TWO STEIN TALKS*

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Language and Realism

Just as formal occasions, such as telephoning an airline, require Muzak, so informal ones require an epigraph. William James provides the epigraph for this Talk:

"Well, I read 30 or 40 pages, and said, 'this is a fine new kind of realism — Gertrude Stein is great!" (Letter to G.S.)

In the past few years, I've been arguing, more in private than in public —that is, as if with myself— for a rethinking of a notion of realism in terms of contemporary writing practice. But in order to understand what I think such a rethinking of realism might yield, it is necessary briefly to account for what it was, in literary and art critical history.

The term as applied to painting and to writing came into use in the middle of the 19th century, more or less simultaneously in Russia and in France and doubtless elsewhere as well. In Russia it seems to have been used first to talk about literary issues and in France it was first applied to painting. Both Turgenev and Flaubert were credited with the paternity, but it was Emile Zola and his followers who made the term and its array of concepts current.

Given that I intend to relate this term to Gertrude Stein's writing, it is interesting, in passing, I think, to note that Zola was a close social and intellectual companion of Cezanne, whom in turn, of course, Stein so admired. Cezanne and Zola were schoolboys together, and comrades later as artists. They believed, at least for a very long time, that they were seeking solutions to the same, or very similar, artistic questions —though Cezanne's, it seems to me, was the far more complete solution.

Zola, in his long essay, "The Experimental Novel", identified the task of the writer with that of the scientist, taking a position which explicitly rejects the methods and subject matter of the Romanticism which had been the dominant literature of the time: "No more lyricism, no more big empty words, but facts, documents", he wrote.

Or, as Martin Eden puts it in Jack London's novel, "The science professors should live. They're really great. But it would be a good deed to break the heads of nine-tenths of the English professors —little microscopic-minded parrots!".

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The basic concerns of the realist writers in the 19th century were methodological. Paul Alexis, who, along with others of Zola's group including Guy de Maupassant, was an exponent of Zola's ideas, wrote: "Realism is not a 'rhetoric', as is generally believed, but something of greater seriousness, a 'method'. A method of thinking, seeing, reflecting, studying, experimenting, a need to analyze in order to know, but not a special way of writing".

The frame of reference was philosophical. The intention was to treat the real rather than the ideal, the everyday rather than the unusual, the common rather than the exceptional. Realism rejected the loftiness and exoticism characteristic of Romanticism and turned to ordinary life for subject matter. The technique was to be based on models from science. "The chain of reasoning will be very simple", said Zola in "The Experimental Novel" (1880): "If the experimental method has been capable of extension from chemistry and physics to physiology and medicine, then it can be carried from physiology to the realist novel".

Realist literature attempted to confront two essential and quite separate issues. One was metaphysical; that is, the writer questioned the nature of the Real, the relationship of the Real to Appearances, the distinction between the simulacrum and the original, the accuracy of perception, and perception's susceptibility to illusion, and finally the capacity and sufficiency of art to translate, transfer, or become itself Real. The other issue was ethical; that is, the writer questioned the relationship of Art to Truth, the relevance of sincerity and/or simulacrum, and posited some practical value for the work, suggesting that literature can and should be useful. Realism, in this case, may be regarded as an attempt to get at both verisimilitude and veracity. "The extent of all realism is the realm of the author's pen, and a true picture of life, honestly and reverentially set down, is both moral and artistic whether if offends the conventions or not", wrote Dreiser (1903; "True Art Speaks Plainly"). "Truth is what is; and the seeing of what is, the realization of truth".

It is in Paul Alexis's statements that we see the limitations of the project already defined: "a need to analyze in order to know, but not a special way of writing". It is precisely a special way of writing that realism requires.

"Gertrude Stein, in her work", wrote Gertrude Stein in *The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas*, "has always been possessed by the intellectual passion for exactitude in the description of inner and outer reality. She has produced a simplification by this concentration, and as a result the destruction of associational emotion in poetry and prose. She knows that beauty, music, decoration, the result of emotion, should never be the cause, even events should not be the cause of emotion nor should they be the material of poetry and prose. Nor should emotion itself be the cause of poetry and prose. They should consist of an exact reproduction of either an outer or an inner reality".

Stein's personal history in this context was peculiarly directed toward the study of reality and of our perceptions of reality, which may or may not differ from or alter reality itself (to determine which was part of her studies), and the study of the

language which, on the one hand, apparently mediates between us and reality and, on the other hand, is for most of us the constant, ready, everyday, and natural medium for discovering, defining, and asserting reality —making use of it, expressing it, and perhaps creating it.

Perhaps it was the discovery that language is an order of reality itself and not a mere mediating medium —that it is possible and even likely that one can have a confrontation with a phrase that is as significant as a confrontation with a tree, chair, cone, dog, bishop, piano, vineyard, door, or penny, etc.— which replaced her commitment to a medical career with a commitment to a literary career. In which case, she would have similarly realized that her writing was potentially as social and as useful as doctoring might be.

> That is a speech. Anybody will listen. What is romantic. I was astonished to learn that she was led by her head and her head was not with her head her head was leading when her heart stood still. She was certain to be left away with them. Dear Christian you are very sweet without hope. Hope is for you...
> Speeches are an answer...
> The scene opens and they have a valley before them.
> *(How to Write)*

The spirit of artistic commitment to the world, and the designation of that as "realism", had in the 19th century followed on a rejection of religious (instructional, inspirational) and secular (escapist) fantasies as the principal function of writing. But also it was a response to the emerging significance of science and its values —research, experimentation, persistence even to the point of drudgery, and the passionate force of discipline.

Stein's later interest in detective fiction is something of an intellectual pun on this. It is useful to consider, because detective fiction parallels when it doesn't parody the essentially bourgeois values implicit in 19th century realism.

Detective fiction asserts social optimism, a triumph over grim context. Detective stories are not about guilt and innocence, that is, not about morality; they are about details. The clue is a detail that solves a specific crime, when appropriately observed by a detecting person. The purpose and function of these and all the other details are to bury the specific crimes and crime in general —criminality.

The point of detection is to uncover the incontrovertible relationship between logic and justice. In the course of being detected, things —that is, objects, events, and ideas— which seem arbitrary and indiscriminate are rendered logical and relevant.

