

Why She Likes Detective Stories

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ABSTRACT

In The Geographical History of America or the Relation of Human Nature to the Human Mind, Gertrude Stein continues her ongoing discussion on the difference between the human mind and human nature. This thesis draws on Stein's key distinction between entity and identity to examine the notion of "identification" and "misrecognition" in the theoretical approaches to the subject employed, respectively, by Sigmund Freud and Louis Althusser.

I will argue that Stein's human nature does not identify the object, but rather identifies the absence of a Subject which is the prerequisite "standard" for all agreements within a consensual meaning system: i.e., the greater narrative. By considering human nature's propensity to identify in the "absence" of the Subject, I follow Stein's lead and adhere to her principal distinction between the human mind and human nature: that they are not related in anyway. This is inevitably the point of departure in a comparison of what I term Stein's "absent Subject," Freud's "total Subject" and Althusser's "S/subject."

This thesis proposes that a clear separation of entity and identity within a theoretical approach to subjectivity is a potentially liberating strategy for a self-reflexivity that is possible only by distinguishing what is related from what is in relation. As Stein suggests, when you begin with a body, you get rid of human nature and you free up the mind to see.


Examiners:



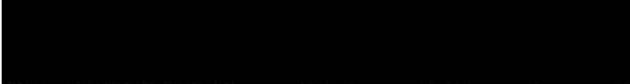
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abbreviations

Louis Althusser

IISA: Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses (Notes towards an Investigation)

Gertrude Stein

CAE: Composition as Explanation

GHA: Geographical History of America or the Relation of Human Nature to the Human Mind

P&R: Portraits and Repetition

WAM: What Are Masterpieces (and why are there so few of them)

WIEL: What Is English Literature

WILDS: Why I Like Detective Stories

Sigmund Freud

BPP: Beyond the Pleasure Principle

E&I: The Ego and the Id

For
Bradley James Crockett
&
James Lawrence Wood

Gertrude Stein suggests that the difference between the human mind and human nature is the difference between entity and identity, between the inside and the outside, between a private and a public life and between seeing and remembering. Although there is a relation in the explicit dichotomy that parallels every aspect of the human mind and human nature, Stein insists that they are not related in any way:

There is always a relation between one thing and any other thing such as human nature and the human mind, between painting and what you paint between a black and a white dog although they are not related to each other (Stein GHA 61).

By adamantly separating the human mind and human nature, Stein resists presenting them as the disparate halves of a "once - whole" and compels her readers to consider the two only as separate and unrelated processes. The separation of an autonomous inner mind (entity) and a socially constructed nature (identity) precludes the possibility of a "greater" absent Subject to which all "things" would be subsumed as particulars.

The difference between the human mind and human nature is the difference between the freedom to see and a propensity to remember. Stein suggests that human nature identifies by remembering, and it remembers only in relation to a greater identity. When Stein adheres to the separation of the human mind from human nature she denies an originary, totalizing source for her relational dichotomy and acquires a certain freedom. Stein qualifies this freedom in her essay Why I Like Detective Stories, where she

suggests that when you begin with a corpse you free up the mind to see (Stein WAM 151).

For Stein, the corpse that appears at the beginning of a detective story releases those elements that were once contextually tied to identifying the "body" in its absence. Stein suggests that the "(detective story) gets rid of human nature by having the man dead to begin with the hero is dead to begin with and so you have so to speak got rid of the event before the book begins" (Stein WAM 151). Human nature only appears "in the event" of the Subject. As human nature only remembers and never sees, it can identify only on behalf of - only as an agent for - another Subject. This Subject is the absent protagonist of an overall narrative that makes agreeing within a consensual meaning system possible. Human nature identifies the object by remembering how it is in relation to the absent Subject. Human nature does not happen upon the object and its meaning, it approaches the object with its meaning. Since human nature constructs and maintains identifications only by remembering, it cannot identify what it does not know and, thus, what it does not understand. The absent Subject is a necessary standard by which all objects that are placed in relation to it can be remembered, known and understood. Like human nature, the ego of Sigmund Freud's theory of subjectivity identifies in the absence of a Subject: a paradoxical pre-Oedipal totality that both anticipates and results

from the primary identification with the Oedipal father. Freud suggests that subjectivity begins with the loss of a body which is fragmented by external and persistent pressures on the inner sphere. The stern Oedipal father interrupts the pre-Oedipal state which results in the recognition of a totality that is, in light of this recognition, lost to the subject ever after. The division of the ego from the id and the setting up the super-ego is a response to that one substantial loss - the loss of that "before" the father. The total Subject is a pre-Oedipal totality to which all things are merely extensions.

Since this totality is made apparent to the subject only once it has been lost, the total Subject has - as mere nostalgia - never really been present. The total Subject like the absent Subject is a point of departure. When the intrusive father interrupts the pre-Oedipal state, the ego divides itself from the id in the id's defense. Although the illusion of totality has been disrupted, the id remains unaware of these events and continues to emanate its taboo demands. The id's instinctual drives are retarded, but not halted, at the infantile level. Suddenly aware of social restraints, and unable to communicate with the id from which taboo demands are constantly emanating, the ego precedes to trick the id by minimizing sensory apprehension (i.e., through repetition) as a means to simulate a state of totality. However, the pre-Oedipal state that the Oedipal father interrupts becomes apparent to the subject only at the moment of its

interruption and, so, it is the "interruption" that precedes the recognition of either the inner or the outer sphere. When Freud posits an originary moment in the pre-Oedipal state, he relegates all the objects of his narrative to identifying traits of this totality and, in as much, they contextually frame a potential return. When Freud determines that the initial meeting between inner and outer spheres will culminate in a contentious division as opposed to a harmonious union, he opens up the possibility for a discourse of difference. Yet, by introducing a divided subjectivity that is destined to "remember" and "identify" the total Subject that came "before" it, Freud predetermines what he will see in accordance with how it complies to the inevitable return to totality. For example, in Beyond the Pleasure Principle, Freud preordains the components of Fort! Da! (the game he observes his subject playing) as identifying traits of the total Subject when he cites Fort! (sacrificing the object) as the preliminary to Da! (retrieving the object or its return) (600). As the objects of Fort! Da! are dependent on the overall goal of return, the repetition of the two components is, as well, subsumed as a particular, even though, as Freud himself points out, repetition is the predominant factor of the game. Positing the total Subject as the inevitable reason for the child's play overrides the preeminence of repetition by relegating it to merely another means to the end of the dominating pleasure principle. The significance of the ambivalence

that frames the game (sacrifice and resurrection) is, also, predetermined as a trait of the total subject - a means to the end of minimizing external sensory apprehension.

When the absent Subject and the total Subject are contrasted, it is evident that both Stein and Freud approach identifying practices as a "process" of striving toward an illusory "product." In both paradigms, identification takes place only in the absence of a "body." Human nature identifies the object by remembering how it is in relation to the absent Subject, while Freud's pre-Oedipal subject identifies primarily as a means to retain the last vestige of hope for the total Subject. Stein and Freud agree that identification can take place only in the absence of that "some thing" else. However, Stein's adamant separation of the human mind from human nature resists approaching the source of that absence while Freud cannot move away from it.

