

An Analysis of *The Making of Americans*:

Gertrude Stein's 'Usable Past'

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**A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the Degree of**

Master of Philosophy



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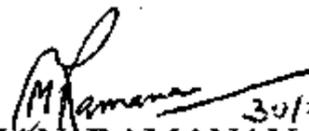
Varsha, who makes me laugh

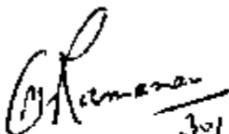
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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that Ms. **A. Anupama** worked under my supervision for the degree of Master of Philosophy in English. Her dissertation entitled "**An Analysis of *The Making of Americans: Gertrude Stein's 'Usable Past'***" represents her own independent work at the University of Hyderabad, and it has not been submitted for a degree or diploma elsewhere.


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I hereby declare that this dissertation, "**An Analysis of *The Making of Americans*: Gertrude Stein's 'Usable Past'**" supervised by Professor Mohan Ramanan, represents my original work in the Department of English, University of Hyderabad, and has not been submitted for a degree or diploma or for publication elsewhere.

Date: 30-7-98
Place: Hyderabad

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CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION

My thesis attempts to give a reading of Gertrude Stein's long novel The Making of Americans (1925) along the lines of her own ideas of composition. Stated thus the task appears deceptively simple. One talks of "reading" as a blanket term for any number of qualitatively different activities that can be performed with a book. For example, somebody can read a book paying little attention to the "how" or the "why" of it, or somebody can read his/her own reading of it. The second kind of reading requires a more patient, conscious and in a sense a "ready" reader. A writer like Stein, who assumes nothing about her readers ("I write for myself and strangers"), is making the biggest assumption (that they will/can read "as she writes").

That apart, where one experiences real difficulty in reading a writer, as it often happens with Stein, one is both tempted and intrigued by the difficulty itself. If the difficulty is formal, the reading becomes so much more exciting and challenging. To formulate a proposition for the thesis, it becomes necessary to ask questions. Thus I began asking myself, "what is the question I have to Stein?". And asking insistently "What is the question", I suddenly realized that these were her last words. On her deathbed she asked Alice "What is the answer" and not getting any, again asked "In that case what is the question". The rhetorical simplicity of these two lines contains the full force of her enigmatic code. And I stumbled onto it quite by chance.

The difficulty involved in comprehending Stein's prose can be resolved thus through chance understanding, by paying attention to the repetition. These two elements point to the necessity of being constantly aware of the expressive power of even the simplest of words. This is an absolute for "reading" to

"happen". Understanding is a simple act of identifying the point, or the nature of a reference-that to which something refers to. In traditional terms this is essential for reading. Stein* last two questions however, deliberately flounce conventional norms of human understanding by establishing mutual points of reference, as if Stein was determined in her characteristic way to express the final reality as words or words as the final reality - "In that case, what is the question".

For such a practitioner of words, the human mind is without a point of reference and bears only a relation of intentionality to anything outside of it. In her writing she realises this by "beginning and beginning again". Meaning is the way of expressing the true character or the full implications of something. This is possible only through words. The words of any language have at least a dual citizenship, each word being credited at the same time with a functional use (grammatical one) and its "real" use (with its specific coloring within context). Both these uses pertain to each other, to a greater or to a lesser extent, depending on the strength of the artist's power of imagination, and together they contribute to the definitiveness of meaning in any sentence. Most poets can hence afford to be "penny wise" and "pound foolish" for in art, if one takes care of those "little soldiers" words, as Anderson fondly calls them, the empire takes care of itself (qtd. in White: 1972, 17). By the same measure, Stein finds two separate realms for art: "poetry has to do with vocabulary just as prose has not" (Stein: 1967,136).

While she is insisting here that poetry has a recognizable language, this can also be extended to analogous activities of the human mind like thinking and to her own writing at large. An identification of the real use of words with their functional use within a sentence was Stein's constant aim in writing. As she

herself explains, "I had to capture the value of the individual word, find out what it meant and act within it" (qtd. in Haas: 1973, 1B).

She was not worried about better expression, but concentrated on giving each word its expression. She found all words self-contained for her purposes. Further she discovered that "the American thing is the vitality of the movement, so that there need be nothing against which the movement shows itself as movement" (Stein: 1935, 173). This she demonstrates quite literally in a line like: "America America dear dear United States of America". As Marianne Moore, who was influenced by Stein, was to describe a poet much later, Stein was a "literalist of the imagination".

In terms of reading however, the difficulty still remains, even to a modern reader. My intention for pursuing this research interest in Stein is to understand and come to terms with her work through an appreciation that is personal and non-theoretical. Accordingly, my selection of method would be one that would logically fall in step with my reading. Each of my chapters is an attempt to resolve the difficulty involved in reading Stein by seeing the angles to her composition (in The Making of Americans). Keeping this as an aim, the chapter titled "Beginnings" relates the identity-relations in her work to her principle "begin again and again" (again/a gain). In order to make a practical assessment of The Making of Americans in terms of its compositional losses and gains, I propose to discuss sections from the earlier drafts of the novel in the light of this principle. This would simultaneously become a means to show how the thesis holds up in real practice, while writing.

In the third chapter, I propose to examine her method of

composition in The Making of American, in the process making explicit certain co-related assumptions in her work like that of "time-sense" and difference. Such ideas apart, my aim is also to understand the grounds for repetition as an order of descriptive reality in her writing. This chapter would also attempt to make clear the theoretical implications of repetition as Stein herself was able to increasingly visualize them in the writing of The Making of Americans.

After exhausting these two preliminary hypothesis that one happens upon in Stein's The Making of Americans, I intend to do a volte-face and come back to understand how writing with such logistics works with the reader and whether it affords the possibility of anything more than a chance understanding. This I see as an essential chore to be performed not only while talking about The Making of Americans, but also particularly keeping in mind her later writing which is unequivocally termed as being "unreadable". In fact, this novel presents faithfully the transition in form from Stein's early texts to what is usually termed her "experimental" or "difficult" writing. My choice of The Making of Americans alone as a text for study over and above the rest of Stein's writing is due to this reason. Also, the duration of its composition, which is a remarkable nine years (1902 - 1911), helps in seeing the gradative differences in form, while it covers the most productive years of Stein's career.

For Stein, all description in writing is aimed at the revelation of the subject, whereby "reading" becomes an act of trans-figuration. My purpose, in the final chapter, would be to examine how this transfiguration would work its way back to the original figuration of the term "reading". For if this is so, it necessarily means the bridging of the gap between what is "readable" and what is "unreadable". The question that this chapter

would address, in other words, is what makes it possible to speak of her writing as being "unconventional" or "different" for the reader (with reference to The Making of Americans).

As a way of introducing my work I would briefly sketch in this chapter a picture of the tradition she was writing in. While doing this I would also explain how she came to be in that tradition and her relations with more than one generation of artists and writers.

Stein was an American born in 1874. She was born into a rich businessman's family as the last child and led a pampered childhood. In the early years of her life the only person she was close to was her brother Leo who was two years her senior. Gertrude and Leo were taken to be 'two of a kind', intelligent and always enthusiastic about doing things. She practically shared all her interests from reading to discussion to walking with Leo. In spite of marked differences that emerged between his opinions and her own growing convictions about things, they remained together constantly. This arrangement, on Gertrude's part at least, was kept up with little choice and out of necessity. In all their conversations, Gertrude played the part of a listener, a habit that she would put to good use in her later life in her writings.

It was initially to join Leo, who was studying at Harvard, that she left home to Radcliffe ("Harvard Annex") in 1893. There was a change in her life at this point that prophesied independence. Her father, Daniel Stein, whose presence in the house was mainly repressive died in that year. The management of the family's finances passed into the hands of Gertrude's eldest brother Michael Stein who made a much more benevolent head than his father did.

At Radcliffe, however, the significance of her brother Leo's presence was foreshadowed by that of at least three major figures of the century who were teaching there - William Vaughn Moody, George Santayana and William James with whom Stein learnt psychology. Studying with William James was to leave a lasting influence upon her thinking. Her initial attraction to William James, and her ultimate rejection of his ideas was a matter not just of Stein's intellectual but also of her emotional orientation. In her Radcliffe manuscripts at one place Stein says: "Is Life worth living? Yes, a thousand times yes when the world still holds such spirits as Professor James... He stands firmly, nobly for the dignity of men. His faith is ... that ... of a strong man willing to fight, to suffer and endure" (Stein: 1949, 146).

James' ideas about "consciousness" and "selective attention" particularly characterized the manner in which she came to think about human types. Initially in "Melanctha" (Three Lives) she juxtaposes elements drawn from the Jamesian model of consciousness that orders "reality" as the selective attention to relevant data from the outside with an "unselective attention" to everything, the inspiration for which she primarily drew from Cezanne. Gradually she developed the later, as she saw more scope in it, from a mere means of expressing a difference with the Jamesian kind of "consciousness - reality" relation, to something which is capable of realizing the equality of things.

By the time Stein had come to write The Making of Americans. James had come to represent to her everything she then questioned about the nineteenth century and its values. As she went about "killing the nineteenth century" through a modernist literary practice she rejected the ideals that had once drawn her to James - the 19th century faith in "progress", in science and character.

In this sense, the association with William James cleared the way for realizing her twin ambitions of "killing the nineteenth century" and "being historical". Writing was an activity that Stein undertook regularly in her sophomore composition class. (English 22 (c)). The students were given the option of writing about anything. The forty-seven pieces that she prepared for this composition class have been collected as "Radcliffe Themes". They are direct and melodramatic (albeit autobiographical) accounts of certain episodes in her heroine's lives. Stein began to cultivate the habit of "fictionalizing" her personal problems with her sexual identity during the course of writing these assignments (Perkins: 1996, 536). The article shows how the course helped Stein not so much towards the improvement of her compositional skills, but initiated her into the processes of self-composition.

In the years 1896-97, Stein enlisted for a graduate degree in medicine at the John Hopkins Medical College, Cambridge. This she did upon the advise of William James who assured her about where her talents lay. But as Catharine Stimpson makes the observation in her essay, "The Mind, The Body, and Gertrude Stein", Stein, otherwise a competent student did badly in her medicine courses. She either failed or did badly in four courses studying "Childbirth, the orifices and openings of the body, and the skin" (Stimpson: 1977, 494). During the fourth year, while the course was **nearing** its completion, Stein abandoned it, thus finding **herself back** at square one at **the turn of the century**. Leo's latest aspiration was to become an artist and he went to Paris to pursue it. Around this time Stein suffered a series of setbacks in her love affair with a fellow student May Bookstaver. She was also discovering her lesbian orientation and having problems with

that. By 1903, the outcome of her affair with Bookstaver was more or less clear. Disillusioned with life, she left America to join her brother in Paris. In the meantime Leo had found himself a residence at 27' rue de Fleurus. Initially she went there on a holiday and to clear up the stale air that her affair left behind for her, but after a few months, she decided not to return.

Thus she became an expatriate in the early years of the century. The dates are important because Stein talks about the "modern composition" commencing around this time. Stein began to write around 1903. Her first published book was Three Lives in 1909. Within this interval Leo and she had collected a large number of Picassos and Matisses. This slowly converted their drawing-room at 27' rue de Fleurus into an art salon. Here they regularly entertained a large number of guests connected with the arts (the avant-garde) on Saturday evenings. Leo would talk and make everybody else listen to him. However Gertrude's disillusionment rankled within her as she neared her thirtieth year.

Gertrude Stein looked upon the painter Paul Cezanne as a genius. He was a French painter whose works led to the development of Cubism and abstract art.¹ Stein derived the basic idea for her composition from his painting of Mme. Cezanne - where every inch of color is given equal importance as every other inch. Looking at Cezanne's brought her to understand the difference that she struggled to express in her characters, moving away from the Jamesian notion of consciousness as an entity that reflects outside reality.

In her essay "Pictures", Stein spells out the influence he had upon her:

"And then slowly through all this and looking at many pictures, I came to Cezanne and there you were, at least there I was ... The apples looked like apples the chairs looked like chairs and it all had nothing to do with

anything because if they did not look like apples or chairs or landscape or people they were apples and chairs and landscape and people. They were so entirely these things that they were not an oil painting and that is just what the Cezannes were they were an oil painting... This then was a great relief to me and I began my writing" (Stein: 1952, 77).

Her prose style in Three Lives (especially in "Melanctha") exhibits a maturity of expression which is a blending of lessons drawn from such former artistic enterprise and the presence of a characteristically modern sensibility that is still evolving. Stein recognized early in her career that an essential feature of this sensibility is its being capable of revision and experiment.

Leaning onto this newly acquired vision from Cezanne and experimenting with the knowledge about consciousness which she had earlier received from William James, Stein liberated her art from a linear focus on an "outside" necessary for a narrative. The three women ("Good" Anna, Melanctha and "Gentle" Lena) are each of them unsolicited by change from any major external event in their lives. Stein strives to give an impression of timelessness to their lives. Their inner realities are expressed in words.