The nature of detail, the foregrounding of certain details and their transformation into clues, forces the trivial to become moral, even humanitarian. The specialness of the detective lies in his or her ability to combat the inexact and muddy —which is what causes or conceals the crime. The detective turns a detail into a clue by

heightening the particular; he or she replaces false or insufficient with true or adequate detail. As Stein put it in "Subject-Cases":

> In place of this and in place of this.
> Parlors and parlors and for their parlors and in the parlors and to the parlor, to the parlor into the parlor for the parlor and fact for it and in fact more than a fact. A fact is a fact. It is a fact, and facing and replacing, in replacing, to replace, to repace here and there, and so much. In so much and so quoted and as quoted and so forth and for the most of it, for almost all of it and so and in that way not investigated. As to investigating reasonably preparing, preparing to do so. Do so and do so and to do so and as it were to be as if it were to have contributed and furthermore not more than as to stating. To state. Behind them to state, behind them and not to wait, behind them and more frequently and as it was very frequently they were merely as to have it attributed. Attributed to all of it and so satisfactorily as stated.

Thus the detective buries the crime under the inexorable logic of infinite unlimited unquenchable details. "So indeed and so indeed a parlor settles that".

At Radcliffe College, or what was then called Harvard Annex, Gertrude Stein studied with William James, who was then not yet the philosopher William James but the psychologist.

For James, psychology meant the study of consciousness —the content and forms of consciousness. His methods were experimental, involving laboratory work and laboratory methods. His principle work was the study of perception, our consciousness of perception, and the consciousness of the consciousness of perception —in which one can hear the approaching rumble of a psychology of language. James thoroughly understood, and Stein activated, the extreme relevance of language forms and structures to perception and consciousness. James's psychology assumed people's natural inclination to seek truth, however multiple and variable it might turn out to be (obviously a truth based on and derived from perception will be multiple and variable as the things perceived and persons perceiving). But for Stein, it was not truth but understanding that was of value —a shift of emphasis, from perceived to perceiving, and thus to writing, in which acts of observation, as complex perception, take place. James's emphasis on the importance of (primarily perceptual) experience and its relationship to the structures and development of meaning had already extended to a study of language as a function of experience. Stein simply extended this, so that language in itself was an essential and primary experience.

> "If anyone ask", wrote James
> what is the mind's object when you say 'Columbus discovered America in 1492', most people will reply 'Columbus' or 'America', or, at most, 'the discovery of America'. They will name a substantive kernel or nucleus of

> the consciousness, and say the thought is 'about' that... But the *Object* of your thought is really its entire content or deliverance, neither more nor less. It is a vicious use of speech to take out a substantive kernel from its content and call that its object; and it is an equally vicious use of speech to add a substantive kernel not particularly included in its content, and to call that its object... The object of my thought in the previous sentence, for example, is strictly speaking neither Columbus nor America, nor its discovery. It is nothing short of the entire sentence, 'Columbus-discovered-America-in-1492'. And if we wish to speak of it substantively, we must make a substantive of it by writing it out thus with hyphens between all its words. Nothing but this can possibly name its delicate idiosyncrasy. And if we wish to *feel* that idiosyncrasy we must reproduce the thought as it was uttered, with every word fringed and the whole sentence bathed in that original halo of obscure relations, which, like an horizon, then spread about its meaning. (*Principles of Psychology* I, 275-76).

This without any ambiguity, is a clear and radical challenge to the primacy of the noun and a description of the state of consciousness as a verbal plane. In imagining this plane, we have to bear in mind its porosity and observe the range of activity on its surface. It is this that I was thinking of when I wrote elsewhere (in *The Guard*):

> Men and women of thought & study
> are voluptuaries. The advantage of the grass
> as borrowing in groceries.
> Admire! an unflat surface.
> The rather reckless emptiness and seriously porous
> emptiness.

Tender Buttons was written between 1912 and 1913, after Gertrude Stein and Alice B. Toklas made their first trip to Spain, where, as Stein herself said, Spanish light and Spanish ways of arranging things, the light flat but the compositions round, had a profound effect on Stein's sense of things —their composition and the syntax of seeing them. *Tender Buttons* is in 3 sections, entitled "Objects", "Food", and "Rooms". There are 58 objects; the table of contents of "Food" lists 39 titles but there are 51 "poems" in the section; and "Rooms" is a continuous piece in paragraphs. The relative weights of the three sections are about equal, and the things portrayed are ordinary —ordinary objects, mostly domestic; ordinary food, plain and wholesome and not *haute cuisine*; domestic rooms, averagely adorned.

In a pair of articles that were published in the *New York Review of Books* in 1982, Charles Rosen, reviewing the catalogues from two exhibitions of paintings, both focussing on realism and the realist tradition, points out that subject matter taken from the ordinary world retains its integrity and ordinariness and even banality in conjunction with a highly visible artistic means. The realism of the

means —the materiality of the poetic language, for example— is a precise manifestation of the artist's attention to the alien particularity of the subject matter.

It is in this respect that the pronouncement from Zola's circle, namely that realism doesn't involve a "special way of writing", becomes inadequate and mistaken. Somewhat paradoxically perhaps, it is the autonomy of the writing —the high visibility of its devices and even its intrusive strangeness— that authenticates the accuracy of its portrayals and gives the work itself its authority. "It is the guarantee of the truth of what is being represented". (Rosen).

To some extent, then, the writer's candor with regard to his or her own means can be taken as representative of a general truthfulness with regard to objects. Rosen makes a further point with regard to mundane subject matter whose aesthetic value is of no significance:

> If contemporary life was to be represented with all its banality, ugliness, and mediocrity undistorted, unromanticized, then the aesthetic interest had to be shifted from the objects represented to the means of representation.

In this the opposite of realism is not imagination (which is positioned in style) but idealism (which is imposed on subject matter).

> Flaubert's prose, distinguished and beautiful in itself, does not disturb the banality of the contemporary life he represented... (Art) can lay a double claim, first to absolute truth undistracted by aesthetic preconceptions, and then to abstract beauty, uninfluenced by the world that is represented. Art for art's sake and Realism are not polar opposites... but two sides of the same coin. It was the avant garde that succeeded in uniting them... in avant garde Realism there is an extreme insistence on the means of representation; the rhythm of the prose or the patterns of the brush strokes are always obtrusively in evidence... A work of avant-garde Realism proclaims itself first as a solid, material art object, and only then allows us access to the contemporary world it portrays. In avant-garde Realism, consequently, the beauty of the book or the picture always appears to be irrelevant to what is being represented. Stylistic forms that idealize had to be avoided at all cost. (Rosen, March 4).

