech and thought patterns as her characters. This is very different from Flaubert's omniscient, superior and ironic narrator. Brinnin explains:

> The world Gertrude Stein's characters inhabit is strictly limited to the range of their personalities and their intellectual capacities. It is not extended, as in the case of Flaubert, by the all-seeing eye of the author and thus demands unusually intimate reader-participation.[41]

Brinnin also suggests that in Three Lives "the sense of a narrator is all but effaced," but this is not so.[42] The world Stein's characters inhabit is limited and intensified by the presence of the narrator as a participant in their world. For instance in the same mode of language as the character's speech, the narrator says, "Anna did not approve their slack expensive ways of doing" (TL, p. 72). Or for example, Jeff says, "You can't help it, anybody ever the way they are feeling. It's all right now Melanctha, you believe me, good-night now Melanctha, I got now to leave you, good-by Melanctha, sure don't look so worried to me, Melanctha, I come again soon to see you." The narrator then tells us, "And then

Jeff stumbled down the steps, and he went away fast to leave her" (TL, p. 204). The language would tend to show Stein as a peer of the characters. Flaubert, in his attempts at objectivity, had not been able to eliminate his own voice from the narrative and his ironic and superior tone constantly creeps in. Stein knows that this was difficult to avoid so she just plays the role of a participant in the narrative. Hoffman notes that she "does not care to pretend that no one wrote her books and she assumes different narrative guises in her various words."[43]

This technique of including the narrator in the supporting cast further unifies the work. But having achieved virtual anonymity as the author, she occasionally intrudes as author deliberately into the narrative and shifts out of the role of a friend or acquaintance of her characters. The intrusions are rare but they are frequent enough to remind us again that this is art, not an imitation of nature; these are composed stories, not merely diaries of true stories. Again this is like Cézanne's works in which he had made no attempt to conceal his brush-strokes and had left blank spaces to remind the viewer that his paintings were not an attempt at illusion but were paintings.

This attitude on the part of Cézanne was also responsible for his "distortions" or "deformations" as the art historians call them.[44] Cézanne produced distortion by misshaping objects which he did to point out the tensions between forms. For example, a carafe or pitcher is misshapen, bulging toward another object. This distortion made it clear that this was not an attempt at an imitative realism or reproduction. Brinnin sums up the reasons for similar distortions which he says occur in Stein's work:

> While science had provided the behavioristic conception of character underlying the design of Three Lives, her intentions were now those of an artist for whom the potentiality of the medium suggests the form of expression. In following the example of Cézanne, she was aligning herself in creative endeavors with one of the first of the great modern painters to regard nature as something to reshape, distort, or otherwise arrange according to the dictation of his own feelings.[45]

It is this emphasis on reshaping nature according to their vision which ushers in the modern movement in the twentieth century. As Brinnin notes, in Stein's early works she is torn between a scientific perception and a desire to express "cerebral projections," that is, her own response to the object.[46] However, the beginnings of Stein expressing the "thing as she was seeing it" are present in Three Lives. Brinnin attributes her close examination of her subjects to her scientific training and this is partly so but it is also from Cézanne's example.

For Stein, "expressing a thing as she was seeing it" was to become a major tenet in her aesthetic. She made note that the camera records things as everybody sees them, so that the business of the artist is to portray things as he sees them. The roots of this expression are visible in Cézanne. Ozenfant explains:

> While the Impressionists were translating the sensations that came to them from without, Cézanne was seeing in nature's vocabulary the means of expressing his interior world; something very different. Therefore Cézanne chooses from nature what best expresses Cézanne.[47]

Roger Fry expresses the same thing, "He worked above all, to find expression for the agitation of his inner life, and . . . he sought to express himself as much by the choice and implications of his figures as by the plastic exposition of their forms."[48]

However, Cézanne's aim in composition, as Gerstle Mack puts it,

"was not primarily the representation of nature as it appeared to his eye, but the composition of an aesthetic organism."[49] For Stein, composition meant "assembling a whole thing out of its parts."[50] The composition of a work of art was to be based on the union of technique and subject matter. Composition, as Stein defines it, is "that that makes living a thing they are doing" (LAMN, p. 24). Just as every detail of description had to contribute to the whole for Flaubert and Cézanne, for Stein, at this stage in her writing career, technique and subject must be in perfect harmony. A composition which achieved this completeness as an aesthetic organism and which was self-contained, without reference to anything else, came to be known as an "autonomous work of art."

The "autonomous" picture, says Haftmann, was a result of Cézanne and Seurat's "subjecting the structural elements to an exact analysis" and coming "to conceive of the picture as an organization of rhythmic coloured forms, so preparing the stage on which thing could be transformed into form."[51] Stein has reached into the resources of language and made them autonomous in Three Lives just as Matisse and the Fauvist painters made colour autonomous. She has removed the rules from the technical aspects of writing. Speaking of her later writing in her "emulation of the cubist painters," Hoffman says, "she wanted the painter's freedom to create her own reality, so that her creation would be subject to no conventions other than those she imposed or that it imposed upon itself."[52] This also applies to Three Lives. Kahnweiler, who believed that Stein was a cubist, writes:

> What the Cubists knew, what Gertrude Stein knew was that the work of art is not an imitation of something else but exists by itself, while signifying something else. The work of art to exist, must preserve its unity. It was to this aim that the struggles of the Cubist painters, like those of Gertrude Stein, were directed. She stated it clearly in her lecture "Composition as Explanation." The title by itself is revealing. . . ."[53]

Werner Haftmann explains what he calls Cezanne's "monumental definition," that "Art is a harmony parallel to nature." He says:

> Since art is not 'reproduction' but 'representation,' it follows logically that 'Art is a harmony parallel to nature.' The picture is subject to its own laws. It is realized on the formal plane, which runs parallel to nature. Cézanne repeatedly stressed the formal element: 'A picture should first of all represent nothing but colour. Stories, psychology . . . all that is implicit in the picture.'[54]

Roger Fry seems to have understood this intention. Writing on the post-Impressionists, he explains:

> Now these artists do not seek to give what can, after all, be but a pale reflex of actual appearance, but to arouse the conviction of a new and definite reality. They do not seek to imitate life, but to find an equivalence for life. By that I mean that they wish to make images which by the clearness of their logical structure, and by their closely-knit unity of texture, shall appeal to our disinterested and contemplative imagination with something of the same vividness as the things of actual life appeal to our practical activities. In fact, they aim not at illusion but at reality.[55]

Speaking of Cézanne's "complex and well-poised" constructions he repeats this:

> He it was who first, among moderns at all events, conceived this method of organizing the infinite complexity of appearance by referring it to a geometrical scaffolding. Though it must be always remembered that this is not an a priori scheme imposed upon the appearances, but rather an interpretation gradually distilled from them by prolonged contemplation . . . this was life itself, and no mere imitation.[56]

Haftmann concurs with this idea. He says Cézanne and the post-Impressionists won for later artists the insight that "art is not nature, art is transformation of nature by the formative mind."[57] Stein was attempting a presentation of life and she was attempting this by using all the resources of her language. Leon Katz interprets Stein's evaluation of Cezanne's definition:

> His [Cézanne's] approach focused on the emphasis on colour, simplification of forms, and subordination of illustrative interest to purely compositional qualities.
> For Gertrude, Cézanne's "Portrait of Mme. Cézanne" manifested an altogether revolutionary sense of composition, whose "realism" superceded the reality of the objects represented. As she saw it, Cézanne was treating composition itself as the essential aspect of reality--as the "entity"; and this method of treatment it was incumbent on twentieth-century writers to pursue to its ultimate consequences.[58]

Stein's Three Lives is generally considered her masterpiece. Even Robert McAlmon who wrote bitterly about Stein and her writing said:

> . . . my admiration for "Melanctha" was great. . . . Her "Tender Buttons" I found amusing enough, but by this time she had written only one sound book, and that was Three Lives. The second life was that of Melanctha, a Negress, and her romance with an idealistic, intellectual, and dumb Negro doctor, and I considered it a masterpiece. It reiterated, stammered, but moved with a pure force to the conclusion: Melanctha's annoyance at the lack of sensual understanding in the doctor, and her wanderings, and her end. In this story, all of Gertrude Stein's sluggish, but virile, feeling for life emerges.[59]

In this surging vitality we can see why she likens her work to that of Matisse. Stein wrote to Mabel Weeks about Three Lives, "I think it is a noble combination of Swift and Matisse."[60] Matisse had freed colour and made it autonomous as a means of expression; Stein freed the language in her weaving and juggling of words. Speaking of what she taught 'many young writers,' Stein said that "observation and construction make

imagination" (AABT, p. 76). In Three Lives she makes it clear that she can observe with acuity and she makes it clear that she can compose or construct like an artist.

Brinnin sums it up:

> For Gertrude the painting [Le Bonheur de Vivre] represented a moment of victory in Matisse's continual struggle. She saw in it an example of the creative wrestling in which her most abiding interest was centered. His distorted drawing, for all its violence, was a constant effort in the direction of clarification and simplicity, she felt, and she admired its naked ugliness. Cézanne, she believed, had come to the point of unfinishedness and distortion by an inevitable development of his way of seeing once he had been disabused of the necessity for traditional forms; Matisse had come to the same point by deliberation, by a knowledgeable reapplication of what Cézanne had discovered.
>
> Immersed in the creative experience and meanings of Cézanne and Matisse and, in her own parallel way, involved in the aesthetic revolution they represented, Gertrude was at the point of meeting one of the major influences of her creative life, and, for many years, one of her dearest friends.[61]

Brinnin means, of course, Picasso. And the next section will attempt to deal with the development of Stein's ideas insofar as they compare with Picasso's developments of analytical cubism.

FOOTNOTES

[1]R. B. Haas, "A Transatlantic Interview 1946," Gertrude Stein: A Primer for the Gradual Understanding of Gertrude Stein (Los Angeles: Black Sparrow Press, 1974), pp. 15-16. Hereafter cited in text as "TAI."

[2]Richard Bridgman, Gertrude Stein in Pieces (New York: Oxford University Press, 1970), p. 46.

[3]Janet Hobhouse, Everybody Who Was Anybody: A Biography of Gertrude Stein (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1975), p. 71.

[4]John Malcolm Brinnin, The Third Rose: Gertrude Stein and Her World (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1959), p. 58.

[5]B. L. Reid, Art by Subtraction: A Dissenting Opinion of Gertrude Stein (Norman, Oklahoma: University of Oklahoma Press, 1958), p. 158.

[6]Bridgman, p. 47.

[7]Gertrude Stein, Three Lives (1909; rpt. New York: Random House, 1936), p. 187. Hereafter cited in text as TL.

[8]Michael Hoffman, The Development of Abstractionism in the Writings of Gertrude Stein (Philadelphia: U. of Pennsylvania, 1965), p. 94.

[9]Gertrude Stein, The Making of Americans: Being a History of a Family's Progress (1925; rpt. New York: Something Else Press, Inc., 1972), p. 3. Hereafter cited in text as MA.

[10]Brinnin, p. 58.

[11]Wylie Sypher, Rococo to Cubism in Art and Literature (New York: Random House, 1960), p. 73.

[12]Alan Russell in Introduction of Flaubert's Madame Bovary: A Story of Provincial Life (1862; rpt. Harmondsworth: Penguin Books Ltd., 1965), p. 7.

[13]Meyer Schapiro, Paul Cézanne (2nd ed., 1952). New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 1962), p. 118.

[14]Roger Fry, Cézanne: A Study of His Development (1927; rpt. New York: Noonday Press, 1960), p. 87.

[15]Bridgman, p. 47.

[16]B. L. Reid, p. 162.

[17]Paul Cézanne's Letters. Ed. John Rewald. 3rd ed. 1941. (Oxford: Bruno Cassirer, 1944.)

[18]Donald Gallup, ed., The Flowers of Friendship: Letters Written to Gertrude Stein (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1953), p. 39.

[19]Werner Haftmann, Painting in the Twentieth Century, 2 vols. (1965; rpt. New York: Praeger Pub. Inc., 1972), Vol. II, p. 7.

