

An Extended Essay on the use of the Gesture in Gertrude Stein's Tender Buttons and Paul Klee's *Architecture Red-Green (yellow-purple gradations)*

By John Hyland



Julia Kristeva fundamentally defines language as “a chain of articulated *sounds* but also a network of written *marks* (a writing), or a play of *gestures* (a gesturality).”ⁱ For Kristeva, the question that immediately arises out of this statement has to do with the relationships that exist (or do not exist) between sounds, marks, and gestures. All language, as Kristeva further notes, originates with a purpose of communication – a social exchange; in this way, language is an exercise executed in social communication: in a process that communicates a message between a sender and a receiver language is realized.ⁱⁱ The notion that what is known is contained within the limits of language has something to do with the fact that language has a distinct primary function of communication. Also if something is not communicated, or at least not acknowledged, then it is, so to speak, unknown; unknown, that is, within language. That language exists, breathes, through exchange presents the issue of its relations to that which is outside of it (i.e. nature, society, etc.). There nearly always seems to be this belief that all the remnants and particulars of what is known are somehow contained within the sphere of language; yet, for instance, a bunch of dried peppers that hang, dangle, off the rafters of my

apartment are there, exist in space, even if I refer to them as leftovers from a Vermeer still-life. An interesting and also important question provoked by this situation is “how are the named universe and the universe that names differentiated from each other?”ⁱⁱⁱ

To consider this question, one must have a firm understanding of the conception of the linguistic sign. Language is not necessarily an instrument of thought, yet it does function to both produce and communicate thought in ways that are not separate but inherently linked, hinged adjacent to one another – in this way, “language is the material of thought.”^{iv} That I refer to these particular things encountered in the above situation as being an event in seventeenth-century Dutch painting may not have bearing on the essence of what that thing may be. I impose my impression of these things, because of associations they initiate in the recesses of my knowledge. If I refer to them as “Vermeer leftovers,” there are only certain listeners who would understand my decision to refer to them this way. The act of naming is a strange act. But naming has only loose threads attached to the idea of the *sign* – fundamentally the two (the sign and the name) are quite different. The idea that the *sign* is the primary element of the “social side” of language reaches back through the centuries and has been considered by many thinkers and schools of thought. As Kristeva observes:

What unites all these phenomena [from Charles Peirce to the Greeks] is the fact that they all *replace* or *represent* something that is absent, evoked by an intermediary, and, consequently, included in a system of exchange: a communication.^v

It is Ferdinand De Saussure to whom we owe the first meticulous examination and scientific development of what we now refer to as the *linguistic sign*. It is useful to refer to a passage from De Saussure’s Course in General Linguistics:

The linguistic sign unites, not a thing and a name, but a *concept* and a *sound-image*. The latter is not the material sound, a purely physical thing, but the psychological imprint of the sound, the impression that it makes on our senses. The sound-image is sensory, and if I happen to call it ‘material,’ it is only in that sense, and by way of opposing it to the other term of the association, the concept, which is generally more abstract.^{vi}

The linguistic sign, then, is “a two-sided psychological entity,” wherein each of the two elements is fused together in such a way as to summon and inform each other. The sign then functions as a “convenient envelope” (the term is Kristeva’s) that maintains and recognizes the thousands (upon perhaps thousands) of representations that any particular sign might manifest.

De Saussure designates these two inseparable elements of the linguistic sign as being the *signified* (the concept) and the *signifier* (the sound-image). As Kristeva notes, “for Saussure, the linguistic sign is defined by the signifier/signified relation; the object, excluded from this relation, is designated the *referent*.”^{vii} The relation between the signifier and the signified is that there is not necessarily any particular, concrete relation, yet – to cite the excellent example employed by De Saussure – the relationship may be understood, visualized considering the two sides of a single sheet of paper. That is, it is impossible to take a pair of scissors and cut the paper and not slice both sides – the signifier and signified are two sides of the same sheet of paper. Taken as entire unit, the nature of the linguistic sign is defined by De Saussure as being “arbitrary.” To say this does not mean that signifiers are blindly chosen; more it speaks to the *unmotivated* disposition of the sign. This intimates the fact that, as Kristeva remarks, there is no “natural or real necessity linking the signifier with the signified.”^{viii} In this way the word “icon” is not a cognate of the linguistic sign because an icon is intrinsically linked to that which it represents. It is not empty, nor arbitrary: the crucifix could not simply be replaced by pieces of yellow and black polka-dotted cloth for those who hold it as valuable; in other words, it is irreplaceable to them.

The linguistic sign, to follow along with De Saussure’s conception of its nature, is the central carrier of the cargo of the message between the *addresser* and the *addressee*. Its effectiveness as a device of communication relies upon an agreement between the speakers of a specific community. For instance, if you, the reader, and I, the writer, agreed that for the rest of this essay ¶ signified the painter Johannes Vermeer’s painting *Woman Holding a Balance*; well, then ¶ might function quite successfully as a linguistic sign. There would be a contract that I would only use ¶ to denote that painting; however, if I used ¶ to signify something other than that painting, the contract would be broken, and communication would fail. In this way language begins to become limited in its ability to function both effectively and clearly, since impressions often tend to be individual in nature – or at least limited. For instance, an ¶ description of those peppers is limited to those who have an understanding of Vermeer’s theory of light. My description (my reference that seeks to describe) is only successful to those who understand how my impression of those peppers provokes a reference to that particular painting. However, if I present an appropriate definition of ¶, if I make clear what is intended by its use, then my description would presumably be more effective. But, there would be different interpretations of

my definition. The definition of my description offers a vast range of possibilities that extend from complete misunderstanding to the other end of the spectrum, understanding.

The linguistic sign is an integral, nearly essential, aspect in the constantly flowing, folding field of that disclosing activity: communication. The linguistic message depends upon communication, which seeks to express the impression that some particular entity has left upon the senses.^{ix} However, the linguistic sign “conceived of as an indivisible entity and absolute value” is not the foundation that language operates upon.^x In his reduction of discourse, De Saussure formulated that the sign operates within a linear chain, which isolated the word as the singular, rudimentary element; yet, as Kristeva notes:

It is more and more difficult to maintain that the word is the minimal unit of *la langue*. In fact, a word does not achieve its complete signification except in a sentence, that is, by and in its syntactical relation. On the other hand, this same word can be broken down into morphological elements, *morphemes*, which are smaller than it is, and are themselves bearers in signification.^{xi}

The observation that a group of morphemes building a word constitutes a portion of its signification, points to the complex function of the linguistic sign within the linguistic message; such an observation extends the notion that a word approaches its full signification syntactically. The sign is a “two-sided psychological entity,” consisting of a “sound-image” (signifier) and a concept (signified).^{xii} To continue along with Saussure’s formulations, as each word is viewed as a series of signs and then each sentence and then etc., the arbitrariness of the sign begins to be called into question, since the object that the sign (signifier/signified) seeks to elucidate is not at all completely contained within it. This arbitrariness does not exist between the signifier and signified, but between “the reality it names, in other words, the relation between the language symbol in its totality and the real outside that it symbolizes” is arbitrary.^{xiii} Several theories and points of view have been postulated and presented in reaction to this reevaluation of the linguistic sign. One point of view of particular interest here is the French philosopher Jacques Derrida’s conception of the *trace*. This theory works from the idea that in writing something is traced, not made to resemble. To jump along the line of this thinking, the signifier is, so to speak, erased, leaving behind the signified. That language is diaphanous, that it is something to see through and then into something else, locates the transient if not fading role that language takes on and often functions within.

Given this complexity, writing and painting could be viewed as universes that speak of other universes. A writer / painter creates to seek – in order to disclose – some impression that an entity left upon their senses. The reader / viewer is given – presented with – the manifestations of this seeking. There, inside the multitudes of what is left behind after the creative act has concluded, are all the various elements that exist to elucidate for the reader / viewer the possible essence of some particular. In this way it is necessary to note that the concerns of a poet or painter are more intrinsic than a muse, or some external point of inspiration, for the writers' concerns influence and affect the work in obscure ways.^{xiv} The concerns of the poet or painter are not the reader's point of interest and study. A reader's job is to consider the piece at hand; examine it for what it is, not for what it could or might be. The job is to complete the poetry of the poem or painting. The concerns are embedded into the writing into the painting. Trying to explain the intimate tie that a poet or painter has with some thing or event is not only laborious but also irrelevant to that which is there within and between the lines of a poem or the colors of a painting; however, a poet's / painter's concerns potently influence all aspects of a piece.

Language is an extension of a person's existence; an extension that Maurice Merleau-Ponty says "propels us towards the things it [language] signifies."^{xv} The mark that is entrenched into each sign, each linguistic unit, with a certainty of who has written it, is influenced by the poet's / painter's concerns.^{xvi} The artistic decision to include or exclude certain signs determines the linguistic value of the signs given. The gesture is as much a result of the signs, as it is the signs themselves. The meaning of a piece is a precarious, somewhat strange balance of filled space and space molded by filled space forming in the gaze of the viewer / reader. The gesture is a kind of movement between these two nearly nebulous spaces (filled space and space molded by filled space). A primary function of the gesture is to stimulate a kind of movement, a sweeping of the reader / viewer under and through the spaces of the signs toward the feeling and the meaning of the intended expression of some entity.