Her friendship with Picasso dates back to this early phase in her literary career. This association made her actively realize that her insights were similar to those in modern painting where content was relatively unimportant. The goal of art was the expression of the process of creation as much as the product itself. As Manly Johnson says in his essay, "the Cezanne principle that any thing is as important as any other thing was no mere formula; it meant the absolute value of buttons, recipes, umbrellas, bottles, plates, feathers, roses, dirt, copper, Rose" (Johnsons 1974, 7). This absolute value was to be expressed in

words. Stein felt that it was her eyes and mind that were *important* and concerned in this choosing:

"I write entirely with my eyes. The words as seen by my eyes are the important words, and the ears and mouth do not matter" (qtd. in Haas: 1973, 31).

Consequently there is a nominal relationship between her choice of verbs and adjectives and the "essence" of things that she sought to give expression to. Hence she writes:

"A bottle that has all the time to stand open is not so clearly shown when there is a green color there. This is not the only way to change it. A little raw potato and then all that softer does happen to show that there has been enough. It changes the expression" (Stein: 1962, 528).

For Stein it gradually became clear in the practise of her art that there could be no communication in creation. Tender Buttons (1914) and Bee Time Vine (1913) which are considered to be non-representational move her art further towards experimentation with words and their referents. According to Malcolm Bradbury, Tender Buttons alone in which the things-in-themselves are preferred to the names assigned to them "removes Stein from the realm of meaningful communication to an extent rare in Modernism" (Bradbury: 1991, 489). These texts contain play with such unalloyed properties of language such as "aural puns (including mistranslations from other languages to English and transsyllabification), rhyme, morphemes, visual format and punctuation" (Smedman: 1996, 573). In her article, Smedman points out that play between words like "bee" and "be", "class grass", "sooth for soot" makes them closely related with the body of the text.

Repetition is another feature which was equally pertinent to her work from this period as it was to her earlier, when she wrote Three Lives and The Making of Americans. She describes it thus: "It is exactly like a frog hopping he cannot ever hop

exactly the same distance or the same way of hopping at every hop". The logic behind such repeating was to make her words, especially her nouns to come alive. She says:

"When I said A rose is a rose is a rose and then later made that into a ring I made poetry and what did I do I caressed completely caressed and addressed a noun" (Stein: 1952, 231).

Concurrent to the publication of Three Lives (1909) there were at least two decisive events happening in Stein's life. The first of these (both in the order of significance and sequence) was her relationship with Alice. B. Toklas. Toklas had met Stein while touring Paris with a friend of hers and within a few meetings had decided to move in with her at 27 rue de Fleurus. Another development was that Stein's own relations with her brother had finally reached a point where they could no longer survive under the same roof together. So Leo departed from 27 rue de Fleurus taking with him the Matisses and leaving the Picassos to Stein.

Both these events can be understood as being crucial in inaugurating a new phase in Stein's writing. The "verbal still-lives" of Tender Buttons are a radical departure from all known modes of expression, even for the writer of Three Lives and The Making of Americans. One can sense the powerful change that Toklas's presence wrought in the way Stein visualized/read (her) reality.

This was also the period when her work came closely in relation to the Cubists' work, in terms of technique. The combined residence, art gallery and salon that Stein had at 27 rue de Fleurus turned out to be of considerable importance. It was here that she entertained Picasso, Matisse and the surrealists. The association between Stein and Picasso and Stein and Juan Gris,

between Juan Gris and Picasso and between Picasso and Braque grew here. Stein around this time (Just before the First World War) became interested in the work of a number of young artists like Juan Gris, Francis Picabia and Robert Coates. She talks of Picasso's and Juan Gris's cubism in The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas (1932). She thought of it as a purely Spanish conception.

"Picasso created it and Juan Gris permeated it with his clarity and his exaltation" (85). She further discusses the origins of Cubism that she and Toklas evidenced in Spain (Stein is talking as Toklas):

We were very much struck, the first time Gertrude Stein and I went to Spain, which was a year or so after the beginning of Cubism, to see how naturally cubism was made in Spain. In the shops in Barcelona, instead of post cards they had square little frames and inside it was placed a cigar, a real one, a pipe, a bit of handkerchief etcetera, all absolutely the arrangement of many a cubist picture and helped out by cut paper representing other objects. That is the modern note that in Spain had been done for centuries (86).

The relationship that Stein's writing bore towards painting can be summed up in the words of Georges Braque as follows: "The painter" says Braque, "knows things by sight; the writer, who knows them by name, profits by a prejudice in his favour" (qtd. in Brinnin: 1959, 139). This was the profit that Gertrude Stein had to do away with, in order to appropriate language from its representational mode.

Hence in a text like Tender Buttons for example, the writing is not dependent upon associational connections even when they can be found.

"A Purse"

A purse was not green, it was not straw color, it was hardly seen and it had a use a long use and the chain, the chain was never missing, it was not misplaced, it showed that

it was open; that is all that it showed"
(Stein: 1962, A69) .

Much of Stein's voluminous prose was evolved on the few austere rules of composition that she had. There is a remarkable continuity in her work from her "Radcliffe Themes" to Three Lives to the The Making of Americans in terms of (self) compositional themes. The latter work was published only in 1925, though it was completed by 1911. The "human types" that she painstakingly describes in this novel are compositions in the present which she begins again and again. Her basic contention was that "the time of the composition is the time of the composition", thereby at once limiting and opening up the possibilities for writing. The present moment is the only possibility and this is a possibility that is repeatedly present. This is the small lever upon which Stein places the entire corpus of the novel.

In terms of elucidating relations of similarity and difference, this novel which is categorized as one of Stein's "difficult texts", foregrounds writing by subsuming thought on identity history, time, etc. Coming from this same period are A Long Gay Book (1910-11) and Many Many Women (1910-11). Both these books continue to show Stein's pre-occupation with number, identity and difference and their relation to writing. She intended that A Long Gay Book go on to as many pages as The Making of Americans. This enterprise was shortened in its length owing to Stein's new interest in portraits. During the years preceding the First World War, when she came to know the new circle of painters in Paris and their work on intimate terms, Stein began to do portraits of many of them including Matisse, Picasso and Cezanne. These were first published in the August 1912 issue of "Camera Work" and were later reprinted in Portraits and Prayers (1934). She even did portraits of some of her personal friends like Mabel

Dodge. At this TIME SHE WROTE an account of HERSELF AND her brother in Two; Gertrude Stein and Her Brother (1910-12. Much later she wrote a novel and a "play" in the pastoral mode which she called Lucy Church Amiably (1927) and "Four Saints in Three Acts" (1928). Here her writing features many passages that skirt the pictorial, where there are descriptions of "nature" and "landscape", but the narrative element is missing. In the "novels" that she wrote in the twenties and thirties, there is a tinge of caricature in Mrs. Reynolds (1932) and in the shorter pieces like "Miss Furr and Miss Skeene" (Geography and Plays 1922). Stein's post-1908 work, largely experimental, was published in collections both in her lifetime (Geography and Plays. Portraits and Prayers Operas and Plays), and posthumously, in Last Operas and Plays and the eight-volume Yale Edition of The Unpublished Works of Gertrude Stein.

Her novel called Ida (1941) is a portrait of Alice. B. Toklas. Simultaneous with this kind of prose, Stein also experimented with form in plays like "Four Saints In Three Acts" and "Three Sisters who are not Sisters" which she calls a 'melodrama'. The first of these has been set to music and performed successfully. In two of her plays collected in Geography and Plays - "What happened" and "Ladies Voices", Stein caters to the connection that she found between geography, "landscape" and play-writing. The poetry that she wrote plays upon the gender limitations by again shifting the emphasis put upon words, for example in "Patriarchal Poetry" (1927) and "Lifting Belly". (1917).

Stein's early love of detective fiction enabled her to identify the specific genres she would work with and change, in the process also recreating her own self as "agency in process". As her work The Autobiography of Alice. B. Toklas illustrates,

within literature, "genre" with its etymology suggesting both "genealogy" and "gender" is the fundamental site of identity politics. More actively than ever this led to her involvement with words. Questions of identity or relatedness (in terms of themes or personal history) are difficult to pose in Stein's work. Though she was a Jewish American lesbian, as F.W. Dupee says, "she felt no urgent identification with the oppressed" (Stein: 1962, Intro. x). In his recent article that appeared in the "Modern Fiction Studies", Charles Bernstein points out that Stein's triple marginalization in these terms provided an "ontological" grounding for her "radical forms of non-identification" just as her education and affluence provided a space to perform them. Writing hence becomes for her "a state of willing, of willed unknowingness" (Bernstein: 1996, 487). Writing relations are similarly phrased in Foucault. Foucault believed that "the writer must actively create a role in the breaks and spaces afforded by the game at any particular time. Through the movement, through the leap from the inside of knowledge to an unknown outside, these breaks and spaces gradually become known" (qtd. in Spellmeyer: 1993, 71).

In The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas (1932), these questions of identity take on a generic form. An autobiography is traditionally considered to be writing by the self. The "self" is "converted" here, as Stein writes Alice's history, not just showing thereby the power of authority, but also deferring it to the catholicity that the self is capable of in writing.

Extending this play with the self-limiting aspects of genre and (authorial) identity in writing, Stein next undertook to write each one's personal history in Everybody's Autobiography. Here writing relations are entirely re-ordered with regard to the

writer-subject and hence also the reader. Cashing in again upon the play element in writing, Stein turned towards children's writing. Her book Alphabets and Birthdays accordingly includes the names of months in serial order and also simultaneously the names of the people who celebrate birthdays in these months in the alphabetical order. The World Is Round (1939) is another book, that Stein wrote for children.

When Stein went to the United States to lecture, after thirty-one years abroad, in the autumn of 1934, she saw and was excited there by a country where "there is more space where nobody is than where anybody is" (qtd. in Harrison: 1965, 48). This thought prompted her to see the history of America as a geographical one. In The Geographical History of America (1936) Stein draws a parallel between the human mind and this notion of a physical space as embodied by America. Her writing gains independence as she stops playing upon the losses and gains of individual identity. Thus to her claim that all the "literary thinking" in this age had been done by a woman.

The lectures which she had given on this tour to the United States are collected in Lectures in America (1934-35). They pertain almost singularly to her work and to the "explaining" of her difficult writing. A look at the titles would reveal that they cover the wide range of her connected thought, for example they include an essay on "English Literature", one on "Painting", then one titled "Poetry and Grammar" and another on "Plays". Stein explains her method of writing in essays like "Composition As Explanation" (1926) and "The Gradual Making of The Making of Americans" (1935). Some of her non-fictional prose is collected in How Jo Write (1928).

Stein had been through both the world wars during her long life. She describes her experience with the young American sol-

diers during the First World War in France in The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas. This was when she and Alice drove an ambulance for the "American Fund for the French Wounded". Though she did not participate in the Second World War, her interest in the American soldiers (the GI's) remained unabated and they were equally fascinated with her talk as an earlier generation of soldiers had been.

During the Second World War, Stein wrote two books in which her direct concern was war - Wars I_ have seen (1945) and Brewsie and Willie (1946). The second book was published in the year of her death. Her love of America abides with her in war-time Paris. Luckily for her, she finds American soldiers with whom she can share this love, and with whom she can triumphantly declare at the end of Brewsie and Willie: "We are Americans."

Apart from her work, during her long stay in Paris, Stein was linked with a series of movements in poetry and painting. Following the publication of Three Lives and Tender Buttons, Stein associated with a number of painters and artists, some of them with already established reputations and schools attached to them. For example, her friendship with Picasso stemmed from a close and mutually shared interest both had in each other's work.

Stein speaks of Guillaume Apollinaire with great fondness. Apollinaire is described as one of the saints of the War years and is glorified in his death as a war - hero (The Autobiography). A French poet, playwright, and a critic, he "played a defining role in the establishment of Cubism, was boldly and vigorously experimental in his own poetry (Alcools, 1913) and took his place in the very forefront of the European avant-garde. His 'surrealistic' play, "Les Mamelles de Tiresias" (published 1918) was his attempt to give imaginative form to the

new spirit it of the years" (Bradbury: 1991, 613n). Thus, apart from being a patron-saint for cubism, he also coined the word "surrealist" for which he provided a theoretical basis in L'esprit nouveau et les poètes (qtd. in Bradbury: 1991, 613n).

Surrealism had its roots in a pre-war literary/artistic group, DADA. The members of this literary/artistic group (Tzara, Breton and Creval), in spite of being a minority produced works that had a powerful message: the deliberate deconstruction of all rationally ordered institutions of the society- The "new spirit" that Apollinaire struggled to express was an extension of the Dada Manifesto that reads:

"The spirit of abstract art represents an enormous widening of men's sense of liberty. We believe in a brotherly act: this is art's new mission in society. Art demands clarity, it must serve towards the foundation of a new man."

Stein too insists that the important thing is to "have deep down as the deepest thing in you a sense of equality" (Stein: 1962, 165). Such a conception of the artist/human being at once establishes various points of similitude and difference between her and the surrealists.