[20]Gertrude Stein, Everybody's Autobiography (1937; rpt. New York: Random House, 1973), p. 76. Hereafter cited in text as EA.

[21]Roger Fry, "The Artist's Vision," 1919, Vision and Design (1924; rpt. Cambridge, Mass.: Murray Printing Co., 1947), p. 31.

[22]Fry, p. 157.

[23]Haftmann, Vol. I, p. 33.

[24]Gertrude Stein, Narration: Four Lectures in America (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1935), p. 41.

[25]William Butler Yeats, W. B. Yeats Selected Poetry, ed. A. Norman Jeffares (London: MacMillan & Co., Ltd., 1963), p. 181.

[26]Hans Jaffé, Picasso (London: Hamlyn Pub., Group Ltd., 1970), p. 12. Critics attribute Picasso's pictures of clowns and acrobats to his compassion for those on the fringes of society. (They might better be attributed to the fact that Picasso saw himself as an artist as a sort of exalted clown since the pictures are rather autobiographical.) Likewise they have found a compassion in Stein's work for the poor underprivileged women. But Stein says "emotion must be the result not the cause" (AABT, p. 221). That is, sentimentality must not interefere with objective observation. Herbert Read, however, speculates that the geometric art was a result of the artists trying to conceal a sentimentality,

more or less as Worringer saw geometric art as an attempt to find a refuge from the flux in permanent forms. Read, p. 155, and Hulme, p. 86.

[27]William Empson in Seven Types of Ambiguity (p. 20) notes that metaphors are an ambiguous and almost unconscious way of analysis, so it is apt that Stein, who refuses the unconscious mind, chooses to use the direct language of epithets. Empson quotes Herbert Read as saying, 'Words used as epithets are words used to analyse a direct statement,' whereas 'metaphor is the synthesis of several units of observation into one commanding image; it is the expression of a complex idea, not by analysis, nor by direct statement, but by a sudden perception of an objective relation.'

[28]Herbert Read, The Philosophy of Modern Art (London: Faber and Faber Ltd., 1952), p. 83.

[29]Hoffman, p. 63.

[30]Fry, Cézanne, p. 68.

[31]Yvor Winters, In Defense of Reason (Chicago: Swallow Press Inc., 1937), p. 126.

[32]Apologies to James Joyce whose Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man closes with the words "forge the uncreated conscience of his race."

[33]Fry, Cézanne. The use of colour, says Fry, was ". . . one of his greatest contributions to art; namely his conception of colour not as an adjunct to form, as something imposed upon form but as itself the direct exponent of form" (p. 13).

[34]Edith Sitwell, Aspects of Modern Poetry (London: Duckworth, 1934), p. 215.

[35]Hoffman, pp. 29 and 30.

[36]Donald Sutherland, Gertrude Stein: A Biography of Her Work (1951; rpt. Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1971), pp. 40-41.

[37]Gertrude Stein, Look at Me Now and Here I Am: Gertrude Stein: Writings and Lectures. 1909-1945, ed. Patricia Meyerowitz (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books Ltd., 1967), p. 100. Hereafter cited in text as LAMN.

[38]Thornton Wilder in Introduction to Narration: Four Lectures in America (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1935), p. v.

[39]Brinnin, p. 60.

[40]Ibid., p. 59.

[41]Ibid., p. 59.

[42]Ibid., p. 59.

[43]Hoffman, p. 37.

[44]Fry in Cézanne calls them distortions; Haftmann calls them deformations, Vol. I, p. 33.

[45]Brinnin, p. 61.

[46]Ibid., p. 60.

[47]Blanshard, p. 93.

[48]Fry, Cézanne, p. 9.

[49]Gerstle Mack, Paul Cézanne (London: Jonathan Cape Ltd.), p. 310.

[50]Gertrude Stein, How Writing is Written: Vol. II of the Previously Uncollected Writings of Gertrude Stein, ed. Robert B. Haas (Los Angeles: Black Sparrow Press, 1974), p. 152.

[51]Haftmann, Vol. I, p. 34.

[52]Hoffman, p. 102.

[53]Daniel Kahnweiler, Introduction to Painted Lace and Other Pieces (1914-1937), (1955; rpt. Freeport, New York: Books for Libraries Press, 1969), p. xiii.

[54]Haftmann, Vol. I, p. 32.

[55]Fry, Vision and Design, p. 157.

[56]Fry, Cézanne, p. 71.

[57]Haftmann, Vol. I, p. 34.

[58]Leon Katz, "Matisse, Picasso and Gertrude Stein," Four Americans in Paris: The Collections of Gertrude Stein and Her Family (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1970), p. 52.

[59]Robert McAlmon and Kay Boyle, Being Geniuses Together (1934; rpt. Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Co., Inc., 1968), p. 227.

[60]James Mellow, Charmed Circle: Gertrude Stein and Company (New York: Praeger Pubs., 1974), p. 125. Stein may have seen similarities to Swift's work in her stories because, as F. Scott Taylor says, in Three Lives, Stein "strips off the romantic notions of humble servitude and the simple life" (Automatic Stein: The Literature of Dissociation, U. of T., 1976, p. 160). In this respect Stein is dissecting attitudes just as Swift did. She may have aligned her work with Swift's because his prose style is highly praised for being clear and simple, a goal she shared. However, Stein may have found no more of a bond with Swift than his poem "Mary, the Cookmaid's Letter to Dr. Sheridan" which, say the editors of the Norton Anthology, "illustrates Swift's superb ear for the idiom of lower-class speech and his shrewd insight into the characters of his servants" (Norton Anthology of English Literature, Vol. I, p. 1329).

[61]Brinnin, pp. 68-69.

CHAPTER III

STEIN AND PICASSO: JUGGLERS IN CONCERT

". . . a tiny juggler . . .
And when he balanced on a sphere
. . . that music of shapes
Destroyed the music of the mechanical
organ"

In a letter of rejection the editor of the Atlantic Monthly wrote to Gertrude Stein in 1932:

> We live in different worlds. Yours may hold the good, the beautiful, and the true, but if it does their guise is not for us to recognize. Those vedettes who lead the vanguard of pictorial arts are understood, or partly understood, over here by a reasonably compact following, but that following cannot translate their loyalties into a corresponding literature, and it would really be hopeless for us to set up this new standard. I am sorry.[1]

Mr. Sedgwick apparently believed that Stein was doing in literature what the painters were doing. However, other than a few rather ambiguous remarks in The Autobiography, like Picasso's remark that "we invented camouflage" for which Stein does not give the pronoun reference, Stein does not ever really ally herself with any painting style. And it must be remembered that it was not until five years after The Autobiography that she made her claim in Picasso that she was "expressing the same thing in literature" as he was in painting. The transition supplement came out in 1935, two years after The Autobiography; Stein's rebuttals in The Geographical History of America (1936) and in Everybody's Autobiography (1937) preceded Picasso. Stein does compare herself with Picasso in The

Autobiography but only by referring to similarities in Spanish and American vision. In Picasso she expands her claims to genius and makes her statement that "Spain and America were the natural founders of the twentieth century" (P, p. 12). She does not ever call herself a cubist, however, although several critics, such as Sprigge and Kahnweiler, do. Even Leon Katz, who demurs at calling her a cubist though he says she was "a passionately involved partisan in the cubist movement," writes:

> One must be cautious in appraising the relation between the art of Picasso and that of Gertrude Stein. In her understanding, their orientation towards the most significant problems of art was identical; but certainly they shared nothing of manner or métier, and the writer's solutions were not based on any imitation of those of the painter.[2]

Stein herself acknowledges the difficulties in comparing painting and writing in her usual periphrastic manner:

> The literary ideas of a painter are not at all the same ideas as the literary ideas of a writer. The egotism of a painter is entirely a different egotism than the egotism of a writer. The painter does not conceive himself as existing in himself, he conceives himself as a reflection of the objects he has put into his pictures, a writer, a serious writer, conceives himself as existing by and in himself, he does not at all live in the reflection of his books, to write he must first of all exist in himself, but for a painter to be able to paint, the painting must first of all be done (P, p. 4).

This somewhat ambiguous quotation deserves thorough discussion, but it is sufficient for the purposes of this paper to note that Stein was acknowledging a difference between painting and writing, albeit perhaps as a disclaimer--since her Autobiography had called forth such rejection of her by the artists. But Stein's references to "doing the same thing in writing as Picasso" had been predated by her G.M.P. written just after she concluded work on The Making of Americans. In the G.M.P. she had obviously aligned herself with Picasso. Leo Stein certainly agreed that

they were allies, for he thought that Gertrude was producing the "same godalmighty rubbish" as Picasso. Writing to Mabel Dodge of the "disaggregation" of his and Gertrude's relationship, he said, "To this have been added my refusal to accept the latter phases of Picasso with whose tendency Gertrude has so closely allied herself."[3]

However awkward or impossible it is to compare different disciplines there was a new and common set of goals for artists, musicians, and writers involved in the new movements; as Stein noted in Paris France, there was a different spirit in the air in the early twentieth century. Werner Haftmann says, "Cubism corresponds to that new, modern conception of reality which it has been the aim of the whole pictorial effort of the twentieth century to express in visual terms."[4] Wylie Sypher, among others, considers the cubist movement involved two disciplines--art and literature. The French poets, Apollinaire, Max Jacob, and Pierre Reverdy, called themselves cubists. In his Introduction to Contemporary Music, Joseph Machlis notes:

> This emphasis on the structural aspect of art was not limited to music. A similar trend can be observed in painting and sculpture, in the cult of pure form that came to the fore with the constructivists and cubists. . . . Musicians abandoned grandiose themes--the new matter-of-factness demanded more sober subjects and quieter colors--restraint and quietness of gesture in every department of musical expression.[5]

The new art movements, most art critics agree, sprang from the theories of Cézanne and/or Gaughin. Haftmann, speaking of Fauvism and Cubism, says, "The pioneering work had been done in the previous decade. . . . The groundwork of the new style was furnished by the continuing operation of earlier stylistic tendencies."[6] It may be contended that those things which Picasso extracted from Cézanne's work for his purposes

were those that Stein too found served her needs. Before going on to investigate just what those things were it seems necessary first to remember the friendship of Picasso and Stein.

Stein's relationship with Picasso has been studied by her biographers at some length. Speaking of her close association with Picasso and her writings on him, Leon Katz and Edward Burns write:

> She is never unsure of her analysis of Picasso. Her comment on him is based on a certainty that grew out of complete absorption in his problems, both personal and creative and out of a complete identification with his struggles.[7]

Bridgman believes that Stein found Picasso a source of inspiration and he writes:

> Pablo Picasso would furnish Gertrude Stein aesthetic stimulation, although not as a superior or competitor, but as a friend and equal. Through him she could keep in touch with avant-garde activity, without being bludgeoned by his opinions, as she had been by Leo's.[8]

Stein writes about Picasso with love and respect throughout all of her work and despite her egotistical claims to having ushered in the twentieth century and to being a genius, she makes no claim to a part in the origin of cubism herself. In regard to cubism she says only and repeatedly that "Picasso created it" (AABT, p. 90).