The gesture is in many ways the carrier of concerns. Not to speak of the romantic ideal of inspiration (because inspiration is ephemeral), but more to speak of a kind of place where the gesture spawns from: the "interior" of language. In the processes of creating an expression, the poet / painter is somehow recoiling through her interactions with her surroundings, somehow walking back along the markers, to create – revisit a thing, a moment, an impression in another context; all this, in an effort to make another world somehow akin to that which initially aroused

the senses of the mind and motions of the self. There is, then, a *force* that propels the poet / painter along the trail that is being re-blazed. The reader / viewer, in turn becomes witness to the remnants of these rustlings and runnings that seek to revisit. As Maurice Merleau-Ponty asks: “How would the painter or poet express anything other than his encounter with the world?”^{xvii} Well, yes, what is there beyond the simple infinity of this world? But the way we see the world is only in pieces – it is unlikely to have some piece that speaks of the whole. Things are lost in the process of creation, during the act of writing language; for “writing obscures language; it is not a guise for language but a disguise. That fact is clearly illustrated by the spelling of French *oiseau* ‘bird’. Not one spoken sound is indicated by its own symbol.”^{xviii} When the poet or painter expresses through creation a perception of the world, she is striving to somehow uncover and convey, not in a representation of how a thing appears but more in an expression of what a thing is. As Merleau-Ponty accurately remarks, “. . . perception itself is never complete, since our perspective gives us a world to express and think about which envelops and exceeds those perspectives . . . why should the expression of the world be subjected to the prose of the senses or of the concept?”^{xix}

Poetic language, Kristeva explains, is “a system whose specific elements must be isolated and precise laws of articulation found.”^{xx} An integral and functioning aspect of poetic language is the dubious communication system that transmits an often quite clear message: gestural. The system of gestural is ambiguous and quite difficult to locate, because it is not easily delineated and designated into core elements that could correspond to the phonemes, morphemes, and syntagms of verbal language. Gestural is a kind of other dimension that acts and achieves its presence through and in relation to language proper.^{xxi} The gesture is in a way subversive of the linguistic sign, since it is not unmotivated; it is not necessarily arbitrary. The gesture is in many instances motion that participates within things – as a part of what they are made of – to not only signify them, but also to capture and hold some primary aspect(s) of the thing disclosed.

The gesture is often studied and spoken about in reference to the human body; for example, American *kinesics* defines gestural as “the communicative aspects of the learned and structured behavior of the body in motion.”^{xxii} Somewhat similarly, I can recall that my first interaction with the term “gesture” was in a life drawing class several years ago. This idea that the gesture is linked to the movements of the human body is not to be completely disregarded,

since the source of the gesture is somehow linked to the human body in distinct if not primal ways. The first efforts that sought to explain the gesture considered the actions of communication of those who are deaf and mute; also, it has been often conjectured that the first means of human communication was a series of grunts and arm sweeping and such. The gesture is not limited to these formulations, though – it could be described as echoes bouncing amongst and between the other elements of language, and then also erupting from them. It is irreducible because its processes are without specificity. “The gesture is not only a communication system but also the production of this system (of its subject and its meaning).”^{xxiii}

This notion that the gesture is the cause of its own existence somewhat obviates the difficulties of developing a science that could be called the “language of gestures.” The next part of this extended essay will examine Gertrude Stein’s Tender Buttons with the point of view that the gesture of the work is produced by the syntactical play of the signs, not just as a result of the play but also as an undulating presence that both accentuates and enhances meaning. The gesture creates movement. Momentary, but also cemented into and between the lines, the gesture does not seem to be limited to some particular way of communicating. It is both the signifier and signified. It criss-crosses the grey areas of language, weaves from white to black. To a large extent, the gesture is, so to speak, “uncharted territory,” not in the sense that much has not been written about it but more in that its very processes are allusive yet real. The gesture I would like to say is liquid. Liquid is often described as having unhindered movement of its aggregation of molecules among themselves without a tendency to separate. The gesture is as unified as it is distinct. It may be said to be the material of poetic language; for poetry is not limited to the word written upon the page, nor is it merely colors upon a canvas. When encountered or aroused in some semblance of its pure state of meaning, when sensed, understood, poetry washes over one as if to extinguish a blazing fire sparked by severely honest reading.

The gesture has something to do with the multitude of ways that an image (and also a text) has the power to cause arousal in a viewer. A viewer / reader is drawn to a particular painting or work of literature for a variety of reasons. The power of an image cannot be explained by a discussion concerned with the semiotic range of it – to do so minimizes the entirety of work (i.e. its emotional content, erotic features, etc.).^{xxiv} A particular painting that immediately comes to mind for me is Vincent Van Gogh’s *Shoes*. There in that painting we have five shoes crumpled, and perhaps waiting to be used. It is not only the textured surface Van

Gogh quite often employed, nor is it the one shoe upside down, but some aspect of the piece speaks to the presence of them there leaning against the wall. In the painting I encounter much more than shoes. There are a multitude of examples like this one. Another, which also occurs to me, is Jean Leon Gerome's *Pygmalion and Galatea*. The story of a creator falling in love with his creation, which, in turn, suddenly comes to life, somehow speaks to the power, the compulsive potency, of the human passion to create. And since reading / viewing is very much an act of creation, an effort that seeks to possess the essential processes of work, it makes sense that there are more than just signs that signify things or ideas in a work. This is not to say that the sign is without weight; on the contrary, the sign is an essential element. It is, so to speak, a jumping off point into the sea of language. Any sign offers to reader / viewer / writer / painter numberless possibilities to touch that which strikes their senses refusing to let go. For the writer / painter it is the act of creating, and for the reader / viewer it becomes the result of the act then re-created.

Painting, as a Kristeva has noted, "has become a process of production that does not represent any sign or meaning, except the possibility."^{xxv} Beginning with a few forms and, say, some juxtapositions of color and then the relation of "a certain form to a certain color," the process of a painting does not necessarily signify only that a particular object is the name of the object. If I draw a shoe, if I sketch its outlines and such, I have not created, per se, a dialogue with a shoe; I have only made an empty sign of what we call a shoe. Painting is much more than just this. As Roland Barthes explains:

Of course, the identity of what is "represented" is ceaselessly deferred, the signified always displaced . . . the analysis is endless; but this leakage, this infinity of language is precisely the picture's system: the image is not the expression of a code, it is a variation of a work of codification: it is not the repository of a system but the generation of systems.^{xxvi}

To paint is to create possibilities, which in turn reveal other possibilities that comment upon and then extend toward that which was previously out of reach. As Marcelin Pleynet notes in his study of Matisse's system:

Until the very end of his life, Matisse would reaffirm that a painting is a moment of the artist, thereby insisting on it not being a *copy* of nature . . . He would also contrast what the artist learns while painting a picture (the knowledge derived from practice) with the painting as specular work, as

a window-mirror “open” onto the world.^{xxvii}

At the closing of his short discussion of painting’s language, Roland Barthes observes:

Something is being born, something which will invalidate “literature” as much as “painting” (and their metalinguistic correlates “criticism” and “aesthetics”), substituting for these old cultural divinities a generalized “*ergography*,” *the text as work, the work as text*. (My own stress)^{xxviii}

An ergograph is an apparatus used to measure the work capacity of a muscle. Ergography, then, would be a way to consider a painter or writer’s work beyond assessments of technique, style, text, image, etc. Instead, the capacity of any piece might be measured in reference to what it ought to be capable of doing and then also what it then does. This would be a way of examining the potentials that a work creates for itself, and then how close the work comes to achieving, touching, those potentials. In a way, this poignantly points out my present concerns (or preoccupations) with writing and painting. To ask a question such as what can any work achieve, calls into question the limits of language. Gesture is somehow inextricably tied to the “text as work, the work as text.” And this tie, this dynamic of what is possible versus what is achieved is not the breath or necessity of the work but the success of what has been made by language and each and every aspect of its relations.

Part the Second

Now this is perfectly a description of an emplacement.

- Gertrude Stein How to Write

In many instances a poem is recognized by line breaks, rhyme, or any of the other usually employed tools and techniques of that literary form. These things are only that, though: tools. They do not define a poem; they do not necessarily make a piece of writing a poem. No specific formula exists to produce a poem. Given that this is the case, there must be some elements or force that allow words to become poetry. Wittgenstein says poetry is simply “something that is expressed only by these words in these positions.”^{xxix} It is more than this, though. It is the interplay, the ability of one word to modify the next in a way that is somehow true, given the space that the words have created for themselves. The creative decision by a poet to place a certain set of words into a particular, undeniable order is how a series of words creates a poem. (If a word is moved or removed, the poem is still there. It still is most probably a poem, but it is a different one.) The form of the poem becomes an intrinsic extension of the order of the words that is as much a part of the expression of the poem as the words themselves.^{xxx} The form of a poem is created as each word is built upon the next. Form is the direct result of the expression and the meaning of a given poem.^{xxxi} A series of poems, when placed into the larger context of a book, creates a structure for each poem to exist within. And within this context, individual poems change, emerge as modified new forms of their previous selves, within this change of circumstance. Each individual poem becomes incumbent upon the next for a sense of reason, a sense of place (in this way each poem might take on the quality of being one sign).