In Louis Althusser's theory of interpellation, the individual is hailed into the greater consensual meaning system through a misrecognition. The hail is a signal; it appears with the intention to communicate. The hailer calls out "You!," to which Althusser suggests the hailee responds, "it must be me!" When the individual agrees "it must be me," she agrees, as well, to a role in the greater public sphere. The agreement grants subjectivity to the individual, but only in as much as she is subordinated as subject to her own greater Subject. It is the element of misrecognition: a disparity inherent in

the hail that guarantees the hailee cannot live up to her "product description," and which facilitates the S/subject dynamic that can, once set up, be manipulated in accordance to the mandates of the greater consensual meaning system, i.e., ideology. It is for this reason I refer to an individual Althusser suggests is hailed in by means of this particular ideological strategy as the "S/subject."

Althusser's S/subject parallels Stein's separation of entity and identity in that clear demarcation between the individual hailed as the Subject and the subject who responds, and it parallels Freud's primary identification in that they both assume there will be a recognition by the individual with the initial purposive hail that interrupts the private sphere. When Althusser suggests that the individual misrecognizes the hail, he is assuming that there is something in the hail the individual might recognize and in turn misrecognize. Both Freud and Althusser preclude the possibility for a subjective agency when they posit an initial identification with an external agent as the primary influence in the formation of the subject. By interrogating Freud's total Subject and Althusser's S/subject in light of Stein's separation of entity and identity, a potential arises to revision theoretical approaches to the subject and subjectivity by beginning our story with a body, and acquiring to a certain degree, a self-reflexivity that is possible only when the mind is free to see.

The absent Subject

In The Geographical History of America or the Relation of Human Nature to the Human Mind, Gertrude Stein furthers her ongoing discussion on the difference between the human mind and human nature. Stein advocates a complete separation of the two terms by designating specific, antithetical, qualities to each. Stein proposes that the human mind is an inside entity: it is private (one) and it sees. Human nature is, on the other hand, an outside identity: it is public (two) and it remembers. Stein argues that while they might be related, there really is no relation between the human mind and human nature. She suggests that one is only free as an entity, and so, it is only with the human mind that one has the capacity to see. When there are two, there must be "identity" to remember the agreements that structure social communications on the outside. Human nature operates exclusively on the behalf of these outside agreements. It is a social, and thus, entirely constructed force. What the human mind sees cannot be articulated by human nature's descriptive capabilities. The human mind is inside and away from language agreements while human nature can point only to that which has once been presented.

Human nature remembers the objects that it understands, and it understands only the objects it knows. The object is known when there has been an agreement reached as to what it is - when it has

been identified. Human nature purposively seeks out objects that have an understandable form - an identifiable form. Human nature knows the things it understands and it remembers the things that it knows. Human nature knows, understands, and remembers these "things" as the identifying traits of the Subject. Although this identity does not and cannot exist as a conceivable whole, human nature behaves as though it does. It anticipates the object's relationship to this absent Subject and contextualizes it accordingly. In this way, objects are designated as "traits" to be subsumed as particulars to the greater or, more precisely, the greatest identity: the subject-as-a-whole. This Subject is the absent protagonist of the narrative that underlies all of human nature's agreements. Human nature never identifies the object, rather, the missing protagonist is perpetually indicated - pointed at through "its" objects.

Human nature remembers what the object is in relation to the absent Subject. When human nature remembers the cup, it does not remember a certain kind of "cupness" that the cup naturally contains or displays, it remembers the cup as it points to the protagonist of an overall "cup story." This story is about the Subject who has used the cup, the Subject who is using the cup, and the Subject who will use the cup. In this way, the cup is a cup when "some one" is drinking out of it and it is also a cup when "some one" is not drinking out of it. The cup's identity lies only in its potential to identify the absent Subject which, in turn, becomes the contextual setting for the cup.

Human nature anticipates the setting of the cup and accordingly unfolds a meaning out before it. Human nature is not the protagonist or Subject of the cup story, it is the constructor of the cup story. Human nature is not in itself an identity; it constructs and maintains identity. Human nature is subject to the greater absent Subject. It points perpetually to the Subject's absence and remembers the meaning of the object in relation to this absence.

Does it make any difference if a dog does not know the difference between a rubber ball and the end of a rug. No not any only he does. In this way identity is proclaimed. Not of the ball and the rug but of the dog
(Stein GHA 132).

Identifying the particular traits of the greater absent Subject is the tie that binds human nature to the consensual meaning agreements it generates and is generated by. Human nature continually reinforces the illusory products that bridge it to society by remembering what it knows about the object. While these consensual meaning agreements are necessary to communication, Stein perceives that there is an over-expenditure of energy directed toward the perpetuation of this system. The relay between public and private spheres is a tenuous negotiation in which the mandates of human nature easily eclipse the desires of the human mind. Stein suggests that this system is so high-maintenance that human nature over-dips into a shared reservoir of available energy. When human nature is adhering to its agreements - when it is remembering as the

means to advance a particular identifying feature - it is committed to the upkeep of this illusion. Stein's strict separation of human mind and human nature suggests that when one is operating the other is not. For this reason, Stein sees human nature as problematic: it relegates the individual's expenditure of energy toward remembering and interferes with the human mind's capacity to see.

What Stein's human mind sees is not simply an object out of "its" context (which is inevitably another way of remembering an object within its context), it sees that which cannot be claimed by identity. While human nature is a derivative of the consensual meaning system it operates within, the human mind is completely separate and removed from such a system and, as such, it defies articulation. While Stein suggests the human mind is that which is inside and away from or opposite the public, she never suggests that this is the pre-public or the not-yet contextualized. Stein is adamant in her claim that "(t)here is no relation between the human mind and human nature" (Stein GHA 158) and so the two are not easily perceived as discordant halves of a whole. Stein maintains her notorious aversion to context by presenting two autonomous and irreconcilable halves of what can only be one individual. Since the two cannot be amalgamated to any end, they are conceivable only as separate and disparate processes. Stein's motivation for explicitly dividing the human mind and human nature is somewhat elucidated when she explains why she likes detective stories.

One reason Stein likes detective stories is that they begin with a corpse, and so, "you do not have to take him on and your mind (is) free to enjoy yourself" (Stein WILDS 147). The corpse at the onset of the detective story is one less body Stein will have to drag through the narrative as the means to identify those objects/traits contextually tied to its identity. As the body of the would-be protagonist, it signals a welcome shift in the value assignments that order the narrative. Stein cautions, however, that this freedom is tenuous and easily revoked if the author reinvests interest too deeply into another body such as the detective, the villain, the heroine or even the detection itself. If interest is placed back into the detective, as it is in those stories Stein labels "super-detective" or "one hero," than "the crime and criminal is nothing but something for the unreal hero to conquer" (Stein WILDS 149). Stein points out that in the melodrama, (the type of detective story she likes best), the roles of the villain, hero, and heroine are equal (in this order of importance), while "in the detective hero type the rest of it becomes too dependent and eventually the hero detective having really to exist all by himself ceases to exist at all" (Stein WILDS 149). Stein cites Sherlock Holmes as an example of the "hero detective" and notes that in these stories the crime is incidental and secondary to the person solving it. In the type of stories Stein likes, the focus

remains primarily on the crime, "here there is neither hero nor villain and certainly not a heroine there is only a crime" (Stein WILDS 150).

The hero detective ceases to exist when there is nothing left by which to differentiate him; when everything else becomes him. Stein suggests that when all interest is placed into one character the "rest" of it becomes too dependent and everything is made contingent on that identity. When all objects are contextually bound to the identity of the hero, there is no longer a need for detection. Detection is the finding out of that which tends to elude notice, to detect is to discover or to perceive something not easily observed. When there is too much emphasis on the hero, no thing remains hidden - every thing points back to him. When all things are subsumed as traits to his greater identity, there is no longer the difference that inevitably defines him and he ceases to exist. For this reason, Stein prefers the type of story that focuses instead on the crime - a story that uses the "old melodrama scheme."