"Art ought", wrote Flaubert, "to rise above personal feelings and nervous susceptibilities! It is time to give it the precision of the physical sciences, by means of a pitiless method" (letter to Louise Colet). Similar ideas occur repeatedly in 20th century avant-garde theory: Thus Viktor Shklovsky: "Thus in order to restore to us the perception of life, to make a stone stony, there exists that which we call art". And Francis Ponge: "In order for a text to expect in any way to render an account of reality of the concrete world (or the spiritual one) it must first attain reality in its own world, the textual one".

"What strikes me as beautiful" —this is Flaubert again, in one of his famous and remarkable letters to Louise Colet— "what I should like to do, is a book about

nothing, a book without external attachments, which would hold together by itself through the internal force of its style... a book which would have practically no subject, or at least one in which the subject would be almost invisible, if that is possible". It might almost have been in response to this that Gertrude Stein wrote, of *Tender Buttons*:

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

And a little further:

> I had to feel anything and everything that for me was existing so intensely that I could put it down in writing as a thing in itself without at all necessarily using its name. The name of a thing might be something in itself if it could come to be real enough but just as a name it was not enough something.

It is thus that she arrived at *Tender Buttons*, a poem, or group of poems, in which the liveliness of anything ("of course you all do know that when I speak of naming anything, I include emotions as well as things"), the liveliness of anything recurs artistically within the scope of a radical force of attention.

This ambitious, exquisite work raises a number of issues —current issues, relevant to contemporary writing practice. There are three areas from which one can triangulate a reading of the work. The first is linguistic: the work questions the nature of language as the basis for knowing anything and explores the effect of technical aspects of language (parts of speech, sentence structure, grammar, and the size and shape of the writing) and poetic devices (images, patterns, puns, etc.). The second is psychological, by which I mean, in Jamesian terms, consciousness based on perception and elaborated by the perceiver in his or her encounter with the world. And the third is philosophical, best seen in terms of phenomenology, in so far as it addresses and tests the objective.

"What is the difference between a thing seen and what do you mean", as Stein posed the issue. In *Tender Buttons* she addressed the question of the nature of knowledge relative to meaning, in an attempt to discover, in so far as possible, the nature of poetic language as a locus of meaning and of primary being, lest, in mediating between us (thought) and the world (things) language become instead a barrier.

It is typical of lyric poetry to take it as the latter, or, if not as a barrier then as the material condition that limits and diminishes the potential of any expression. Thus Dante complained:

> How weak are words, and how unfit to frame
> My concept —which lags after what was shown
> So far, 'twould flatter it to call it lame!

It is, after all, the complete, unmediated encounter that one must image to be characteristic of a "typical" experience in "paradise".

If one follows Merleau-Ponty's definition of phenomenology, *Tender Buttons* might be read as a masterpiece of phenomenological literature —assuming there to be such a thing.

In the "Preface" to *The Phenomenology of Perception,* Merleau-Ponty says:

> Phenomenology is the study of essences; and according to it, all problems amount to finding definitions of essences: the essence of perception, or the essence of consciousness, for example. But phenomenology is also a philosophy which puts essences back into existence, and does not expect to arrive at an understanding of man and the world from any starting point other than that of their 'facticity'... It is also a philosophy for which the world is always 'already there' before reflection begins —as an inalienable presence; and all its efforts are concentrated upon reachieving a direct and primitive contact with the world... It is the search for a philosophy which shall be a 'rigorous science', but it also offers an account of space, time, and the world as we 'live' them. It tries to give a direct description of our experience as it is.

Stein described her intentions in *Tender Buttons* and the portraits of that same pre-war period, in her lecture "Portraits and Repetitions".

> I began to wonder at at about this time just what one saw when one looked at anything really looked at anything. Did one see sound, and what was the relation between color and sound, did it make itself by description by a word that meant it or did it make itself by a word in itself. All this time I was of course not interested in emotion or that anything happened... I lived my life with emotion and with things happening but I was creating in my writing by simply looking. I was as I say at that time reducing as far as it was possible for me to reduce them... I became more and more excited about how words which were the words that made whatever I looked at look like itself were not the words that had in them any quality of description... And the thing that excited me so very much at that time and still does is that the word or words that make what I looked at be itself were always words that to me very exactly related themselves to that thing the thing at which I was looking, but as often as not had as I say nothing whatever to do with what my words would do that described that thing.

The first poem in *Tender Buttons* is entitled "A Carafe, That Is A Blind Glass".

> A kind of 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.

A carafe is a container, a glass one, which, if filled with a thick liquid, that is a colored one, might be, so to speak, blind, opaque. A blind glass might also be a

blank mirror, or a draped window —as my aunt would say, "Draw the blinds, it's dinner time". A glass might be a magnifying glass, or other eyes-glass —a spectacle— though it's unusual to use it in the singular, as one seldom hears a scissor, or a trouser. The meaning or meanings of the title depends on whether the phrase after the comma is an appositive or whether the comma is like the copula "and" in the sentences of the poem that follows. In the one case, one thing is seen in two aspects; in the second, two things are joined as a pair. The pattern of unfolding laid against infolding, or of doubles set in dualities, continues in the poem until the last sentence, which might be read as a statement or commentary on the rest.

"A kind in glass and a cousin": a kind binds carafe with blind phonically. The two words in the two halves of the title are condensed into one, while the simple phrase, a kind of glass, undergoes a bit of distortion, becoming a kind *in* glass. A kind of glass, or some kind of glass thing, which is a carafe, has something *in* it —the way ideas fill words.

A cousin is a relationship —a familiar one, "nothing strange".

A spectacle has a double meaning, in that it is both that through which one sees, "glasses", and also what one sees through them: "What a spectacle!" and "Don't make a spectacle of yourself". Seeing through, seeing with, seeing at, seeing in, and seeing beside —a fully prepositional situation. As William James remarks in *Principles of Psychology* (I, 245-46):

> There is not a conjunction or a preposition, and hardly an adverbial phrase, syntactic form, or inflection of voice, in human speech, that does not express some shading or other of relation which we at some moment actually feel to exist between the larger objects of our thought. If we speak objectively it is the real relations that appear revealed; if we speak subjectively, it is the stream of consciousness that matches each of them by an inward coloring of its own... We ought to say a feeling of *and*, a feeling of *if*, a feeling of *but*, and a feeling of *by*, quite as readily as we say a feeling of *blue* or a feeling of *cold*.