Stein favoured "exactitude" and "precision" in the description of the inner and the outer realities. This led her to be able to divorce words from their conventional meaning as well as their grammatical order, while keeping her searching for a new reality with words. The democratic nature of her art lived up to its image at the level of words – she sought to re-figure relations at the fundamentals of sentence/phrase/paragraph. Her "vision" is that sense was restricted to words. "Vision" became an extremely important aspect of creation even for the surrealists who came later. For example, George Bataille's Visions of Excess: Selected writings. (1927–1939) where language becomes a

means of poetic flight and it destroyed in the process of achieving its end. In Artuad again, complete silence is a threat that would put an end not just to communication but to creation as well.

While Stein's main concern was with language alone, the surrealists in their literature, put forward an ideal of anarchy (irrationality). The goal is to enable the reader to gain a deeper understanding of order by making him participate in a kind of disorder. This irrationality was often achieved by collage. The immediacy of the act where a sewing machine and an umbrella, are photographed in proximity to each other was their ultimate goal for art. This immediacy was something that Stein herself realized as a "continuous present" in her work: "The time of the composition is the time of the composition."

The surrealists through their technique of automatic writing, were making a strong political statement. It involves a deliberate subversion of the conscious act of writing. By means of a self-induced trance, they suspended all the usual activity of the mind and focussed on the messages from the Unconscious. Here they made or at least claim to have made a find that the language of the Unconscious, unlike the language of everyday speech, was poetic. It also resembled the language of poetry in terms of its images.

The surrealists mainly recorded these messages - in other words they were not doing anything creative. Ironically the prose and poetry written in this manner is much richer in language and images, freed as it is from a conscious censor. The surrealists were quick to take note of this distinctive quality, which made their "automatic writing" almost a threat to the normal kind of writing.

It could be seen as a model for practicing democracy through art, for art then would be shorn of its former pretensions to an exclusive status. Stein's prose in Tender Buttons has certain similarities to automatic writing. The metaphorical title recalls the soft treatment of *hard* objects in the paintings of Salvador Dali.

However, in Tender Buttons, the objects that are described are ordinary and the words are deprived of any metaphorical or associational significance. Their strangeness or unreadability comes not from verbal density but from the lack of tangible connections between her verbs, nouns, prepositions and conjunctions.

"A Carafe, That is A Blind Glass"

A kind in glass and a cousin, a spectacle and nothing strange a single hurt color and an arrangement in a system to pointing. All this and not ordinary, not unordered in not resembling. The difference is spreading" (Stein: 1962, 461).

Stein is indirectly celebrating her inverted love by describing the household objects that signify the space that she shares with Alice B. Toklas. Since her love is what redeems the ordinariness of these objects for her, it is for her, love that is carefully revealed through these descriptions. Again here, Stein makes her descriptions of things move and insist upon their existence (Being).

William Gass's book of essays The World Within The Word shows the underlying patterns in these word-objects. His analysis of "A Box" is worth looking at. (Gass: 1979, 86).

"A Box"

The change in that is that red weakens an hour. The change has come. There is no search. But there is that hope there is and that interpretation and sometime surely any is unwelcome. Sometime there is breath and

there will be a **sinecure** and charming very
 charming is **that clean and** cleansing. Cer-
 taining glittering is handsome and convinc-
 ing.

The change in that is
 that red weakens an hour.
 The change has come
 There is no search.
 But there is
 that hope there is
 and that interpretation
 and sometime
 surely any(time) is unwelcome
 sometime there is breath
 and there will be a sinecure
 and charming
 very charm-
 ing is
 that
 clean
 and cleansing.
 Certainly glittering is handsome
 and convincing.

Hence these descriptions which appear to be solipsistic at
 •first glance are actually conceived upon a pattern. By this kind
 of an activity, love is once again celebrated in writing and
 thereby rescued from within the realm of necessity.

Another aspect of change is the touch of humor that mani-
 fested itself in the life and works of the surrealists. The
 surrealists laughed in the face of bourgeoisie morality/aesthetic
 values by glorifying its opposites - violence/sexuality/shit/
 death. Their art also shaped their individual lives. They be-
 lieved in liberating themselves and their impulsive loves on
 lines parallel to the ideal that they had created for their art.

Stein's play on words in the song "Susie Asado" - "A lean or,
 the shoe means slips slips hers" is not unlike the deliberate
 punning that goes on in much of the non-sense verse of the Dada-
 ists. The very essence of humor is contained in that associa-
 tional "slip". The pun here is vested in what appears to be a
 spoonerism - an, over-abundance of syllables "means slips slips
 hers".

In The Autobiography of A.B. Tokles. for instance, Stein confesses her anxiety about her compositions like Tender Buttons and says that after the initial doubts about whether they made sense, there followed the "intense feeling" that they did make sense (Stein: 1962, vii). She replied to a journalist's troubled query as to why she doesn't write as she speaks by asking him in turn why people don't read her "as she writes". This tone of deliberate ambiguity is again something that she shared with the surrealists.

Stein had better-known relations as a modernist writer with the American expatriate writers of the post-war twenties. Many of them, (Hemingway and others) had taken part in the First World War and shared their youth with the century's youth. The War altered their perceptions so drastically that they could no longer stay amidst their old associations. Flight from home (America), when they no longer felt "at home" came as an answer and came rather quickly.

Paris settled matters for a whole generation of atheists. They discovered an ideal haven to explore their "lost"-ness here. In fact the birth and christening of this era took place under the auspices of Gertrude Stein who was already there before the expatriates. Hemingway in his posthumous publication A Moveable Feast (1964), relates how Ms. Stein after having trouble with her car "Auntie", referred to a young mechanic handicapped by time lost in the war as a part of a "generation perdue". The "Lost generation" critic Malcolm Cowley touches upon a riddle in the subject - why there was a "generation" feeling accompanying the struggle for individual expression. He provides the only satisfactory definition. "In a strict sense the new writers formed what is known as a literary generation" (Cowley: 1963, 7).

With a self-conscious irony, these writers deftly adopted "lost"-ness as their geographical and psychological reality and this was realized in their artistic and literary contentions as well. Hemingway owed a literary debt to Stein that becomes traceable in the structural terseness of a short story like "Hills like White Elephants."

A statement like "the story was writing itself and I was having a hard time keeping with it" (Hemingway: 1964, 12), has clear echoes of Stein, as she puts it in "Composition As Explanation": The composition

"is the thing seen by every one in the living they are doing, they are the composing of the composition that at the time they are living is the composition of the time in which they are living" (Stein: 1962, 516).

A couple of other writers who would frequent Stein's residence at 27 rue de Fleurus during the immediate aftermath of the war were Ford Madox Ford and Scott Fitzgerald. Ford was responsible for the publishing of her long novel The Making of Americans (1925) while Hemingway corrected the proofs of the same. Stein talks about this in The Autobiography. While she labelled them as a generation "who drank themselves to death", she was at the same time aware of their tragic literary sensibilities.

Hemingway promotes this kinship when at one point in A Moveable Feast he says that "They say the seeds of what we will do are in all of us, but it always seemed to me that in those who make jokes in life the seeds are covered with better soil and with a higher grade of manure" (Hemingway: 1964, 94).

This picture of the "sad young men" is true of almost all of Fitzgerald's heroes. He offers a candid summing-up of one of the famous dilemmas of the age in "The Crack-Up":

"I must hold in balance the sense of the necessity of struggle, the conviction of the

inevitability of failure and still the determination to succeed - and more than these, the contradiction between the dead hand of the past and the high intentions of the future" (qtd. in Howard: 1972, 83).

Though Stein herself did not belong to any literary group, her identity, both as an expatriate American and a writer affirms her relationship with these writers. Most notably, one of her rules of composition, "begin again and again" plays on the theme of loss and gain. This was to remain a life-long pre-occupation with her. In an interview that appeared in the New York Times Magazine, she says,

"I have been asked are the young men of this war after the war is over, are they going to be sad young men. No I do not think so. And I do not think so for a most excellent reason, they are sad young men already, if you are sad young men then there is a fair chance that life will begin at 30 instead of ending at 30. And I think more or less that is what is going to happen to this generation..." (Stein: 1945).

This is no naive presumption on Stein's part. She is in a sense writing her own (as well as her age's) history. By bringing in the phrase "sad young men", in what cannot be considered otherwise except as a tactical gesture, Stein is actively trying to regenerate/create the sensibilities of the "lost generation" which was originally her own "generation".

Stein's relations with this series of young writers writing in the twenties (Hemingway, Faulkner and many others among them) established her both as a modernist writer and as a member of the avant-garde (It earned for her the title of "Mother Goose of Montparnesse"). Her particular mode of vision that made her experiment with words was something that many of these writers found to be useful. For restless story tellers like Hemingway and Sherwood Anderson, the fact that she had already done this with writing was itself enough attraction. Her model served the

age all the way through.

She herself explains this in The Autobiography; "Gertrude Stein never corrects any detail of anybody's writing, she sticks strictly to general principles, the way of seeing what the writer chooses to see, and the relation between the vision and the way it gets down. When the vision is not complete the words are flat, it is very simple, there can be no mistake about it, so she insists" (Stein: 1962, 202).

The publication of The Making of Americans (1925) coincides with the initiation of Stein in the role of a literary mentor to this group of younger writers (Hemingway, Fitzgerald, Elliot Paul, Eugene Jolas, Ford and others). After a number of trials to publish the book in full form, Stein consented to bring it out as a serial in the "Transatlantic" whose editor was Ford. The mode of the novel is something like a modern saga, its "history" comprising the whole of America as a "family" (The sub-title the text offers is "Being a History of a Family's Progress"). However Stein's ambition also to realize and possibly exhaust the whole of humanity sets the novel apart from other American saga narratives published within the same decade such as Faulkner's Sound and The Fury (1929). Traditionally, a "history" would be written in a linear fashion. The history of a "family" moreover demands adherence to some chronological order within the narrative. The word "progress" would indicate logical and coherent development in plot, character etc. Though it might not seem so in the beginning, the crucial word in the sub-title is "being", for it re-defines all these subsequent terms. The Making of Americans plays with all these conventions. In the seven sections within the text, Stein departs from her set intention to tell the "story of a family" (in the literal sense) any number of times to a prolonged rendering of individual human beings. (or

the **type** they belong to). The novel also deviates from the norm of **giving** a complete history of each important individual character. (For example, we cannot know when Martha Hersland and Alfred Hersland died, though we are told in the concluding section that each one sometime then comes to be a "dead one"). While giving their individual "histories" Stein concentrates only on the "time-sense" within them and how it determines their reality. The relations each one has to various others at different periods in a life-time are described in terms of having an "important feeling" because of somebody or somebody deriving an "important feeling" out of doing something in "family living" (for example, Julia Dehning's marriage to Alfred Hersland). This aspect of each individual's "real" history contributes to the "fiction." of family living.

From all this, one can see how The Making of Americans, though still a novel about America and concerned about the "individual"¹, differs remarkably from the traditional American family saga. In fact in trying to move away from the tradition, its concern is to re-write the genre. The next chapter will deal with the period of the novel's actual composition, the directing principles that refigured it, and the evolution of "time-sense"¹ in each character in the latter drafts. The Making of Americans pre-figures the successes and failures of Stein's personal odyssey as a modern writer/human being.

Notes

1. Paul Cezanne (1839-1906). His famous paintings include a view of "Mont Sainte-Victorie" and "The Card Players".
2. Stein talks about her residence 27 Rue de Fleurus in the Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas (1932) at considerable length, especially in the chapter titled "1907-1914".
3. For an interesting analysis of Stein's works from this period, look at the chapter titled "Landscape" in Marianne DeKoven's A Different Language: Gertrude Stein's Experimental Writing. (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1983) 112-147. DeKoven looks at Stein's "landscape" writing in these terms: "... Stein begins to re-espouse other conventional literary values in this period as well. As a mode of writing, "landscape" is premised precisely on this re-espousal of continuity and cohesion without concomitant return to clarity, order, coherence. Therefore, we can take experimental incoherence as assumed, and claim that the more powerful the mode of cohesion in a piece of "landscape" writing, the more successful that writing is. Thematic center is a powerful mode of cohesion" (131).

CHAPTER II "BEGINNINGS"

The story of The Making of Americans which Stein took nine years to complete (1902-1911) is one of successive beginnings. Amidst variegated influences, as Richard Bridgman suggests in his book Gertrude Stein In Pieces (1970), there was a strong autobiographical intention in her work, at least in the earlier drafts of the book (completed during 1902-1906). Very little of what happened to her during the writing of these initial drafts is omitted in the "Notebooks" which she kept at this time. Consequently very little escapes the attention of the reader of these "Notebooks".

By 1902, Stein had concluded her disastrous affair with May Bookstaver. Finding little that she could do in America that would be of any interest to her, and being "sad with longing and sick with desire" (as she describes Adele in Things As They Are, she fled to Europe to join her brother, Leo, at his residence in Paris. Staying here, she encouraged him in his pursuit of a career as an artist.