Stein suggests that the formula in which a crime is the primary focus of the story is employed most faithfully by her favorite detective story writer, Edgar Wallace. For Stein, the difference between the melodramas penned by Wallace and those by authors who produce super-detective stories is found in the manner by which detecting is presented. She suggests that Wallace produces stock characters and even stock action that will not get in the way of

the description of the ordinary. According to Stein, Wallace "makes it ordinary and the ordinary because he is genuinely romantic has an extraordinary charm" (Stein WILDS 148). In The Geographical History of America or the Relation of Human Nature to the Human Mind, Stein parallels romance and the human mind: "There is some relation between romance and the human mind but no relation between human nature and romantic anything.."(Stein GHA 124). The ordinary can be perceived by the human mind because, as it is ordinary, there is nothing identifiable about it. The ordinary is defined only in terms of what it is not, and this is extraordinary, because the unexceptional amidst the exceptional paradoxically stands out. The ordinary is extraordinary because even though there can be no agreement reached as to what it is, it is, nonetheless.

When a thing is extraordinary there is something about it that is more than ordinary, some thing that can be identified. In the melodrama, the ordinary does not interfere with the detection, it does not make the detection dependent on it and Stein's mind is free to see. In the midst of the super-detective, all things are made his identifying traits. The greater the gravity placed on his identity, the greater the pull on the rest of the narrative. Human nature is always in the midst of the super-detective. Even after the super-detective has ceased to exist, human nature continues to point to its identity through its objects.

Not solve it but be in it, that is what one can say of the problem of the relation of human nature to the human mind, which does not exist because there is none there is no relation because when you are in the human mind you are in it, and when you are in human nature you are out of it (Stein GHA 155-56).

Solving the thing is the necessary prerequisite to presenting it as some thing that can be agreed upon. Human nature "helps" solve the thing by remembering how it is in relation to the Subject. The cup story is solved/completed when the Subject uses the cup, and so, what human nature constructs and maintains is a "cupness" to the cup - a trait of the cup - some thing "extra" about the cup that anticipates the Subject's return. The object is always contextualized as it is "in-the-wake" of the Subject - as it is in that tenuous moment before the "pocket" created by the Subject's "once-presence" collapses or fills in. Human nature keeps this pocket open by pointing to what has supposedly once been and, so, what will supposedly be again. It points at the possibility the Subject will return by pointing to "how" the object is "in" the Subject's absence.

The total Subject

Human nature remembers the object as the object remembers the Subject. When the Subject is absent, all elements of the narrative are made dependent on it and, subsequently, the narrative houses the potential for the Subject to return. For Sigmund Freud, the movement toward a pre-Oedipal totality is seen as a "returning:" a movement away from external sensory apprehensions and back to a consummate state of non-being, i.e., death. Not unlike the epic hero who finds his way back and in doing so finds himself, Freud's subject is in a constant state of going "home." However, the fragmented subject is not the protagonist of Freud's narrative. Like human nature, Freud's subject points to those objects that are the identifying traits of the absent Subject. These "traits" point back to the site of Being/non-Being simultaneously confirming and denying its presence. The absent Subject of Freud's narrative is the totality that the ego is forced to abandon under external pressures. Subsequently, all "objects" within the narrative are subsumed as particulars to this absent Subject. As is the case with Stein's super-detective, when all things are made dependent on this metaphoric location, the location - having nothing to differentiate it - ceases to exist. Although Freud presents a subjectivity that is always in the process of "returning," short of diving into a narcissistic pool, it mediates instead between a series of eventual gradations. If there is

always a more inward site, then the concept is made ineffectual - if you can go deeper than deep, then deep necessarily becomes something else.

Prior to the Oedipal complex, the child maintains the illusion of totality through its bond with the mother whom it believes to be merely an extension of itself. The Oedipal triangle is formed when the father appears as a rival for the mother's affections. Under the threat of castration, the child is forced to relinquish the claim to the mother and identify with the father. Submitting to the will of the Oedipal father and abandoning the love object is the first act of the newly created ego which represses the demands of the id and in doing so acknowledges the first transgression. By identifying with the father, the ego begins the relentless task of negotiating between the demands of the id which have been arrested at an infantile level of instinctual gratification and the restraints of the super-ego: the internalized societal watch dog. The primary identification which begins with a threat and is maintained by anxiety consequently results in an ambivalence that is produced by the desire to do away with the father and contested by the restrictions against such desires.

Freud determines that the primary identification will result in an ambivalence that will shape the subject's object-choices from this point on. The child identifies with the father and relinquishes the desired object only under threat. By supplanting an internal

authority - the super-ego - the ego makes a decision to put off immediate instinctual urges which are perceived as dangerous in lieu of long term satisfaction. In this way, the goal of the Total subject is never abandoned, rather, it is continually reworked in accordance to social restraints. The primary identification with the father is the first in a series of compromises made on behalf of this total Subject. While this identification is presented as threatening and coercive, it serves only to make the subject more dependent on the pre-Oedipal illusion forming its outside negotiations on the basis of the societal restrictions against it.

The threat of castration creates a cleft between the subject and its desired place of totality and sets this subject on the path "back/toward" this goal. The relationship with the mother represents for the child the narcissistic fulfillment of the instinctual drives. The mother as desired object must be abandoned in light of the greater social authority. The father as symbolic of this authority inevitably holds sole claim to the mother's affections and demands that the child relinquish the attachment. This demand creates the first displacement in the form of an originary aggression aimed at the restricting father. In order to reconcile this animosity, the child is forced to identify with the imposing authority figure. While Freud cites the outcome of the initial meeting between inner subject and outer sphere as ambivalent, he qualifies this ambivalence by identifying it as a trait of the total Subject. As he has determined the

all pervasive dominance of a total state, Freud must find a way to extricate the pre-Oedipal subject from its total realm by producing something out there that the child can and will identify with. To do this, he introduces threat and coercion which - while it may disrupt the child's imaginary realm - does not automatically guarantee a subsequent identification with the force of this disruption.

Identification as the result of an initial meeting between the inner subject and the outer world presupposes a familiarity outside and a totality inside that theory cannot fully account for. When Freud's severe father curtails the instinctual demands of the Oedipus conflict, it evicts the ego and leaves "behind" the total Subject in the realm of pre-Being to which destination the subject compelled by thanatos is driven on a course back toward. From this point on, all the objects of Freud's narrative will recall and point to the total Subject who "resides" in the dominion of primal pleasure and the subject's narrative of being will be constituted and structured by its constant and mimetic adjustments to this end. It is Freud's insistence that drives have originary beginnings and predetermined ends which subsumes ambivalence as just another particular of this greater absolute. By introducing the threat of castration, Freud can account for the relinquishing of the love object, however, there is no reason to assume the child would then identify with his oppressor.

When the "entity's" narcissistic inner realm is disrupted by an outside force there is no thing, and no state, more immediate than the in-between. If the child identifies with the father - with authority, then she will have to negotiate that identity first. Whereas the bond with the mother is illusory and thus assumed, identifications made in the outer sphere are not. The onset of subjectivity requires a contradictory interruption of the illusion of totality that constitutes the pre-Oedipal realm. Freud's commitment to the predominant influence of this realm determines that a break is possible only under threat of punishment. The father threatens to cut off the vein to totality and in response the ego barter short-term immediate satisfaction for long-term gain.