Ideas, imagination and thought began to permute poetry and painting at the turn of the Twentieth Century. In Paris the *zeitgeist* was explosive with what is often referred to as “experimentalism.” Turn of the Century industrial innovations presented the poet or painter with a milieu of new circumstances, which were encountered everyday. The pace of living was quickened in a variety of ways. Forms of expressions were in turn affected by the change of the habitual look of things. There was shift in perspective, which could not necessarily be compared with all that had come before. Things began to blur into other things. As a way of elucidating this, consider this passage written by the painter Ferdinand Leger in 1914:

The existence of modern creative people is much more intense and more complex than that of people of earlier centuries. The thing that is imagined is less fixed, the object exposes itself less than it did formerly. When one crosses a landscape by automobile or express train, it becomes fragmented; it loses in descriptive value but gains in synthetic value. The view through the door of the railroad car . . . has altered the habitual look of things . . . so much so that our language, for example, is full of diminutives and abbreviations.^{xxxii}

Although painting is not the subject here in this section of this extended essay, this passage comments on a more general theme, which usefully creates a bit of a backdrop for the discussion that will follow. A large number of now historical figures were emerging and developing methods for exploring and entering into different dialogues with their surrounding world. Of all of these artists and writers, Gertrude Stein, undoubtedly one of the most central and influential modernist writers, produced between the years of 1912 and 1914 one of the most language-aware works of the Twentieth Century: Tender Buttons. Perhaps (similar to those who first saw Pablo Picasso's *Ma Jolie* in 1914) a reader opening to the first page of Tender Buttons immediately enters into a world of uncertain and unfamiliar constructs.^{xxxiii} The structuring of the language is ambiguous, but is not indefinite. Reading the first few lines drawn across the pages, the reader may not be sure if Tender Buttons (hereafter referred to as TB) is indeed a book of poems, even though Gertrude Stein did refer to the work as such.

The peculiarities of TB often result from syntax, but more than syntax it is diction that dictates gesture. Few if any of the words encountered in TB are not encountered in everyday speech; often though there is a reversal or a scrambling of these normally familiar circumstances. In this way the capacity of the linguistic sign is often stretched or blurred by its interplay with the signs surrounding it. There is a renewal of language; a re-awakening of what is possible within the parameters of poetry. Stanzas and rhythm do not signal to the reader that they are reading a poem, but the weaving together of ideas and images creates layers of meaning. And this layering of meaning is the backbone of the language of poetry.

The assemblage of phonic and conceptual differences that constitute language – as De Saussure has told us – occurs within a system of “interdependent terms,” relying upon each other to create a message.^{xxxiv} “Almost all units of language depend on what surrounds them in the spoken chain or in their successive parts.”^{xxxv} An example of this is the structure of a word; for instance, in “Substance Of A Cushion” Gertrude Stein writes: “What is the use of a violent kind

of *delightfulness* if there is no pleasure in not getting tired of it.” The word “delightfulness” decomposes into three sub-units (delight-ful-ness); yet, these sub-units are not independent parts just thrown together (delight+ful+ness). They are “interdependent” elements linked – woven – together by what De Saussure refers to as their “reciprocal action.” When any one particular word is removed, the message changes, however slightly or greatly, it takes on some new shade of a similar meaning, or the meaning may change completely. If any one of the words is removed from the line given above, there is an obvious loss. Even if the suffix “ness” is removed the line almost wholly fails. Each individual word has within it a power; the poet manipulates this power; and it is this power that is accentuated along an expanding scale of value. The expressive power of any signifier is rooted in its interconnectedness with other signs, not from some transcendent power.^{xxxvi}

Persuasive, potent poetry exploits this intertwining, this layering quality of language by permitting a word, as it twists then turns amongst its neighbors, to touch all its possible relations.^{xxxvii} Well-formed poetry achieves this through a subtlety of diction and syntax. Each word is treated, if you will, “tenderly.” And the poem, when it is being strongly wrought, progresses and unfolds beneath the poet’s hand in that small yet infinite space between the tip of the pen and the white of paper, without hesitation. As words are written they reveal slots (as those where buttons are placed to close the placket of a garment) where the meaning unmistakably emerges in order to speak. In TB the reader is constantly in the realm of this kind of treatment of language, which exhumes language from what Stein considered to be dullness resulting from long overuse. Stein turned to “portraits of rooms and food and everything because there I could avoid this difficulty of suggesting remembering more easily . . .”^{xxxviii}

The task of writing in such a way as to bring the reader into the essential moment of the poem is difficult.^{xxxix} This task has something to do with the structure of language. In his discussion of the interior of language, Maurice Merleau-Ponty refers to De Saussure’s explanation that the “system [of language] is never modified directly; in itself, it is unchangeable, only certain elements are changed . . .”^{xl} The fact of language is undeniable. The structure of language is mobile and alterable; yet at that same moment, it is there amidst a piece of writing when it is under construction, when one word is being linked between two others. There are certain ways that language is able to succeed as a mechanism of communication; in many ways, this is only explained by facts taken from outside of language.^{xli} Language does not

constitute a purely material entity. It is sound. It is a sense of a thing or a concept. And the success of expression is not dependent upon exactness but more upon a manipulation of the structure of language.

As De Saussure said, “Whenever the same conditions are fulfilled, the same entities are obtained.”^{xliii} Gertrude Stein in TB has somehow altered the conditions. The arrival and departure times are not clear.^{xliii} The reader is unsure – tentative as to where to enter. To discuss conditions is to talk about the stipulations of a contract of some kind, and when there is a contract there are usually two parties involved – in this case the reader and TB. Every moment when those “conditions are fulfilled,” the contract is renewed or adhered to; the two parties maintain a way of relating to one another, a connection is continued. When the conditions are unclear to the reader, and in turn the contract, then there is, for lack of better words, a communication breakdown, an uncertainty of the signs explicit (and not explicit) there in the writing. It is in these cases that “we have to find in the phrase as it occurs the rule of equivalences and substitutions it involves, to find the right key to the language, the meaning of the verbal chain – these cases are the very ones by which we understand the most ordinary facts of language.”^{xliv}

Conditions determine the value of a thing; for instance, if conditions A, R, and T when fulfilled by a thing demonstrate that this particular thing is equal to another thing, which also fulfilled the above conditions, then they can be exchanged. It does not matter whether the two things are similar or not, because they both have the same determined value.^{xlv} This makes exchange possible. As De Saussure comments:

To determine what a five-franc piece is worth one must therefore know . . .
that it can be exchanged for a fixed quantity of a different thing, e.g. bread . . .
In the same way a word can be exchanged for something dissimilar, an idea;
besides, it can be compared with something of the same nature, another word.
Its value is therefore not fixed so long as one simply states that it can be
“exchanged” for a given concept . . .^{xlvi}

In TB exchanges have been made. This results in the uncertainty that a reader will encounter. The task for the reader is at the outset to determine, or at least achieve a strong sense of, the conditions that TB is operating with. Since we are not able to rearrange the poems to understand them, we must consider it (TB) for what it presents itself as. Throughout the entire work there is a “painterly-ness” to the writing. But, what is meant by this term “painterly-ness?” It is that there is a sense of each word, each line being carved, placed indelibly upon the page.^{xlvii} It is a fluidity

of the words, the way they provoke an emotional response. For now, we can be content with understanding it as a feeling, a pointing beyond the words that is at the same time created by the movements of the words. This is all predicated by the gesture of the work, which arouses responses that are beyond the realm of language. The poems are difficult to understand in many ways. Still, somehow, they succeed in provoking questions from a reader, perhaps moving or affecting a reader. The meaning, though, is allusive. TB is not a system intended to match or mirror something. The structure and arrangement are as they are for a reason; they are, so to speak, the something that it is part of a system, which points beyond itself toward something else. As Stein writes in the first poem:

...and an arrangement in a system to pointing. All this and not ordinary, not unordered in not resembling. The difference is spreading.^{xlviii}

Using a string of double and single negations in this opening poem, Stein prepares us for what we are about to encounter in this book of poems, which indeed beguiles the most studious of readers. The language in the book is being manipulated for some particular reason, or towards some particular end, or to make some undeniable point about some aspect of something. The difficulty of grasping the reason, the intention of the book begins with a relinquishing of expectations of what a poem is.

Many of the sentences in TB might be called senseless since often they do not talk about some obvious thought about any specific thing. It seems that many of the words have been “withdrawn from circulation.”^{xlix} To remove those words is to leave space for other words to exist.

Dirt and not copper makes a color darker. It makes the shape so heavy and makes no melody harder.

It makes mercy and relaxation and even strength to spread a table fuller. There are more places not empty. They see cover. (Dirt And Not Copper p. 5)

Certainly, to say that a certain set of words does not make sense is to exclude them “from the sphere of language”; it is to suddenly create boundaries.¹ In TB the arrangement is a rearrangement of language leaving words out of places where a reader would expect them to be, and then putting other words in spots where the reader might not be able to see why they are there. This does not mean that a given sentence does not have an effect on a reader, and if it has an effect then it must be, however slightly or greatly, being received as something that has

meaning. And meaning is not senseless. In the passage quoted above there is an uncertainty of what is being expressed. However the muddy-darkness of dirt does darken a color much more efficiently than the glittering-brown of copper. To place this line into the context of a painting or, say, a piece of music, when a shape or a few notes are darkened they do become heavier; though the unison of the painting or piece of music is not hindered.

Wittgenstein discusses the concept of “language-games” as a way of examining the multitude of ways that meaning is determined, or “bound” by context.^{li} The difficulty of attempting to decipher the “language-game” occurring in TB is determined by a reader’s ability to understand the context that the text creates for itself. An easy mistake is to impose a context upon the text as opposed to deciphering the delineations of the actual, existing, context. There is this strong sense that the text itself is not talking necessarily about something else but is talking about itself. If this is the case, then this is a somewhat unlikely context. All of these questions point to the components of the language-game. Stein has written: “an arrangement in a system to pointing” – and then a few pages later: “all this which is a system, which is feeling” – is emotion a synonym for feeling? If it is, then we can understand the text to be a motion of the self – if this statement can be taken as a direct statement about the actual text, a question of how this system is constructed (i.e. how does it work) then immediately arises.