Here she began keeping "notebooks which gradually accumulated the memories, observations, quotations and story material" that made the book. Description, of various human beings and their types was fast becoming an obsession with her. While attempting this, she fell back to the language of psychology that she had acquired from William James. In the chapter titled "The Stream of Thought" in his book The Principles of Psychology (1890), James concludes with regard to human consciousness that "no state once gone can recur and be identical with what it was before" (230). The idea of repetition which was to become important in Stein's work in due course is found embedded in this assertion. Repeated reactions of sameness related to objects

makes an individual corroborate in himself the notion of reality in the past, present or future.

Further James says that the object of our thought is its "entire content or deliverance" (275). This equates the content' of the thought with its expressive form. The object of every thought is "neither more nor less than all that the thought thinks, exactly as the thought thinks it, however complicated the matter, and however symbolic the manner of thinking may be" (276). This development recorded in James is reflected in Stein's love of "exactitude".

James contends that the human perception is based upon what he calls "selective industry", (286) . He says that our consciousness "is always interested more in one part of its object, than in another, and welcomes and rejects, or chooses, all the while it thinks" (284). James extends this thesis to the fields of art and morality: "The ethical energy par excellence has to go farther and choose which interest out of several, equally coercive, shall become supreme... his choice really lies between one of several equally possible future characters" (288). In the long run, Stein found such a notion of "character" based upon selective attention to be untenable with the expression of reality, even though she was initially attracted by the assumption. For all practical purposes, James' idea of "selective attention" furnished the cause and the reality of human consciousness. James also says that "thought may, but need not, in knowing, discriminate between its object and itself. (275). The view that the object of the thought is also the form, while it qualifies the thinker to some extent, does not exclude the possibility that such attention might indeed be free of any further determining characteristics outside the thought itself. Thus Stein found a

way out of the entirely behaviouristic implications of "selective attention", as a way of characterizing individuals, by simply observing the indeterminacy of attention at least in some.

In the beginning she struggled to come to terms with "human conflict" through personalized narrative as in Things As They Are. However the result of this effort was far from cathartic, for Stein tries to attain objective distance mainly through "unsorted material". What she instead achieves is a literary post-mortem of her affair with May Bookstaver. At the same time she provides the necessary emphases for her later work in Things As They Are while describing the triangular love of her three characters. Description would be of paramount importance to her work for at least a whole decade.

The date of commencement of her writing of The Making of Americans is of crucial importance. For as Leon Katz suggests in his introduction to Fernhurst, Q. E. D. and Other Early Writings (1971), if the book was begun during her stay in England in 1902, this was the interval between her break-up with Bookstaver and her later decision to go and stay with her brother at Paris. This date, as Katz is quick to observe, establishes The Making of Americans as a text preceding either Things As They Are (1903) or Three Lives (1906-7). The trip that Stein made to America in February of 1903 gave the decisive and final turn to her relationship with May Bookstaver. It was decisive because it gave Stein some sustainable insights into human character. As Katz records, Stein soon after reaching there had written "we have just gotten into position". Katz points out that thus "the terrain of which Stein had caught a mere 'glimpse' at the very beginning had finally become her daily habitation" (Katz: 1971, xx). However Stein's attempt at resuming their relationship on the basis of her new insight failed. It only led her to the sad

realization that "their pulses were differently timed" (Katz: xx).

This inclination toward character description that Stein felt here is the first evidently recorded account of it since the compositional themes she did while at Radcliffe. The traces of James' thinking can be detected in the manner Stein chooses to express the principle behind her writing. "Composition" and "time-sense" which form the axes of her writing are terms related to the concept of "duration" which can be found in the chapter "The Perception of Time" in The Principles of Psychology. James calls "The unit of composition of our perception of time" as duration; "... It is only as parts of this duration block that the relation of succession of one end to the other is perceived. We do not first feel one end and then feel the other after it, and from the perception of the succession infer an interval of time between, but we seem to feel the interval of time as a whole, with the two ends embedded in it" (610). The individual expression of each one's "time-sense" which Stein evolves in the first section of The Making of Americans parallels this concept of "duration" in James.

It is significant that Stein referred to The Making of Americans variously as "the long book", "the old book", and "the book about America", suggesting improvisation both in terms of theme and method over the nine-year period when she undertook this ambitious project. These labels on the one hand reveal Stein's reluctance to talk directly about the book that cost her the maximum in terms of effort, time and perseverance, and on the other hand of the uncertain nature of the ambition itself.

These facts and inferences that sustained interest in The Making of Americans for the audience, also open up the question

of where its significance lies. Mallarme once said, "A poem is made of words". Taken in that sense Stein's novel The Making of Americans is a long prose-poem; it seeks a uniqueness of expression in a repetitive present. The connection that one can draw between the poem that Mallarme visualizes and the particular kind of expression one finds in Stein's prose is one of deliberate-ness. Writing is a conscious activity. What appears as its logic can actually be dictated by an outside necessity, in which case the words themselves are supplied from the outside, and thereby used for secondary purposes; or the logic is self-supplied in which instance writing becomes more exciting, because then the word is simply the written word and has no other value/reference that stands investigation. The second kind of writing leads to an inherent paradox. Such writing tends to gain an "abstract" color when words are used in their own right ("Any one can go on not doing something" p. 402), even though in actuality it is an attempt to relate words to a condition of intense "materiality".

In The Making of Americans, where Stein gives us a broad sampling of various types of human beings, the writing is of the second kind. Things like identity and history are presented **because** they are seen as being important for writing. Living makes for a confusion between the "insides" and the "outsides". Love, marriage and "family Living" are highly **improbable though** significant games that people play with each other. Stein says at the beginning of the novel that:

"we need only realize our parents, remember our grand parents and know ourselves and our history is complete" (3).

Yet what ironically completes this history is its very improbability because:

"We all begin well, **for** in our youth there is nothing we are more intolerant of than our own sins writ large in others and we fight them fiercely in ourselves: but we grow old and we see that these our sins are of all sins the really harmless ones to own, nay that they give a charm to any character, and so our struggle with them dies away" (3).

The seven sections in the novel, where Stein proceeds to give individual histories of the "family living" (I - "The Dehmings and Herslands", II - "The Hersland Parents," **III** - Mrs. Hersland and The Hersland Children") and later of each one's "being" (IV - "Martha Hersland", V - "Alfred Hersland", VI "David Hersland") can be read in terms of achieving a balance between the prominence of beginning and this sense of futility. The final section titled "A History of a Family's Progress" re-echoes the novel's original ambition stated in the sub-title as understanding the progress in "family living".

The uncertainty of tone and purpose that Stein displayed in talking about it during its composition belies the ring of conviction that almost singularly characterizes the book, even into its lengthy digressions. This is true except for certain passages where indications of initial cynicism towards the project can be found in a reconsidered fashion.

"It is a very strange feeling when one is loving a clock that is to every one of your class of living an ugly and a foolish one ... or you like something that is a dirty thing and no one can really like that thing or you write a book and while you write it you are ashamed for every one must think you are a silly or a crazy one and yet you write it and you are ashamed, you know you will be laughed at or pitied by every one and you have a queer feeling and you are not certain and you go on writing." (282).

The cynicism revealed in these lines is related to an earlier "listening" to criticism leveled against the self - with the qualities ascribed to its choice being "ugly", "foolish",

"dirty", or "crazy". The problem thereof is in the self being looked at variously as something to be "ashamed of", "laughed at", or "pitied by" every one. The difficulty presented for writing is met with by overcoming there problematic assumptions or in the form of that overcoming.

One is not intrigued, hence, by the question as to what really made her write, for as it comes out clearly here, writing was "primitive love" for Stein and all our loves are at one level little more than rationalizations.

The question that one can ask is what led her to begin "again and again" with The Making of Americans. Stein's claim about the novel "being a history of a family's progress" is evidenced in the interesting anecdote at the beginning of the novel, which looks like a bare recording of facts, suppressing all the melodrama:

"Once an angry man dragged his father along the ground through his own orchard. 'Stop!' cried the groaning old man at last, 'Stop!' I did not drag my father beyond this tree" (3).

History is here being re-membered and enacted along personal lines. Identity is given only as a relation in age – the individuals are a son and a father and a son again. Identity is again "dragged" into the picture in the phrase "his own orchard". There is an element of "lived" identity that is emphasized here.

One can see a parallel development between the number of existing drafts (composed during the years 1902-1911) of the book and changes achieved in the "unsorted material" within each successive draft. For example the very terms that Stein uses to locate the significance of beginnings change. To quote from an earlier draft:

"No, It is not for need of strongly featured out-of-doors that we use the old world, it is for an accomplished harmony between a people and their land, for what understanding we have of the thing we tread, WE the children of one generation. However let us take comfort, beginnings are important nay to our modern world more important than fulfillment and so we go cheerily on with our story" (138).

These beginnings take an unrecognisable form in the final draft that was finished in 1911:

"And so since there is no other way to do with our kind of thinking we will make our elders to be for us the grown old men and women in our stories, or the babies or the children. We will be always, in ourselves, the young grown men and women. And so now we begin, and with such men and women as we have old or as very little, in us, to our thinking" (6).

There is but little choice. Having acknowledged the necessity of beginnings, Stein refuses to take "comfort" from them in an "important" way to "go cheerily on with our story". She shifts the focus so that in the place of "an accomplished harmony between a people and their land" we have "our elders to be for us the grown old men and women in our stories", with whom "we begin".

Stein begins the novel with the first generation of people who have come from Europe, but the "living" of these people also in a sense begins in America. She tells us that she is beginning to describe the beginnings of these people which were real to them and hence to her also. There is a struggle not to take the reality of their beginnings for granted for herself and in order not to do so, she "uses everything", which is still in consonance with her liking to do it. This is evident in the caution she expresses with regard to Julia Hersland.

"And so those who read much in story books surely now can tell what to expect of her, and yet, please reader, remember that this is

perhaps not the whole of our story either, neither her father for her, nor the living down her mother who is in her, for I am not yet ready to take away the character from our Julia, for truly she may work out as the story books would have her or we may find all different kinds of things for her, and so reader, please remember, the future is not yet certain for her, and be you well warned, reader, from the vain-glory of being sudden in your judgement of her" (14).

For one still runs the risk of using up everything as in the case of David Hersland- Here the struggle is still there but it is submerged in the importance of beginnings alone:

"He was strong, then in beginning, he was strong in fighting, he was always changing, he was very strong in fighting. In his business living this came out in him, it came out in him in his ways of eating, in his ways of doctoring, in his ways of educating children... To the end of his business living he had in him a big beginning..."

The size of the book grew in proportion to Stein's continued interest in human beings. Keeping close to beginnings yet, Stein makes a map of individual character-types. However nowhere does she furnish their characteristics with regard to specific details of dress, language, customs etc. No definite information is given concerning such things. Clive Bush suggests that The Making of Americans is "theoretical biography". Instead of creating fictional characters, that lend stability to her novel, Stein makes provisional (independent/dependent, dependent/independent) categories for understanding the being "coming out of" people. These categories though arbitrary by themselves, nevertheless supply the basis for grounding her interest in human beings. Her language, thereafter, shifts itself onto this main trajectory of her interest - towards an expression of their "bottom being". Any additional associative words are few and far between. William James (in the chapter "the Stream of Thought") makes it clear that consciousness is

"interrupted and continuous, in the mere time-sense of the words. But in the other sense of continuity, the sense of parts being inwardly connected and belonging together because they are parts of a common whole, the consciousness remains sensibly continuous and one" (238).

Seen this way, the principle "begin again and again" in Stein's compositional practice resolves this apparent paradox, which is a fact of each individual consciousness. Beginnings assume significance in relation to living/being. For otherwise:

"To be ourself like an old man or an old woman to our feeling must be a horrid losing-self sense to be having. It must be a horrid feeling, like the hard leaving of our sense when we are forced into sleeping or the coming to it when we are just waking" (6).

Beginnings have to be taken into account not only from a theoretical interest in her work, but even from the aspect of its making itself. A lot of ground can be covered in terms of understanding The Making of Americans if one investigates the various beginnings in Stein's life and work. In a sense one is presented with many makings in terms of drafts and revisions. Each of these drafts, seen in a series of beginnings, is stronger than the earlier drafts, and does not leave out anything. It is true that Stein's own efforts are akin in spirit to those of David Hersland's "big beginning". At the same time, she again ensures that each of these beginnings in various drafts is towards 'a gain'. Specifically, Stein was fighting against failure and this fight took the guise of a new beginning each time. Failure expressed itself as "loss" or confusion to her "literary thinking". Here also there is a struggle but the struggle is not related to, or does not lead to, any specific beginning. In writing the history of Martha Redfern, Stein makes it out as a loss in her protagonist's living:

"Martha Redfern never understood what had happened to her. In a dazed blind way she

tried all ways of breaking through the walls that confined her. She threw herself against them with impatient energy and again she tried to destroy them piece by piece. She was never quite certain whence came the blow, how it was dealt, or why" (263).

This is partly so because "a beginning of a description of the being in Martha Hersland as beginning" (230) does not illustrate "whether Martha was the kind of them having attacking as their natural being, the kind of them having resisting as their natural being" (233).