The father's threat is credible only as the predecessor of difference. Until the totality of the pre-Oedipal realm is contradicted, there is no differentiation and no demarcation of sites. The appearance of the father simultaneously creates the "before-the-father" and so, the predominance of the pre-Oedipal state is an afterthought; the nostalgic longing for an object that can only be identified as a counterpart within a dialectic. Identification implies that there is something out there that the subject will identify with. However, the father is not something that the subject selects or chooses from the "outer" sphere. The father/the image/the presentation appears before the subject reacts to it and consequently the dynamic is comprised of an active and passive relationship. This

difference precludes the possibility of selective identification and makes coercion a necessary element in the Oedipal strategy.

"Everybody knows how nothing succeeds anything. And so just now yes just now the human mind is the human mind" (Stein GHA 54).

In Beyond the Pleasure Principle, Freud records his observation of a game played by his grandson in which the child repeatedly throws a wooden reel attached to a string away from him and proclaims Fort! - Gone!, at which time he pulls the reel back to him and announces Da! - Here!. He suggests that the child repeats these two actions to simulate the appearance and disappearance of the mother - to take control in a situation in which he is otherwise powerless. By controlling the destiny of the outside object, the child recalls a pre-Oedipal existence: a "before" the arrival of the stern father - the harbinger of supererogatory sensory apprehension. The game is carried out on behalf of the pleasure principle which "endeavors to keep the quantity of excitation present as low as possible or at least to keep it constant" (Freud BPP 596). The game is played in anticipation of anxiety - "a particular state of expecting the danger or preparing for it" - that arises from persistence of desires that are in conflict with the existing social code (Freud BPP 598). The control the child exercises over his "wooden reel" compensates for the forced renunciation of instinctual satisfaction that occurs when the mother disappears and the child cannot produce her.

In this late essay, Freud amalgamates his previously separate egoistic and libidinal drives by citing the ego as the originary seat of libidinal activity. Freud determines that all drives are instinctually compelled and seek to obliterate (or at the very least subdue) contradictory sensory apprehension. Freud's subject is destined to move back/toward a period of inorganic being "which the living entity has been obliged to abandon under the pressure of external disturbing forces (Freud BPP 612). This desire on behalf of the subject to return to a state of totality dominates the course of all processes of excitation and thus predetermines the significant ordering of Fort! Da!:

This, then, was the complete game -- disappearance and return. As a rule one only witnessed its first act, which was repeated untiringly as a game in itself, though there is no doubt that the greater pleasure was attached to the second act (Freud BPP 599).

Our interest is directed to another point. The child cannot possibly have felt his mother's departure as something agreeable or even indifferent. How then does his repetition of this distressing experience as a game fit in with the pleasure principle? It may perhaps be said in reply that her departure had to be enacted as a necessary preliminary to her joyful return, and that it was in the latter that lay the true purpose of the game (Freud BPP 600).

Freud concedes that the child could not find a repetition of his mother's disappearance a pleasurable experience and so he will have to find a way to "fit" the repetition of this unpleasant experience into a structure that recognizes the a priori dominance of the pleasure

principle. He therefore privileges Da! by relegating Fort! as its "necessary preliminary." Although Freud cites the repetition as the most immediately pleasurable experience for the child, he nonetheless relegates it to a link in a chain of events that always point to Da!:

But if a compulsion to repeat *does* operate in the mind, we should be glad to know something about it, to learn what function it corresponds to, under what conditions it can emerge and what its relation is to the pleasure principle -- to which, after all, we have hitherto ascribed dominance over the course of the processes of excitation in mental life
(my emphasis) (Freud BPP 605).

Privileging the Da! of experience - the return of the mother/the return of the Subject - Freud determines that the reel is (as the fetishized mother) repeatedly banished and recalled as a means to minimize anxiety and replicate a pre-Oedipal state. By identifying the objects as the traits of his total Subject, Freud restricts the game to a carefully manipulated and controlled frame wherein all roads eventually lead back to Da! However, if at some point the child becomes bored with the game and throws the reel down without retrieving it, he then performs Fort! without anticipating Da! or, perhaps, the Fort! of a previous game is always answered by the Da! of the next. By reducing his frame, Freud identifies only the dialectal relation of the phonemes as a link to the pre-Oedipal state. Yet, Da! is not repeated any more frequently than Fort! and it cannot be performed or distinguished outside of Fort!. Fort! and Da! are not

The S/subject

The S/subject is an individual that has been interpellated into the greater society by means of a "hailing." The individual is hailed (signaled to) and responds (misrecognizes) the hail as the marker of an already fixed identity. The hail says "it's you!" and the response is "it must be!" (or else you wouldn't have called me). The hail is a signal, like a white flag its appearance simultaneously relays an explicit message: it labels you "subject" and then it tells you what that means. In its simplest terms it means "the one I am calling to," "that one," "you!." If "all ideology hails concrete individuals as concrete subjects" and if ideology "recruits individuals...transforms them by interpellation or hailing" and the individual "turns around believing/suspecting/knowing it is for him, i.e. recognizing that it really was he who is meant by the hailing" (Althusser IISA 48-49), then all ideology and all indoctrination into social relations must necessarily arise from an initial identification.

If the individual answers the hail with "it must be me!" then the "it" must be qualified as something outside of the subject but still a part of the subject nonetheless, an extension of the subject - a "**subject-presentation.**" According to Althusser, the individual when presented with the subject-presentation does not simply respond with "it must be me!," but responds with what he suggests is

a misrecognition: "it must be me because they say it is me so they must be right." The "hailee" is initiated into the dominant ideology through a misrecognition wherein the individual mistaking herself for the Subject called assumes the role of that Subject. The S/subject role guarantees Subjectivity in that the individual must then subject herself to herself. This contradictory dual role fulfills the individual's desire for Subjectivity but only on the condition that the subject ruled is oneself.

Althusser suggests the individual hailed is initiated into the dominant ideology through a misrecognition in which the individual mistaking herself for the Subject called begins fulfilling (as opposed to filling) the role of that Subject. Yet, if the subject misrecognizes herself as Subject, and the "duplicate mirror-structure of ideology ensures simultaneously: 1. the interpellation of `individuals' as subjects; 2. their subjection to the Subject" (Althusser IISA 54-55), then the split necessary to accommodating the hail suggests that the Subject the individual is subjected to is something "other" - something more foreign than known. The subject-presentation is not an offering or a selection - it is something imposed upon the individual and, as such, it is more an interruption than it is a possibility.

In the act of hailing, any identification, recognition or misrecognition is only secondary to the presentation of that "something" to be identified with. Misrecognition is, like identification,

secondary to an interruption. The Subject role is fulfilled when the individual submits herself to constructing and maintaining an illusory product. The Subject dictates the societal directives for maintaining the illusory traits of Subjectivity to the subject who complies by remembering and reinforcing those agreements. Like Stein's human nature, the subject is constantly occupied constructing and maintaining a narrative that houses the potential for the Subject. Like the ego that constantly negotiates outside objects in its attempt to appease the id, the S/subject dynamic begins in disparity: an unreachable goal that creates a deliberate gap. Like Freud, Althusser suggests there is a coercive element to the primary identification between inner and outer spheres, and like Freud, Althusser overlooks the significance of this coercive element when he suggests the interaction results in misrecognition. As is the case with the intrusive presence of the Oedipal father, the hail "anticipates" the subject, and so, it is designed to appear to the subject "anticipated."