This raises one sense in which one might interpret Stein's "an arrangement in a system to pointing", namely a "system to pointing" might mean descriptive language (though significantly "not ordinary" language, bearing in mind the formalist distinction between ordinary and poetic languages) —descriptive not with recourse to naming but relationally. Pointing itself, the gesture, is relational, in that it locates a thing relative to the position of the pointing person and implies the presence of contiguous or neighboring things beside which or among which the thing-pointed-to sits. After all, if it sat alone, the pointing would be redundant and tautological.

The first sentence of the poem is a trio of twos, in which a cousin, nothing strange, and an arrangement are aligned and face a kind in glass, a spectacle, and a single hurt color. A single hurt color might be interpreted as an imperfect

perception —imperfect in being single— thus in need of the first term of the next sentence: "all this".

In "Portraits and Repetitions", Stein said, "I tried to include color and movement", meaning that she wanted generally to understand the qualities of things, in themselves (their color) and as they color our feelings and thoughts, as they qualify them, "in the stream of consciousness that matches each of them by an inward coloring of its own". "Beside beside is colored like a word beside why where they went. That is a speech. Anybody will listen. What is romantic. I was astonished to learn that she was led by her head...".

As for movement, Stein wanted to understand things not in isolated rigidity, which falsified and monumentalized conditions which were fluid, but as present participants in on-going living —fountainous living. How does a carafe move? In an arrangement. By being larger than a cup and smaller than a pitcher; by containing less liquid than before; by reflecting light (and thereby color); by being or containing the same color as a piece of paper; by having a vase with flowers not of that color set to the left of it from here but to the right of it from there, and so forth.

Stein's analysis, in this sense, is lateral; she does not trace things back to their origins, it is not etymological. That would reduce things to nouns, when getting away from the stasis (and the phallogenic monumentality) of the name was essential. She saw things in a present continuity, a present relativity, across the porous planes of the writing. "Not ordinary".

Not unordered in not resembling. Not chaotic, despite the rapidly multiplying abundance of singularities by virtue of the differences. Differences keep things separate and distinct.

As Donald Sutherland put it: "The great welter of what seem to be particularities and trivialities in *Tender Buttons* comes from a 'religious' attitude toward everything as simple existence. She said the change at this time was from feeling that everything was simply alike to feeling that everything was simply different". Differences are at the heart of discernment. It is precisely the differences that are the point of devices such as rhyming, punning, pairing, and running strings of changes within consonant frames. It is the difference between rod and red and rid that makes them mean. Word play, in this sense, foregrounds the relationship between words. "Literalness is not deceptive it destroys a similarity" ("Arthur a Grammar"). "A sentence is that it makes a difference".

The carafe in *Tender Buttons's* first poem is only the first of a number of various things that can be thought of as containers or enclosures —with an ambiguous relationship to the semantics of perception and to the syntax of the language in which it is expressed and described— or in which, perhaps, it actually takes place.

Across the motif of containment, there is a series of words relative to destruction, or, at the least, change —process, alteration, and natural transformation. Cracks, holes, punctures, piercing, gaps, and breakage —and the possible spill with which the first poem ends— recur and refer in part to Stein's concerns about the means and adequacy of writing— of capturing things in words. As she put it a year

earlier, in "Americans", "A gap what is a gap when there is not any meaning in a slice with a hole in it. What is the exchange between the whole and no more witnesses".

> Or to quote myself:
>
> going
> by the usual criteria for knowledge
> I vowed not to laugh
> but to scatter things. In the bowl
> of my left palm I placed my right
> forefinger, to signify a) Feeding
> b) A batch, c) The Appraisal, d) Too Much
> consolation
> is like a forgetfully boundless vow.

The contrast between the containment and the water motifs is obvious, especially in *Tender Buttons*, but I think of it too in others of Stein's works. The flow of water is rather like the abstract nature of color. It can take place in or on a thing but it is always as part of a larger, more abstract entity that it has its character. Blue, or the sea. "Why is there a single piece of any color" is a line from "Rooms".

Perhaps the water alludes to consciousness, the consciousness which, said James, "does not appear to itself chopped up in bits... it is nothing jointed; it flows". (Briefer Course, 159) "Within each personal consciousness, thought is sensibly continuous. I can only define 'continuous' as that which is without breach, crack, or division" (I, 237). The term "stream of consciousness" recurs over and over in James's writings on psychology.

I myself don't experience consciousness that way —my own. It does appear broken up, discontinuous— sometimes radically, abruptly, and disconcertingly so. It would seem that Stein wondered about this:

> Will she be kneeling beside the water where the water is flowing and will she be losing it and will she furnish a house as well and will she see some one as she is advancing and will she be a christian and will she furnish a house as well. Will she be kneeling beside the water. Will she advance and will she furnish the house as well. Will she be kneeling there where the water is flowing. She attached to it this, she attaches to it. ("Lend a Hand, or Four Religions")

Box, bottle, carafe, cup, shoe, tumbler, book. Containers and their covers —concealment— colors, and dust, dirt, darkness, polish, shine. "A shine is that which when covered changes permission. An enclosure blends with the same that is to say there is blending. A blend is that which holds no mice and this is not because of a floor it is because of nothing, it is not in a vision" ("Rooms").

That a thing remains itself, unchanged, that perception contains that thing

accurately, completely; that words capture that perception, honestly, accurately: containers and enclosures raise questions about the integrity of things in many senses.

> Instead of giving what I was realizing at any and every moment of them and of me until I was empty of them I made them contained within the thing I wrote that was them. The thing in itself folding itself up inside itself like you might fold a thing up to be another thing which is that thing... If you think how you fold things or make a boat or anything else out of paper or getting anything to be inside anything, the hole in the doughnut or the apple in the dumpling perhaps you will see what I mean.

For Stein, the container was from the start an interesting problem. To regard description —or the page of writing— as a container was to betray the nature of the thing described, the flow of its existence, and the flow of the consciousness perceiving it. "An eyeglass, what is an eyeglass, it is water" ("Muttons").

To resolve this, she conceived of her work not as a medium for emptying herself of ideas nor as a formalized language holding the contents of the objects which emptied themselves into it, but of the writing as "the thing that was them" —which means that things take place inside the writing, are perceived there, not elsewhere, outside it. It is the nature of meaning to be intrinsic, in other words, immanent, as the meaning of any person is, of me, *is* me, the person. That is how the poem means. Concentric circles draw more and more in as they radiate out; more and more lake is contained by the stone.