Could there not be a sudden date, could there not be in the present
settlement of age old pensions, could there not be by a witness, could there be.

Count the chain, cut the grass, silence the noon and murder flies. See
the basting undip the chart, see the way the kinds are best seen from
the rest, from that and untidy. (Cranberries p. 29)

Sometimes I read this passage and receive the urge to go outside and change the oil in the jeep and drive to North Carolina. And then at other moments, I lean back in my yellow chair, look out the window, see the building – its weather-beaten paint-peeling front - and think about things that seem so useless. Other times I read on. It is the tone of the passage that stimulates these feelings. There is a sense of orders being given since there are verbs that mandate action (“Count . . . cut . . . silence . . . murder . . .”). But this occurs after a kind of wondering of whether there could be some something that sees all that does occur and has occurred. And then the lines that seem to be giving orders take on a quality of listing that which this “witness” might be seeing.

Wittgenstein uses the word “multiplicity” to denote the quantity of language-games, and also he uses the word *countless* to describe “the kinds of use of what we call ‘symbols,’ ‘words,’

‘sentences.’^{lii} In TB the reader encounters this multiplicity and the countlessness in the expanse of every sentence. In the last sentence of “Glazed Glitter” Stein writes, “It certainly showed no obligation and perhaps *if borrowing is not natural there is some use in giving*” (My own stress). When something is given there is a loss for one and a gain for another, and certainly it seems that Gertrude Stein is trading words for other words beneath the gaze of the reader. This idea of giving revisits the early discussion about value and the conditions in language, which dealt with how a sign’s value is determined by the signs surrounding it.^{liii} It also returns us to the notion of the withdrawing of words from circulation, that Stein is switching words, swapping phrases, just as much as she is manipulating language. In this way, she is permitting the text to be generous.^{liv}

A FEATHER

A feather is trimmed, it is trimmed by the light and the bug and the post, it is trimmed by little leaning and by all sorts of mounted reserves and loud volumes. It is surely cohesive. (p.14)

The tone of this passage is surprisingly reminiscent of the way I was taught by an old seaman to splice pendent lines for securing vessels to moorings. He would say, not tell, “ first, you take this (which he called A) and slid it through this (B) and then tighten over with this one (C). Finally,” he would say, peering over his rimless glasses, “trim all of the ends and burn them with that torch.” There are obvious problems in my reading of the piece here. First of all, I am projecting a memory, some sort of a psychological association (it is the word “trim” that gives the passage this particular tone for me), and it obscures, masks, my reading of the piece. As Wittgenstein says:

If you do not keep the multiplicity of language-games in view you will perhaps be inclined to ask the question: “What is a question?”...Think of how many different things are called “description”: description of a body’s position by means of its coordinates, [etc]. . .^{lv}

“I do not know whether” there is a description of an order or a description of a thing here. To a large extent, TB achieves what it does achieve by a kind of turning of language inside out; then, with the other side in view the text examines – considers – language. There is, as Maurice Merleau-Ponty has pointed out, an “interior to language” out of which arises an *expressive act*. De Saussure too pointed out that there is an interior to language. This “interior” is not based in the history of language. It is the structure of language that we use to communicate. Creative

expression is an arranging of the units of language that produces a sense of immediacy, a feeling of proximity that this wholly essential, nearly spiritual slab of language generates. In TB the careful reader will encounter, and then perhaps be struck by clarity of language, which does not result from pure relations to denotation. In TB language is in “its live and creative state”; for in this state, “language is the gesture of renewal and recovery.”^{lvi}

The power of language, the vigor of the gesture is to transport readers, kind of throw their senses and intellection out / then toward the movement of the molecules which constitute that which is being expressed. Moving beyond the “system of official grammar which attributes a given signification to each sign” the reader of TB “can see another expressive system emerge which is the vehicle of the signification but proceeds differently: *expression* in this case is not suited point by point to what is expressed.”^{lvii} Here within this shift of the treatment of language each element is not particular or isolated, but receives its significance from its neighbors.

In TB each word is important in the formation of the pointing; though, what is it pointing at or towards? Does it point at the same thing or concept or what-have-you all the time? Let’s step back for a moment and examine the text’s general structure as a way of trying to talk about these questions. The entire work is a sequence arranged into a particular order that is determined not by external influences, by a prefabricated form, but by internal elements developed each upon each. In this sense, TB is readily independent. It does not subscribe to something else, nor does it rely on another source to exist. It is only itself. The book is divided into three sections: *Objects, Food, and Rooms*. The first section consists of fifty-eight pieces varying in length from one or two lines to over fifty. The second section is also divided into shorter pieces (forty-three), which also vary in length. The third section might be referred to as a narrative poem, because of its form and structure. These quite common entities, which serve as the names of the three sections, provoke a certain set of expectations or ideas about what they are – and perhaps for this reason, Gertrude Stein chose them.

The reader brings a set of expectations when these entities are encountered. Since these entities are so common, the readers assume that they already know what it is that can be written about them. All of these expectations are immediately shattered after the reader moves through the first few lines. Something entirely unexpected is placed before the reader. Now in that moment what was thought to be there is not there, and instead something else is there. (In this way, the reader is placed at the will of the text.) An object usually has a concrete quality, a

tangible quality to it. This seems to be what constitutes the idea behind what an object might be; however, might I not see a broad, blue, cloudless sky and say that it is a sun-drenched canvas? Or, am I not able to call a can of motor oil “blue,” since that is its color? A word, any single word, might signify any set of signifiers when put into any particular context. In TB Gertrude Stein is constantly playing with the plasticity and the disparate dispositions of words in ways that often betray their everyday usage. De Saussure taught us that the sign is wholly arbitrary; it does not have any direct link to the sensible world. In a piece of writing a writer may decide to say that a particular rock is rainbow colored, and the writer might do this (perhaps) to achieve a particular effect in the story that is necessary to the expression of the piece. This does not mean that there are rainbow colored rocks in nature. Similarly, Stein is manipulating language in ways to achieve a particular gesture.^{lviii}

The movement generated by Stein’s workings of language across the page depends upon a quite specific command of language. Food is quite simply something edible; yet in the second section of TB some of the poems bear names such as “End of Summer,” “Single,” and “A Centre in a Table.” Similar, in the first section, are poems with titles such as “A Frightful Release,” “More,” and “Nothing Elegant.” Though these entities are not necessarily objects or food, they might take on an object or food quality when placed into either section. And it is possible that if they were placed into another section, which was titled “moments,” they would take on the qualities of just that. How could this happen? As De Saussure has said, language is only made up of differences without positive terms.

Everything that has been said up to this point boils down to this: in language there are only differences. Even more important: a difference generally implies positive terms between which the difference is set up; but in language there are only differences without positive terms.^{lix}

This fact of language further clarifies the questions posed because it elucidates the notion that what makes any signifier what it is *is* the difference existing between it and other signifiers. As Gertrude Stein says, “The difference is spreading.” This fact shows how language when written presents a variety of possibilities to a poet or a writer. To place one word beside another is to create a juxtaposition of differences between both value and signification. There is no word that

is any other word. There are words similar to other words, but no two words are the same. This seems a bit ridiculous, but it is intrinsic to understanding what can be produced within the realm of language.

Elephant beaten with candy and little pops and chews all bolts
and reckless reckless rats, *this is this*. (A Sound p. 15 – my own emphasis)

This returns to the earlier discussion of the value of a term, which is determined only by the presence of other terms. To continue along this line, value is only “one element in signification, and it is difficult to see how signification can be dependent upon value and still be distinct from it.”^{lx} What is the linguistic value of “little pops”? A term’s value (once again referring to De Saussure) is unfastened as long as it can be “exchanged.” And since value is determined by difference between terms, the content of a given term (a given word) is determined only by the chorus of terms that surrounds it.

De Saussure:

Its content is really fixed only by the concurrence of everything that exists outside of it. Being part of a system, it [the linguistic sign] is endowed not only with a signification, but also and especially with a value, and this is something quite different.^{lxi}

A discussion of value is crucial in an examination of gesture in TB because Gertrude Stein arranges particular words in ways that impact the value a particular word might carry in different circumstances. The value of “little pops” is determined by “chews all bolts” and “reckless reckless rats.” The differences enunciated between these units are clearly heard; yet, the value of one isolated unit is troublesome to define. However, even if two terms, in this case two units, are (to use De Saussure’s term) “dissimilar,” they can still be “exchanged” if a value is determined. A way of possibly determining the value might be answering the question: do they all make the same sound, since that is the name of the piece. How this question might be answered is certainly ambiguous; however, it does raise a critical question in an examination of TB.

The question has to do with determining the relationship between the text of individual pieces and their accompanying titles. There seems to be no direct connection. They do not appear to be descriptions. They might be definitions of some obscure type. But the definitions given, which may or may not be obscure, are at least allusive. Let’s look at one of the pieces.

A SUBSTANCE IN A CUSHION

The change of color is likely and a difference a very little difference is prepared. Sugar is not a vegetable.

Callous is something that hardening leaves behind what will be soft if there is genuine interest in there being present as many girls as men. Does this change. It shows that dirt is clean when there is volume.