In evaluating the relationship of Stein and Picasso as artists, two authorities on Stein indicate that the developments in Stein's work toward abstraction parallel Picasso's. Bridgman writes, ". . . as the pace of innovation quickened in painting, Gertrude Stein's methods of portraiture underwent extreme revision. The examples of Matisse, Picasso, and Braque utterly transformed her writing."[9] Donald Sutherland says that Picasso's painting was "a corroboration not a model" for Stein's

work.[10] Of all the Stein scholars only Scott Taylor seems to have noted that it is possible that Stein influenced Picasso and led the way into cubism. Taylor says, "Although critics are quick to deprecate Stein as having been influenced by cubism, they have never suspected the opposite."[11] Perhaps the greatest indication of the relationship between Stein and Picasso as to leader and follower is that Stein, who usually flaunts her influence over other writers never mentions Picasso in this light. She never claims to have influenced him; she claims only to have been with him and she clearly had respect for his "genius." The closest she comes to taking any credit for influencing Picasso is to say, "Spain discovered America and America Spain" (P, p. 24). And Picasso never bothered to argue with her or to refute any of her claims although he did say in later years, ungratefully and with irony as Janet Hobhouse points out, "Ah those Steins how they did exploit me."[12] After Picasso's grand success he seems to have forgotten his need for the patronage that the Steins gave him. For example, in 1908 Picasso had written to Gertrude, "At the end of the month I shall go to see your brother because I very much need help. Greetings to you both and all my friendship."[13] Even Leo Stein who called him "the Phoenix Picasso, who had no father" agreed with many of the art critics, such as Michael Ayrton, that "Picasso borrowed his working capital."[14] Leo refers to Picasso's borrowing of ideas, not money. So it is possible that some of Picasso's ideas came from Gertrude Stein.[15]

Stein had been sitting for Picasso's portrait of her during the writing of "Melanctha." According to Bridgman's chronology she posed during the last two months of writing Three Lives in 1906 and during the beginning of the final draft of The Making of Americans. It is possible

that, during the conversations these two shared, the major formulations that cubism was to embrace were posited. Since these were ideas developed from Cézanne's work and aesthetic and since Stein had an understanding of Cézanne's work which she demonstrates in Three Lives, it is possible that Stein was doing the leading. Since Stein has muddled her dates, her words must be taken with caution when she says it was in 1907 and 1908 (P, pp. 8 and 12, and AABT, p. 89) while Alice was typewriting The Making of Americans that Picasso painted the first cubist pictures. But most art critics do date cubism from 1907, the date of Picasso's Demoiselles d'Avignon. Since The Making of Americans began as a sort of logical extension of the portraits of Three Lives at this time it is not presuming too much to consider that "their orientation towards the most significant problems of art was identical" (as quoted previously, from Leon Katz).

The two things which Stein's work has in common with cubism are those which she had begun to experiment with in Three Lives. The first of these involves a reappraisal of the relationship of the artist to his subject and involves a search for the essence of an object--the search for the spirit or reality behind the appearance. The second is the reappraisal of both technique and style--form--to create a work which had a life of its own. Consideration of the technical aspects and her belief in the autonomous nature of the technical elements of the artist's medium led Stein to attempt to create works which would also be autonomous--that is, complete as "entities." Flaubert's search for the "juste mot" may have perhaps helped create Stein's awareness of words and the need to recreate and renew them and have led in part to her experiments as to the autonomous value of their sounds. But it was Cézanne's theories--that, by analysis and reduction to the simplest elements, an architecturally

ordered construction might be achieved which would be an "autonomous" entity on its own and from which emotion would result rather than be the cause--that Stein appears to have been attempting to practice. Certainly her definitions of compositions that are timeless and enduring in value, as delineated in her lecture "What are Master-Pieces," thirty years later are based on these tenets.[16] We can see how much use Stein was able to make of these theories by examining the portraits in The Making of Americans.

Flaubert had attempted objectivity, Cézanne had used an almost scientific approach and Stein, whose formal education had been in the sciences, was to extract from their work and from her own experience and the belief that objective observation and research into the object to be presented was a necessity. She also learned from the masters that "one has no identity when one is in the act of doing anything" (LAMN, p. 148). There must be only "entity" involved, says Stein, and no "relation," that is, involvement, on the part of the creator to his subject or to his audience (LAMN, p. 151). Only then could the artist create masterpieces which "exist because they came to be as something that is an end in itself" (LAMN, p. 151). Perhaps since Stein was defining masterpieces after a long career of writing she was including her own work! To make it clear that her relation to her subject was objective, Stein even begins The Making of Americans as a scientific study, a theory duly supported by examples. She makes the hypothesis that there are two kinds of basic human nature and then gives examples to support her theory.

However, the major tenets which Stein took from Cézanne were her beliefs that the fitting subject for a work of art was the essence or "essential reality behind the casual appearance"--she called this essence

"entity"--and that "composition is explanation" in the sense that the "human mind" by architectural structuring or by intellectual method could create a work which becomes an autonomous entity. Before going to examine these concepts at work in The Making of Americans, it seems appropriate here to review just how the aims of cubism have been defined, since cubism seems to be based on these same two concepts.

Peter Selz says that in cubism there "existed no external relations," that is, that these paintings made no attempt at realistic representation or at imitative art and he notes that the stress was on "the fact that this is a painting."[17] E. H. Gombrich agrees and says:

> Cubism, I believe, is the most radical attempt to stamp out ambiguity and to enforce one reading of the picture--that of a man-made construction, a coloured canvas. If illusion is due to the interaction of clues and the absence of contradictory evidence, the only way to fight its transforming influence is to make the clues contradict each other and to prevent a coherent image of reality from destroying the pattern in the plane . . . the painter drives home the message that this is an exercise in painting, not an illusion.[18]

Wylie Sypher also agrees with Selz and Gombrich. He defines cubism as a "quest for style . . . which undertook to represent the object in its total existence."[19] He writes:

> At its extreme purity--in Braque's work--cubism is a study of the very techniques of representation--painting about the methods of painting, a report on the reality of art. With Braque's intelligent and lyrical vision cubism devoted itself to what the French call tableau-tableau--the painter's painting--which investigates both the object and the means of painting the object.[20]

Sypher quotes Ozenfant, "Cubism is painting conceived as related forms which are not determined by any reality external to those related forms."[21] Sypher sees cubism as an attempt to show that "thought enters things," to

show that "life and art coincide . . . at the points we call objects" and he says the cubists "relied on certain technical devices" to demonstrate this.[22]

Even Roger Fry, a contemporary of the new movements, who appears a little mystified as to their purposes, is able to note that these artists aimed "not at illusion but at reality."[23] And he applauded the discipline of the technique for he was happy to see that "Design, rhythm, texture, they were in again as in Flaubert, as in Cézanne."[24] Fry, who took an interest in Stein's work, had looked at the post-Impressionist movement and tried to "read books by the light of it" as Virginia Woolf notes in his biography. She writes:

> He found glaring examples in Shakespeare, in Shelley, of the writer's vice of distorting reality, of importing impure associations, of contaminating the stream with adjectives and metaphors. Literature was suffering from a plethora of old clothes. Cézanne and Picasso had shown the way; writers should fling representation to the winds and follow suit.[25]

Haftmann too finds cubism requires discipline.[26] He notes that in the post-Impressionist movements space, light and atmosphere had "to be divested of their illusionistic character" and "had to be given representational autonomy."[27] He says, "While the principle concern of the Fauves was the analytical investigation of the autonomous potentialities of colour, the main preoccupation of the Cubists was the analysis of form."[28] Haftmann's explanation of the aims of the new movements agrees with that of the other art historians:

> The desire for a new style sprang from dissatisfaction with the reproductive picture . . . . It was a question of eliminating the imitative, illustrative character of painting and of replacing the reproductive by the evocative function. This at once involves a new conception of the whole picture. It had to cease to represent a fragment of

> reality, had to be complete within its own limits as a self-sufficient organism reproducing nothing but representing an image evoked by the arrangement of pictorial means.[29]

Just as Stein recalled the tremendous effort required to write her Tender Buttons, Haftmann notes:

> Modern painting is "studio painting" through and through. It does not come into being in the presence of nature and the subject but in the studio, in the cell, the product of meditation and recollection and laborious manipulation of artistic media.[30]

In summary then, the art critics and historians seem to be in agreement that cubism was an attempt to discover the essence of the object and an experiment with the means of painting the object. Given these definitions of cubism's aims and Stein's own explanations of her aesthetic we can now examine The Making of Americans to see if it is possible to call it a cubist work.

Some scholars such as Wendy Steiner have grouped The Making of Americans with Three Lives and Q.E.D. as all of a piece. This grouping of all these works into one "early" period may serve a useful purpose but, just as her biographers have pointed out the very different conditions of Stein's personal life during these ten years, the contents and the techniques used in these three works differ markedly and significantly. Though Q.E.D. was perhaps Stein's first major effort at writing, she wrote it before she had become acquainted with Cézanne and the modern artists so that there seems no need to discuss Q.E.D. in this study. The stories of Three Lives which were discussed in the previous chapter might however, be discussed individually if one is trying to classify or group Stein's works because "Melanctha" for instance is an attempt to do something quite different from "The Good Anna." It is in "Melanctha"

that Stein begins, with a vengeance, to examine the polarity of relationships and to explore the technical aspects of literature--repetition, rhythm, and an attempt to renew and recreate everyday words. The Making of Americans as it begins is an extension of these things. But it too develops and changes into something more than she perhaps originally set out to produce.

"If The Making of Americans can make any claim to being a monument in the history of modern literature, it is as an architectural folly," says Mellow, giving credit at least to its displaying "architecture."[31] If the formal structure of a work of art was a worthy consideration to Stein, as it was to the cubists, The Making of Americans, because of its bulk, seems to belie this concern. It appears to have little or no overall formal structure. Bridgman calls it an "improvised work"[32] and so it seems on first reading. For instance, rambling digressions interrupt the history of a family's progress, and passages of inordinate length about seemingly unimportant or irrelevant servants or governesses are interspersed in the midst of descriptions of a major character. The subject matter of the book, other than the triptych of portraits, appears to simply include whatever was of concern to Stein in her meditations at the time of writing. But these chunks of writing immediately bring to mind the geometrical chunks or planes of the cubist pictures, where it is almost impossible to get a feeling of continuity unless one absorbs the picture as a whole. The Making of Americans is an improvised work perhaps in that the methods change and the ideas grow and develop, but the structure is clear as the history of a family's progress.[33]

That she began the book with one purpose in mind--to tell the "history of a family's progress"--an allusion perhaps to Pilgrim's Progress,

is evident in her title and subtitle and in her third and fourth paragraphs. "The old people in a new world, the new people made out of the old, that is the story that I mean to tell, for that is what really is and what I really know" (MA, p. 3). There is no progress of course, just a progression. Progress is no longer interesting, says Stein. There is just a passage from beginning through middle to ending living, with moral and spiritual deterioration if anything, rather than progress. The generations almost show progressive degeneration. Though Stein calls it a history, there are almost no events. There is so little action that she must remind us periodically of the story line. The history is an internal history; character is the preoccupation. Brinnin writes:

> She made a composition, "covering" time as if it were a flat surface upon which she was free to work. In the tail-swallowing movements of her sentences and paragraphs and chapters, she retained just enough propositional content to remind her reader that she was telling a history, "The History of a Family's Progress," in which actual events actually occur. These events, like the fragmented features of portraits or landscapes in early cubist paintings, served as links between her individual view and the common view. Like the cubist paintings, her composition demanded continuous activity upon the part of the observer. Points of rest--points of information, dramatic turns of circumstances, passages of description--are few and far between as hours of abstraction overwhelm moments of representation.[34]

The "propositional content" sometimes appears to be included just as touchstones, just as the cubists include some recognizable features in their portraits like a hand or a nose or the scroll of a violin.

Stein begins the book with her version of an old legend of a son dragging his father--she uses it almost as an epigram. (Bridgman points out that it came from Aristotle.) Scholars have debated the meaning of the old legend. Bridgman sees in her use of this story and the line "our own sins writ large" an indication that Stein intended the

novel to concern itself with showing "that it was difficult to overcome inherited character."[35] In Stein's usage, "sins" does seem to mean flaws in temperament. As in Three Lives, Stein is dealing with determinism here, too. Heredity plus environment makes the character which cannot be escaped, altered or repudiated. It is a novel of the history of the progression of the people of a new world but they are "new people made out of the old."

Stein used composite models for her characters, as has been shown by the research of Katz and Bridgman.[36] For example, Alfred is partly Michael Stein and partly Bird Stein's first husband. They are old people (romantics) in a new world and they are new people (her own creations) made out of old. Bridgman sees it as a "psychologically liberating work" for Stein.[37] And perhaps it was undertaken as a deliberate exercise, like O'Neill's Long Day's Journey into Night, to exorcise the personal demons of her family as Q.E.D. had been a coming to grips with her romantic affairs. But it is more likely that in its inception it was to be an attempt to banish her memories or to batten down her "identity" so that she might get on with herself as "entity."