Like Freud's Fort!, Althusser's hail anticipates a return. Hailing is comprised of an active and passive dynamic. As initiator of the action, the subject-presentation (a recognizable element of the subject that is somehow outside of the subject: a trait) has the priority, privilege and power that is assumed in all primary, and thus, active positions. As receiver of that action, the individual is destined merely to react as the passive counterpart that completes the movement of identification. As a response in the aftermath of

the violent, coercive hail, "It must be me!" seems unlikely. The hail is violent because it is not asked for, not requested, and not chosen and it is coercive because it anticipates in advance that which has not yet been produced, and in doing so, "appears" anticipated.

The hailee could not misrecognize because there is nothing to identify in the outside hail - the hail is not a product that is offered, it is a process of demand. The precedence of the subject-presentation suggests that at the very least identification could not play a key role. Even if there is a narcissistic and nostalgic yearning to incorporate the subject-presentation - to "self its otherness" - this cannot occur prior to the imposition and demands of the other upon the individual hailed. Identification implies selection, while the hailee is placed in a position where there can only be a response or a reaction. This is especially true if the hail is designed in such a way as to be unaccommodating, in such a way that the hailee will not and cannot fit the product description (even though the individual is hailed as though this is a possibility or indeed the case).

In hailing, the Subject is some thing thrust upon the individual rather than some thing selected or offered. Neither the hail or the "subject" it targets carry the actual traits of identification. In the act of hailing, it is always "You!" that is hailed to, and since the "me" is never a "You!," it can never be "me" who is hailed. Consequently, it is the "You!" which is set up as Subject and the "You!" that the individual becomes subject to. Under these circumstances, the

response could not possibly be "they think it's me so I'll make it me" but rather, "they think it's me I'll pretend it's me." "Is that you?" "Yes, your You! of me."

If, as Althusser suggests, the individual recognizes that the subject-presentation is, in fact, not commensurable and a S/subject dynamic is established, then this incompatibility is also known to the hailer. Although the hail behaves in an anticipating manner, the action is one of a coercive negotiation: the setting up of the subject-presentation on the grounds of a deception. The hail is set up in such a way that the desired disparity would in fact be thwarted by identification. This discrepancy between the hailer and hailee is decisive in Althusser's theory in that the individual will only set up the S/subject paradigm if a disparity exists, such as that between the objectives of the dominant ideology and the subjective desires of the individual.

Why She Likes Detective Stories

And so always it is true that the master-piece has nothing to do with human nature or with identity, it has to do with the human mind and the entity that is with a thing in itself and not in relation (Stein WAM 151).

Gertrude Stein likes detective stories because they begin with a body, and when you begin with a body, your mind is free to see. If you begin in the absence of the body, every "thing" is incidental and secondary to solving that absence by making it a thing in relation. As a thing in relation is remembered and never seen, it is necessarily an identity. When Stein divides entity and identity she insures that what the human mind sees is distinct and separate from what human nature remembers. The human mind is a thing in itself and never in relation. Human nature is two and never one and, consequently, it "is" only in relation. As it is a constructor and maintainer and never a protagonist, human nature does not exist outside of identity. Although there is a relation between human nature and the absent Subject (as there is always a relation between one thing and any other thing), they are not related in any way. Human nature remembers the object only in relation to the Subject's absence, as it is only "in the absence of" that identity "takes place." As human nature identifies only on condition of the Subject's absence, it can never be the "One" on whose behalf it identifies: "Human nature has to do with identity but identity has nothing to do with any one being one" (Stein GHA 131).

Stein's separation of the human mind from human nature is a separation of entity from identity. As opposed to Sigmund Freud's division of the ego which occurs only in defense of the id. While the ego separates from the id, it is never separated from it. As it is a direct "descendent" of the total Subject, the id holds sway over all the ego's processes. Although the ego receives all the id's signals and responds (adjusts) accordingly, the id is frozen at the pre-Oedipal stage and, so, it remains unaware of the ego's unrelenting work on its behalf. Whereas Stein's human mind and human nature are not related in anyway, whatsoever, the ego is intrinsically related to the total Subject through the "common" id. The ego does not identify the absence as a trait of an other Subject; it adjusts the absence to simulate a return to the total Subject.

As human nature appears only "in the event of" the Subject - in the Subject's absence - it is in no way related to the Subject. As human nature is not related to the Subject it identifies on the behalf of, it does not desire a "return," nor does it channel such desires from a "deeper" source. The ego channels a desire for the total Subject through the id which is a "thing in relation" to both the ego and the total Subject. When the ego submits to authority, it does so to shelter the id. However, since the pre-Oedipal "before-the-father" is not the inorganic state of totality the ego desires, but is, rather, an unwitting simulation of it, the total Subject resides not in the before-the-father

(which is merely an illusory replication of a "non-state"), but in the "before of the before-the-father." While the id appears to dominate in the Freudian schemata, it is only a representative of the absent, total Subject which is, finally, the definitive motivating "force" behind all the ego's processes. The ego identifies first and foremost with a nostalgic representation and, subsequently, the submission to the father's authority serves only to reaffirm this identification.

In Beyond the Pleasure Principle, Sigmund Freud suggests that the attempt to minimize sensory apprehension is simply a detour on the path toward its complete eradication. When linking the libidinal and instinctual drives, Freud determines that "the final goal of all organic striving" is the return to a state of non-being (Freud BPP 613). In as much as a "state" of non-being constitutes the beginning for Freud, he privileges it as setting precedence for all that follows. "The elementary living entity would from its very beginning have had no wish to change; if conditions remained the same, it would do no more than constantly repeat the same course of life" (Freud BPP 613). Freud suggests there is a "very beginning" wherein the "entity" would have "no wish to change." Yet, the entity that has no wish to change must, then, have a wish to stay the same, and the entity that has any wish at all is necessarily already an identity: it regards itself, as itself, only in relation to that some thing other.

As Freud's own terminology suggests, the pre-Oedipal can be presented only as that some "thing" prior to - that some "thing"

before - the Oedipal conflict. As the totality is made apparent only after it has been interrupted - only after it has been punctuated by the appearance of an other and given definition, it is discerned only when it is lost: "Anything that can be lost is something anybody can get used to and that is identity" (Stein GHA 171). The fact that a totality created in conflict has never been "attained" by the "living entity" does not deter Freud from positing it as the "final goal of all organic striving:"

Moreover it is possible to specify this final goal of all organic striving. It would be in contradiction to the conservative nature of the instincts if the goal of life were a state of things which had never yet been attained. On the contrary, it must be an old state of things, an initial state from which the living entity has at one time or other departed and to which it is striving to return by the circuitous paths along which its development leads
(Freud BPP 613).

As the formation of the pre-Oedipal is contingent on its disruption, it is not an "old state of things" once realized or once attained and, subsequently, it does not exist outside of the attempt to realize or attain it. Totality is recognized after the appearance of the father, as its definition is formed only in relation to what it is not. Like all "things" that appear after the father - that appear in relation - totality as the identified lost object is necessarily a product of ambivalence.

When the ego divides in defense of the id it formulates the first identification with the total Subject, and establishes the submission

to the Oedipal father as a secondary act that is carried out only in preservation of the first. While the identification with the father is presented as threatening and coercive, it serves only to reaffirm the ego's commitment to the total Subject. The ego's adjustments are a response to the societal restrictions that threaten the sanctuary of the id. In as much, setting up the super-ego as a representative of external authority to keep the ego in check inevitably translates as another means to safeguard the id's sheltered environment.