In the many beginnings in Stein's writing the loss/gain of self/identity in very definite terms is readily made available for investigation. What one must be prepared to encounter if one wants to understand something at all costs, is the inevitability of many beginnings. And Stein knew this. Sometimes, however, in the absence of understanding, beginnings become a drive towards desperation. For example, in spite of the fact that Martha "always commenced again and again for Martha was full up with desiring beginning" (233). "... it came very nearly being certain that she would not be succeeding in living but she might have been succeeding in living" (275).

In a sense Stein draws attention to the literary enterprise itself in The Making of Americans, as in her later non-fictional prose like "Composition As Explanation". Theoretically beginnings are necessary for writing. However any beginning is not possible in practise, unless there is an earlier beginning even though that beginning contained only an expression of confusion within the self or an escape from the self. What characterizes such beginnings is their indeterminacy. Each such beginning avails of experience still in all its manifold possibilities. For Stein clearly, this demarcates the basic premises of writing. In this context, one can cite the French theorist Gilles Deleuze

to provide a parallel. Here too, any significance writing may have is shown to be only relative and not absolute.

"Writing is a question of becoming, always incomplete, always in the midst of being formed, and goes beyond the matter of any liveable or lived experience... To become is not to attain a form (identification, imitation, Mimesis) but to find the zone of proximity, indiscernability, or undifferentiation where one can no longer be distinguished from a woman, an animal, or a molecule- neither imprecise nor general, but unforeseen and non-preexistent, singularized out of a population rather than determined in a form... rather than acquiring formal characteristics, he enters a zone of proximity (Deleuze: 1997, 225, emphasis added).

Deleuze alludes to Bergson to point out that the fabulating function (in writing) "attains these visions, it raises itself to these becomings and powers" - thereby the writing is pushed to "an outside or reverse side that consists of visions and Auditions that no longer belong to any language" (230). Stein's efforts in beginning again and again can be understood precisely in terms of attaining such a "zone or proximity".

One can cite an early example of a beginning that expresses confusion within the self from her "Radcliffe Themes". In a piece titled "In the Red Deeps" Stein makes her character Hortense voice her anxiety in the following manner:

"As she passed out of the quiet retreat, the east wind struck her, and increased the tumult in her soul. 'I will walk it down' she said aloud. 'I must escape from myself'. She started up over the hill at a quick pace, but even that did not satisfy her, faster and faster she went, panting as she climbed the steep hills, but utterly oblivious of her bodily strain, anxious only to escape from self" (141).

The movement here is expressed in the physical action of climbing up a hill. Hortense seeks freedom in the outside world,
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through a frenzy that is ultimately self-defeating. In contrast, Stein adopts a different strategy in The Making of Ameri-

cans where the movement is "internalized" and absorbed within the manner of seeking a new beginning. This is so because here the stakes are acknowledged, retained, and hence realized for what they are worth:

"We flee before the disapproval of our cousins, the courageous condescension of our friends who gallantly sometimes agree to walk the streets with us, from all them who never anyway understand why such ways and not others are dear to us, we fly to the kindly comfort of an older world accustomed to take all manner of strange forms into its bosom..." (20).

Once a beginning has been made somewhere else, it makes for a difference. Reconciliation is sought with one's difference in the form of "the kindly comfort of an older world" instead of subjecting one's self to "bodily strain" which paradoxically proves to be inadequate. Such a beginning indicates a re-visioning of earlier beginnings, as a method of approach of arriving at definite expressions of loss/gain in terms of identity-relations.

In this instance there is a definite "gain" in the adoption of an older world accustomed to take all manner of strange forms into its bosom" for it follows upon the lament that singularity "is as yet an unknown product with us" (20).

Stein considers "custom", "passion" and "a feel for mother earth" the three things necessary to breed vital singularity in any man. This "singularity" looked at with regard to Stein's expatriation, converts its own principles into those of her writing.

Flight in this context is not in order to escape reality but to re-vision or make a new reality. To quote Deleuze again, "To write is also to become something other than a writer. To those who ask what literature is, Virginia Woolf responds, to whom are you speaking of writing? The writer does not speak about it, but

is concerned with something else" (230).

Stein realized that the difference ("queerness") is possible only if it is made explicit through its beginnings in "time and a certainty of place and means"(the aspects of its "making" so as to speak). Until then it is not made known. The difficulty involved in these beginnings is this, for it also involves simultaneously the necessity to begin "a gain" through writing.

This again takes time. For Stein's intention of beginning a gain is directly manifested as 'beginning again'. More and more while writing, Stein, has to "repeat" her own attending to the way "all of them are always repeating themselves" to make out their "difference".

The gain that one can achieve in this manner is a complicated one. "Making" to be seen in these terms involves creation as well as the process of creation. Stein talks about this 'making' in "The Gradual Making of The Making of Americans":

"When I was up against the difficulty of putting down the complete conception that I had of an individual, the complete rhythm of a personality that I had gradually acquired by listening seeing feeling and experience, I was faced by the trouble that I had acquired all this knowledge gradually but when I had it, I had it completely at one time... And a great deal of The Making of Americans was a struggle to do this thing, to make a whole present of something that it had taken a great deal of time to find out, but it was whole there then within me and as such it had to be said" (249).

The practical constraint expressed here (with regard to the limits of human memory and the passing of time) epitomizes the problem of beginnings for Stein. This also creates the necessity for the "time-sense" in each individual as something to be "read" – as a basis for the possible 'availability' of beginnings.

For all these reasons knowing a gain is again a problem and demands constant re-visioning. The medium being the written word,

re-vision is tied up to the question of form. As Randi Koppen says, Stein's aesthetic aim lies in setting up "precise, intimate and unmediated contact with the object of attention and with the moment it occurs" (Koppen: 1997, 797). To support this claim he quotes from Stein's Narration :

"How do you know anything well you know anything as having it completely in you at the moment you have it. That is what knowledge is, and essentially therefore knowledge is not succession but an immediate existing" (30).

The implication is that any knowledge that comes as succession is appropriation. In the absence of succession, beginning "again and again" becomes imperative for knowing and thereby the only way in which writing can proceed.

Koppen goes into much detail to explain "an aesthetic of significant form" in Stein's work. He suggests that Stein's difference lies in her concern "with a relation between subject and object as constitutive of 'knowledge' (801). This relational difference is what her form seeks to establish. The gain comes through altering the terms of experiencing 'knowing'. These terms are actively re-visioned in every beginning in her work. This movement toward "an aesthetic of significant form" (by extending Koppen's argument) is a necessary ideal that gave a vision to each of the beginnings in Stein's work. As she records it:

"It is very clear to me and to my feeling, it is very slow in developing, it is clear now in writing, it must be done now with a slow description" (217).

"This is then a beginning, always then there is some winning knowing. Sometime perhaps it will be clear in some one the knowing. Sometime perhaps it will be clear in some one, this being in any one, always then there is some winning knowing ... This is then again a beginning" (223).

Stein's ambition towards "winning knowing" simultaneously seeks expression in writing. However there is no perfect correlation between "winning knowing" and each successive beginning that she made in her writing. This is not to say that they are independent of each other, but as I have tried to show above, both are bound by a third question, that of form. "Form" as Randi Koppen defines it, is "the 'mark' of aestheticism, of art and artifice, and may be understood as the condition which at once produces and withholds meaning" (Koppen: 798). To put it more simply, there is nothing pre-existent about form. It has at least three identifiable components to it in all normal circumstances (in writing) - the linguistic, the spatial and the temporal. Something is said to possess a form (a cube, a sentence) only if it fulfills at least two of the three above-mentioned specifications. It gains an identity only through form (even a dot or a straight line for that matter occupies space and time).

'Identity' has two mutually interdependent components in it. 'Id', signifying a flight arranged on the pleasure principle in 'entity' - the fact of existence, being. Stein seeks to give expression to both these elements in her writing. The fact that being is not a non-entity (even when it seeks expression only through 'id') forces one to make a beginning.

In beginnings, 'id' and 'entity' are in an unequal relation to each other and this conflict can be resolved only formally (the driving question behind Stein's work was "How can anything be different from what it is"). Form is the significant link between 'id' and 'entity' of being and the making of these as 'identity' in writing. As Stein would often like to say, "What is strange is this". Form is also the liberating agent that creates identity. Identity once determined can exist even when

faced with non-being through the form **that** gives expression to such a state:

"Any one can come to be one coming
not to be going on being living".

'Any one' can still retain their "any one"-ness once the possibility of non-existence has been given expression. Thus "any one" ness is a gain that one can form in terms of identity relations. Here one begins a circular gain between existence and non-existence: "... can come to be coming not to be..."

"Any one can come to be one coming not to be going on being living, in a family living, any family living can then have been something been existing" (411).

'Any one' as an identity relation comes to be a significant gain when one bears in mind the fact of Stein's expatriation. This is the fruit of Stein's constant "labour" with the "materiality of language" after having declared herself a stranger to it. (Randi Koppen: 804). Regarding her expatriation, however, Leon Katz notes in his introduction to Fernhurst, Q.E.D. and Other Early Writings (1971) that "the notebooks and her letters of her first month in Paris - in fact of her first four years there - suggest that Stein underwent a period of the most relentless despair, surrender of ambition and psychological disorientation" (xxix).

Fernhurst. written in 1903, was later revised and included in The Making of Americans as an episode in the life of Martha Hersland. This passage (written in 1908) can be cited as evidence of Stein's constant "labour" with her material and her gain from retrogressive beginnings.

"Categories that once to some one had real meaning can later in that same one be all empty. It is queer that words that meant something in our thinking and feeling can later come to have in them in us not at all any meaning ... There is ... so complete a changing of experiencing in feeling and

thinking, ... that something once alive to some one is then completely a stranger to that one, the meaning in a word to that one "the meaning in a way of feeling and thinking that is a category to some one,these then come to *be* all lost to that one some time later in the living of that one" (Katz: xxxvi).

This composition of reality that Stein attempts through the materiality of language is fully realized only in the final chapter of The Making of Americans, where she is able to express a specific gain in identity-relations through the expression "any one".

In this chapter (written in 1911) the beginnings Stein had made earlier with her descriptions covering psychological types in words are clearly evolved as literary gains. "Any one has come to be a dead one."

The gains in identity relations, thus seen are hence literally far-fetched from their real beginnings:

"... some then have a little shame in them when they are copying an old piece of writing where they are using words that some time had real meaning in them to the feeling and thinking and imagining of such a one. Often then I have to lose words I have once been using, now I commence again with words that have meaning, a little perhaps I had forgotten when it came to copying the meaning in some of the words I have just been writing ... now to begin a description of Philip Redfern and always now I will be using words having in my feeling, thinking, imagining very real meaning" (Katz: xxxvii).

Notes

1. **The** "frenzy" is related to the character's sense **of time** and **the** necessity for a progressive evolution. A useful insight can be obtained from Richard Coe's analysis of technique in his book Samuel Beckett: "Narrative is unsuited to non-linear language, it does take several words to tell a story, and they therefore "take time"; this is what accounts for the frenzy in Faulkner, the anxiety in Beckett, and the assurance in Stein" (17).(qtd. in Kawin: 1972, 129-30n.)

CHAPTER III

"ORDERING": DESCRIPTION IN THE MAKING OF AMERICANS

In the previous chapter I looked at "beginnings" in Stein's The Making of Americans as a useful way of arriving at a knowledge of identity-relations in her work. There I simultaneously made an attempt to show possibilities of assessing the importance of her expatriation to her work (in terms of her compositional principle "to begin again and again"). I tried to show sufficient justification for exploring this model by drawing upon Stein's affinity towards America during her expatriate years. She expressed this in her work and also in the lectures she gave on her 1934 tour of America.

The present chapter will deal with the "method" of composition in The Making of Americans. Over the past three decades this novel has generated a considerable amount of critical attention. Detailed analyses of the text have been pursued from various angles by scholars involved in Stein criticism. To mention only a few good and reliable studies here, I would include Leon Katz's analysis (in his essay "Weininger and The Making of Americans (1978)) of the influence of Otto Weininger's book Sex and Character upon Stein's thinking about human types. This essay argues that the reading of the book in 1906 brought about definitive changes in Stein's earlier assumptions about human types. Katz while doing so also takes into consideration the extensive notes that Stein made of this book. Another useful and interesting model for analysis is the chapter on The Making of Americans in Richard Bridgman's book Gertrude Stein In Pieces (1970). Bridgman - adopts a perspective which integrates autobiographical facts with textual problems to gain new insights. A third work is Lisa Ruddick's Reading Gertrude Stein (1990) which contains exhaustive psychoanalytic and feminist interpretations of Three

Lives and The Making of Americans. This book shows Stein's adherence to Jamesian psychology in her Three Lives (1909) period. It also shows her break from it in The Making of Americans (1911-25) decisively toward "repetition" and discusses what it stands for in Freudian and psychoanalytic terms. The book while it stretches the analysis to its logical conclusion within its framework, also clarifies beyond doubt the transition in Stein's vision and method from an "exact description of inner and outer reality" in "Melanctha" to "repetition" in The Making of Americans.