The book's first two paragraphs puzzle readers because the epigrammatic story seems to be forgotten as Stein goes on. However, it must be noted that she does base all the portraits of the book on the "tempers we are born with." The major portraits of Martha and Alfred, like those in Three Lives, show the "temper" in interaction--and analyze complex relationships, while the final portrait of David is just a portrait of "being." The digressions serve, as Gombrich notes, the "tricks" of the cubist portraits serve, to remind the reader that these are "an exercise in painting not an illusion."[38] Like the painter who

attempts "to do away with peep show convention" Stein is constantly telling the reader that this is no "slice of life" novel.[39]

First Stein introduces the grandparents. With the introduction of the first David Hersland she tears into the matter of "individual feeling" (MA, p. 115). Today we might call this "identity," as the psychologists of the sixties and seventies have defined it, but Stein dismisses identity as essentially unimportant. Hersland is "as big as all the world in his feeling" (MA, p. 119). The name David means beloved and there is a sense in which this David thinks of himself as 'the beloved of the country.' He becomes distracted when he is dispossessed of his position and his sense of himself "in relation" to others by making the move to America. He loses control as head of the family in America and Stein goes on to his son, the second David Hersland. Like his father, this David also has a strong egotistical sense of himself, but his sense of identity is occasionally shaken, however, and then he must "begin again" in order to get back his "big as all the world" feeling. His wife, Fanny Hissen (his 'en), is content with her position in Gossols because she feels the "important feeling" in her position which the Shillings (shills perhaps or Shelling, the philosopher who had inspired Bergson and who stressed the importance of intuition) had first stirred in her. Stein says, "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" (MA, p. 139). She is examining the bottom nature and has been differentiating between kinds of bottom natures with all the infinite variations.

The whole first section is devoted to the grandparents and the

parents and the "repeating of being," that is, the basic nature, both within and without. The second section or division begins on page one hundred and fifty and on page one hundred sixty-five Stein makes her "dependent-independent" and "independent-dependent" classifications. She leads into this distinction by describing "how some men have loving as attacking in them." To explain her classifications Stein uses the governesses and servants of the Hersland family as examples. Stein explains the roots of these distinctions in her Autobiography as she explains her loss of interest in Matisse:

> Matisse intimated that Gertrude Stein had lost interest in his work. She answered him, there is nothing within you that fights itself and hitherto you have had the instinct to produce antagonism in others which stimulated you to attack. But now they follow.
>
> That was the end of the conversation but a beginning of an important part of The Making of Americans (AABT, p. 65).

This section of The Making of Americans closes with discussions and examples of people with "negative egotism"--that is, not enough egotism to be really resisting because they have "lazy, vague bottoms in them"--and with "instrument being"--that is, living through someone else (MA, pp. 231 and 250). These are two of the more significant variations on the dependent-independent categories.

Stein had discovered in her personal relationships that in a dialogue between two people or two groups of people one always assumes a role of leader and the other that of follower--the positions of dominance and submission as in teacher/student, master/servant, aggressor/victim relationships. And she saw that these positions may change frequently during the course of a lifetime or of a conversation. In Three Lives she investigated these relationships. The Making of Americans begins with

her investigation of her theory that people are of two kinds, with infinite variations on those two kinds, in their essence or basic nature. There are those who act and those who are acted upon, doers and thinkers, aggressors and victims, and she makes it clear that those who seem to take the passive role and seem to resist may be like Melville's Bartleby simply using "passive aggression" or "passive resistance" as the pacifists came to call it. She says:

> There are then two kinds of women, those who have dependent-independence in them, those who have independent-dependence inside them; the ones of the first of them always somehow own the ones they need to love them, the second kind of them have it in them to love only those who need them . . . (MA, p. 165).

The seemingly simplistic classifications which Stein used to categorize her characters had a logical development. Her categories of independent and dependent personalities had their beginnings in the relationship of Anna to her friends and to her employers and in Melanctha's relationship to Jeff. Bridgman explains that the roots of these categories went back to Stein's university days:

> Ideas that she first conceived in the Psychology Laboratory about the essential nature of human beings, were fusing, deep in her consciousness. In "Cultivated Motor Automatism," Gertrude Stein had divided her subjects into two types, the first nervous and easily aroused, the second anemic and phlegmatic. She held persistently to this basic duality throughout her early career as she moved towards an ambitious study of men and women. At the same time she was fashioning a style capable of embodying her understanding of how people presented themselves to her consciousness. The one problem was inseparable from the other.[40]

By attending to "the repeating that comes out from them . . . that makes a history of each one always coming out of them," Stein attempts to penetrate to the essence of her characters with this "geometry" of

personalities (MA, p. 191). Her theory of a "bottom nature" is explained by Hoffman who says, "Each character at all times keeps certain characteristics permanent and unchanging. Within this permanence of quality, there are possibilities for a variety of actions and responses consistent with the permanent qualities."[41] These are the natural laws Stein sets out to uncover.

Stein's belief in bottom nature has curiously been revivified in very recent years by psychologists and anthropologists alike. For instance, Levi-Strauss "believes at the deepest level there is an implacable pattern ingrained in the human intellect, unchanged since primitive times, and it is not perfectable as the humanists believed."[42] Lionel Tiger and Robin Fox in The Imperial Animal explain their belief in implacable, ingrained patterns of behavior that they call "biogrammar."[43] B. P. Nichol explains that "Stein is talking about emotions about emotional forces as if they were solids as if they were observable phenomena in the real world this would have seem far-fetched in 1908" but he says of Stein's "descriptions of emotional substances in people" that "contemporary scientific research bears out what stein is saying, i.e., emotional forces create visible measurable effects with many of the qualities stein mentions." He goes on to illustrate this with examples of the current research on thermography and on auras and on bio-energetics.[44]

These categories in The Making of Americans imply a different type of determinism from that of Three Lives. Michael Hoffman explains:

> The emphasis on personality, class and racial types, a concern important to The Making of Americans begins in Three Lives. . . . There are types of behavior indigenous to each nationality. . . . Finally, there are types of personality that simply exist with no necessary psychologically determined patterns of behavior. . . . These personality types are to take over in

> The Making of Americans, as "attacking" and "resisting" and "yielding" types work their wills on one another. This type is more real in many instances to Gertrude Stein than the individual, because the nature of the individual's behavior, thought, and emotions is always determined by the class of personality, national, or social types to which he belongs. Gertrude Stein's psychological determinism goes first from the class to the individual, rather than the other way.[45]

Since Stein's characters are second generation middle-class Americans, race and social class are not of much consequence. They are "ordinary" people, she says. But the determinism that affected a character's responses to situations is now a pure basic nature that is given and is fixed or unalterable.

Since the book purports to be about "living down the tempers we are born with" and about the new people made out of old, it begins with a description of the grandparents and parents. They are given one hundred fifty pages dealing with the "important feeling of themselves to themselves inside them." The second section as has been noted deals with a character's essence or "bottom nature" and explains the theory of attacking and resisting kinds of people and all the permutations and combinations. She writes:

> There are many kinds of men and there are many kinds of women and some of the millions of each kind of them have it to be made only of the bottom nature of their kind of them, some have it in them to be made of more or less mixing inside them of another nature of them, some of them have it in them to have the loving feeling in them with their ways of thinking coming from the other kind of nature or other kinds of natures in them not from the bottom nature in them (MA, p. 154).

Bridgman notes that the language Stein chooses helps her to incorporate the exceptions to her theory into the book. He writes:

> Throughout the book tension is felt between those words that convey wholeness and assurance and those that express tentativeness. "Completely" and "certainly" must fight off the threatened encroachments of "almost" and "in a way." Gertrude Stein's quest for demonstrable and final truth was perpetually undermined by her awareness of exceptions until she found a way to incorporate them into her writing.[46]

The bulk of the book consists of the portraits of the three Hersland children. Martha Hersland gets two hundred pages, Alfred and his wife, Julia, get three hundred fifty-two pages, and the last two hundred belong to David. The sections on Martha and Alfred, like the preceding section, are concerned with relationships, with the bottom nature in relation to the rest of the world. They are about how attacking kinds "relate" to resisting kinds, and so on:

> more and more . . . everyone will understand it how everyone is connected with everyone in the kind of being they have in them which makes of each one one of their kind of them. More and more then this will be a history of every kind and the way one kind is connected with the other kind of them . . . (MA, p. 180).

These two sections are also still about the relationships of family relations, just as we say little George has Uncle Julius' stubborn nature or little Debbie has her mother's bad temper. Mr. Hersland found ". . . Martha was annoying to him being as she was of the same kind of being as the being that was in him" (MA, p. 410).

The penultimate section of The Making of Americans on David Hersland shifts to a new focus. It is here that Stein makes her most radical changes from her earlier works both in content and form. And it is here that she most appears to put into action the aesthetic that she shares with cubism. In this section there is a noticeable change of style. There are no names other than David's, there are no events, there

is no action, and there is an increase in the use of both participles and indefinite pronouns.

Stein opens the section with a puzzle which suggests that David Hersland is a bastard--the closest she ever comes to judging her characters. This might be interpreted as an attempt to remove from consideration any psychological determinism which she has previously always included. Speaking of Afred she had said, "He was the eldest son but not the eldest child as I was saying, and that had some effect on him as I was saying" (MA, p. 540). But now Stein is dealing with entity alone--with the character without relations, in both senses of the word. The second paragraph contains a statement about certainty--and self-deception, "I am believing that I am not certain when I am saying something from being one being then being loving that I am meaning anything by what I am then saying, I am not certain that I am not then having being in being one being loving that is being that is having the meaning of being of what I am then saying" (MA; p. 524). Stein questions herself much as a depressed person asks himself whether reality is the way he sees the world from his depression or the way he sees the world when he is happy. After the puzzle Stein goes back to discuss again what she discussed in the opening pages, that no one is to himself a young one or an old one but each is the same to himself through all his life. Then she begins in earnest. "This is then to be a description of David Hersland of being and listening and talking and being liked and disliked and remembered and forgotten and going on being living and dying and being a dead one" (MA, p. 727).

The characters in the first sections of The Making of Americans take their identities partly from their positions in their families.

Martha has a role as a wife and as a daughter; Julia is seen in relation to her mother, her father, and her husband. But gradually Stein lets go of the particular relationships between people. She attempts here to search out pure entity--as she explains herself, "an entity is a thing not in relation" (LAMN, p. 151). As Brinnin notes:

> As a scientific demonstration of Gertrude Stein's belief in the final absolutism of human character, The Making of Americans carries the weight of its conviction, and the conviction of its enormous weight. As a work of literature, it is all but swept bare of the felicities of detail, colour, and anecdote that beguile the attention in great books as well as minor ones. But Gertrude Stein had had enough of the picaresque trappings and sentimental diffusions that recommend novels to the insatiable reader. She wanted to come to essentials--to ideas in action rather than ideas comfortably couched in formulation, and to character as an entity alive rather than character as an identity pinned to the wall like a butterfly.[47]

David then no longer has the context of a family as relations in this portrait of him but he apparently is self-sufficient. David is always thinking and feeling and thinking about his feeling and he seems to be one who lives completely within himself. But while David is described not in relation or contrast to another specific character, he is described by contrast or comparison to all other people. Stein discusses David's every possible quality, trait, preference or activity in relation to every one else's. She does not describe every different way of thinking or feeling or acting or eating or teaching or learning, et cetera, but she lists them, all of them. It is a book of "nice distinctions."

David's problem seems to be that he "was one wanting to be knowing that thing, that he was one" (MA, p. 868). Stein tells us that he "was never certain that he was one of them" in the beginning of his

middle living (MA, p. 876). Stein let him die because he was disillusioned. "Disillusionment in living is finding that no one can really ever be agreeing with you completely in anything" (MA, p. 483). She has prepared us for his dying four hundred pages earlier. ". . . there will be completely a history of the disillusionment of such a realizing and the dying then of that one, of young David Hersland then" (MA, p. 484).