A cushion has that cover. Supposing you do not like to change, supposing it is very clean that there is no change in appearance, supposing that there is no regularity and a costume is that any the worse than an oyster and an exchange. (p. 3)

Do we have before us the definition of a cushion? It is true in that sugar is not a vegetable, but that is only true outside the context of the passage; perhaps, it is a description of the color of the stuffing of a cushion. And the possible definition of “callous” is accurate in this way also, in that it describes the covering of the stuffing. Though suddenly the passage begins to distort itself. Now the passage is talking about change. The entire passage is talking about objects that are hid inside of other objects. And the “hidden” objects are much softer than the objects that are hiding them. An oyster and an exchange: there is a monetary notion here, a reference again to value. Inside oysters there may be pearls. Not every oyster has a pearl in it, yet an oyster that has a pearl in it does not change in appearance – all oysters wear the same “costume,” so to speak. The interior and the exterior are being discussed here, the seen and the unseen. The substance in a cushion is not seen, but when the substance is sat upon it is felt – which returns us to the quote cited earlier “all this which is a system, which is feeling.” These may be some of the particulars of the passage. Note the use of the phrase “very clean.” This is an unlikely use of the word. Then, though, the use of the word “clean” is a paradox. The entire sentence may seem senseless. It is difficult to understand how when there is a volume of dirt it becomes clean. Understanding this sentence depends upon how the three-word sentence that comes just before it is read. If that sentence is read as a question without proper punctuation, then the reader becomes lost. But, if the sentence is not a question then it is a fragment. It is quite easy to become lost inside the particulars of the text. There come certain points in the text where the reader might be “put off”; for what is the cover of a cushion in this passage? It is something that the reader only has a feeling of – it is not specific. A cover within the context of this piece is something that is callous and equal. We could go to the dictionary, but it seems we are completely missing the point if we

turn to Webster while reading TB. Possible answers to the questions the text presents are not in, so to speak, “conventional” places, nor are they necessarily arrived at in standardized ways.

In the first two sections (*Objects* and *Food*) we have over a hundred pieces, each of which consists of a body of writing and a title or a heading. The body of writing appears to function separately from the title, but from across that distance it could be discussing some aspect of the title. The other day while reading the paper an idea occurred to me as I was looking at a photograph in the *Bangor Daily News*. There was an image of a woman with a gloved hand over her mouth. Bundled-up, with the wind sweeping her hair across her face, I had no idea as to why this photograph was on the front page. The caption below the photograph brought relevance to the picture’s presence: *high winds and cold bring county to a standstill*. Sitting down at the computer this morning, it occurs to me that the relationship between title and writing in TB might be compared to a photograph in a newspaper commented on by a subtext. The heading or title in TB could be the photograph, and the body of writing in TB could be the subtext that is telling us how we should understand the heading. The purpose of the subtext accompanying an image in a newspaper is to point a viewer toward those elements of the image that are pertinent to the story the newspaper article is telling. Roland Barthes in Responsibility of Forms discusses this relationship between text and image in newspapers and advertisements. Quite similar to a newspaper or advertisement image, there are a panalogy of denotations, connotations, and expectations accompanying the objects and food that Stein presents to the reader.

ORANGE

A type oh oh new new not no not knealer knealer of old show
beefsteak, neither neither. (p. 38)

There is a twist, though. Given this throng of signifiers, the reader is not necessarily given very certain sentences that seem to point out specific ways of understanding the title. It is not obvious what the reader is intended to understand or gather about, in this case, an “Orange.” To push past the expectations of what an orange usually appears as in writing, is difficult because there does not appear to be a reason as to why, or a way as to how, a reader would do that.

A passage from Barthes:

Language helps identify purely and simply the elements of the scene and the scene itself: it is a matter of a denoted description of the image (a description that is often partial)... The denominative function corresponds nicely to an anchoring of every possible (denoted) meaning of the object, by recourse to a nomenclature; in front of a dish of

something (in an Amieux ad), I may hesitate to identify the shapes and volumes; the caption (“*rice and tuna with mushrooms*”) helps me choose the *right level of perception*; it allows me to accommodate not only my gaze but also my intellection. On the level of the “symbolic” message, the linguistic message no longer guides the identification but the interpretation; it constitutes a kind of vise which keeps the connoted meanings from proliferating either toward too individual regions or toward dysphoric values; an ad (d’Arcy preserves) shows a few fruits scattered around a ladder; the caption (“*as if you had picked them in your own garden*”) distances a possible signified (parsimony, poor harvest) because it would be an unpleasant one and orients the reading towards a flattering signified; the caption here acts as a counter-taboo, it combats the disagreeable myth of the artificial, ordinarily attached to canned goods.^{lxii}

The purpose of the text (of the body of writing in TB) would be then to aid the reader in choosing the appropriate level of perception when reading a particular piece; however, this level of perception is not obvious. It is unlike an advertisement for food in many ways. For instance, in “Orange” the readers are not given a line to direct them back towards the image of, say, fruit in a basket; instead, there is a telling to the viewer of elements that are quite un-orange-like. Barthes identifies the text’s purpose as directing the viewer toward those signifieds that are to be considered and those that are to be disregarded. In TB the text directs the reader toward a place that appears irrelevant to the title of the piece – oranges are not known to be “knealers.” In this way the denotations of the word “orange”, which usually signify fruit or color, do not coincide with the text that is given.

The next two pieces after “Orange”:

ORANGES.

Build is all right.

ORANGES IN.

Go lack go lack use her.

Cocoa and clear soup and oranges and oatmeal.

Whist bottom whist close, whist clothes, woodling.

Cocoa and clear soup and oranges and oatmeal.

Pain soup, suppose it is a question, suppose it is butter, real is, real is only, only excreate a no since.

A no, a no since, a no since when, a no since when since, a no since when since a no since when since, a no since, a no since when since,

a no since, a no, a no since a no, a no since, a no since.

There must be (to use Eisenstein's terminology as found in Barthes) "corresponding associations" between the title and the body of writing. In the space that exists between the two there – it would seem – must be threads that the reader can trace back and forth between them.^{lxiii} Eisenstein is speaking of sound and color in film when he uses this term, and just as Barthes finds this apropos, here it too seems somewhat opportunely relevant given the last sequence of "Oranges In." (Note: it is important to not use the word repetition here because each time, for instance, the word "since" is read there is a renewal of its meaning(s) in new or different context.)^{lxiv} The title "Oranges In" has an action quality to it, a verbal tone – movement. And that last line – a sequence of permuted phrases – creates with and through a re-sounding of four words a rhythm of moving-toward, when read aloud. This building of sound (which could circle back to "Build is all right") corresponds to the title not in a literal, written-out way, but through sound, which the reader will discover when the passage is read aloud. There is also a play of sound when the three titles are read: Orange . . . Oranges . . . Oranges In. There is a progression there. Building upon itself, there is a continual forward progression that echoes.

To continue with the discussion of image and text relations, if the body of writing is the subtext of the image given (the title), it would then serve to "*direct* the reader among the various signifieds of the image (again, the title)." The body of writing in turn (to use another of Barthes' terms), "anchors" the reader; tells the reader which signifieds are to be considered.^{lxv} The text is intended to move the reader along and through the image, toward a predetermined meaning. One of the difficulties in TB lies in attempting to understand the signs so that we can reach that predetermined meaning that Gertrude Stein may have selected for us. As we move along and through the lines of each piece, we feel that we are being thrown around like a bag of fluff. We go over there, we run to here, we jaunt back over to there; we are not ever able to rest our gaze or employ our intellect – thoughts are not provoked in a symmetrical way. The body of writing directs the reader into a place that does not usually carry connotations of culture, history, politics or anecdote. In this way the book begins to create its own structure, but at times the pieces seem to float "unanchored" in the sea of language. The possibilities seem so endless that not any particular one appears to be definite. For the reader, there is a striving to understand what exactly is being talked about, since one of the primary purposes of language is to answer, "more or less

directly, more or less partially, the question *What is it?*^{lxvi} There is this tendency in reading TB to want to know *what* exactly is being written about. This is an easy mistake to be made when reading TB.

However, unlike an advertisement, in TB there is no exact set of signifieds to be uncovered by a reader in regards to the title. Barthes discusses every image's polysemy, which "questions meaning, and this question always serves as a dysfunction."^{lxvii} It dilutes meaning. In TB the titles are so common that they are nearly polysemous themselves. "Orange" has "a 'floating chain' of signifieds from which the reader can select some and ignore the rest" in an arbitrary, uninformed manner.^{lxviii} The commonplace quality of the titles Stein chooses makes them disguises of sorts; they assert a mendacious form because once the reader enters into the body of writing she encounters a universe adverse to what the title usually designates.

SALAD

It is a winning cake.
(p.37)

It may be possible to also say: "cake is a losing salad." The relationship between cake and salad turns on the verb "winning," which functions as a modifier. To venture an interpretation, perhaps: salad is a winning cake because it tastes just as sweet as cake but is also healthy. This is a description of what salad is; it succeeds in telling the reader how to consider salad in reference to something as apparently opposite to it as cake. If we return to the line in "Substance of a Cushion" which says "Sugar is not a vegetable," then the equation that we are given above seems improbable within the context of TB, but the verb "winning" makes the equation possible, and allows this short commentary to succeed. This is one of the pieces in TB (perhaps it has to do with the length) that is quickly grasped, available, and then easily entered.