Tender Buttons can be read as an approach toward a hard-edged, rigorous, analytical, merciless, romantic realism, which

1. is patient and accurate in regarding the subject
2. sounds the psychological density of language
3. keeps its techniques bristling with perceptibility
4. is motivated by the cathexis of language itself toward knowledge
5. is successful in achieving the inability to finish what it says.

GRAMMAR AND LANDSCAPE

1

Landscape, *per se*, is a model of longevity. It has the virtue of never being complete, and so of seeming permanent —eternal. As a form, therefore, it is solemn and vacant, because nothing can match it. No condition, or set or array of conditions, achieves a finalized form of landscape —which makes landscape an exemplary case, a spread of examples. As D'Arcy Thompson puts it, "Some lofty concepts, like space and number, involve truths remote from the category of causation; and here we must be content, as Aristotle says, if the mere facts be

known. But natural history deals with ephemeral and accidental, not eternal nor universal things; their causes and effects thrust themselves on our curiosity, and become the ultimate relations to which our contemplation extends".

For Gertrude Stein, landscape was an empty form, or rather a form free of predictions, a somewhat vibrational field of reversible effects. The exactitude —the "realism" that she claimed for her descriptions (as nameless naming) of single objects in *Tender Buttons*— could be repeated over and over if she could get not only the object but its position and the condition of its being in position. And this could be multiplied; there could be many objects and then therefore multiple relationships —coincidents, which are the most reversible of relationships.

To "Act so that there is no use in a center" proposes landscape, with its perspective spread over a largish surface, located in innumerable non-isolating focal points. In terms of writing, this meant, for Stein, that the vanishing point might be on every word.

Stein, in her *Lectures in America*, especially in the one called "Plays", tracks the development of her understanding of landscape in terms of plays —at first in the theater, and in terms of temporal rather than spatial problems, but more and more as writing rather than theater, and in response to local landscapes— in Spain, again on the trip that influenced *Tender Buttons* and on later visits, and then in the French countryside —"and there I lived in a landscape that made itself its own landscape", she says, as if identifying as a natural condition, or a condition in nature, that which was the made condition of her own descriptive writing in *Tender Buttons*: "I made them" (that is, the objects as descriptions in the poems of *Tender Buttons*) "contained within the thing I wrote that was them. The thing in itself folded up inside itself like you might fold a thing up to be another thing which is that thing inside it that thing...", as she said. "And there I lived in a landscape that made itself its own landscape", heavy, burdened, under the tension of its own sufficient and complicated activity, its habitual readiness, a form of charged waiting, a perpetual attendance; this is very much the way a child feels its life, and the way saints, as Stein saw them, lead theirs. One thinks of the opening of *Four Saints in Three Acts*, which for Stein was primarily and pointedly a landscape:

> Two saints prepare for saints it two saints prepare for saints in prepare for saints.
> A narrative of prepare for saints in narrative prepare for saints.
> Remain to narrate to prepare two saints for saints.

But if one is to consider the landscape as a form of charged, redolent waiting, one can't help but think too of Flaubert, and his recurrent oblique or lateral stylistic influence on Stein.

> Full and flushed, the moon came up over the skyline behind the meadow, climbed rapidly between the branches of the poplars, which covered it here and there like a torn black curtain, rose dazzling white in the clear sky, and

> then, sailing more slowly, cast down upon the river a great splash of light that broke into a million stars, a silver sheen that seemed to twist its way to the bottom, like a headless snake with luminous scales, or like some monstrous candelabra dripping molten diamonds. The soft night was all about them. Curtains of shadow hung amid the leaves. Emma, her eyes half-closed, breathed in with deep sighs the cool wind that was blowing. They did not speak, caught as they were in the rush of their reverie. Their early tenderness returned to their hearts, full and silent as the river flowing by, soothing-sweet as the perfume the syringas wafted, casting huger and more melancholy shadows on their memory than those the unmoving willows laid upon the grass. Often some night-animal, hedgehog or weasel, would scuffle through the undergrowth as it started after its quarry; now and again a ripe peach could be heard softly dropping from the tree. *(Madame Bovary)*

2

It is at just that moment that the night is repeated, received repeatedly surrounding the foggy morning, a rainy noon, the hot sun, the clouds in moonlight that move from left to right. That is, despite the forward momentum, the gravitational drag that keeps us characteristically active, despite the inclinations to look without being specific into the distance and gaze into the blue-gray diffusion and soothing yellow-gray silhouettes on the horizon that soaks up details, one concentrates instead (let us say, formally) on the foreground branches just within reach of a middle-sized tree to the left. On their underside, the leaves are a dusty gray with a powdery texture and green and greasy above, bisected by a bulging vein. It takes more breeze to move the tree than the gradual grass that goes down a slope over a mound which begins above the tree in rocks with green and exposed maroon concave faces on the hill. "The rope attached to the mountain is for the benefit of those who roll the rocks down the mountain and the umbrella and the mechanical motion is hers who is breaking the rocks open and she is observing that the grass is growing nearly four times yearly". ("Lend a Hand, or Four Religions"). The young grass grows more broadly than tenderly and is most pervasive in the middle distance, since the dirt in the foreground and the dying yellow and matted gray and brown moldy tangle blot it out over some ants. In the interim: bees, a wire fence, cows, shadows, picnics and a game, a siren in the distance that reaches us somewhat after it sounds. Several seasons, and an entire day move by, and if you now think of language, both loosely and particularly, as radiating structures and as behavior in sentences, the relationship between grammar and landscape, while still vague, may be proposed, at least in the imagination. The nature of the proposition resembles that of the appearance of the person in nature, or of a landscape instead of a wilderness.

To suggest that there is a relationship between grammar and landscape in Stein's work —or to suggest that we can usefully imagine one in order to understand the meaning of a form of poetic language in her writing— is really not

an imposition, since landscape and grammar were what Stein herself was writing and thinking about (the two for her are almost inseparable) simultaneously during the Twenties and early Thirties, the years in which she wrote a number of plays, including those collected in *Operas and Plays, Lucy Church Amiably*, and the works collected in *How To Write.* One can read these various works in conjunction, that is as a ground for the examination of temporal and of spatial scales in the world of things and persons and in language, which determines just as much as it reflects our sense of measure and scale. Cows, roses, shadows, exclamations in appreciation, rivers, spouses, poplar trees, fences, conversations, and sentences in description, for example. What occurs as time and what occurs as space, the movement, have grammatical value and can be understood as such, at least incompletely —by which I mean that it is likely that the understanding remains unfinished.