Another recent critical study worth mentioning is Ellen E. Berry's book Curved Thought and Textual Wandering; Gertrude Stein's Post Modernism (1992). It analyses and critiques the shortcomings of at least two interpretations that provide a possible tool for reading Stein. One is the modernist judicial plot of "struggle" against the father which is put forth by the feminists. The other is the post-modernist relational plot of "escape" from the law to an "intersubjective space of perfect mutuality". Both these 'plots' are taken to be productive and enabling narratives. Yet the book says that they are confined within a metanarrative logic that precludes the emergence of 'sites of difference - points of resistance to that evolution will disappear'. The problem, as the book recognizes, arises out of imposing an interpretive code: "how to speak difference without returning through and to "an economy of the same".

The book suggests possible ways of reading Stein's works which "move beyond mimetic norms and forms in fiction" in terms of specifically evolved "reading moments". In order to tackle the difficulty of these works directly, the attempt is to understand them as writings that seek "non-oppositional fundamental difference" (in Cixous' terms).

An awareness of these **critical** stances has been indispensable to my understanding of The Making of Americans. My discussion of Stein's method in this chapter is essentially limited to three aspects of mutual significance. These include looking at Stein's views about plot, character, and reality, categories of importance in the nineteenth century. She takes each of these categories into account in her non-fictional prose, for example in Narration (1936) and in "Composition As Explanation" (1926). This is within the context of her claims about plot and narrative sequence in writing.

Secondly, my aim is to consolidate the frame work that I had earlier investigated (in "Beginnings") for defining the scope of her method. The "any one" space that she achieved is significant in the light of locating the significance of beginnings, as well as in changing the descriptive reality in her composition. This makes the twin poles of her composition with regard to realizing for "everyone" their "last touch of being in history" and to description as a goal in itself. Both configure the kind of plot visible in The Making of Americans.

The third function of this chapter would be to provide a reworkable vocabulary to understand the connection that Stein makes between writing-description-listing (in "Composition As Explanation".) Here I borrow from the theory of language/writing that Foucault attributes to Borges' classification of animals (in the introduction to The Order of Things) which is in some sense analogous to the theory behind Stein's "lists". Listing helps her to change the conventional narrative order into one of repetition.

In writing The Making of Americans where she tells the history of a family's progress in seven sections. Stein elaborated upon the compositional principle of a "continuous present". The idea is connected with her complex views about narration. In order to make a conceivable beginning she fought to beat the nineteenth century back to its literary grave. She discovered the "time-sense" in the conventional narrative to be of no use for her purposes. Eased upon this discovery, she sought to alter the necessity of beginning, middle and an end in writing. Stein speaks about this difference in Narration:

"Narrative has been the telling of anything because there has always been a feeling that something followed another thing that there was succession in happening (18). ...the narrative of today is not a narrative of succession as all the writing for a good many hundred of years has been" (20).

Stein takes the two fundamental elements that constitute the compositional reality most obviously, "time" and "expression" and re-orders the hypothesis. These two things served her while writing The Making of Americans in an important way. Throughout the novel instead of concentrating upon the plot or a single character, Stein's effort is to create in terms of "specificity" while describing each one's reality. For as she explains in "Composition As Explanation":

"The only thing that is different from one time to another is what is seen and what is seen depends upon how everybody is doing everything" (Stein: 1962, 513, emphasis added.)

The specificity is something which she ultimately extends to description itself (in a generic sense). For example, the following account of 'washing' from the text points to Stein's interest in describing it, to the extent that she begins by calling it a "question".

"It is a great question this question of washing. One never can find any one who can be satisfied with anybody else's washing. I knew a man once who never as far as any one could see ever did any washing, and yet he described another with contempt, why he is a dirty hog sir, he never does any washing the French tell me its the Italians who never do any washing, the French and the Italians both find the Spanish a little short in their washing, the English find all the world a little lax in this business of washing, and the East finds all the West a pig ... And so it goes." (14)

While writing this section Stein however is primarily creating the "time-sense", for "nothing changes from generation to generation except the thing seen, and that makes a composition".

Hence, there follows upon all the elaboration on the particular varieties of washing the reassurance "Yes, George Dehning was not at all foreign in his washing but for him, too, the old world was not altogether lost behind him" (16).

While describing "how everybody is doing everything", her composition expresses itself as a struggle, more often simply a difference between the "old" and the "new". What determines the "time-sense" of this relational difference is essentially encountered in the form of the habit, the feeling or the knowing of various things. Such of these ways as Stein describes are natural to any one's existence and offer scope for composition. For example, Stein clearly describes the marginalized time-sense in the living of old grandfather Dehning":

"They were good daughters and sons to him, but his sayings and his old ordinary ways of doing had not much importance for them - they were strong, all of them, in their work and in their new ways of living. It was alright, he always told it to them and he thought it so really in him, but it was all too new, it could never be any comfort to him. He had been left out of all life while he was still living. It was all too new for his feeling and his wife was no longer there to stay beside him" (7).

Another aspect that comes under consideration is the reality

that composition makes of each one's living. The struggle for individual expression and each one's belief in it is what constitutes this composition. For as Stein says in Narration "every one inevitably has to tell something and has to tell something in a way that makes it feel that something is what that thing is".

The nature of that "something" consequently owes more to the "telling" of it and to the force of that "telling" than to its actual existence. This brings in the possibility for a change in the reality or in its composition. For example, Henry Dehning's "realler" living comes to him from the telling of his past struggle which gives to him all his sense of importance in the present:

"And this father Dehning was always very full of such talking. He had made everything for himself and his children. He was a good man was Henry Dehning. He was strong and rich and good tempered and respected and he showed it in his look, that look that makes younger people think older ones are very aged, and he loved to tell it over to his children, how he had made it all for them so they could have it and not have to work to make it different' (9).

"Telling" hence was a verb that would effectively replace "creation" or "fiction". The problem of telling was what Stein came up against as description in her composition, while she kept simultaneously listening to each one's reality coming out of them. Both these activities respectively form the basis of her writing. Her writing, structured upon this change from the traditional narrative did not focus upon a "story". Instead through the very absence of linearity on the one hand, and "truth" claims on the other that she realized in composition ("telling") Stein consistently raises and addresses her writing to the question of method in The Making of Americans; "How can anything be different from what it is" (335). Stein saw the

possibility of expressing ("making") this difference that "is" through description:

"There will then be soon much description of every way one can think of men and women, in their beginning, in their middle living and their ending". (212) "To go on now giving all of the description of how repeating comes to have meaning, how it forms itself, how one must distinguish the different meanings in repeating" (214).

Thus for Stein the question "how" provided the means to resolve the nature of descriptive reality in her writing. The scepticism that she found within herself for an outdated mode of narrative shaped her own views about plot: "I like a thing simple", she says, "but it must be simple through complication". This in essence is her aim in description. This same scepticism is doubled in her assertion about writing:

"I write for myself and strangers. This is the only way that I can do it. Every body is a real one to me, every body is like someone else too to me. No one of them that I know can want to know it and so I write for myself and for strangers" (214).

The interest in a character's motives for action which lent itself to the plot in earlier fiction is dismissed as the ways of repeating in each one become clear and insistent. In writing The Making of Americans, Stein leaves the realm of representation behind her. Traditionally, portraying reality has always presented a problem that writers were forced to engage with. This problem exists not only with regard to the "narrative" element in writing, but at the more fundamental level of language itself. Almost every writer in the present century has tried to grapple with both these aspects while writing. For in the wake of theories of self-consciousness, what directly came under attack was the way in which we look at ourselves and the way in which we look at the world, with immediate consequences for literature. Richard Coe's analysis of the style of three modern

writers in this context is worth quoting:

Faulkner tried to put "it all" in one sentence, but did not give up narrative - in fact crammed in more narrative than most writers, Beckett never quite gives it up - even the Unnameable manufactures fictions, and Mr. Knott's routines are in themselves a story; but Stein is not interested in "what happened". Another point; Faulkner felt that once he had said it all, he would be finished writing; the unnameable expects that once he is said, he will be still; but life does not stop at being said: it continues to grow and change; Stein knew that "it all" needs always to be said anew, as it all is always new", (qtd. in Kawin: 1972, 129-30n.).

Writing for Stein creates the necessity to reconcile the difference to its own obsessive terms: "every body is a real one to me, everybody is like some one else too to me". This showed to her, that, "everything simply different" would provide a different space for writing also, in trying to understand the "being" coming out of people:

"if it is all so alike it must be simply different and everything simply different was the natural way of creating it then" (519).

The "natural way" liberated her writing from the constraints of plot, in the traditional sense and at the same time provided her with one. For otherwise,

"no one thinks these things when they are making when they are creating what is the composition, naturally no one thinks, that is no one formulates until what has to be formulated has been made" (516).

One can talk of her method as something that sustained itself by the very writing of it. Repetition assumes an importance role in The Making of Americans, both as the 'natural way' for reality to happen as well as the expressive 'form' of that reality in writing:

"There are many that I know and they know it. They are all of them repeating and I hear it. I love it and I tell it. I love it and now I will write it. This is now a history of my

love of it. I hear it and I love it and I write it. They repeat it. This is now a history of the way they do it." (213)

This makes the space for undermining all existing relations in favour of existence itself while writing. In the writing of The Making of Americans. Stein chooses to begin again and again with the possibility of giving the "last touch of being to everyone in history." Consequently nothing "happens" to the people in the novel. This reveals itself as a contradiction to the traditional approach towards characterization. Repetition only leads to the realizing of each one's "time-sense" or their respective natures coming out of them. This is also clearly prompted by the fact that "no one formulates until what is to be formulated has been made." Mary Maxworthing, the dress maker in Gossols whom Mrs. Hersland employs has a lot of repetition in her.

"She is of the kind very closely like the kind I have been just been describing, but she is of a different kind of women from them. She has not in her any servant girl being, she has in her attacking as her way of fighting but she has not much fighting in her being... this is now a history of her kind of women and there are men too who have this kind of being" (142).

The "independent dependent" being in her makes for her "very-little weakness or sensitive yielding at the bottom of her". This allows for repetition in her to exist as a simple formulation, notwithstanding the complication in her middle living. The fact of her giving birth to a child outside the wedlock rouses no abnormal interest. Though Stein repeats it a few times while giving her history, the tone is merely one of casual surprise.

"Mary Maxworthing then had a baby in her, it had happened to her, and it was a surprise to every one who knew her who learned it about her. It was the very last thing anyone would have expected to happen to her. One would have thought surely Mary Maxworthing would make a man marry her before such

a thing would happen to her. It was a surprise to every one who knew her..." (151).
There is no dramatic twist in the "story" as such after this. The initial interest in such as thing" happening" to her is given up to be a "difference" within her living by those who "knew" her. (after a few repetitions within the text):

"...It had happened and that was the end of the matter to her. Soon everyone who knew her had the same feeling of what had happened to her. Every one continued to have the same opinion of her whether they liked her or whether they did not like her as they had before this happened to her, then every one who knew her still had the same estimate of her" (151).

Nothing changes. What should logically follow as a matter of course makes room for what can be or what is. Stein counterbalances the fact of Mary Maxworth having a baby in her and that being "the end of the matter for her" with the possibility of every one continuing to have the same estimate of her, its being common to "every one". And there are "always being made many millions of men who have in them the same kind of being she had in her in her living" (142).

"Sameness" hence becomes a value by contradistinction, for Stein still considers "every one" to be a necessary category from which the description of being originates and towards which it is oriented. Thereby she substitutes the traditional for the modern, for the modern' in terms of creation is essentially what has been/ is 'always' going on:

"So it goes on always in living, every one is always remembering some one who is resembling to the one at whom they are then looking. So they go on repeating, everyone is themselves inside them and everyone is resembling to others, and that is always interesting. There are many ways of making kinds of men and women. In each way of making kinds of them there is a different system of finding them resembling ... sometime there will be then a complete history of each one" (212).

There is no space for a definite identity in this. For the history of each one is yet to be "complete". Any difference that may be, simultaneously serves towards the expression of everyone.

In the history of Martha Redfern, for example Stein explores the different possibilities in her ways of being. She begins from the time when Martha was a child and when the "bottom being" in her was undistinguishable, to the time when in her young living she was "not very interesting to any one who then knew her" (244) Then comes the time when "having seen the man hit the woman with the umbrella, she had in her the need of a college education for her. Her family was in no way important to her. This past clearly indicates a "difference" that is not re-espoused subsequently either. Martha Hersland was modelled upon her own self by Stein. For when she initially wrote her story in Fernhurst, Stein had a completely negative opinion of herself.

"Always a little then Martha had trouble with each one of them, the family living in her house together, her father and her mother and her brother Alfred and David the younger-brother but mostly then they none of them were important to her, she was all taken up then with the being in her" (257).

Again Martha's repeated trials at understanding Redfern, when he becomes her husband are seen in terms of a possibility that could have been ultimately realized.

"After two years of marriage Redfern's realization of her was almost complete. Martha was all that she had promised him to be, all that he had thought her, but all that proved sufficiently inadequate to his needs ... Redfern was a hard man to hold ... there was no way in which she could make to him an appeal ... Her narrow eager mind was helpless" (262).