However, the short explication given above does not fully elucidate the piece because "Salad" occurs between other pieces (namely, "Eating" "Sauce" and "Salmon"), and when read in sequence the meaning changes. For instance, consider the last line of three words of "Sauce": "Sauce *sam in*" in relation to the title of the piece that follows "Salmon" (my own stress). The sound is nearly the same: "sam in" . . . "Salmon." There is this type of play with words, this modification, this swerving of sound that occurs not separate from the presence of the title, but in

relation to them, tied – and riffing off them. The emphasis in these cases is on sound, and sound is an integral aspect of the linguistic sign.^{lxix} It would be easy to write another essay on Gertrude Stein’s sensitivity and employment of musicality in TB. Sound is central to the construction and life of the lines in TB. Here is another example: “Alas a dirty word, alas a dirty third alas a dirty third, alas a dirty bird” (“Chicken” p. 35). A large portion of the work carouses and cavorts amongst the vibration and consonance performed from phoneme to phoneme. It now seems that the notion of the relationship between title and writing (as being similar to the relationship between a newspaper photo and subtext that occurred to me the other morning), is somewhat lacking analysis given that the two meet, mingle and inform each other in softer, more melodious, less direct ways.



Similar to the rise and fall of a musical score, there are certain parts of TB that always strike me, stay with me; in ways that are unclear they speak to me. I sense a something that in some way seems to be beyond language. These moments seem obverse to all other moments occurring while reading TB. These moments are similar to one that I have nearly every morning with a bunch of different varieties of peppers that are hanging from the rafters in the kitchen. Since autumn they have sat suspended above the stove and every morning they capture my gaze while I fry eggs. It has something to do with their organization, the way a pale yellow one swoops down and away from the others. Many mornings they appear as unreal as a photograph, so I must reach out, touch them, and swing them into stupid motion. The peppers’ sense of “unrealness” has something to do with their hue (that some mornings seems reminiscent of Vermeer to me); however, what exactly it is about their existence that strikes me, I am unsure. These circumstances are all quite similar to Roland Barthes’ discussion of the “Obtuse meaning” which he generates in reference to a series of photo-stills from Eisenstein films:

I believe the obtuse meaning carries a certain *emotion*; caught up in disguise, this emotion is never viscous; it is an emotion which simply designates what is loved, what is to be defended; it is an emotion-as-value, an evaluation.^{lxx}

This concept that the obtuse meaning is an evaluation, an “emotion-as-value,” is quite different from earlier discussions of linguistic value. If the obtuse meaning is removed, communication remains; its presence, its functioning does not impact reading or speaking. In this way the obtuse

meaning is, as Barthes observes, outside the system of language. It is not established or fixed with any type of objective certainty within the structure of an image or a piece of writing. The obtuse meaning somehow functions in relation to language, as Barthes says, “it is still within interlocution.” The obtuse meaning “is a signifier without signifieds.”^{lxxi}

A METHOD OF A CLOAK

A single climb to a line, a straight exchange to a cane, a desperate adventure and courage and a clock, all this which is a system, which has feeling, which has resignation and success, all makes an attractive black silver. (p.6)

It represents nothing. There is uncertainty in describing the obtuse meaning. Fading and then resurfacing, undulating, its existence creates “a distancing effect with regard to the referent (to “reality” as nature, a realist instance).”^{lxxii} When I reach out and set those peppers in motion, their effect upon my senses falls away and is no longer there. In the above passage the last six words seem to be (to adopt Barthes’ terminology) a “penetrating feature” of the piece for me, but in a way, the whole piece seems to emit or carry a certain extension of itself that is without a specific point of departure or arrival. But the obtuse meaning is ridiculous to describe; one can only “designate a site”, can only point towards that which seems to be ambiguously doing the same with certainty. The reading of TB – to broaden this discussion out to the whole work for a moment – is continually suspended between action of formulating a definition, a determination of some essence, and approaching a closeness with that essence, coming together with it as in the way one brings cut edges of tissue together. The first line of the above piece echoes this: “a single climb to a line.”

It is not in trying to disclose some “literal” or “obvious” meaning that I begin to enter the universe of these six words. It is the moment my eyes act upon them; for suddenly soon after reading climb, a yellow-cream-grey color spreads across my reading since that is the color I associate with rock climbing. This is not objective, but as Barthes remarks, “a semantologist would not acknowledge its [the obtuse meaning’s] objective existence.” Yet, it is apparent, manifest in my reading. The placement of “single” before “climb” is to an extent a useless modifier. Without it, the reader would still know climb is singular, simply by implication. But, that it is there, that it does not feel useless as I read the piece, is a testament of some kind to its

functioning, its operation upon my senses; for instance, if I read the line without the word “single” in it the yellow-cream-grey fails to spread.

The phrase that follows does not signify anything that is without specific description. It is informational; it gives me things that possess a certain yet limited weight. In this way the two phrases are completely separate from one another. The second contains a less camouflaged meaning. And as my eyes move through the piece, a second significance rises in the last six words (“all makes an attractive black silver”) that is strikingly similar to the one I sensed in the first six. In this instance it is the adjective “attractive” that appears to be the pivot point. There are other adjectives that could replace “attractive” and not change the information that is contained there. But that the word is there, that it shifts my senses, my reading, in the way in which it markedly does, discloses the power it carries when placed between “an” and “black.” Then also the placement of “black” and “silver” beside each other is another point of departure for me. They send my reading quickly to another place that is still contained there in the lines.

Consider this short passage from Barthes:

The obtuse meaning can proceed only by appearing and disappearing; this operation of presence/absence undermines the character by making it a simple site of facets: a disjunction expressed on another point by Eisenstein himself: ‘What is characteristic is that the different positions of one and the same [i.e. object]...are given without transition from one position to another.’^{lxxiii}

It is this un-melding of permutations that addresses (and might even to an extent describe) the book-ending occurring in “A Method of a Cloak” that I sense in my reading of the piece.

One of the characteristics of the obtuse meaning that Barthes articulates is that it “blurs the limit separating expression from disguise, but also presents this oscillation quite succinctly: an elliptical emphasis...a complex, very intricate arrangement.”^{lxxiv} An arrangement results from elements being placed into a suitable sequence or relationship to one another in such a manner as to direct a reader’s senses of the mind toward some eminently possible way of gathering in and considering the significance and meaning that a work contains and indicates. TB is a complex and intricate arrangement exploiting the power that is contained in each of its elements in ways that subvert their typical usage. The structure of the arrangement (again to employ Barthes’ vernacular) *leaks from the inside*. The obtuse meaning functions as “an *accent*, the very form of

an emergence, of a fold (even a crease) marking the heavy layer of information and signification.”^{lxxv}

Gertrude Stein’s diction is not abnormal, nor is it difficult. She primarily uses everyday language in TB. It is her syntax and grammar that throws the reader into a place of quick confusion. The way she manipulates language is strange, yet quite deliberate.

A FEATHER

A feather is trimmed, it is trimmed by the light and the bug and the post, it is trimmed by little leaning and by all sorts of mounted reserves and loud volumes. It is surely cohesive. (P.14)

Reexamining this earlier cited piece: it is presenting itself in another way; perhaps, I am supposed to receive and formulate a visual image because there is a painterly-ness to the piece, a feeling that each line is carving out the delineations of the feather, and the things, the elements, which serve this function are the bug, the light, and the post. Then from these points of reference, these juxtapositions of things that are all placed in direct correspondence to the feather (perhaps among the aggregation of these elements), I am to understand what the feather is - its fragile-ness; its weight; its purpose as an object with meaning in the context of the bug, the light and the post.

Wittgenstein:

We speak of understanding a sentence in the sense in which it can be replaced by another which says the same; but also in the sense in which it cannot be replaced by another. (Any more than one musical theme can be replaced by another.)

In the one case the thought in the sentence is something common to different sentences; in the other, something that is expressed only by these words in these positions. (Understanding a poem.)^{lxxvi}

TB is a case of the latter. There is not a “translation” to be made here, a “making sense of” what is being talked about by recapitulating some other series of sentences. Reading TB is not a matter of talking about what it is talking about. Rather, reading TB is a process of absorbing, recognizing, and then definitively grasping the movement of the stroke performed by each of the words as they meld and converge – within the adherence of the reading – to *point* to the *feeling* which is beyond the words themselves. For, when a painter paints the edges of, say, a fragment

of glass lying against a piece of blue velvet, she cannot simply draw out the shape of the glass; instead she must hew and scrape and etch – with a brush loaded with the appropriate color – the fragment of glass with its unexpected edges into the canvas, where the blue velvet carries the same amount of weight as each edge of glass, to express the feeling that the object emits. And when the fragment has been rendered as such, instead “it’s telling me something consists in its own structure, in *its* own lines and colours.”^{lxxvii}

Amidst the lines and colors of the piece given above, and also in this painting of the fragment of glass that we’ve now created in our mind’s eye, there are certain elements that, so to speak, “pop out” to hold our gaze a little longer than the others do. These *accents* (referring back to the obtuse meaning) offset the other elements, manipulate them, to then call attention to the layers of meaning entrenched in the fabric of the piece. I was not too far off when I discussed much earlier that the choice of the word “trim” somehow signified for me something of the essence of the piece. At that juncture in my reading of the piece, I simply did not locate the source of the meaning that it carried. This word creates the movement of the piece. It incites the presence of the feather, its occupancy as an object in the space of the text that describes it. “Trim” is the stroke; it is the gesture. And what is the gesture? Let’s turn to Barthes:

Something like a surplus of an action. The action is transitive, it seeks only to provoke an object, a result; the gesture is the indeterminate and inexhaustible total of reasons, pulsions, indolences which surround the action with an *atmosphere* (in the astronomical sense of the word).^{lxxviii}

Hence, the gesture is separate from the sign and the message. It is separate in that it does not function to produce intellection or carry information; instead, it carries the multitude of emotional content that is left behind by these other, somewhat benign yet necessary, elements. In writing, the gesture acts as a kind of producing agent, which activates the others out from their dormancy, for each word has within it a power waiting to be stimulated, awakened.