Stein's subject matter is "American Gothic"--the more or less ordinary American middle-class descendants of German forefathers. Her three portraits present us with the all-American girl who has the freedom of an education but an old world morality that inhibits her choices, the aggressive unethical business man in a land of opportunity, and the sensitive thinker who becomes "dead" because he finds no star to hitch himself onto with any certainty. They are portraits constructed with no reference to any myth. Stripped of any real roots or of a sense of position, neither country nor city dwellers, these simple middle-class people find America a place not of freedom but of conformity (just as Stein had found it in her personal life). Stein treats America as a blank canvas--just as the cubists were exploring space on their canvases, Stein thought of herself as exploring the large, flat land of America whose people, like their literature, had no real tradition.

In Picasso, Stein says she and he saw the twentieth century as theirs because art in the twentieth would be interested only in conceptions not in emotions. This is rather like an extension of Cézanne's dictum that emotion should be the result not the cause of a work of art. Stein also saw America as a flat place--a blank canvas--since there was no literary tradition that was particular to America. There was no place for literary allusion. Since it was a large young country of new people

she could brood on America and its people to her heart's content--with no necessity for a narrative line. (Of course, illustrative art, anecdote and story-telling, had been abolished by Cézanne for painting and so were no longer criteria for literature either.) Identity was not significant in a country where the people were predominantly middle class and entity was all that it was necessary to explore. Sutherland says, "She was determined to express the essential being, the final mode of existence in people, as a thing in itself and sufficient in itself, independent of their historical and social conditions."[48]

Since it is the middle class Stein says she aspires to describe --the ordinary, common lives--she uses no unusual or dramatic events but only the "daily living" of her characters, a similarity to the cubists' use of mundane everyday objects in their still life pictures. Since she is not dealing with heroics here she uses the simple words of everyday speech which is also similar to the restrained hues and quiet colors used by the cubists.

Stein had written Three Lives as an objective narrator with a persona of a character from the same social class. She employed the same kind of speech as her uneducated or inarticulate characters, as if the narrator had been one of their friends, which gives tremendous sympathy to the characters. In The Making of Americans, although she employs the simple everyday vocabulary as her middle class characters, she takes a different approach as narrator. True to Flaubert's idea of an objective narrator, she does not judge her characters, and her own personality is not discernible. The narrator is a presence here but an anonymous presence. She is doing what, for a time, Picasso and Braque tried to do --they had a formal schema, an architectural form, and they attempted to

paint anonymous pictures using this formal schema, from which the identity of the painter would not be discernible. Stein writes as a scientist. Hoffman quoting Haines writes:

> "Even in The Making of Americans, however, Miss Stein, like a scientist, let the reader understand what it was she was doing. A scientist doesn't merely report the conclusions he has reached; he tells also how he reached them. The scientist is at all times a part of the picture. And the novelist, Miss Stein, was a part of the picture of her book all the time."
>
> It will be valuable to keep this astute observation in mind. It is not only Gertrude Stein's constant explanation of her methods that relates her technique to the scientific, but other things such as her use of definition, hypothesis, and demonstration. . . . Gertrude Stein's function as a narrator constantly has her telling us what she is doing. . . . She tells us her definition of history . . . tells us her method of characterization.[49]

Though she does not judge her characters she does intrude into the narrative. The intrusions which had begun in Three Lives, for example, "Remember Mrs. Lehntman was the romance in Anna's life," are extended in The Making of Americans. Her intrusions or digressions tell us only that the writer is dedicated to ascertaining some kind of truth --a truth which will be "felt" when it is accurate, like finally "hitting the nail on the head" after groping around. She says, "When I have not been right there must be something wrong" (MA, p. 573). She sits contemplating her subjects like a Buddha and her "I" is an anonymous "I" --simply the "eye." As narrator she often laughs or weeps and speaks of herself as a wise observer. For example, "So then any one can know that being one loving hearing seeing feeling repeating has made of me a very wise one" (MA, p. 710). But she speaks from a role, like the mask of a clown, which keeps her separate and apart. Picasso's use of a mask in his portrait of her is appropriate since she was to do much of her writing

from behind a mask.

As narrator in The Making of Americans, Stein insists upon her presence even more forcefully than in Three Lives. Her presence is an attempt to keep the reader from achieving empathy with the characters. Brecht called this technique "alienation" and it is a way of keeping the reader aware that this is art and not life. The painters, from Cézanne on, had also striven to keep viewers aware that it was a painting they were viewing and not a slice of life. Stein saw that in Flaubert and in Henry James, for instance, no matter how much these writers had tried to keep the narrator's voice from intruding, the reader was always aware of his presence, by his tone if nothing else, or by his perspective which if omniscient, makes the reader interrupt his reading to ask, "How does he know this is what his character is thinking?" or "Where is he that he sees all this but is not involved in the action?" There could be no more posturing or pretense if a narrator's position were known and he was clearly visible--he could not play at being God or pretend to be non-existent. The narrator need not be a part of the action, like Richardson's Pamela either. He might simply make felt his presence as a story-teller.

This distancing, resulting from a desire to present what is real combined with a desire to keep the reader aware of the work as literature, produces a tension. The subjective method applied to the objective propositions almost keeps the reader from believing that these are objective propositions. This tension operates between the factual and bleak content and the detached, ironic, humorous, explanatory tone.

Stein's interjected comments remind us of the conversation of a medium in a trance waiting patiently for the object to become clear to

her. The following are examples of her intrusions:

> . . . now I am waiting a little for an inspiration about this thing to explain completely my feeling (MA, p. 530).

> Now I will begin with the being in Alfred Hersland. I am not yet quite full up with the being in him. Again I am beginning waiting. Again I am beginning a little to feel him. I am still hoping to be more certain in my feeling. I am waiting and waiting, I have not in me now any impatient feeling. Pieces having existence in being, whole ones in being, words saying what I am wanting, words having existence in them to my feeling, Alfred Hersland and the being in him and the kind he was of men and women all these things will come soon to be more completely in me, that is certain (MA, p. 541).

Hoffman says no distinction is necessary between the narrator and Stein:

> The narrative method of The Making of Americans proceeds directly from the nature of the narrator. In the previous two books, we differentiated between the narrator and Gertrude Stein herself. In each of the books it seems that Miss Stein was accepting the conventionalized notion that an author keep at least some distance from her book. As a result, in each book she adopted the tone that would seem appropriate to the particular social world she was describing, and she emerged from this tone only occasionally. In this book, too, she adopts a particular stylized form of speaking which she maintains with even more consistency than she did previously. However she makes no attempt whatever to remain on the sidelines of her book. She takes part in every bit of the telling from the very first pages. In discussing The Making of Americans, then, we shall make no distinction between the narrator and Miss Stein. In fact, the most fruitful way of discussing the narrator's technique is to view it as Gertrude Stein's taking us for a tour through her own creative processes.[50]

But although Stein says in "What are Master-pieces" that perhaps all masterpieces are autobiography she is not referring to the personality of the artist but to his development. It would be impossible, even ridiculous, to try to understand Stein's own character from what we learn of the narrator. Stein achieves sympathy for the narrator as a story-teller who laughs, cries, thinks, struggles and has "being" but she does

not simply lay out her private self for inspection. Hoffman is quite right when he says that "the most fruitful way of discussing the narrator's technique is to view it as Gertrude Stein's taking us for a tour through her own creative processes." (See above.) This is precisely what she is doing. The name of the book, The Making of Americans, is indicative of this business of creating, as well as indicative of the recording of the history of new people made out of old. It is the artist and the process of creation which she wants the reader to be aware of:

> I have been seeing some, I have been knowing some, I have been hearing about some having attacking being in them and I am not realizing of them the way sensitiveness is in them. I have not been loving any of this kind in men and women, I would like to be loving some one some, of this kind in men and women. . . . I will not now be telling my troubles to everyone. It is enough that I have been saying that I am not understanding all the ways sensitiveness is in the attacking kind in men and women (MA, p. 634).

Only Stein's "entity" is discernible--not her "identity," which is being forged.

More important in The Making of Americans than the subject matter or the position of the narrator is Stein's unusual syntax and repetition. One need only read passages at random to get an idea of the soporific if not hypnotic effect. Leon Katz notes that the means becomes more important to Stein than the matter:

> Without knowing it, in the years before 1908, Stein's work was moving precisely in the direction of Picasso's painting. This movement was toward describing reality in terms of an iconography of such pervasive force that it commands aesthetically a position in the composition equal to the objects it describes. Gradually, the iconography becomes not the element that subsumes the composition, but itself the primary element out of which the composition is made.[51]

I may not understand Katz' use of the term iconography, if he means a conventional sort of symbolic representation. On the other hand, Katz may be useful to this study of Stein and Picasso if his remark may be taken to mean simply that for both Stein and Picasso the methods become of more significance than the subject of their portraits. Stein says: "Take Sherwood Anderson, Hemingway, Fitzgerald, in all these it is the title and form of the book that you remember rather than the characters in the book" ("TAI," p. 21). Among the techniques Stein uses in The Making of Americans are those it shares with Three Lives: the renewing of the word, word games, repetition, and rhythm. Those techniques which she investigates here for the first time are those pertaining to space and movement; she called it "the continuous present" as opposed to the "prolonged present" of Three Lives. What follows is an examination of some of these techniques and some postulations in regard to similarities to the techniques of cubism.

Stein's efforts at "awakening the somnambulistic sensorium," as Taylor puts it, are put to task with a vengeance in The Making of Americans.[52] She is renewing the word as Mabel Dodge said by using "primary colours in word painting."[53] Stein said, "Every word I am ever using in writing has for me very existing being . . ." (MA, p. 539). Sprigge says Stein's goal was "to reassess primary factors" and Sprigge writes:

> There then she sat making her enormous sentences; a democrat of language, using simple everyday words with a reformer's urge to emancipate them from the fetters of tradition, association, rhetoric, grammar, and syntax. She knew them intimately, carried them about with her to caress and meditate upon, 'every word I am ever using in writing has for me a very existing being,' and each time she found herself using a new one she was disturbed, as when a stranger

> joins a circle of old friends. This passion for words was balanced now by her interest in human character, but it could transcend everything.[54]

Victor Shklovsky discusses the idea of defamiliarization or the "renewal of perception." He explains that "perceptions are normally automatic, minimal; we learn to ignore--in ordinary prose we feel something is wrong if we notice particular words." He says, "This purpose of art is to force us to notice; art develops techniques to impede perception or to call attention to themselves."[55] Shklovsky's definition of art has a remarkable correspondence to the cubist aims:

> Art forces awareness--it attracts and holds our attention so that it bears then more than just meaning. Perception is an end in itself. The good life is the life of the man fully aware of the world. Art is the record of the occasion for that awareness.[56]

He goes on to discuss how writers can make the familiar strange by word play or by varying the usual rhythms. His article could have been about Stein's work. He explains that an artist's images are not intended "to express a meaning of the object" or to make us perceive a meaning, but are intended to create a special perception of the object. They "create a vision of the object instead of serving as the means for knowing it. They are not just presenting the unknown in terms of the known."[57] Shklovsky's comments are not referring of course to only the art of this century and Stein was not the first writer to discover that the word in common usage might be exploded to resonate afresh in the reader's ear. Stein is not only using a palate of primary colours, like Matisse and the Fauves, she is also attempting to make the word have an autonomous quality as first Cézanne and then the Fauves did with colour before her.

Stein uses the words with only rare allusions, just as the

painters were attempting to free colour from just being a tool for illustrating light or atmospheric effects and to give it its own due. Hence Matisse could paint a nose green, and Stein could play with words like "every one" and "dead" until the reader was forced to examine the denotation of the word and its connotations.