3

Stein said of dances and battles that they constructed landscapes, since persons went in and out of them, and filled them with movement back and forth. Conversely, she said, in *The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas*, "a landscape is such a natural arrangement for a battlefield or a play that one must write plays".

The composition of the plays that she wrote, beginning with one called "Lend a Hand, or Four Religions" (written in 1922 and collected in *Useful Knowledge*), of which she wrote (ABT 209), "This play has always interested her immensely, it was the first attempt that later made her *Operas and Plays*, the first conception of landscape as a play", coincided with her thinking and writing about grammar and with the novel, or landscape romance, *Lucy Church Amiably*, written en 1927, which she characterized as "A Novel of Romantic beauty and nature and which Looks Like an Engraving". "There is a church and it is in Lucey... Beside this there is amiably and this comes from the paragraph". (Advertisement to LCA).

Four Saints in Three Acts was written in the same year as *Lucy Church Amiably*, and she said of it, in her lecture "Plays", "I made the Saints the landscape. All the saints that I made and I made a number of them because after all a great many pieces of things are a landscape all these saints together made my landscape. These attendant saints were the landscape and it the play really is a landscape".

The activity, or the characteristic movement (both literal and conceptual —that is, not perceived but known), that takes place in the plays and the novel is unplotted, though not without vista, romance, and even melodrama. What is in place from the outset and continuously occurring are all-over relationships of greater or lesser complexity that includes things, persons and events— lists (one of the plays in fact is called "A List"), shifts ("What is the difference between reserve and reverse", HTW), cycles that are both rhythmic and arhythmic, like the acceleration and decelleration in time or crescendo and diminuendo in space, comings and goings, and the dynamics of emotional and motivational relativity.

That the form in which this takes place is called landscape, rather than story, makes it easier to understand how Stein perceived and felt about event, adventure,

and meaning —what constituted these for her. Of course, "non-linear" is a key term here, and it is against this that grammar becomes complicated and interesting.

In the opening paragraphs of the lecture "Plays", Stein herself associates her studies of grammar with her interest in plays as landscape. She says that she has made discoveries about the emotions in grammar ("paragraphs are emotional, sentences are not") and at the same time she has discovered that there is a disjuncture between the emotional time of the play and the emotional time of the audience watching the play, which causes a troubling "syncopation", as she calls it —a mortal arhythmia. The conventional theater causes an unpleasant and debilitating anxiety. In blocking participation, it is devitalizing, where for Stein vitality is a moral category. She had expressed in innumerable ways her position that the value of anyone (or anything) lay in their "being completely living", and so this problem with the conventional theater was an important one. "I felt that if a play was exactly like a landscape then there would be no difficulty about the emotion of the person looking on at the play being behind or ahead of the play because the landscape does not have to make acquaintance. You may have to make acquaintance with it, but it does not with you, it is there..." ("Plays").

And so Stein arrived at the question, What is a landscape and what relationship does a landscape have with a sentence and a paragraph? Or, What are the qualities that are characteristic of a landscape? and what is it about landscapes that lead Stein, and through her, us, to think about grammar? "Grammar in relation to a tree and two horses" (HTW).

It is natural to think of landscape as a space, as a framed spatial configuration enclosing natural phenomena. To think about time, as it takes place in a landscape, makes it much easier to understand some of Stein's central concepts and their literary methods, since so many of them concern temporal structures of perception. "The sense of time is a phenomenon of nature", she said in "Natural Phenomena" (PL). "It is what adds complexity to composition. There can be past and present and future which succeed and rejoin, this makes romantic realistic and sentimental and then really the three in one and not romantic and not realistic and not sentimental. The three in one makes a time sense that adds complexity to composition. A composition after all is never complex. The only complexity is the time sense that adds that creates complexity in composition. Let us begin over and over again. Let us begin again and again and again." It is the convergence of these elements —that is, time and space— with language that provides the excitement of grammar. "It makes me smile to be a grammarian and I am". ("A Grammarian").

4

The character of space in landscape is not difficult to think about. As Donald Sutherland puts it, it is a "composition of motions". Things in space expand or wither, the expanse is more or less framed from any particular point of view in it. Trees bend to the wind; the color of the grasses shifts under shadows; bushes bloom

and receive birds; cows, deer, a bicyclist, squirrels, a dog, lizards, etc., pass across to through. A rock rolls down the slope. Any unit of this space, however large or small, is complete in itself as a landscape. The style of activity anywhere bears a resemblance to the style of activity elsewhere. The space is filled, so to speak, with long-wave and short-wave sympathetic vibrations. "Would it be very certain that rain and its equivalent sun and its equivalent a hill and its equivalent and flowers and their equivalent have been heard and seen and felt and followed and more around and rounder and roundly. Is there also a hesitation in going slower. She said yes". ("Natural Phenomena").

A self-contained landscape where "what is seen is contained by itself inside it" in direct and precise distances, divisions, and situations is the point here. The "going slower" becomes obsessive. The movement, if one can put it this way, becomes a fixation. The activity that maintains between events is arrested and detail is flattened out, becoming monumental. It is in this sense that Stein could observe, as she put it in "Plays", "A landscape does not move nothing really moves in a landscape but things are there". It is a matter of simple observation. "Magpies are in a landscape that is they are in the sky of a landscape, they are black and white and they are in the sky of the landscape in Bilignin and in Spain, especially in Avila. When they are in the sky they do something that I have never seen any other bird do they hold themselves up and down and look flat against the sky". In essence the landscape, by virtue of its own laws, is transformed under attention into a tableau, a *tableau vivant*; episodes become qualities. As Stein says in *Lectures in America*, "all that was necessary was that there was something completely contained within itself and being contained within itself was moving, not moving in relation to anything not moving in relation to itself but just moving..." It is thus that Stein can envisage battles and charging up or down hills as landscape events —flattened out onto the names of the hills. Events are presences:

1. A stain with a lily.

Second. A girl with a rooster in front of her and a bush of strange flowers at her side and a small tree behind her.

3. A guardian of a museum holding a cane.
4. A woman leaning forward.
5. A woman with a sheep in front of her a small tree behind her.
6. A woman with black hair and two bundles one under each arm.
7. A night watchman of a hotel who does not fail to stand all the time.
8. A very stout girl with a basket and flowers summer flowers and the flowers are in front of a small tree.