In TB it is diction that predicates and then produces gesture. By diction I do not mean a verbal description; more, I mean it as the choice of words, their correctness and effectiveness; specifically though it is the enunciation – the preparation in relation to a system – creating, as Barthes says, an atmosphere, which sweeps the reader toward a notion of the essence of the object. “The essence of an object,” says Barthes, “has some relation with its destruction: not necessarily what remains after it has been used, but what is *thrown away* as being of no use” (his

emphasis).^{lxxix} That stuff which is disregarded, tossed aside with some indifference, still exists there where it is, pointing back towards where it once did reside. The peeling away of diction in TB, this sense that certain words have been “withdrawn from circulation,”^{lxxx} is the gesture operating on and within the “system to pointing.”

Part Klee



Architecture Red-Green (yellow-purple gradations) 1919/22.
34.4x40.3cm; with border: 37.9x42.8.

In his analysis of Paul Klee's works in relation to Ferdinand de Saussure's formulations of linguistics, Ranier Crone posits:

The complications attendant upon applying semiotics to works of visual art are not easily resolved. The language of painting is never given apart from individual works, and since the language of painting is not in the possession of the entire social body but of a limited number of individuals, it can undergo many more volatile mutations than language proper.^{lxxxi}

Crone continues on in his essay to compare Klee's formulations of the "dividual" and the "individual" with De Saussure's signified/signifier. Paralleling Klee's "interplay of systematic

constraint and free choice” with De Saussure’s development and defining of *la langue* and *parole*, Crone attempts to establish the constraints (i.e. the “umbrella”) under which “free choice” (his indefinite term for expression and accent) takes form in Klee’s paintings. This is an idea Klee briefly discusses in his Pedagogical Sketchbook as “Divisional Articulation.” Crone’s discussion leaves us with two distinct points. First, that attempts to establish, define a “universally valid *langue* for painting escapes our capacities,” since any attempt seemingly leaves everything in flux: words and images do not readily cohere; they often succeed, in Crone’s estimation, in canceling each other out. To cancel something out is to render it useless and difficult to detectable. This, I would like to say, seems to be somewhat extreme, since, for example, one would think that a letter, if taken to a certain visual scale, or perhaps if given a particular typographic treatment, might in itself become an image.

In Klee’s work, the writing is often there in the painting. It has become incorporated into the actuality of the painting; a part of – linked to the image. The second point that Crone makes, which is relevant here, is that Paul Klee was undoubtedly influenced by De Saussure’s cultivation of modern linguistics. And then also that Klee wrestled and worked with these conceptions in his paintings in various ways. Citing examples from Klee’s notebooks, and also referring to several of Klee’s paintings done in color, then also early sketches and drawings, Crone discusses the possible roles of linguistics in Klee’s work.

Paul Bauschatz remarks in his article on Klee’s use of language in painting that “much of Klee’s colloquy is explicit, not analogical, and linguistic principles play a central role in his artistic enterprise.”^{lxxxii} Before moving into a discussion of four of Klee’s paintings, Bauschatz offers a question which is not only applicable to the works of Klee: “how does word meaning operate in the visual event before us?” And, to relate this question to Klee’s use of language, what does the employment of letters, numbers, etc. accomplish in a painting that might not be accomplished by other means? Indeed, to spend time viewing/reading any number of his paintings is to become caught (maybe released) in a kind of verbal-imagery, which at times may have more of a sense of reading than perhaps of seeing. For Klee the painting was motion. It was an unconstrained area of perpetual motion, stimulating the eye to gather the multitudes of what might be seen in conjunction with what is seen. Klee, as Bauschatz notes, understood the limits of human communication. And in his paintings he worked with these limitations to create visual fields that commented somehow on the complexity of those limitations.^{lxxxiii}

Roland Barthes, in his investigation of Jean Louis Scheffer's discourse on the Venetian painter Paris Bordone's work *Chess Game*, says of the work that:

It is not the disciplines that need to be exchanged, it is the objects: there is no question of "applying" linguistics to the picture, injecting a little semiology into art history; there *is* a question of eliminating the distance (the censorship) institutionally separating picture and text.^{lxxxiv}

To a large extent this may be what Klee attempted to accomplish when he included various linguistic elements: close the distance, bring into view the various components of signification. It appears he was working towards writing the painting in ways that might move beyond the description of the object.^{lxxxv} Yet, Paul Klee did not begin to seriously work in color until the late teens, after he had been released from the ranks of the Great War. And it is not until these works in color begin to emerge that one can discern any 'Cubist' influence in Klee's finished paintings. Indeed, Klee had been to Paris (he traveled widely from 1905 to 1906), and was exposed to a variety of movements (Fauvism, Cubism, Orphism, etc.), but in his work at that time he was completing a series of etchings, which were intended as satirical comments on humanity. These etchings, which are highly sculpted pieces, meticulously formed, bare no resemblance to any of the multitude of movements rising up across Europe at the time.^{lxxxvi} Marcelin Pleynet notes in his study of Matisse:

The real question is to know what the artist did with what he saw; whether what he saw determined what he made; and whether what he made did not determine to some extent what he was capable of seeing.^{lxxxvii}

It is obvious in his journals that Klee was aware of what he was doing and that he was quite disgusted with the 'classical' conceptions of the figure. He knew that his etchings would not receive much attention at the Munich Secession in 1906, where they were displayed as one piece.^{lxxxviii} In his journal Klee notes that they were "a necessary first step".

In his book Paul Klee and Cubism, Jim Jordan explains that Aubrey Beardsley predominantly influenced Klee's etchings, since many of the etchings (particularly *Menacing Head*) are closely aligned with Beardsley's Art Nouveau work.^{lxxxix} For Jordan, the interesting link between these two artists is not their etchings, but the fact that they both harbored a general disgust for the human figure. Klee never actually produced what one might consider a classic study of beauty, yet he worked with the figure almost exclusively through 1909. The majority of

the etchings are anatomically distorted for the purpose of satiric human commentary. The first set of etchings became a series that allowed Klee to express his rejection, as he noted “the service of beauty by drawing her enemies.”^{xc} Indeed, this reassessment of the human figure was a somewhat ubiquitous sense at the early part of the twentieth century. The reassessment was almost entirely a reaction to the academic and/or the salon; however, with Klee, the reaction is more to the classics than to the immediate past (Impressionism, Post-impressionism, etc.). Another trace of a connection between Klee and his early contemporaries is in his second series of etchings, which focus on masks. The use of masks is similar to the Cubists (particularly Picasso), who, as Pleyne notes, used African masks. Klee, unlike Picasso, was not interested in the mask as a new way of seeing the human face and its structure; more, it was the metaphorical function of masks. As he noted in his journal: “...the mask as a work of art; behind it, the man.” After 1909 Klee began a series of landscapes that – much like Matisse’s seascapes in 1898 – would be a turning point in his career, despite their weaknesses in composition and the lack of strong use of color. Until 1909, though, it seemed that Paul Klee was working in a sort of historical vacuum, where he was preoccupied by Greek statuary. There is a sense that this preoccupation is his own preconceptions of the classical; in the etchings he is to come to an understanding of what the ‘classical’ is/was, and then also work through some of his own preconceptions / problems with these conceptions. Klee’s maturation as an artist is a fascinating if not beguiling timeline of various investigations and preoccupations. And if one reads through the various materials of those years (mainly the diaries) one will see struggles with attempting to approach and enclose some semblance of synthesis between music, visual art, and linguistic practices.

Sometimes I dream of a work on a vast scope, spanning all the way across element, object, content, and style. This is sure to remain a dream, a vague possibility . . . We must go on looking for it. We have found parts, but not the whole.^{xcii}

Klee was a practicing musician in addition to being a painter. He wrote poetic works during his years in the war, and also produced a series of paintings often referred to as “poem-paintings.”^{xciii}

In the light of the fact that Klee often exhausted certain particulars in an effort to see what they could and could not do, I will offer a brief examination of the use and examination of color in one of his paintings. *Architecture Red-Green (yellow-purple gradations)* is oil on canvas with a red watercolor border. Begun in 1919 and completed in 1922, the painting balances color.

“In a broad way we may say that color balances on middle gray.”^{xciii} Klee employs this sense of balance of color in many of his paintings by using a moderate amount of extremely strong color in contrast to other more grey colors. For instance, there is a patch of bright red there in the lower middle of the painting that is counterbalanced in other red-purple squares. “In fact, it is one of the aims of the artist to discover the powers of colors and to employ their suggestiveness in his appeals to emotional man.”^{xciv}

Munsell uses a sphere to represent the world of color. Balanced on a pole whose “North” end is white and whose “South” end is black, the color wheel is situated in the middle (grey) area. To consider *Architecture Red-Green* beside Munsell’s color sphere is useful since in his painting Klee is attempting to create a balanced architecture of color. The actual shapes will not be of import here in this discussion, because they are primarily dictated by the effect of color upon the senses. Color has three fundamental dimensions: Hue, Value (light), and Chroma (strength). To pick up at that bright red patch, if the viewer is to enter there, then their eye might bleed – as the red in the painting does – up into the next small patch of greener-greier red that is similar in value to the rectangle above it. There is an ease of movement of the eye in this area. At other points in the painting, the contrast of value and hue is more severe, but remains within the grey of the color sphere. The yellows, which appear and function as sorts of accents upon the others, are yellow-greys. In Munsell’s color sphere yellow is the hue situated between green and red; also there in the wheel are yellow-red and yellow-green. In his painting, Klee does not use blue. In this way the painting could be an exercise in the use of “primary colors.”