However, Stein envisages that Martha's plea in her own favour (with her re-assertion of her love for Redfern) is what could have been a "gain". This aspiration which is present in

her gives to her- "the last touch of being in (her) history":

"Mrs. Redfern was less completely such a one, it came very nearly being certain that she would not be succeeding in living but she might have been succeeding in living. It was not a certain thing, not completely a certain thing and it was not a certain thing that she was not succeeding in living not succeeding in living before the ending of living" (276).

It is difficult to characterize the plot of The Making of Americans. William Gass in his book The World Within The Word notes that Stein "lacked a locale which might help her to define her and a family that she could in general accept. Both these factors assume significance for the absence of a "real" space initially led to a sense of personal loss in her. This did not, however, move Stein to create a Utopia or a dystopia based upon her experience of reality. Instead she set out to examine the reality of that space in the wake of her personal feeling of loss. Thus to substantiate what I have said in the earlier chapter about her works, in Stein's case, "... an interest in beginnings (paradoxically) is often the corollary result of not believing that any beginning can be located" (Said, p. 5, emphasis added). Growth cannot find sufficient expression through a linear mode of writing; it has to be visualized also in terms of alternative spaces and differences. For the purposes of doing this Stein assumed that "each one is a one" and has an 'equal stake in existence". Thereby she makes clear the kind of fictional stake that she is setting up at the very outset ("family living"/"family progress").

"... this that I write down a little each day here on my scraps of paper for you is not just an ordinary kind of a novel with a plot and conversations to amuse you but a record of a decent family's progress respectably lived by us and our fathers and our mothers, our grandfathers and grand-mothers, and this is by me carefully a little each day to be written down here" (37).

"... I take a simple interest in the ordinary kind of families, histories, I believe in simple middle class monotonous tradition, in a way in honest enough business methods" (38).

Hence while it offers us no "plot and ordinary conversations" to amuse us, this "record of a decent family's progress" at the same time literally brings the history of each one's ways of washing, eating, sleeping, thinking, loving etcetera to the account of "every one". It is "worthy that all monotonously shall repeat it" (family living) and repetition frees the writing of it from the realm of necessity. This description of how everybody is doing everything is the central aspect that constitutes the "making" in The Making of Americans.

Repetition clarifies the order present in each one's ways of doing things. This shows the difference in practise in Stein's novel especially in terms of plot and narrative sequence.

In order to avoid the dearth of desire/pleasure in composition (which can be read as "list"-lessness) because her writing does not offer plot/character in traditional terms, Stein began listening to the human beings around her who for her then supplied the words with which to create her fiction - repetition/"bottom being" ("eating", "drinking", "beginning", "feeling", "attacking", "loving", etc). She listened until all the time-sense in her came to be historic, allowing her to tell their "completed histories". This brought her to the realization that "the time of the composition is the time of the composition" (Stein: 1962, 522). This time-sense is realized in The Making of Americans in a "prolonged present." A prolonged listening to men and women (to the "being coming out of them") thus shifts the emphasis from plot/character description to a prolonged listening of the types in them:

"In this natural way of creating it then that it was simply different everything being alike it was simply different. This kept on leading one to lists. Lists naturally for a while and by lists I mean series" (519).

As all these various series gradually filled her "some time to telling", Stein literally fills the pages of The Making of Americans with a series of these series:

"Everything then they do in living is clear then to me, their living, laving, eating, speaking, smoking, scolding, drinking, dancing, thinking, working, walking, talking, laughing, sleeping, suffering, joking, everything in them. They are whole beings then, they are themselves inside them to me. They are then, each one, a whole one inside me. Repeating of the whole of them always coming out of each one of them makes history always of each one of them always to me" (222).

Having rediscovered the time-space equation for herself, Stein restricts language to a theoretical use in description, to go hand-in-hand with her principles "began again and again" and "using everything". Hence in creating the plot of The Making of Americans, Stein is serving "God" and not "mammon". "God" and "mammon" make possible two different orders of writing for Stein. This is how she describes them.

"When I say God and mammon concerning the writer writing, I mean that any one can use words to say something. And in using these words to So; what he has to say he may use words directly or indirectly. If he uses these words indirectly he says what he intends to have heard by somebody who is to hear and in so doing inevitably he has to serve mammon... Now serving God for a writer who is writing is writing anything directly, it makes no difference what it is, but it must be direct, the relation between the thing done and the doer must be direct.

In this second instance of writing, the finality of "the relation between the thing done and the "doer" makes writing essentially a task of scaling the impossible. This is so because the order (method) here makes itself evident to "a writer who writes anything directly only in writing.

The fact that there is very little "fundamental changing" in any one in their living leads to disagreement about how everybody is doing everything. This is a very "peculiar" thing, for its realization means disillusionment, while this is also what helps sustain the difference of each one's composition. This difference which owes its existence to the very little "fundamental changing" in any one determines each one's "bottom being." Stein finds repetitive patterns in each one's living which raises the question for description not merely of the things done, but of how they are done and how they characterize the doer.

Description is in direct relation to the being and its ways in each one. This is enabling because it allows her to describe each one's reality in relation to the reality of composition (seeing the "difference") which is the description of that description. In theory the role of this description is to give the "last touch of being to every one" in history. The writing of it would involve number and endless possibilities of the mixtures of being in every one (equality). This makes her description (of types) take up space due to repetitiveness and "endless" listing of the possibilities for being.

Subjectivity (realized as 'time-sense') in each one's composition grants the essential difference. This difference is the key to description in the sense that it makes it possible to arrive at a gradual awareness of the 'time-sense' in each one. At the same time it allows for the play with numbers for each one can virtually become everyone and every one consists of each one (one becomes infinity and infinity has to begin with one). The goal of "completed history" is a fictional goal for the history of each individual is something made even when its a "completed" one. "Making" can be seen in terms of this difference:

"Disillusionment in living is the finding out that nobody agrees with you not those that are and were fighting with you. Disillusionment in living is the finding out nobody agrees with you not those that are fighting for you. Complete disillusionment is when you realize that no one can for they can't change. The amount they agree is important to you until the amount they do not agree with you is completely realized by you. Then you say you will write for yourself and strangers, you will be for yourself and strangers and this then makes an old man or an old woman of you" (282).

This difference, where it is not clearly distinguished, needs to be explicated solely on the strength of its own terms. This creates a problem for description and writing, for as in this instance of "being good in living", the only other aid available for developing the many connotations of the relational difference is the use of number:

"Being good in living is something, it is in some way mostly in every one, it is a very peculiar thing sometimes, and sometimes not a very peculiar thing. Being good in living is certainly a very important thing, it is in some way mostly in everyone, in some way in very many women and in very many men it makes their what they are in living...' (285)

Seeking out a difference in writing means having to begin a gain with "each" one (provisionally) which is realized ultimately in "everyone". The number is significant paradoxically to learn the difference in 'each' one. The fact contributes to the description of kinds of "being in men and women". How each one attends to things, also qualifies and orders the difference while they are repeating themselves.

"... always to my feeling there are a very great many men and women always existing, always to my feeling there are a very great many of each kind of them always existing, always to my feeling each one of them is an expensive thing to be learning to be understanding and now I being again" (288).

The spatial relations determined accordingly with an attempt to make sensible reality through the use of number in writing,

are evolved from a Cubist perspective of things. However number again poses a problem to the knowledge-time relation in writing (for knowledge is not succession). This is neutralized in description through the use of the terms "everyone" and "history". In writing The Making of Americans, Stein overcomes the problem of representation inherent in number, by using what she calls "distribution" and "equilibration" in describing various kinds of being, thus providing the final complication.

"This makes what follows what follows and now there is every reason why there should be an arrangement made. Distribution is interesting and equilibration is interesting when a continuous present and a beginning again and again and using everything and everything alike and everything naturally simply different has been done" (Stein: 1962, 521, emphasis added).

The living of each one derives character (to be read as "difference") when described within an arrangement. The understanding of each one's repeating is possible only in the form of distribution and equilibration:

"Now then mostly every one is a good deal in pieces to my feeling, Alfred Hersland then now is such a one to my feeling, a good deal in pieces to my feeling. Always all his being is always repeating in all his living. He is a good deal in pieces to my feeling'. (295).

The attempt Stein makes at understanding the being in Alfred Hersland while writing his 'history' is therefore within an arrangement equilibrating between knowledge and non-knowledge. The "distributed" being in him is studied under a system which critically lead to series and their evaluations:

"... and these then have it in them to equilibrate themselves to this opinion, the opinion the conviction of being not dead when they are dead of having virtue in them when they are not doing any good thing ... and this is a generalized sense in them all through their living ... always and always it will in its simple and in its complicated

forms will be interesting, will be illuminating in the being and the living of Alfred Hersland and Mr. Herman Denning and his son George Dehning" (288).

The difference in each one is something that Stein comes to understand and address gradually, to its minute variations. The problem of explicating it is met with through a pronominal description (listing) here. Stein creates this imperative need for writing the history of each one:

"He [Alfred] made David and Martha have such a feeling too in them, it was a mixed feeling in Alfie then, he was then just beginning to feel in him responsibility for family living, he was then just beginning then to feel in him that he was an American citizen, he was just beginning to feel in him then his daily living and living that realization that he was then beginning to have in him" (292).

Again the description derives meaning through a sure use of number. The living of Alfred Hersland is measured out in relation to an unspecified number. This is another gain expressed in terms of the every one space, for Hersland feels close to these "many" people in his living. What appears to be marginal and to be written off as insignificant thus in fact contributes to the difference by its very real and consistent presence in number(s). Number, hence becomes useful in rescuing marginal differences and facts of existence:

"There were a number of little houses in this part of Gossols and Alfred knew a good many of the people living in them. In a good many of them the simple people kept on living all the time the Herslands were living in a ten acre place there, in some of the houses there was much moving, people would be very often coming and going" (298).

This dependence upon number, at the same time, ensures that there enters nothing irrelevant in her description. Moreover Stein describes the difficulty in attending to "repetition" in human beings through the use of numbers: the disparity between what one says and feels and one's actions is usually what makes

each one's being to come out in pieces. This prevents each one "from being a "whole" one. Her discoveries and achievements with number throw light in a significant way upon the character ("kind of being") in the one she is talking about. The finding of this is copied out as a "difference", whose terms ascertain its humor. In the following example Stein uses number for a reductive purpose (as only "one" instead of the actual three).

"One quite young one was loving another one and that one was saying to the one that one was loving, I only love them like you with dark hair and brown eyes for I am a blond one and I could only be loving a dark one. Then this one saw a picture of another one, I could love that one said this one. But that one is a blond one the one this one was thinking of loving told this one and you just said you could only love a dark one, yes that is true but I think I could love that one, and this is very common, and always there are very many having it always in them that they are a piece of being..." (308).

Such "ones" possess a "generalized sense" and distribution in all their being. Both these factors determine the "time-sense" in the description of such a one's being, simultaneously justifying the use of numerical abstractions. Stein then proceeds to combine this "generalized sense" and numerical abstractions to examine the being in a "great many".

"A very great many like to know a good many things, a great many are always asking questions of every one ... some when they are hearing any one talking are immediately listening ... a great many quite honest ones always wanting to know everything" (509).

"Telling" hence becomes counting. Alfred Hersland knew a "great many" people living around the ten-acre house of the Hersland in Gossols and he knew a "fair number of men and women" (312) in his middle living later at Bridgepoint when he married Julia Hersland. This telling based upon number might occasionally prove to be difficult thing to realize.

The following instance expresses contradictory opinions or claims both of which are equally real (because of the "telling") to those who believe in them. This is most interesting because this "telling" is in direct relation to number and is expressed as such. However Stein is still puzzled about the question "how". For the interest in what a "great many" think (with an implicit bid for representation) does not bring her new insights that can be expressed with "any one" specifically:

"A great many are thinking that mostly every one is having pleasant enough living, a great many are thinking that not any one is having pleasant living, a great many are thinking that some are having pleasant living... I find it quite puzzling to be certain about any one whether they are having pleasant living in them (317).

The "plot" of "family living" in The Making of Americans operates upon an implicit assumption made on the basis of number. This is found in a description (listing) of "family living". The assumption makes it almost like a simplification. The paragraph quoted below illustrates the problem in which the entire novel is "grounded". It shows Stein's characteristic impatience with "the story".

"Mr . Henry Dehning had his being in him, Mrs. Dehning had her being in her, George Dehning

had his being in him... this is now to be the history of all the living in each one of them, of the family living they has in living, of the living thay had each one with each one of the theirs of them and with themselves inside them, this is to be the history of every one almost every one they ever came to know, any one of them in living, the history of every one who came to know of them to know of any one of them..." (320).

In the section on Alfred Hersland, Stein traces the beginning, the being and the ending in the "married living" of Julia Dehuing and Alfred Hersland. What configures their relationship is seen in connection with the everyone space that Stein sought to explore. Stein's failure, which she acknowledges in this

section, is because of the fact that she cannot fully understand "married living". Hence she fails to materialize it as a "gain" in her fiction.