Saints in Season

5

Stein's sense of landscape is more painterly than theatrical; the use of a flat or planar perspective for purposes of intensification comes from Cezanne. (Certainly Stein's regard for landscape is radically different from that of the American 19th

century landscape painters, though I think one can trace their influence on the work of other 20th century American poets. Their conception of landscape as the "book of God", as a wilderness in which Spirit is Immanent, as a solitude ((their attitude toward humans is full of conflict)), the abode of melancholic euphoria, as a retrospective vision of Eden —that is, landscape as past tense, burdens the sense of place and its significance for later American poets. I am thinking, for example, of the mystique of place ((say of Gloucester, as a thunderous noun)), as history, with etymology its paradigm, the noun or name being radically significant, and the heroic task of articulating it claimed as that of the poet). Cezanne's landscapes are presented, so to speak, broadside, and more than one area is present with full force. Similarly, Stein distributes value or meaning across the widest possible range of articulation —in this context, one might say, panoramically.

In this regard, it's useful for a minute to consider the distinction that Saussure developed in linguistics between a language considered diachronically, that is historically, in terms of its etymologies and developing syntactic usages and strategies over time, and the same language regarded synchronously, as a system in use and complete at any given moment. Indeed, the distinction between synchrony and diachrony proves extremely fruitful for regarding almost any kind of system. What we have is two continuums (or continua), one of which, the diachronous, we may think of as vertical, an historical swathe or a current of contiguous time lines trailing behind every object, idea, and event. The second continuum, that of the synchronous present, on a plane extending over the full expanse of the moment, is characterized by an existential density in which present relationships and differentiations, to the extent that we can take them in, are the essential activity. The diachronous is characterized by causality, or one could say narrativity; the attachments of one thing to another are insistently relevant. Whereas the synchronous is characterized by parallelism. One notices analogies and coincidences, resemblances and distinctions, the simultaneous existence of variations, contradictions, and the apparently random.

One of the characteristics of Stein's writing is that elements co-exist with alternatives in the work; phrase or sentence A is not obliterated when it appears, slightly altered perhaps, as phrase or sentence B. The frequent use of "and" in Stein's work is an important indicator of inclusion, just as the use of the gerund is an important indicator of the continuation of anything. One must be careful not to read any sequence of sentences as a series of substitutions or cancellations.

A landscape is almost by definition and naturally synchronous. Writing is not. The effects of landscape are frontal, and less mediated than those of, say, historical stages.

6

In terms of writing, what adds to the interest of the synchronic-diachronic opposition, is that, although the synchronic is obviously a temporal concept, it

projects a spatial figure —one could say a landscape— "a moment of time that has gotten in position".

That is, the syntax of time is juxtaposed against the syntax of space, rather as the sentence runs across the line in poetry. There are the two sets of conditions governing the composition.

Barrett Watten, in the title essay of his book *Total Syntax*, in discussing Robert Smithson's sculpture, says, "*Space* is the exterior syntax; it is physical and cultural, starting from the actual site of the work. *Time* is the interior syntax; it is structural and psychological and begins with the response to the work in language". But in Stein's work —that is, in *Lucy Church Amiably* and the plays of this period— both space and time are primarily psychological and interior, and structural when triangulated with language, which remains exterior, as the *site.* Time is jammed into and spread over the imagined spatial plane, and it is in language that details, and especially temporal details, are specified and, as it were, made physical. Distinctions must occur —activity takes place— across the language plane itself. In terms of spatial syntax, configurations and relationships occur in sets rather than in sequence, so that the perceptual activity, which has taken the form of writing, makes essential comparisons, oppositions, and distinctions. As Saussure put it (*Cours de linguistiques générale*), "in language there are only differences". Or as Stein said, "Grammar makes it be different" (HTW).

This occurs at its simplest level with the word itself, and accounts in part for Stein's exploration of the significance of homonyms and rhymes and the effect of changing single vowels or consonants across a set of words. "Natural phenomena are or are not to cease. There is a pleasant difference between a crease cease and increase. There is a pleasant difference between when they had been very fortunate in deciding everything and when they had it little by little all the time". And in "Sentences", "Supposing it is ours a dress address name can be opposed to name and tame".

The change and exchange of names, simply in terms of the relationship of sound to meaning (and quite apart from what is indicated about Stein's concept of personality), is one of Stein's most recurrent devices. "Nobody knows which name is the one they have heard", she comments (LCA). "Helen Mary how many how many how many Helen Marys are there to be had as many as every time every every every time time of day..." "John Mary with it as if Mary which is Xenobie never could be left handed and left and right said that it is best that if it is to be tried she she knew that it was best to stay and every year four coming from there were to be arranging that they were to receive who came. Delightful".

Gertrude was often a comic writer —funniness has something to do with the vibrational movement that she achieved (just as other emotions have to do with movement in writing, though Stein usually deems that the movement occur above the level of the sentence— specifically in paragraphs). She was often a comic writer, but she was almost never ironic, perhaps because irony comes from being of two minds, while Stein was, by choice, significantly single-minded. And for the same reason she is seldom metaphorical. In fact, metaphor is a suspect device,

since it is a secondary characteristic of perception, and it is primary perception that Stein sought in her work. Directly in sentences.

7. *Seasons*

Sentences of which present attention is the sole antecedent; the thought begins here. "A sentence is an imagined frontispiece" (HTW). Candor without confession, not neutral but frontal. In the thickening of the sentence. "A grammar means positively no prayer for a decline of pressure" (HTW). Stein's often aphoristic style must come from writing one sentence at a time. As a consequence of its irreducibility, a sentence like "A sentence is not natural" is the kernel of an analysis, but so too is "A sentence is not not natural" ("More Grammar for a Sentence", Yale Selected 253).

To think of grammar as a river might have silly consequences. "The great question is can you think a sentence" (HTW). What sentences are about is what Max Beckmann calls "the will for Form", which is why a river or stream is such an outrageous model of location and stability, even when the landscape is taking its name from the river: the Loire Valley, for example.

> She attaches it and as she attaches she is kneeling there and she is kneeling there where she is kneeling in a box there where the water is flowing there where she attaches it there. Where she attaches there where she is where she is as she is kneeling there in a box and the water is flowing there beside the water where it is flowing there she attaches it there. ("Lend a Hand, or Four Religions").

The entrance of the sentence into metaphysics may produce a landscape, but the sentence itself is grammatical. Its words and meaning are engaged as grammar, motivated temporally and spatially. The sentence moves in large or small increments, depending on the specific sentence; conventionally, it advances the story, the argument, the information, or the melody-line. And conventionally it is led by the noun-verb configuration (which can only take place in sentences anyway —that is, words are simply vocabulary until they take place in a sentence; it is the sentence which renders them malleable, making their plasticity relevant).