The condition for return is a "wish" not to "change" (Freud BPP 613). As there is no possibility for identity within a whole, the goal of totality is secondary to the wish that creates it. The origin of the entity is necessarily a creation of identity: a by-product conceived in ambivalence and presented as difference. The entity does not divide itself from itself and identify with that which produced the division, it divides itself in defense of the only identifiable state - an "earlier state of things:" the only state, according to Freud, that has been attained:

In quite a different region, it is true, we do meet with such a hypothesis; but it is of so fantastic a kind - a myth rather than a scientific explanation - that I should not venture to produce it here, were it not that it fulfills precisely the one condition whose fulfillment we desire. For it traces the origin of an instinct to a *need to restore an earlier state of things* (Freud BPP 622).

Freud suggests that totality is a state that has once been attained. However the existence of a state can be realized only as a response to that which moves against it: "...the realization of existence is that like a train moving there is no real realization of it moving if it does not move against something...(Stein P&R 99). The goal of totality is framed by the resistance to it and, in as much, it cannot be separated from this resistance. The emphasis on totality as the originary seat of all the ego's processes underplays the alteration of the goal which is subjected to the external forces that create it. As it is the relation between inner and outer spheres that forms the related goal, there can be no thing more immediate to the entity/identity than its negotiation of these spheres. As the entity does not "realize" an inner totality until it is lost, and identity is outside and remembered, the entity/identity does not inhabit a state of things, it negotiates a state of things.

When Freud explains the subject's constant and mimetic adjustments as the means to replicate a pre-Oedipal existence, he denies the primacy of the negotiation itself. Although the constitution of the pre-Oedipal state occurs only as a reaction, it is upheld as the impetus for all the ego's identifications. By positing the pre-Oedipal as the dominating force motivating all subjective processes, Freud throws out the Fort!/Gone! of which nothing less than a return: Da!/Here! is demanded. As is the case in the child's game with the "wooden reel," the elements that contradict the

primacy of the Da! (such as the repetition of an unpleasant experience) are remembered as traits which may result in a "detour," but never a deviation on the path back to totality.

When you begin with a body, you see that there is no thing extra about the ordinary object. As Freud has determined subjectivity begins and ends with a total Subject, all processes are revisioned as the traits of this Subject. As the ego is intrinsically related to the total Subject it is relegated to remembering what is extra about the ordinary object that recalls the originary "state."

In the midst of the total Subject there is no thing outside of the Subject and, subsequently, no thing of definition - no thing identifiable. As the attainment of the state is possible only on condition of its recognition, and the state is only recognized once it is disrupted, the final goal "materializes" in contrast, and never outside of identification. As it is a memory recalled through the difference that disrupts it, the pre-Oedipal is framed by the contradictory stimuli that at once avows and disavows its possibility.

When Freud places the goal in the irrevocable "before the father," he relegates all processes to mimetic adjustments that attempt to reduce stimuli and recreate that state. In as much as the id's instinctual drives are arrested at the pre-Oedipal level, the ego's subjugation to the demands of the id commit it to perpetually constructing and maintaining an environment that attempts to simulate the instance of the before the "before-the-father".

When Freud divides the ego in defense of the id and sets up the super-ego, he precludes any possibility of subjective agency. The ego is first and foremost a negotiator. However, as it is tied inextricably to the id, the ego's negotiations are reduced to acquiescent gestures on the behalf of the id. Yet, the fact the ego acquiesces in the face of authority while it simultaneously selects its object-choices to appease the id indicates there is something that treats both the total Subject and the authority that represses it as foreign. This is apparent when the Oedipal father interrupts the pre-Oedipal realm of totality and a gradation of sorts must be formed to account for the sudden confrontation between inner and outer spheres.

"If you have seen any one you know them as you see them whether it is yourself or any other one and so the identity consists in recognition and recognizing you lose identity because after all nobody looks as they look like, they do not look like that we all know that of ourselves and of any one" (Stein WAM 155).

There is a relation between the absent Subject and the total Subject in that they are both absent from the narratives that are formed around them. There is a difference between the absent Subject and the total Subject in that one is absent while the other is merely lost. Human nature remembers in the event of the Subject while the ego seeks to recall the Subject: a once-totality. As Stein has decisively separated the human mind from human nature, human nature begins and ends in identification. Human nature's agreement about the object as it relates to the absence of the Subject has

nothing to do with human nature, the object or the Subject. Human nature constructs and maintains the agreement about the object as the means to construct and maintain its more "tenable" relationship to the greater social narrative.

By constructing and maintaining a narrative of agreements around/about the absent Subject, human nature reaffirms its link to the greater consensual meaning system which it generates, and is generated by. The disparity between the "You" of the narrative and the constructor and maintainer of that "You" insures that the object will never be other than the object of the Subject - the object that is remembered. As such, the ubiquitous narrative about the Subject can subsume the object's meaning as a trait and, in doing so, disavow that there is any meaning foreign to the Subject - that there is any meaning outside the agreement. The absence of the Subject is a standard by which outside objects can accordingly be gauged and placed in context. It serves as a touchstone by which mutual agreements can be made in relation to it. That the Subject is never present in or outside the agreement guarantees human nature is perpetually engaged - is fixed - in the task of constructing and maintaining a narrative from which it is necessarily excluded.

When you begin with a body, you see how even a primary identification is always contingent on that some thing in relation, and so, you see that there are really no primary identifications after all. Definition is possible only as contrast and, consequently, the thing

identified is only identified by that some thing else. As identity implies a recognition, there must be some thing out there that the subject recognizes, that it knows, that it understands and that it remembers. As Freud has determined the predominant influence of the total Subject as the originary "internal" home of the ego, there is no possibility for a thing outside of this totality that the entity could identify with. For this reason, a threat (in the form of castration) is the necessary prerequisite to the primary identification. In as much as threat and coercion may shatter the illusion of totality, they do not necessarily guarantee a subsequent identification with the source of the disruption. Identity is not a product that is offered to the subject, it is a process of demand (in which the means of the process are its ends). As such, the primary identification is indicative of all identifications in that it necessarily contains an element of coercion.

By contrasting Freud's inception of the ego to Louis Althusser's interpellated S/subject and Stein's human mind and human nature, a potential arises to reexamine the ego's primary identification as a process of negotiating inner and outer spheres (as opposed to an identifying trait that recalls only the total Subject). While human nature is in no way related to the absent Subject and the ego is intrinsically related to the total Subject, the subject that has been interpellated is both related to, and estranged from, the Subject it is subjected to. The ambivalent dynamic that comprises the Althusserian S/subject occurs as the result of a misrecognition,

wherein the individual that is "hailed" mistakes herself for the Subject projected by the hail. Although misrecognition implies there is an identification, the individual must first recognize some thing in the hail which can, in turn, be misrecognized. The incongruity that forms the S/subject dynamic suggests, at the very least, that not only is the potential for misrecognition improbable, the hail itself purposively targets the "me" as a "You" as the means to create a deliberate disparity.

The ego's identification with the Oedipal father is both the instigator and the result of ambivalence: "Henceforward his relation to his father is ambivalent; it seems as if the ambivalence inherent in the identification from the beginning had become manifest" (Freud E&I 640). However, as this ambivalence appears in the midst of the total Subject, it is subsumed as a trait: some thing extra about the ordinary which points back/toward the total Subject. The ambivalence as trait creates a link that allows for an identification with the outside while it insures the preservation of the lost object. When Althusser's concrete individual is targeted by the "You" of the hail, a dynamic occurs that is similar in some respects to that of the ego and the id. Like the ego's subordination to the id, the Althusserian subject subordinates herself to a greater Subject, but with a significant difference. While the id is inside, inaccessible and empowered through its close proximity to the total Subject, and while the ego was at one time a part of the id, the Althusserian

subject sets up her own Subject - that is constructed solely on the outside, that is constructed solely of identity - which she misrecognizes and maintains as a subject-presentation of herself.