The words "description," "repeating," "history" all take on a fresh meaning in The Making of Americans--by dint of their repetition perhaps more than by any other technique. Stein's use of the simplest words repeated over and over again force us to consider all their meanings. David, for instance, does not "die"; rather he "becomes a dead one" so that we meditate on the alternative meanings of dead--the physically lifeless body, or the dull, lifeless person who is said to be "dead," or as a party is called "dead" colloquially or like the expression "dead certain." Like Brinnin, who sees Stein as inspired by cubism in regard to technique and her efforts at exploring language, Sprigge writes:

> . . . Gertrude Stein identified herself with the painters' 'struggle to express in a picture the things seen without association but simply as things seen,' for this was how she was endeavoring to use words. To free them from the tyranny of all associations of memory and emotion and from the tyranny of time, thus allowing them pure and immediate meaning. . . . She and Apollinaire were both aspiring to 'mots en Liberte,' both discarding punctuation as a crutch that weakened understanding, both enjoying puns and onomatopoeia. And the whole group of writers, in common with Gertrude Stein, was influenced by the determination of the artists to achieve 'la peinture pure.'[58]

In her efforts to free the word, Stein uses a variety of word games. Much of the book reads like a multiple choice examination: All of these, Some of these, None of these . . . . For example, she writes, "Every one mostly . . . . Some have it to love every one. Some have it to love many men and many women or many men or many women . . . . Some

have it to love some . . ." (MA, p. 307), or "Each one being living is beginning being living and some are then knowing this thing . . . . Some who are beginning being living are then knowing that thing. Some . . . are almost then knowing that thing . . . some being living are quite certainly not knowing anything at all of this thing" (MA, p. 806). As well as showing all facets of the characteristic under consideration this use of pronouns forces us to notice pronouns "in a new light." Though she uses indefinite pronouns until we feel nearly hypnotized by them, she uses them to make her precise distinctions. "Everybody," for instance, remains one word but "every one" is always two words for Stein, because she is letting us know that she is enumerating kinds of people. Bridgman notes that she is "selecting general nouns and replacing nouns with pronouns that lacked distinct referents and if possible gender."[59] Often she confuses the pronoun antecedents and we are forced to pause and sort out the references. Prepositions too are forced onto our consciousness by Stein; she intends to prevent the reader from taking for granted any of the simplest words. For instance, she writes, "Each one sometime is a whole one to me. Each one sometime is a whole one in me" (MA, p. 367). Hoffman says, "She elevates participles into substantives and reduces substantives with participial endings back to participial functions" and she "changes adjectives into substantive qualities, for example real equals real one, the abstract quality becomes even solider."[60] Stein's intention in these word games is to make every word have for the reader the "very existing being" that it has for her.

Stein dismisses Matisse because he saw an object as everyone else saw it. She describes the aim of Picasso (and perhaps of herself as well), "His effort was not to express in his way the things seen as every

one sees them, but to express the thing as he was seeing it" (P, p. 17). Here again Shklovsky in his definition of defamiliarization seems to sum up Stein's idea:

> Art defamiliarizes: habitualization devours all till life is reckoned as nothing (Tolstoy): art exists to make us feel things, to make the stone stone. The purpose of art is to impart the sensation of things as they're perceived not as they're known. Hence art must make forms difficult, objects unfamiliar, in order to increase difficulty and length of perception because the process of perception is an aesthetic end in itself and must be prolonged. Art is a way of experiencing the artfulness of an object. The object is unimportant because as art the poem does not have to point to anything outside itself. To the extent that a work of art can be experienced, to the extent that it is; it is like any other object. Yet with an advantage: it can mean and it is designed especially for perception and for attracting and holding attention.[61]

As well as using word games, Stein uses repetition deliberately to increase the length of perception--repetition with variations and repetition with "increments of meaning." Some of the repetition, however, comes from her insistence on 'expressing the thing as she was seeing it' and unfortunately she taxes the reader's attention span by refusing to edit the trial descriptions she thinks of before she finally finds the accurate expression!

Stein varies the rhythm and the repetition to give the reader "a sense for all the slightest variations in repeating" so they "never lose themselves so in the solid steadiness of all repeating that they do not hear the slightest variation" (MA, p. 294). She says, "Sometimes I like it that different ways of emphasizing can make very different meanings in a phrase or sentence I have made and am repeating" (MA, p. 539). She occasionally uses what appears to be French syntax, for example, "And yet a little I have made it too strong against us in saying . . ."

(MA, p. 47), or "No, them we never can feel" (MA, p. 6).

Some of the repetition comes from summarizing so that the reader will not lose the thread. For example:

> And so visiting and being, well to do living and her children, these never gave her a strong feeling of being important inside her through them, it was only through her husband and the governesses and seamstresses and servants and dependents that she could ever have an individual feeling (MA, p. 55).

She summarizes constantly; for example, "As I was saying . . ." (MA, p. 379). "This is now a history of . . ." (MA, p. 373). "These then are one kind of way of being one with the bottom attacking, one with the bottom the resisting kind of them, these two I have been just describing" (MA, p. 360). "This was being then in Mrs. Dehning. This is remembering all the being in Mrs. [redacted]. All this I have been telling is remembering the being in Mrs. Dehning" (MA, p. 618).

Just as she summarizes she also anticipates for the reader what she is going to discuss:

> This will be now little short descriptions of learning six of them (MA, p. 351).
>
> Now I will finish up this one (MA, p. 370).
>
> Now there will be . . . (MA, p. 359).
>
> This then is now to be a little description . . . (MA, p. 539).
>
> I will now begin a description of his being (MA, p. 578).
>
> I will now be adding a very few (MA, p. 574).
>
> There will now be some more description of him (MA, p. 619).

She tells us what events occur in an offhand manner. For example, after ten pages in which Julia tries to persuade her father to let her marry Alfred, Stein concludes by saying, "In a few days more the actual marrying

was done . . ." (MA, p. 33) and the marriage is not mentioned again until four hundred pages later. The wedding is not described, of course, it is just announced to the reader. Stein wants the reader's attention on other things, not on the events. But she also uses the technique of suspense while she meditates and searches for her truth, "He is not yet clear to me--wait a while dear reader--then I may try again."

Stein uses other arts of the story-teller with considerable skill. When the rhythms begin to lull us to sleep she breaks the rhythm:

> I have come to know some as being young whom I have been knowing as middle aged ones as coming to be old ones, I know now what ones being young ones will come to be middle aged ones like some I have been knowing as middle aged ones. This seems an easy thing. It is a very difficult thing (MA, p. 725).

The rhythms Stein employs are an attempt to capture the "essence of the personality" as Sutherland writes:

> How is it to be expressed directly, that is without simply describing the circumstances and exteriors in the naturalist manner, or even the Proustian manner? Gertrude Stein solves the problem by reproducing its rhythm and telling its final relationships, its ultimate kind. Although the book may seem at first to be an impoverishment of human life, the personal and biographical life, it is rather a heroic insistence that something of the present person does exist in itself, independent of the flux of personal history and the adventitious contents of the consciousness.[62]

Stein's use of rhythm is intended to create movement.

Cubism was an attempt to show movement by interlocking planes and by dissociation of line and colour. Along with the rhythm of her sentences, Stein's use of the "continuous present," that is, her "present immediacy" by the use of the present tense and present participle--her very "verbal" writing--is an attempt to create movement. In 1935 she wrote in "How Writing is Written":

> The other thing which I accomplished was the getting rid of nouns. In the Twentieth Century you feel like movement. The Nineteenth Century didn't feel that way. The element of movement was not the predominating thing that they felt. You know that in your lives movement is the thing that occupies you most--you feel movement all the time. And the United States had the first instance of what I call Twentieth Century writing. You see it first in Walt Whitman. He was the beginning of the movement. He didn't see it very clearly; but there was a sense of movement that the European was much influenced by, because the Twentieth Century was become the American century.[63]

In 1936 in Everybody's Autobiography she discussed movement with regard to the artists:

> The history of painting is this. Ever since Cézanne everybody who has painted has wanted to have a feeling of movement inside the painting not a painting of a thing moving but the thing painted having inside it the existence of moving. Everybody since Cézanne has tried for that thing. That made the Matisse school so violent, and then the violence as violence does resulted in nothing, like the head-lines which do not head anything they simply replace something but they do not make anything, then there were the cubists the cubists, decided that by composition, that is by destroying the centralization they would arrive at movement being existing, then there were the surrealists they thought they could do it by invention . . . (EA, p. 311).

Again she does not make direct comparisons of her work to that of the painters but she says that she and Picasso were contemporary and led in the twentieth century because they had "the inner time-sense of their contemporaries" which was a sense of movement (HWW, p. 151).

Stein's concerns with movement had begun with her art education. Bridgman writes:

> Leo also pointed out that the work of the painters in whom he and Gertrude first intenested themselves--Monet, Renoir, Degas, and Cézanne--was 'all non-dramatic.' When figures are composed in a group their relations are merely spatial. At most they are relations of movement concurrent or opposite.[64]

Leo then criticized Gertrude's "Melanctha" severely for lack of movement. He says, "It was the rhythm in 'Melanctha' that I found insufficient. Art is composition and the life of composition is rhythm. Rhythm is movement, and where there is no movement it has to be as though there were movement."[65] (This comment is amusing when contrasted with Katherine Mansfield's comment that in "Melanctha" she found the "syncopated Negro rhythms" overwhelming.)[66]

Leo's definition of composition as rhythm or movement probably derived from his friend Berenson. Stein had Berenson's theories of art well in mind, no doubt, as she began her writing career since it was he who introduced Leo and her to Cézanne's work. Her aim "to express life" throughout her career, implied expressing movement. (Dealing with the "static" she leaves to the next generation (HWW, p. 160).) Berenson had said, "The art of getting the utmost tactile values and movement out of figures and masses in action is known as composition."[67] Then Berenson goes on to define movement:

> Movement is the manifest indwelling energy that vitalizes the delineating outlines of an artifact and the delineations of all the parts within these outlines. It has nothing to do with change of place, or even with change of attitude or pose, and still less with transitive activity of any kind. Outline or delineation thus energized is a contour.[68]

By The Making of Americans the movement of "Melanctha," that is, the "movements of passions of how Jeff and Melanctha feel differently toward each other from moment to moment" as Hoffman puts it, has been reduced to how someone feels differently from moment to moment.[69]

Reid, who finds Stein's work flat in all ways--rather like yesterday's opened and left over champagne--grapples with Stein's theories and practice on movement. He finds that to Stein "essence proves

to be intensity of movement inside," which he then dismisses as a nebulous concept.[70] Since he finds The Making of Americans merely had a "paralyzing effect" in "the overpowering mass in which she served it" it is possible that he did not find "life" or "movement" in Stein's characters and their "being."[71] Bridgman, too, finds The Making of Americans a "great sow of a work" but he acknowledges that the "advances she had made were impressive and generally comprehensible."[72] Whether Stein achieved her goals will no doubt continue to be debated by scholars as will the success of the cubist experiments. However, Brinnin sees in Stein's work an artistry comparable to that of the painters. He writes:

> Gertrude Stein had come early to a notion that was to dominate her creative life--the notion that the "continuous present and using everything and beginning again" was the final reality in fact and thus the final reality that words could communicate. Escaping from the conventions of beginning, middle, and ending, she simply laid out a space --a space of time as big in its proportions as a canvas of Jackson Pollock--and proceeded to make sure that it would be "always filled with moving." In a monumental abrogation of the barriers that separate literature from painting, she produced a work having the fascination of a symbol that powerfully impresses itself upon the imagination long before the thing it symbolizes is open to scrutiny or subject to understanding.[73]

FOOTNOTES

[1]Donald Gallup, ed., The Flowers of Friendship: Letters Written to Gertrude Stein (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1953), Ellery Sedgwick about Lucy Church Amiably in 1932, p. 256.

[2]Leon Katz, "Matisse, Picasso, and Gertrude Stein," Four Americans in Paris: The Collections of Gertrude Stein and Her Family (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1970), pp. 62 and 59.

[3]James Mellow, Charmed Circle: Gertrude Stein and Company (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1974), p. 202.

[4]Werner Haftmann, Painting in the Twentieth Century, 2 vols. (1965; rpt. New York: Praeger Pub. Inc., 1972), Vol. II, p. 80.

[5]Joseph Machlis, "Objectivism in Music," Introduction to Contemporary Music (New York: W. W. Norton and Co. Inc., 1961), pp. 154-55.