"I tell about successful living about failing in these now because I want to be telling about it in everyone and I cannot just now do that thing because I do not just now completely know that thing" (337).

Death comes to every one as a certainty in living, the knowledge determines the "last touch of being" for the description of each one and each one thereby becomes a "dead one". For purposes of description of "kinds of being" alone, the play with number does not end here. For this is a difference with a difference. Here what is usually referred to in terms of "no gain" (zero) is finally made out to be a "gain" (a a dead one). In terms of experience, this defines the extreme possibility for seeking a "difference" in being. "She came sometime to be a dead one. Many others had come by then to be dead ones. Some had not yet come to be dead ones" (342).

The "fiction" of "family living" comes to an end when everyone is dead. This ultimately meets the conditions of both "every one" and "history" - "every one is some time coming to be a dead one". However, this makes possible a further re-visioning of "being" through a play with number.

"... then each one comes to be gradually to be knowing how being is in men, in women when men and women are about forty, about forty-five, about thirty, about twenty-eight, about twenty-six, about twenty-two, about eighteen and fourteen and three and two and under one to being only just beginning being living" (344).

The "time-sense" in the living of each one is completed in this section in the history of Alfred Hersland. Realised simultaneously are the histories of Julia Dehning, Mr. Dehning and Mr. Hersland who all of them sometime come to be "dead ones". Number

signifies the being in each of their individual lives and appropriates it to the "every one" space.

In the section on David Hersland, "telling" and "listening" are used as the cornerstones for describing the different ways of being. David Hersland is an example of one "being living" and realizing a difference in living. In describing his pre-occupation with a "big beginning", Stein fully concentrates on evolving his time-sense; the sense of importance in him hence becomes something "real".

"He mostly was not thinking himself being one doing a thing in the way some other one was doing a thing. And sometimes it was a pleasant thing to him to be connected with every other one by such a thing by doing things in a way he was noticing other ones had been doing" (377).

Each one in this fiction-David Hersland. Alfred Hersland, Julia Hersland - is one "not being one needing something", hence each one is a "one". In the last section titled "The History of a Family's Progress", each one's kind of being finds expression in anyone. The compositional reality of any one is described only in terms of number and a realized time-sense that attend to equality and difference:

'Any one has come to be a dead one. Any one has not come to be such a one to be a dead one. Many who are living have not come yet to be a dead one. Many who were living have come to be a dead one" (395) .

There is a listing of the kinds of ' family living" existing, with all possible variations. This makes a difference to the being in "any one". Writing thus for Stein creates an order of described reality that redeems the ordinariness of things. This order is strange because it sets out to "realize absolutely every variety of human experience that it was possible to have." Number is something that orders and in- "forms" her vision. The problem

is of "mapping¹ understanding in terms of the space created by language.

In Lectures in America (1935), Stein says that "by written I mean made. And by made I mean, felt" (165). Order which is experienced by her as a fact is something which makes a difference in composition. For her the compositional problem is contained in the expression "What is strange is this". The impossibility that Stein strove to give expression to within the space she stumbled upon, belongs to the same class as that which Foucault enumerates in his discussion of Borges list: what he qualifies as the "stark impossibility of thinking that." (in his introduction to The Order of Things).

Borges' classification quotes a "certain Chinese encyclopedia" in which animals are divided into: (a) belonging to the emperor (b) embalmed (c) tamed (d) sucking pigs (e) sirens (f) fabulous (g) stray dogs (h) included in the present classification (i) frenzied (j) innumerable (k) drawn with a very fine camel hair brush (l) etcetera (m) having just broken the water pitcher (n) that from a very long way off look like flies. (Foucault: 1972, xv).

The Chinese pictograph presents an incomprehensible picture when it translates, "literally" into English.

Order in this classification of Borges says Foucault, belongs to the 'middle region' which 'liberates order' itself by exposing the essential site of knowledge (the traditional language - representation grid) for investigation.

The order in reality as experienced by us (in terms of "thinking", "knowing", "doing") is necessarily something that can be understood/identified in the "given" space of language. Language can be stretched to accommodate the "unthinkable" (when

linguistic space is, pushed beyond culture) and at the same time however, in the very process become empty. The content of Borges' classification and Stein's repetition (in The Making of Americans) is "unthinkable", except, in the way in which it has been enumerated and hence in both cases language signifies a place that is necessarily beyond order ("order" in any of its ordinary common sense interpretations). When language becomes emptied thus of an existing (determining) order, a new order has to be created in time and space, word by word. Stein hence came to concentrate on one word at a time, "even if there were always one after the other". This she arrived at because she found out that "reading word by word makes the writing that is not anything to be something". The number thesis helped her make this order in writing evident in a disembodied way, in the writing of The Making of Americans.

Thus the paradox that Stein sought to give expression to - "what is strange is this" - had to be accomplished outside an "ideal order". "Being men is a difficult thing to be" and hence Stein had to necessarily contend with the realization that "for that very reason there is no Utopia" (Everybody's Autobiography).

The Making of Americans is concerned with "habitating" this non-place of language through the writing of this 'unthinkable space'.

"It is like knowing a map and then seeing the place and knowing then that the roads actually existing are like the map" (233), which "to some is always astonishing and then very gratifying" (233).

What one learns on similar lines from Borges' classification is that the space-language relation is altered when the language is familiar but the order is strange. A strange and completely unexpected order is sighted in the translated version simply by

Keeping the order of the Chinese classification intact:

"The uneasiness that makes us laugh when we read Barges is certainly related to the profound distress of those whose language has been destroyed: loss of what is "common" to place and name ...

In our traditional imagery the Chinese culture is the most meticulous, the most rigidly ordered, the one most dead to temporal events, most attached to pure delineation of space... we see it, spread and frozen, over the entire surface of a continent surrounded by walls. Even its writing does not reproduce the fugitive flight of the voice in horizontal lines; it erects the motionless and still-recognizable images of things themselves in vertical columns" (xviii).

The relation between the linguistic order and the "site of space" associated with a country that Foucault delineates here, also applies to Stein's Literary enterprise in The Making of Americans. The term "making" is the linguistic thread that verbalizes the existing order. While trying to come to terms with the description of reality, Stein saw the possibility of a new "ordering of space". Cubism provided the necessary insights that served her while writing this book. Intellectually at this point she rejected William James. For as she says:

"When Leo said that all classification was teleological, I knew I was not a pragmatist. I do not believe that, I believe in reality as Cezanne or Caliban believe in it. I believe in repetition".

As Bush states in his essay, (Bush: 1978, 32), Stein's definition of repetition could be rendered in Nietzsche's terms that "the real continuous process takes place below our consciousness: the series and sequence of feelings, thoughts and so on are symptoms of this underlying process." Repetition of the "series and sequence of feelings, thoughts and so on" becomes the order symptomatic of this "underlying process", what Stein calls the "bottom being" in men and women in her composition.

CONCLUSION

My work on The Making of Americans dealt with the aspect of what informed its vision and growth. For an accustomed reader of prose novels, these differences can be defined only in terms of their "unconventionality". The reason that I chose singular aspects of Stein's writing, like "beginnings" and "ordering" is to make available the differences and paradoxes that structure The Making of Americans.

The critique never runs smoothly when one attempts to judge a writer like Stein in the context of traditional methodology. This is because there are inherent problems in the use of words like 'character' and 'plot' whose sense one has to circumnavigate to come to the reality of Stein's The Making of Americans. The difficulty is further made manifest by the fact that while Stein periodizes these narrative elements in earlier novels (in her Narration), she is still writing a novel'.

Michael Hoffman opines that "perhaps the metaphor of The Making of Americans as a stylized stream of Stein consciousness is not far off the mark" (1965:134). The expression "stream of consciousness" has to be used with a certain amount of caution however, for while the discontinuities suggested therein can be found in full in the 'digressions' that Hoffman speaks of within the novel, there is also a deliberate renouncing of the possibilities afforded by such a "stream" (which cannot be merely accounted for by "style").

Memory which is, for example, a key "motif" in much modern fiction, is carefully excluded from her description of "being". For memory implicitly extends itself to representation. Hence while writing, Stein attempts to create a form out of a limit which she calls the "continuous present."

Bergson argues that memory generally **treats** the past as present moments that have ceased to exist. In **his** book "Proust and Signs", Deleuze says that as a result of this tendency, "memory does not apprehend the past directly: it recomposes it with different presents" (56). This is a tough proposition. Even though in her practise, Stein inverts this thesis by substituting "memory" with "reality", the nature of the insight that she gained for her writing was similar to this. Since Stein uses this insight as a key to problematize and re-open the very possibilities that determine "meaning" and "sense", The Making of Americans (with an emphasis on "making") sets out to encounter "reality" in virtually "all" its aspects. Characters are seen as improbabilities. The play thereby is actually extended from the dimensions of a single character to time and space. This makes the difference(s) performative, as they emerge.

However as a novel or rather because it is a novel. The Making of Americans falls short of the mark. The "difference" that Stein seeks in the reality of "being" is for "every one" and it can hence only be taken up as a cumulative process in writing. This creates a necessity for repetitive "patterns" in understanding the "being" in men and women. In other respects also, for example while attending to the question of form, the novel has to remain with an aesthetic of beginnings and growth. These very factors provide the ground for critiquing the novel.

Ideally 'difference' does not have a history. Viewed in terms of experience it is also formless. However because The Making of Americans desires this "difference" in writing, it is forced to engage with the question of form. Form (which is encountered as formal repetition) proves to be a formidable element in writing, for it can usurp the sovereign domain of "difference". Also in seeking to make a "complete" reality of

the present, the intuition of time is made to coincide with the intuition of form further modifying the question of "difference" in favour of its expression.

In order to have a sustained mode of "difference" (one which develops a form), Stein endeavours to understand and map its personal relevance or "meaning". While traditionally there has been a practice through description of making sense out of the most subjective kinds of experience, "difference" itself has never been associated with the form in the novel. The Making of Americans attempts to address this gap. However while explicating "difference" on the one hand, ultimately it posits "meaning" as a category for being and thereby for writing. This leads to a complication that remains unresolved. For as Jane Walker says, so long as Stein remains faithful to a description of direct experience of "reality" in her novel, and places the onus of this upon repetition, there exists a committed risk that repetition might not help her actually realize a difference (as in the case of Alfred Hersland) (Walker: 1984). Not only that, her simultaneous use of independent dependent typology for 'classifying' individuals or "the being coming out of them" also comes under question for the, only substantiate her ' meaningful description of reality.

The virtual impossibility of transcending the present moment is an important reason for trying to re-create direct experience in its terms. However real this might seem to make the plea for "difference", it is untenable with Stein's professed faith in "bottom being" while writing "The Making of Americans". The circular aim of the "bottom-being" in each one determining their individual reality (repetition), and the repetition in each one leading to an understanding of the "bottom being" in them, shows

the futility of such an ideal for writing.

The goal that Stein set for her novel was a difficult one partly because in order to realize it, she imagined it necessary to continue the "undoing" that she began with Three Lives: "The reality of the nineteenth century is not the same as the reality of the twentieth century."

This fear of becoming anachronistic made her begin again and again with the "modern composition" which was also the "twentieth-century reality". The realization that suddenly freed her from this fear also dispenses totally with this failed ideal, through her characteristically simple logic:

"... after all I know I really do know that
it can be done and if it can be done why do
it".

One has to keep in mind that the very nature of the difficulty that she attempted in writing has changed. The radical experimentation with words in Tender Buttons is not so much a deliberate attempt to confound sense, as a move to yoke her writing to "difference". The questions of readability that Tender Buttons provoked are because of the fact that there was no principle behind its composition. As Stein herself wrote, "The difference is spreading". Moreover there remains still the question of whether her work could still be considered as "modern", in the sense that Three Lives and The Making of Americans determined the meaning of the term.

Stein no longer wrote as she did and this was something she lost no time to grapple with. For a reader of Tender Buttons, this would remain a mystery unless he is able to dispense with the memory of her style of Three Lives or even The Making of Americans. For the writing of Tender Buttons (1914) antedates whatever was "modern" about her writing, both in terms of style as well as thematic preoccupations- However The Making of Ameri-

cans, as **far** as the "modern composition" is concerned, can impart crucial lessons to the reader. In fact in choosing not to **refer** to The Making of Americans. Many Many Women. Two: Gertrude Stein and Her Brother and other titles from that period (1907-1914) as works, Marianne DeKoven overlooks the fact that they are "works" precisely in the modern sense of the term, and thereby contain modernism's usable past.¹

In this context, my thesis has attempted to show how The Making of Americans as a "work" is not just central to Stein's early writings, but also (and more crucially) informed with the problems that Stein sought to resolve in writing.

Notes

1. "But even within the experimental period, I do not give readings, as such, of The Making of Americans, GMP, Many Many Women. A Long Gay Book, Two. Tender Buttons, "Lifting Belly", any of the famous portraits, How to Write or Stanzas in Meditation. I do not believe that the writing collected under any of those titles constitutes a "work", in the way we normally understand that word: 'a coherent literary unit, separate and distinguishable from any other, which it is the critic's task to account for as a whole" (DeKoven: 1983, xv).

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