As the hail anticipates its subject, it appears to its subject anticipated. The element of coercion in the hail is a guarantee that the S/subject dynamic will result. As is the case with Freud, Althusser presupposes that there is "some thing" out there that the subject will recognize and, in turn, misrecognize. Both Freud and Althusser preclude the possibility for a subjective agency when they posit an initial identification with an external agent as the primary factor in the formation of the subject. As identity occurs only in the absence of the Subject, the individual that is hailed could not misrecognize the subject-presentation as an extension of the self outside the self. If the individual perceived the subject-presentation as something that she "identifies" with, as opposed to some thing that she is "identified" with, it would cancel out the subject-presentation, as the manifestation of that which is identified subsumes its traits: In the midst of the super-detective, everything becomes him, and consequently, every thing ceases to exist. Subsequently, the "You" that is hailed to is never the "me" that responds. (Is that you? Yes. Your "You!" of me).

Identification implies selection, while the hailee is placed in a position where there can only be a response or a reaction. The hailee is surprised, violated and coerced by the hail that demands a return,

that demands a Da!/Here!. If the hailee does not mistake the hail as a subject-presentation of herself then she sees, perhaps, the subject-presentation as a desired Subject that has been mistaken for her. Operating on this assumption, she places herself in debt to the subject-presentation never mistaking for a moment that it is something which is a part of her (something to be identified, something recognizable). Any actual misrecognition would thwart the strategies of the hail. The disparity between the hail and "Subject" it hails in is, inevitably, what keeps the hailee in debt to that presentation and it insures that the debt can never be paid off. From the start, the hailee is aware of the "disparity" between herself and the Self presented and, subsequently, the labor she expends constructing and maintaining this presentation on behalf of the Subject is self-perpetuated and self-perpetuating.

As neither the hail or the "subject" it targets carry the actual traits of identification, they must be constantly constructed and maintained. The subject is always aware that she lives in the shadow of her "image," and that "image" is always beyond her reach. She works behind the scenes to insure that the initial "misrecognition" (that she believes occurred on the part of the other) is never found out. She does not try to become the Subject hailed, she tries to maintain the illusion of the Subject hailed. She barter and negotiates for the Subject but, contrary to Althusser's theory, she is never Subject to her subject just subject to her Subject.

"Human nature does not excite me but it does make me nervous" (Stein GHA 60).

When we begin with a body, we can see how it is defined by, and defines only, that which is in relation to it. We can see that the beginning is only the beginning in relation to the end, and we see that the end is only the end in the absence of a beginning. When we begin with a body, we get rid of human nature and we can see that repetition is only repetition when it is in relation - when it is subsumed by the Da!:

"Is there repetition or is there insistence. That is what makes life that the insistence is different, no matter how often you tell the same story if there is anything alive in the telling the emphasis is different" (Stein P&R 100).

There is a relation between the human mind and human nature. While human nature is necessary to remembering and understanding the agreements that structure and uphold a consensual meaning system, it is no way related to the human mind. There is an inside and an outside and a beginning and an end, but these are things that are only in relation and not related. When human nature remembers the cup it does not remember that the cup is something "I" can drink out of, it remembers the cup as something "You" can drink out of. Human nature constructs the cup story in accordance with the "You" that it constructs and maintains all cup stories for. The "You" is something outside and separate from human nature which points to the "You" to insure its connection to the

greater narrative. When you begin with a body you can see that, outside of identity, there is no thing extra around or about the ordinary object.

It is important that Stein adamantly separates the human mind from human nature, for if she did not, then when we begin with an absent Subject, we might believe that we are still somehow capable of "seeing" what we "remember." Going into the detective story with Stein, there is an accountability: a self-reflexive acknowledgment of our object-choices. We see that the object does not and cannot remember our past association with it and, so, we see that when we identify the object we identify a demand for the object to remember us. We project a desire for the object to affirm an adjacent "concrete" site of Subjectivity. When we begin with a body we see that the object identifies only our continuous process of constructing and maintaining an absent Subject around and about it.

Gertrude Stein likes detective stories...

"...and will there please will there be more of them"

(Stein WILDS 150).

On Methodology: Composition as Explanation

It is very difficult so difficult that it always has been difficult but even more difficult now to know what is the relation of human nature to the human mind because one has to know what is the relation of the act of creation to the subject the creator uses to create that thing. There is a great deal of nonsense talked about the subject of anything
(Stein WAM 149).

Gertrude Stein likes detective stories because they begin with a body, and to begin with a body is to present the "subject" (the would-be protagonist) as "apart" and "in relation" as opposed to "a part" and "related." To Begin with a body is to begin with an account of the use of the "subject" as just another thing the creator uses to create "that thing." As anything that can be identified is not "that thing," Stein includes processes, such as "beginning again and again" and a "continuous present" as "things" that are used to create "that thing," which is, finally, "the using everything:" "Continuous present is one thing and beginning again and again is another thing. These are both things. And then there is using everything" (Stein CAE 25). Stein's use of the detective story as an analogy furthers her ongoing discussion on the relation of the human mind to human nature and reveals her self-reflexive strategy for presenting the subject as just another thing used to create that thing; "the using everything." When Stein suggests that by beginning with a body you get rid of human nature (identity) and free the mind (entity) to see, she

underscores the complicit and, thus, contradictory "nature" of this freedom by emphasizing its conditional terms. Stein's separation of human mind and human nature does not resist/withhold producing a subject, it insists that the subject is a thing in relation and not a thing that is related to. By suggesting that the freedom to see is contingent on the interest not being reinvested into another body such as the detective or the process of detection itself, Stein gestures toward her own process of seeing the subject/the body as just another thing she uses to create "that thing," and in doing so, she begins to account for the "using everything."

Composition as explanation is necessary if the thing identified is never a completed thing: "because if a thing is a completed thing then it does not need explanation" (Stein WIEL 51), and it is necessary if the thing is not a whole thing: "because if it is a whole thing it does not need explaining, it merely needs stating" (Stein WIEL 51). When you begin in the absence of a subject/of a body, there is a continuous constructing and maintaining of the composition as explanation for the absence of that subject/of that body. As the appearance of the body precludes the need to identify in its event, the composition of the thing is in no way related to the body; it is in relation to the explanation "about" the body which is, in turn, an explanation about the absence. By identifying what is extra about the ordinary thing, human nature constructs and maintains composition as explanation and negates the use of the thing by

relegating it as a trait to the greater body. Composition as explanation disavows the using everything by distorting the "direct relation" between the "doer of the thing" and the "thing done" (Stein WIEL 39).

If there is a direct relation between the doer and the thing done then there is completion and "the essence of the completed thing is completion" (Stein WIEL 39). To begin with a body is to demand to see the subject in whose absence the narrative is constructed and maintained. As there is no subject beyond an explanation of it, to begin with a body is to begin with an account of the explanation which is, in turn, the subject of the composition.

In "What Is English Literature," Stein accounts for composition as explanation by observing the relation between "explaining" and "owning:"

They owned everything inside of course but that they had always done, but now they owned everything outside and that reinforced their owning everything inside, and that was as it was only more so but as they owned everything outside, outside and inside had to be told something about all this owning, otherwise they might not remember all this owning and so there was invented explaining...

(Stein WIEL 49).