[6]Haftmann, Vol. II, p. 7.

[7]Leon Katz and Edward Burns, "They Walk in the Light;" Gertrude Stein on Picasso, ed. Edward Burns (New York: Liveright Press, 1970), p. 110.

[8]Richard Bridgman, Gertrude Stein in Pieces (New York: Oxford University Press, 1970), p. 111.

[9]Bridgman, p. 118.

[10]Donald Sutherland, Gertrude Stein: A Biography of Her Work (1951; rpt. Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1971), p. 71.

[11]F. Scott Taylor, Automatic Stein: The Literature of Dissociation (University of Toronto, 1976), p. 77. Brinnin in The Third Rose notes, "To make her independence [from Leo] even more complete, she could in Picasso's company often reverse roles and be the dominant one herself" (p. 72).

Leon Katz records the dates of The Making of Americans and of Cubism's beginnings, but he does not note the possibility that Stein might have guided Picasso:

> During the years from 1906 to 1911 (roughly concurrent with the "heroic" years of Analytical cubism from 1907 to 1912), Gertrude was chiefly preoccupied with writing her massive novel, The Making of Americans. Work on the novel entailed a series of revolutionary aesthetic reorientations on her part, and the attention she paid to painters and painting was almost entirely determined by their relevance, as personalities or as craftsmen, to this private artistic concern ("Matisse, Picasso and Gertrude Stein," p. 51).

[12]Janet Hobhouse, Everybody Who Was Anybody (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1975), p. 52.

[13]Donald Gallup, p. 41.

[14]Leo Stein, Appreciation: Painting, Poetry and Prose (New York: Crown Publishers, 1947), p. 174.

[15]Bridgman in a footnote on page 119 writes, "It is a minor, but I think significant point that in the version [of the GMP] using initials--that is to say in the equivocal title--Gertrude Stein put herself first." Stein, in her suggestive way, writes in Everybody's Autobiography, "There is too much fathering going on now" (EA, p. 133). And she is no doubt referring not just to politics but to art as well, not just to Hitler and Mussolini but to Cézanne whom Matisse called "the father of us all." She has the last word in 1945 in one of her last works when she is referring to herself, as much as to Susan B. Anthony, when she titles it "The Mother of Us All." Egotist that she was, we may assume she is laying claim to being a founder of modern art--painting as well as literature. Certainly Stein never acknowledges any debt she may have to Picasso but then, as Sheila Watson notes, "Kneeling for her was not a characteristic gesture" (Sheila Watson, "Gertrude Stein: The Style is the Machine," White Pelican, Autumn, 1973, p. 8).

[16]Stein's explanations of what she had been attempting might be of dubious value since they are a retrospect, but there is a self-conscious awareness in her work itself, for example, in her positioning of words in different order for different emphasis and in her interspersed remarks like those on "very existing words" (MA, p. 539). Her later elucidations become progressively simpler but her ideas remain the same as in her early works.

[17]Peter Selz, German Expressionist Painting (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1957), p. 45.

[18]E. H. Gombrich, Art and Illusion: A Study in the Psychology of Pictorial Representation (Kingsport, Tenn.: Pantheon Books, 1960), p. 281.

[19]Wylie Sypher, Rococo to Cubism in Art and Literature (New York: Random House, 1960), p. 260.

[20]Sypher, p. 269.

[21]Ibid., p. 287.

[22]Ibid., p. 270.

[23]Roger Fry, "The French Post-Impressionists," 1912 Vision and Design (1914; rpt. Cambridge, Mass.: Murray Printing Co., 1947), p. 157.

[24]Virginia Woolf, Roger Fry, A Biography (London: Hogarth Press, 1940), p. 240.

[25]Virginia Woolf, p. 172.

[26]Werner Haftmann, Vol. II, p. 77.

[27]Ibid., p. 14.

[28]Ibid., p. 77.

[29]Ibid., p. 14.

[30]Ibid., p. 14.

[31]Mellow, p. 164.

[32]Bridgman, p. 60.

[33]Bridgman explains that for Stein history "did not mean a chronological narrative but a perpetually valid description" (p. 57). Stein says, "when anybody is doing anything that is history" and she adds "history is the state of confusion between anybody doing anything and anything happening" (GHA, pp. 140 and 141).

[34]John Malcolm Brinnin, The Third Rose: Gertrude Stein and Her World (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1959), p. 95.

[35]Bridgman, p. 67.

[36]Leon Katz, "Introduction" to Fernhurst, Q.E.D. and Other Early Writings by Gertrude Stein (1950; rpt. New York: Liveright Press, 1971), and Bridgman, pp. 64, 65.

[37]Bridgman, p. 61.

[38]Gombrich, p. 281.

[39]Ibid., p. 282.

[40]Bridgman, p. 53.

[41]Michael Hoffman, The Development of Abstractionism in the Writings of Gertrude Stein (Philadelphia: University of Penn. Press), p. 168.

[42]"Second Thoughts about Man: The Rediscovery of Human Nature," Time Magazine, 12 April, 1973, pp. 48 ff.

[43]Ibid.

[44]B. P. Nichol, "Gertrude Stein's Theories of Personality," White Pelican (Edmonton: White Pelican, 1973), Autumn 3.4, p. 17.

[45]Hoffman, pp. 68 and 69.

[46]Bridgman, p. 74.

[47]Brinnin, p. 94.

[48]Sutherland, p. 57.

[49]Hoffman, p. 115.

[50]Ibid., pp. 144-45.

[51]Leon Katz and Edward Burns, "They Walk in the Light," Stein on Picasso (New York: Liveright Press, 1970), p. 114.

[52]Taylor, p. 28.

[53]Elizabeth Sprigge, Gertrude Stein: Her Life and Work (New York: Harper and Bros. Pub., 1957), p. 72.

[54] Ibid.

[55] Victor Shklovsky, "Art as Technique," Russian Formalist Criticism, ed. L. T. Lemon and M. S. Reis (1917; rpt. Lincoln, Nebraska: University of Nebraska Press, 1965), p. 3.

[56] Shklovsky, p. 3.

[57] Ibid., p. 7.

[58] Sprigge, p. 69.

[59] Bridgman, p. 57.

[60] Hoffman, pp. 133 and 136.

[61] Shklovsky, p. 6.

[62] Sutherland, pp. 56-57.

[63] Gertrude Stein, How Writing is Written: Vol. II of the Previously Uncollected Writings of Gertrude Stein, ed. Robert B. Haas (Los Angeles: Black Sparrow Press, 1974), p. 153. Hereafter cited in text as HWW.

[64] Bridgman, p. 47.

[65] Leo Stein, p. 162.

[66] Sprigge, p. 124.

[67] Bernard Berenson, Aesthetics and History (1948; rpt. Glasgow: Pantheon (The University Press), 1953), p. 82.

[68] Berenson, p. 82.

[69] Hoffman, p. 67.

[70] B. L. Reid, Art by Subtraction: A Dissenting Opinion of Gertrude Stein (Norman, Oklahoma: University of Oklahoma Press, 1958), p. 82.

[71] Reid, p. 108.

[72]Bridgman, pp. 91 and 79.

[73]Brinnin, pp. 94-95.

CHAPTER IV

STEIN AND THE AESTHETICIANS: THE RATIONALE

"open air performances"

In the course of writing Three Lives and The Making of Americans Stein was formulating the basis of her aesthetic. Though her aesthetic was to grow and change in the course of her career, the major premises of her philosophy were to remain more or less constant. In a review of Sherwood Anderson's A Story Teller's Story (1925) she expresses admiration for his achievement. She writes:

> They do not reflect life or describe life or embroider life or photograph life, they express life and to express life takes essential intelligence. Whether to express life is the most interesting thing to do or the most important thing to do I do not know, but I do know that it is the most permanent thing to do. . . . The story-teller's story is not a story of events or experiences it is a story of existence, and the fact that the story teller exists makes a story and keeps on making a story. The story-teller's story will live because the story-teller is alive. As he is alive and as his gift is the complete expression of that life it will continue to live.[1]

These are also the basic tenets of Stein's aesthetic--to express life--the life of the object informed by the life of the artist--and to thus create works which have permanent value.

Ben Reid credits Stein, albeit somewhat backhandedly, with a talent as an aesthetician. He writes:

> I have said that Thornton Wilder sees the truth about Gertrude Stein; he sees, in fact, what seems to be the two basic truths: that she is first of all a philosopher and aesthetician; that

> as an artist she has extreme limitations. He gives us this opinion: I think it can be said that the fundamental occupation of Miss Stein's life was not the work of art but the shaping of a theory of knowledge, a theory of time and a theory of the passions.[2]

Ben Reid also credits her aesthetic as self-made:

> Her powers as an aesthetic theorist seem considerably better than mediocre, considerably less than first rate. Whatever its idiosyncrasy, her system is perfectly coherent. Against much that strikes one as mistaken or merely trivial must be set much that is interesting as theory and potentially fruitful for others, if not for herself. In her aesthetic Miss Stein is no more derivative than in her artistic practice, and one can almost always trace the maturing of an idea through her own thinking rather than through another's. Whatever Gertrude Stein is, she is self-made.[3]

Stein's system is not always "coherent" and while one may trace the maturing of her ideas through her own thinking these same ideas found expression in the philosophy in the air of the time.

Art and philosophy had joined hands in the twentieth century. As Croce says, "the art of our own age is representative of contemporary philosophy."[4] Herbert Read elaborates:

> The specifically 'modern' movement in art, which began with the first cubistic experiments of Picasso and Braque, is now forty years old. Its vagaries, its violence, its sudden transitions and frequent schisms, suggest that it has developed haphazardly, without premeditation, justifying itself from day to day, pragmatically. But the briefest consideration of the historical facts shows that the philosophical foundations of the modern movement were already established in logical completeness before the creation of any parallel manifestations in plastic form. . . . I am persuaded that a conscious integration of art and philosophy took place at this time. The philosophical development which leads from Schelling through Kierkegaard, Nietzsche, and Husserl to Heidegger and Jaspers has no parallel in the plastic arts until we reach Picasso, Kandinsky and Klee, Mondrian and Gabo.[5]

Certainly Stein's aesthetic reflects the thinking that was in the

intellectual climate of Europe at the time.

Some of the correspondences to the ideas propounded by the philosophers are clearly in evidence in Stein's work. There are echoes of Hegel, whose ideas it was popular to discuss at the time, for instance, in the studies of relationships in both Three Lives and in The Making of Americans.[6] His "dialectic" of "relations" or contradiction of opposites is almost exemplified by the polarity of Melanctha and Jeff's relationship and by the aggressive versus resisting personalities.

Some of the correspondences to the ideas of the philosophers, while they are not so clearly visible in her work, are in evidence in Stein's aesthetic. Schopenhauer's ideas, which were also receiving serious attention at the time, are called to mind by several of Stein's tenets. Blanshard attributes much of the aesthetic of abstraction to Schopenhauer and writes:

> A philosopher to whom the theory of abstraction owes a debt rarely noted is Schopenhauer. Failure to recognize it may be evidence of its indirectness and its depth. Schopenhauer's tenets have come down through the Symbolist poets, Bergson, and the Cubists. Furthermore, the acceptance of his points has been so general that they hardly seem to have any one author. Writers repeat him, not conscious of quoting; they feel simply that they are talking good aesthetic sense. "The aesthetic experience affords direct insight into reality; it is an experience in which the impact of the work of art is immediate; observer and object are one. A painting is an entity with a life of its own. Its vitality derives from the quality of the artist's vision."[7]

This latter quotation from Schopenhauer sounds remarkably like Stein's definition of masterpieces which "exist because they came to be as something that is an end in itself" (LAMN, p. 151).