But in Stein's writing, the word values, which are conventionally hierarchical, are often instead spread out within the sentence. The role of noun and verb gets shifted or bounced back and forth across the sentence, and words trade functions —this is relatively easy in our uninflected English where words like paddles value sentences reverse part and so on may be nouns verbs or in some cases adjectives without any alteration— so that the movement is multi-dimensional, multi-relational. "A sentence is an interval in which there is finally forward and back". "Our comes back. Back comes our" (HTW).

Perhaps this approximates consciousness. I'll explain more specifically what I mean, but first let me quote from William James's *Principles of Psychology*:

> As we take, in fact, a general view of the wonderful stream of our consciousness, what strikes us first is this different pace of its parts. Like a bird's life, it seems to be made of an alteration of flights and perchings. The rhythm of language expresses this, where every thought is expressed in a sentence, and every sentence closed by a period. The resting-places are usually occupied by sensorial imaginations of some sort, whose peculiarity is that they can be held before the mind for an indefinite time, and contemplated without changing; the places of flight are filled with thoughts of relations, static or dynamic, that for the most part obtain between the matters contemplated in the periods of comparative rest.
>
> Let us call the resting-places the 'substantive parts', and the places of flight the 'transitive parts', of the stream of thought. It then appears that the main end of our thinking is at all times the attainment of some other substantive part than the one from which we have just been dislodged. And we may say that the main use of the transitive parts is to lead us from one substantive conclusion to another...
>
> There is not a conjunction or a preposition, and hardly an adverbial phrase, syntactic form, or inflection of voice, in human speech, that does not express some shading or other of relation which we at some moment actually feel to exist between the larger objects of our thought.

It seems to me that this is tantamount to identifying language as a kind of landscape-scanning technology, wherein landscape is a temporal-spatial configuration and language operates within it. Or, as Stein puts it, "This is a sentence that comes in the midst not in the midst of other things but in the midst of the same thing" (HTW).

To be somewhat more specific about the sentence dynamics that I find so compelling in Stein's work, let me start with an example from *Tender Buttons,* the entirety of the poem entitled "Roast Potatoes":

> Roast potatoes for.

The dominant word, when the sentence gets said, is *for* —in part because of its strangeness; the incorrectness of the dangling preposition attracts one's attention. The word "roast" goes through various permutations: it may be an adjective, defining potatoes, and if so, in one reading of the sentence, it as a redundant one —namely, if one reads "for" as a pun, buoying up the already emphatic preposition. "For" is an accurate enough rendering of the American pronunciation of the French word *four,* meaning oven —baked or roast potatoes in French are called *pommes de terres au four.*

Rather than an adjective, roast may be a noun, in which case one might read the sentence as something in an index style, say: Roast, potatoes for. One supplies the "missing" comma —one so often does do that in reading Stein. Or one may supply a "missing" copula, say "and", and read the sentence amidst ellipses, as, perhaps, listing: Here are the *Roast and potatoes for...*

And finally one may take roast as a verb, perhaps in the imperative mood. Potatoes is, as they are, the stable element.

The point is that the sentence comes at one full face.

In longer sentences, the number of meaning events, and the possible range of combination and recombination is much greater. "A sentence is made to be divided into one two three six seven starting with one". "Roast potatoes for" might be one. Another "one" is "Place praise places" (from *Hotel Francois Ier,* 1931).

The comment in *How to Write,* "A sentence is made to be divided into one two three six seven starting with one", has obviously to do with stress and emphasis, and also with a notion of equivalence in the units —the meaning units, so to speak— that are foregrounded as planes. Stein follows the comment with examples of "A sentence divided in three. He is never to be allowed/to continue to commence/to prepare to wait" (the slash marks are my division indications) and of "A sentence divided into six. Thëy hâve púrchased what thëy have bëen to sée."

Where the reader makes the divisions may be somewhat subjective, dependent on one's particular rhythm of comprehension —how fast one thinks, how large a unit one can hold before having to drop if for the next, and the nature of the background activity *in* the sentence— its field of reference. In the sentence divided in three, for example, the nearly perfect grammatical balance is poised under a temporal warp. The logic is displaced —that is, it is possible "to continue to prepare" and "to commence to wait" but it is unlikely that one would "continue to commence".

"A sentence is made by coupling meanwhile ride around to be a couple there makes grateful dubeity named atlas coin in a loan." This is the first sentence of "Sentences" (HTW). Here the phrasing is interlocked, rather than displaced. If one parses the sentence, almost every phrase does multiple duty, holding the sentence together as a complex thought, or web of thoughts, and serving as a so to speak hospitable ground for the meanings that adhere to it. There are really radical shifts that are going on in the sentence, such as "the grateful dubeity" that "a couple there makes" and the change in scale from "atlas" to "coin", and from "coin" (specific, say a penny) to "coin in a loan" (general-money) —though here it is also possible that "coin in" is a verb, meaning something like to "cash in" or "convert into money". Love rides around a rich world in or on a sentence.

Such love might be thought of as "grateful dubeity" —headlong tentativeness, grateful in being given the opportunity to doubt.

"We do know a little now what prose is", Stein says in *How to Write.* "Prose is the balance the emotional balance that makes the reality of paragraphs and the unemotional balance that makes the reality of sentences and having realized completely realized that sentences are not emotional while paragraphs are, prose can be the essential balance that is made inside something that combines the sentence and the paragraph..."

As Ron Silliman points out in his essay "The New Sentence", what Stein means here is "that linguistic units integrate only up to the level of the sentence, but higher orders of meaning —such as emotion— integrate at higher levels than the

sentence and occur only in the presence of either many sentences or, at least Stein's example suggests this, in the presence of certain complex sentences in which dependent clauses integrate with independent ones." Language generates sentences, which taken as forms of frontal grammar, are the verbal planes from which consciousness constructs that of which it is conscious. That is, one realizes consciousness by positioning sentences in the landscape of consciousness:

"Sentences are made wonderfully one at a time".
"A sentence is a present which they make".
"I return to sentences as to a refreshment."
"A balance in a sentence makes it state that it is staying there".
"A sentence is an allowance of a confusion".
"A sentence is our paragraph".
"A sentence is dependent upon whether they open it again and again giving it for it and gave it to it".
"As to paper and weight naturally phenomena must be unresisted as much as heard and seen".