The composition of the thing as explanation is necessary when "the owning everything outside is no longer actual or certain" (Stein WIEL 54). The owning everything outside has nothing to do with "the using everything," as the "using everything" has nothing to do

with identity. The "using everything" is "something that is an end in itself and in that respect it is opposed to the business of living" (Stein WAM 151). To begin with a body is to begin by "knowing that there is no identity and producing while identity is not" (Stein WAM 153).

To begin with a body is to acknowledge that the composition of the thing has nothing to do with the thing; it has to do with an explanation of how the thing "is" in another thing's absence. When Stein begins with a body as the means to account for the "using everything," it is never as the means to another body - another explanation. Stein "acquires" a certain freedom with her accountability which is - as it is conditional - tenuous and easily rescinded if the "use" of the thing is then negated by identifying that some thing extra "about" it that would inevitably point to the absence of the Subject (an/other). The difference between using and owning is the difference between seeing what is in relation and remembering how it related. Composition as explanation disavows the use of the outside thing by creating a trait/a meaning "about" it. As the "trait" is "about" the thing (in relation) rather than "of" the thing (related), the thing is by-passed altogether and a "pseudo-owning" (identity) takes its place. Composition as explanation assumes the thing is not a whole thing and identifies the absence as the potential for a completion and, in as much, the meaning is constructed and maintained about the thing as it anticipates the return of the Subject: Da!.

"(C)omposition is not there, it is going to be there and we are here" (Stein CAE 25). When you begin with a body, you account for the "use" of the thing as a means to "that" thing and, in as much, there is insistence as to the difference between what "is" seen, what "is" known and what "is" explained: "If it describes what it sees how does it do it. If it describes what it knows how does it do it and what is the difference between what it sees and what it knows...and then too there is what it would see if it could see and there is what it explains" (Stein WIEL 33). To begin with a body is not the means to identify what is beyond constructing and maintaining composition as explanation; to begin with a body is to begin to account for "constructing" and "maintaining" as thing in themselves and not the means to any other thing. Stein refuses to consider a subject she cannot account for, and this way she frees up her process from a striving toward an end. Human nature targets its objects with their meaning, it identifies composition as it explains the owning of the outside object to the inside and its success hinges on this indirect action which disavows the "direct relation" between the "thing done" and the "doer" of that thing.

"It is awfully difficult, action is direct and necessary and anything that is necessary has to do with human nature and not with the human mind" (Stein WAM 150).

To begin with a body is to resist the Da!/the return by producing the completed thing and revealing, as a result, that "the essence of the completed thing is completion" (Stein WIEL 39). When Stein presents entity and identity as "one thing" and "another thing" that she uses to create "that thing" - the "using everything," she eludes the Da! and, in doing so, she acquires a conditional freedom. By pointing to her use of the body, Stein inverts the interest she invests in that body and frees up her mind to see. When you begin with a body, you see that the subject does not construct and maintain the narrative, but rather, the narrative is constructed and maintained around the absence of the subject. By treating the subject as a means rather than an end or a beginning, Stein demystifies the notion of a total Subject: an originary moment when the subject was whole, and reveals the process toward product that is the only "subject" of composition. When Stein insists "(t)here is singularly nothing that makes a difference a difference in beginning and in the middle and in the ending..."(Stein CAE 21), she compels her readers to see the thing apart and in a continuous process and not a part of a greater body.

"...mostly people live in identity and memory that is when they think" (Stein WAM 153).

To begin to account for the "using everything" you must begin with a body. When you begin with a body, you see that there is no thing extra about the ordinary object as composition "is" only "as"

explanation for the absence of a Subject. As is the case of the creator and that thing created, the relation between the human mind and human nature cannot be approached outside of identity. As the possibility for entity (seeing) is precluded by the attempt to identify it, there must be insistence on a separation of the human mind and human nature to see how the using everything is negated through the guise of owning everything. When Stein insists on the separation between what one sees and two remember, she does not suggest a separation or negation of the doer of the thing and the thing done. Instead, she insists upon an account of that thing that occurs between them: that thing that has nothing to do with the subject or the object and, so, effaces the role of one and the use of the other.

To begin with a body does not provide an explanation for the subject, nor does it provide an explanation for the object, it revisions what is in-between them: the composition of the thing as it explains the owning of the thing by that some "Thing" else.

"Anybody can understand that if you explain and the thing to be explained is that you leading your daily inside life own everything outside, it is not possible to choose a completed sentence a completed thing" (Stein WIEL 51).

When there is composition as explanation, there is justification for the relegation of the absence about the thing as a trait that embodies the event of the "principle" absent Subject. When there is composition as explanation there is justification for the pseudo-owning of the thing on behalf of the absent Subject that disavows

and discounts the use of the object. When there is composition as explanation, there is the identifying the thing as a part and related as opposed to apart and in relation. In "What Is English Literature," Stein points out that she is "very fond of books that have little quotations at the head of each chapter, and she "particularly" likes it when these quotations are "very varied" (Stein WIEL 42). Is the quotation that is apart from the work and in relation still a part of the work and related? The difference between the quotation that is a part of the work and related is that it is always a piece that confirms there is a "whole" work - a total Subject - of which it is merely a part, and, in as much, it attests to the "notion" of the work as a greater body.

If the thing by itself cannot "state" the whole thing and needs another thing to "explain" it, then the subject that the thing explains is, as well, not a whole thing: "because if it is a whole thing it does not need explaining, it merely needs stating" (Stein WIEL 51).

As human nature remembers to identify only in the absence of a Subject, there is no whole or total or complete thing that subsumes the "using everything" to its identity; there is merely justification for the owning everything. Outside the justification for owning everything there is no need for explanation. The explanation of a thing is always a means to another thing and, consequently, the use of the thing "now" is displaced by the thing it is used for. When there is justification through explanation there is never

accountability, there is "stating the facts" to explain the point, but this has nothing to do with what one sees, it has to do with "knowledge" and, "(o)ne cannot come back too often to the question what is knowledge and to the answer knowledge is what one knows" (Stein WIEL 30).

If there is the owning everything outside to "reinforce" the owning everything inside, and conversely, the owning everything inside to reinforce the owning everything outside, then there is only composition as explanation. As there is no means inside of a consensual meaning system to point to the owning everything outside without pointing to the traits of the absent Subject: the not-owning everything outside, it is necessary (because it is relation and identity) to attempt, perhaps, to "un-agree" as opposed to disagree. To begin with a body no more explains the thing than the thing is explained in the body' absence. Stein's novel beginning replaces identity with a body lacking a subject: a corpse, and in doing so, she gestures to both her complicity in, and resistance to, the Subject by agreeing that there really is a body, and then producing it. For Stein there is no/thing "new" to learn or to create, there is only unlearning - making an old thing alive again: "Edgar Wallace quite rightly uses the old melodrama machinery and he makes it alive again and that is everything it is much better to make an old thing alive that to invent a new one anybody can know that" (Stein WILDS 149). As Stein has pointed out that Wallace "makes it ordinary and the ordinary has,

because he is genuinely romantic, and extraordinary charm," it is possible that "to make and old thing alive" is to unlearn what is extra about the ordinary object. To see the thing (conditionally) outside of the agreements that inevitably construct and maintain a consensual meaning system is to begin to account for the use of the thing as a thing-in-itself or at least to account for what it presumably extra about the ordinary object.

"To begin with a body" is one thing and "to begin again and again" and a "continuous present" are also things. And then there is the "using everything". "This as a whole thing could be told in a couple of sentences but it is necessary to make it a great deal longer. Anybody, even, I, can understand that necessity" (Stein WIEL 32).

When you begin with a body....

"is this repetition or is this insistence?" (Stein P&R 166).

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Why She Likes Detective Stories

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