Defining the function of art, Schopenhauer writes:

> This deliverance of knowledge from servitude to the will, this forgetting of the individual self and its material interest, this elevation of the mind to the will-less contemplation of truth is the function of art.[8]

This is akin to Stein's "entity" which creates masterpieces. She says, "One has no identity when one is in the act of doing anything" (LAMN, p. 148). Blanshard also notes, "Schopenhauer had said that in art there are no 'great subjects.' Any original will serve if the artist sees it in its own peculiar essence. The character and quality of the artist's vision are all-important."[9] Stein's everyday subjects, her mundane middle class everyday living, her search for the essence of the subjects, and even her remark ". . . the influence which makes a new movement in art and literature have continued and are making a new movement in art and literature; in order to seize them there needs a very dominating creative power" (AABT, p. 227)--all these things echo Schopenhauer. Stein may even have decided to label Picasso and herself geniuses because of Schopenhauer's definition of genius, which he says is "the highest form of will-less knowledge" or "simply the completest objectivity."[10]

Schopenhauer is revered for giving art new authority and for giving intuition legitimacy. Bergson, who follows Schopenhauer, also lends authority to intuition. T. E. Hulme says of Bergson's theory:

> Our eye perceives the features of the living being merely as assembled, not as mutually organized. The intention of life --a simple movement which runs through the lines and binds them together and gives them significance--escapes it. This intention is just what the artist tries to regain in placing himself back within the object by a kind of sympathy and breaking down by an effort of intuition the barrier that space puts between him and his model. . . . The artist is the man, then, who on one side of his nature is detached from the necessities of action, and is able to see things as they are in themselves.[11]

The ability to see things as they are in themselves was a constant in Stein's aesthetic. She publicly reminded Picasso of the importance of this as has been noted in the introduction.

Bergson also comments on the way the artist reveals this knowledge to the spectator. His comments on rhythm remind us of Stein's somnambulistic rhythm. He writes:

> Beneath the conventional expression which hides the individual emotion they are able to see the original shape of it. They induce us to make the same effort ourselves and make us see what they tell us, or rather suggest, things that speech is not calculated to express. . . . Some arts proceed from the outside. . . . On the other hand, an art like music proceeds from the inside (as it were). By means of rhythm it breaks up the normal flow of our conscious life. It is as if by increasing the flow of the stream inside it broke through the surface crust and so made us realize the real nature of the outline of the inner elements of our conscious life. It does this by means of rhythm which acts something like the means used to bring about the state of hypnosis. The rhythm and measure suspend the normal flow of our sensations by causing our attention to swing to and fro between fixed points and so take hold of us with such force that even the faintest imitation of sadness produces a great effect on us. It increases our sensibility, in fact.[12]

Bergson's definition of art is "a passionate desire for accuracy" and he defines the aesthetic emotion that art arouses in the spectator as "the excitement which is generated by direct communication."[13] He says "the important thing is, of course, not the fact of the visual representation, but the communication over of the actual contact with reality."[14] Stein's definition of art and its purposes is essentially the same. Bergson also says the "ordinary language communicates nothing of the individuality and freshness of things." Stein took up the challenge and attempted to convey this "freshness of impression" by using ordinary language, by using simple words in changing patterns. Bergson's ideas on space-time and the new fourth dimension undoubtedly made a vast impact on

modern art and have been amply discussed elsewhere. It is sufficient to note here that his notions of duration are also used by Stein.

Croce expands on intuition as a source of knowledge as equally legitimate as the conceptual knowledge. Both Picasso and Stein are often considered to have worked in trance-like states--almost states of self-hypnosis. Both Stein and Picasso would agree with Croce's definition of an artist, "Insofar as he is an artist, he is not a man of action, and does not reason, but poetizes, paints, sings; in short, he expresses himself."[15] Croce also insists that art be autonomous, that it "is not dependent on morals, pleasure, or philosophy."[16] Stein says, "a masterpiece has to do with the human mind and entity that is with a thing in itself and not in relation" (LAMN, p. 151). Herbert Read puts it more clearly, "The virtue of any art wholly inheres in its appeal to the senses and to the 'non-discursive' or 'imaginative' reason, and all other criteria, whether moral or sociological, are aesthetically irrelevant."[17]

Cubism, in its emphasis on form, has been defined by art historians as almost a retreat into the permanence of geometrical form away from the chaos and flux of life. It 'appeals to the senses' because it offers tidy structures. This is explained in Wilhelm Worringer's treatise on "Abstraction and Empathy" which defines two impulses and intentions for all art. One is the desire for a response of empathy which is produced by realistic art; the other is a desire for a response of a feeling of order, an arousing of feelings of satisfaction by design and structure which is produced by geometrical or abstract art.[18] Though Three Lives has touches of realism we might see it as an attempt at abstraction if we consider the simplified character description and the use of techniques like the simple vocabulary, repetition and rhythm. The

Making of Americans clearly demonstrates Stein's development into the realms of abstraction. She is certainly not striving for a response of empathy or "exhibiting delight in nature."[19] Her system of classification of types and her hypnotic paragraphing units make it obvious that she is exploring the 'design and structure' of her subjects. Stein, indeed, does put her faith in "Composition as Explanation" (LAMN, p. 21).

Stein's emphasis on these kinds of forms or structure may be legitimately attributed to inspiration by Cézanne. Herbert Read says that cubism was founded on a misinterpretation of Cézanne. He seems to think that Cézanne's "formal composition and simplification of planes" was all that inspired cubism.[20] And yet Read also notes that "It was with his insistence on the strict purity of his perceptive experience that Cézanne restored to art some degree of primal rectitude."[21] It is this effort by Cézanne to express things as he saw them that also inspired Stein and the cubists. Read notes too, that "the general effect of the revolution in painting established by Matisse, Picasso, Braque and their immediate contemporaries was subjectivist in character and the same generalization can be made of other arts (Proust, Joyce, D. H. Lawrence). . . Subjectivism is a mental climate, announced more than a century ago by Kierkegaard and Hegel."[22] Moholy-Nagy explaining cubism says essentially the same thing:

> Photographic emulsion rendered shadow and light exactly at the spots where they appeared at the time of the exposure, but the cubist carried through the task of rendering without any consideration of such accidental circumstances. He rendered the object in its true nature, in its totality. With this, he unbound himself from the dictates of naturalistic renderings; from the pressure of conventional, repetitive, and imitative demands to a growing consciousness of the autonomous interpreting power of the artist.[23]

Picasso's effort, says Stein, was "to express the thing as he was seeing it" (P, p. 17). Stein shares this goal with Picasso. In Stein's writing about painting and literature she repeatedly emphasizes the act of "creating"--not re-creating or imitating as in realistic art.

Herbert Read says that from Cézanne to cubism was a "quantum-like jump" but he also says "Analytical cubism is an offspring of realism."[24] It is both and it is this jump from realism to abstractionism that we can trace in Stein's first two major works. Hulme explains that the roots of abstraction are those of realism:

> There must be just as much contact with nature in an abstract art as in a realistic one; without that stimulus the artist could produce nothing. In Picasso, for example, there is much greater research into nature, as far as the relation of planes is concerned, than in any realist painting; he has isolated and emphasized relations previously not emphasized. All art may be said to be realism, then, in that it extracts from nature facts which have not been observed before. But in as far as the artist is creative, he is not bound down by the accidental relations of the elements actually found in nature, but extracts, distorts, and utilizes them as a means of expression, and not as a means of interpreting nature.[25]

Whether Stein might properly be called a cubist in her attempts 'to express life' might be debatable though The Making of Americans and the GMP are certainly abstract works. And whether her work after The Making of Americans develops into "expressionism," "abstract expressionism," "synthetic cubism," or "constructivism" must be left to further studies.[26] Certainly Three Lives and The Making of Americans are evidence that she is an artist.

FOOTNOTES

[1]Ray Lewis White, ed., Sherwood Anderson/Gertrude Stein: Correspondence and Personal Essays (Chapel Hill: University of N. Carolina, 1972), p. 45.

[2]Ben Reid, Art by Subtraction: A Dissenting Opinion of Gertrude Stein (Norman, Oklahoma: University of Oklahoma Press, 1958), pp. 21-22.

[3]Reid, p. 205.

[4]Benedetto Croce, Guide to Aesthetics, trans. by Patrick Romanell (1913; rpt. Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill Co., Inc., 1965), p. 64.

[5]Herbert Read, The Philosophy of Modern Art (London: Faber and Faber Ltd., 1952), pp. 100-101.

[6]Françoise Gilot tells a revealing anecdote about Picasso. After a discussion on Hegel, Gilot asked Picasso how much Hegel he had read. "None," he said, ". . . I picked up my information from Kahnweiler" (Life with Picasso, p. 68).

[7]Frances B. Blanshard, Retreat from Likeness in the Theory of Painting, 2nd ed. (1945; rpt. New York: Columbia U. Press, 1949), p. 124.

[8]Will Durant, The Story of Philosophy: The Lives and Opinions of the Greater Philosophers (1926; rpt. Garden City, N.Y.: Cardinal, 1953), p. 336.

[9]Blanshard, p. 71.

[10]Durant, p. 334.

[11]T. E. Hulme, Speculations: Essays on Humanism and the Philosophy of Art, ed. Herbert Read (1924; rpt. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1965), pp. 144 and 155.

[12]Hulme, pp. 155-56.

[13]Ibid., p. 159.

[14]Ibid., p. 167.

[15]Croce, pp. 57-58.

[16]Ibid., p. 48.

[17]Read, p. 157.

[18]These ideas of Worringer's are paraphrased from Peter Selz' German [redacted]ssionist Painting (pp. 8-12) and from T. E. Hulme's discussion of th[redacted] of Worringer in "Modern Art and Its Philosophy" in Specula[redacted]ns (pp. 82ff) since his treatise is in German.

[19]Hulme, p. 84.

[20]Ibid., p. 101.

[21]Read, p. 24. Read also summarizes the developments of Cézanne and Cubism noting that the "theory had been current for some time." He writes:

> The process (of geometricization) was, of course, inherent in the practice of Cézanne who had conceived the art of painting as the art of giving permanence and solidity to the immediate data of visual experience. Instead of catching the shimmering surface of appearances, the momentary effects of light and movement, Cézanne sought to reveal a permanent reality, to feel nature as eternal, and in this attempt he arrived almost unconsciously, at something like a geometricization of objects; nature, he said, should be resolved into the cylinder, the sphere, and the cone. But that effect, with Cézanne, was a by-product of his primary aim, which was still to realize his sensations in the face of natural phenomena. Picasso, though he may have begun with a similar aim, and though some of his early cubist paintings succeed exactly as Cézanne's succeeded, carried the process a stage further. He found that the cylinder, the sphere, and the cone were satisfactory objects in themselves, and that out of such elements he could construct a design which conveyed all the purely aesthetic appeal inherent in any painting. Though such a literal interpretation was novel, actually the theory which justifies such a step had been current for some time (pp. 155-56).

[22]Read, p. 40.

[23]L. Moholy-Nagy, Vision in Motion (Chicago: Wisconsin Cuneo Press, 1947), p. 116.

[24]Read, pp. 37 and 92.

[25]T. E. Hulme, Further Speculations, ed. Sam Hynes (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1955), p. 128.

[26]Haftmann sees all modern art as expressionism. Here is his brief summary of the history of modern art:

> The creative unrest of the 1890's derived from a fundamental disturbance of man's innermost attitude towards reality. Nature was no longer self-evident, familiar, unquestioned. There was a secret communication between the observer and its visible, terrestrial form which indicated much wider-ranging, undefined realms only indirectly reflected in our sensory perceptions. These concrete experiences imposed upon art the task of defining this extended reality as it appeared to the human mind. Art could no longer reproduce, it had to define, represent, render visible. This necessitated an adjustment of the vocabulary of colours and forms and of the picture field. The painters of the Latin countries set out from the beginning to interpret these new facts in terms of clearly organized formal structures. The Germanic painters sought to transcend visible reality and to reach the spheres of hallucination. To this end, they enhanced the expressive capacity of the pictorial means and were not as greatly concerned with form as with spontaneous expression. It was at this point that artistic theorists began to envisage the possibility of dispensing altogether with images of the visible. Both modes, however--the constructive and the expressive--opened up new prospects in the realm of human expression--and the view was enhanced by the sense that the new art would resolve the apparent contradiction between the real and the imaginary (Vol. II, p. 19).

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