The range of value and chroma in the painting explores one level of colors on Munsell’s color sphere, although some of the yellows do move “North” at certain strategic points. If we return to our bright red patch and then follow downwards, we enter into a large, relatively neutral rectangular area that seems brown-red. This takes us out of the painting. If while inside this area, which is repeated to the left of our bright red patch, we move either right or left, a series of what appear to be dark red-brown quarter-circles are encountered. These elements are the strongest, darkest hues in the painting, and they occur at other junctures in the painting. They are, however, not red in hue; they are yellows. That shade of yellow is a low valued one with a lot of black in it. This is most likely the reason that Klee called the piece “gradations yellow-purple.” This quarter-circle shaped hue serves to hold the painting, gives it a sense of gravity. This darker, “Southern” hue has more weight when transpiring beside the yellow-greys. The contrast is stark.

To continue an observation of the composition of this painting, the color-shapes at the top of the painting are long, and on the whole much lighter in value than those at the bottom of the painting. The middle of the painting is primarily without the quarter-circles. It consists primarily of rectangular shapes. The varicolored functioning of red, green, yellow in this painting is achieved through the juxtaposition of differing value and chroma. The ways this all occurs seems similar to De Saussure's conceptions of language being a system of differences without positive terms. Our bright red patch is what it is because of the various other color-shapes that surround it. Each element of this painting, though rationally separated by Klee's careful constructions (only in rare instances does one color overlap or blend into another), still offers varying sorts of commentary upon one and other. (This is all somehow similar to the syntactical play of words in Gertrude Stein's Tender Buttons.) The threading, unifying apparatus of this painting is indeed in its playful balancing of color. To let the eye roam across the painting, at no point in that roaming is the eye bombarded by extreme shifts in value or chroma. There are differences, but they are subtle if not quite balanced. The key to balance, in Munsell's estimation, is reason and consistency. In *Architecture Red-Green*, each of the varying hues appears in a varying repetition with one another. Although, considered as a whole piece, the painting is not compositionally symmetrical, the precarious placement of each color beside the next creates a well-balanced gesture of the relations of red and green, which has more than just a symmetrical quality to it.

If considered on a large scale, Tender Buttons is not a, so to speak, symmetrical work. There is not an obvious logic to its structure. The three parts (*Objects, Food, Rooms*) do not necessarily reflect a consistent balancing of words but, as was discussed in the previous section, there is movement from one poem to the next (*Orange . . . Oranges . . . Oranges In*) that is certainly a smooth progression of gesture. In *Architecture Red-Green* Klee fabricates a very comparable structure by melding and shaping color that is dictated not by shape, form, or composition but by the impact that color has upon the senses. In the painting there are jumps in value and chroma that at first glance appear arbitrary, closer inspection, however, reveals a subtlety in shifts of value and chroma that progress smoothly.

If this situation of a similar progression of gesture exists in Klee's painting and in TB, then it would seem that the act of expression through writing is not very different from expression through painting. As Merleau-Ponty observes:

What if language expresses as much by what it says between words as by

the words themselves? . . . And what if, hidden in empirical language, there is a secondary language in which signs once again lead the vague life of colors, and in which significations never free themselves completely from the intercourse of signs?^{xcv}

The writer, it is often said, works from a pre-fabricated system of expressions; on the other hand, the painter, it is often assumed, works within an unarticulated mass of lines and shapes. However, as was discussed in the previous section, writing is not in anyway limited to the rules and structures of everyday speech. Here in this section we have seen that the seeming arbitrariness of a painting that is without compositional symmetry does employ balance of color as its fundamental tool. In both of these cases there is the creating of a work that had not yet existed. In each case there are decisions being made about what word or what color to place where.

After a discussion of a film that shows Matisse making decisions as to where to place a line, Merleau-Ponty concludes:

Consequently, there was a choice, and the chosen line was chosen in such a way as to observe, scattered out over the painting, twenty conditions which were . . . in formulable for any one but Matisse, since they [the painting's conditions] were only defined and imposed by the intention of executing *this painting which did not yet exist*.^{xcvi}

“Expressive speech,” Merleau-Ponty continues, “does not simply choose a sign for an already designed signification;” instead, it “gropes around significative intention which is not guided by a text.”^{xcvii} In this way, the creative act is an event defined by concerns that are certainly outside language. For perception occurs before thought, and thought is very much a relation of language.

Before the gaze of a viewer / reader there is motion; rarely if ever do things sit completely still. And that motion is an occurrence beyond language that exists as a result of language. The word play in TB achieves a gesture that is markedly similar to the color-play in *Architecture Red-Green*. This similarity in “play” does not result not in some similar message or meaning being made by Klee and Stein; instead, it is that space of language where differences meet that is surprisingly comparable between Tender Buttons and *Architecture*.

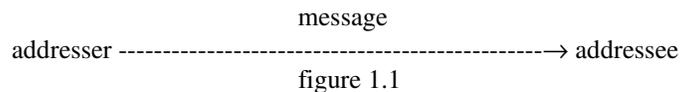
The grounds for comparison are innocently not subject or style. The point of intersection between these two works is where the treatment of colour juxtapositions and syntax produce meaning that is explicitly gestural as opposed to obviously literal or pictographic. The colors of

Architecture Red-Green look like a stained-glass window that was shatter and glued back together and *Tender Buttons*' syntax often reads as if first it was placed into a food processor and then removed. However, this is not the case with either of the works. The expressive intention of both works relies upon a movement of each element modifying the next element and then the next until there is a universe of meaning that is received in a sweeping motion of the reader's / viewer's eye as it allows each element to meld into the next. In both of these works, the gesture becomes the pivot point for transmitting meaning. The gesture's function becomes that of a kind of epoxy that produces a unifying structure, which is built upon generous yet precise reading of that which is there in each piece.

Notes on Part One

ⁱ Julia Kristeva Language The Unknown: An Initiation into Linguistics trans. Anne M. Menke. Columbia University Press, New York. 1989

. *ibid.*: "We can say that language **is the process of communicating a message between at least two speaking subjects**, one of whom is the *addresser* or sender, the other, the *addressee* or receiver (figure 1.1)."



ⁱⁱⁱ *ibid.* pgs. 5 – 8.

^{iv} *ibid.* pgs. 5 – 8.

^v *ibid.* pgs. 12 – 13.

^{vi} Ferdinand De Saussure Course in General Linguistics trans. Wade Baskin. ed. Charles Bally and Albert Sechehaye. McGraw-Hill Book Company, New York. 1966.

^{vii} Language The Unknown p. 14

^{viii} *ibid.* p. 15

^{ix} Course in General Linguistics. p. 66: "the *psychological imprint* of the sound, the impression that it makes on our senses." The word that De Saussure leaves out in that quote is "image," yet we may assume that image is implied, since it functions the same as the sound.

^x Language The Unknown p. 15

^{xi} *ibid.* p.15

^{xii} Course p. 66

^{xiii} *ibid.* p.17

^{xiv} Refer to Figure One in the Appendix while reading this next section.

^{xv} Maurice Merleau-Ponty. “Science and The Experience of Expression” in The Prose of the World. Edited by Claude Lefort. Translated by John O’Neill. Northwestern University Press, Evanston 1973. p.10

^{xvi} In How to Write – Dover Publications, Inc., 1975. – Gertrude Stein says: “There is no use in finding out what is in anybody’s mind.”

^{xvii} “Science and The Experience of Expression.” p.27

^{xviii} Ferdinand De Saussure, Course in General Linguistics, McGraw-Hill Paperbacks, New York. 1966. p. 30.

^{xix} Merleau-Ponty, Maurice, “Indirect Language and the Voices of Silence” in Signs. Translated and with an Introduction by Richard McLeary. Evanston: NorthWestern University Press, 1964. p. 52.

^{xx} Language The Unknown p. 303

^{xxi} As Antonin Artaud wrote: “alongside the culture through words, there is a culture through gestures.”

^{xxii} Definition of Gesturality by American Kinesics as found in Language The Unknown.

^{xxiii} *ibid.* p. 307

^{xxiv} David Freedberg. The Power of Images. The University of Chicago Press. 1989. pgs. 317 – 344.

^{xxv} Language The Unknown p.314

^{xxvi} Roland Barthes The Responsibility of Forms trans. Richard Howard. Hill and Wang, New York. 1985. p.150

^{xxvii} Marcelin Pleynet, Painting and System, trans. Sima Godfrey, University of Chicago Press. 1977. p. 19.

^{xxviii} The Responsibility of Forms: Is Painting Language? pgs. 149 – 152.

Notes on Part Two

^{xxix} Ludwig Wittgenstein, Philosophical Investigations, Macmillan, New York. 1968. Section #531, “We speak of understanding a sentence in the sense in which it can be replaced by another which says the same; but also in the sense in which it can be replaced by another....In the one case the in the sentence is something common to different sentences; in other words, something that is expressed only by these words in these positions.” (Understanding a poem.) This is intrinsic in a discussion of Tender Buttons, because there is not another sentence that could be written to replace a sentence in Tender Buttons. The only sentence is the sentence that is there in the work. This challenges the perceptions of a reader’s concept of *understanding*.

^{xxx} Maurice Merleau-Ponty, Signs: Indirect Language and the Voices of Silence. trans. Richard C. McCleary. Northwestern University Press, 1964. To reiterate a definition of expression: “expression is not the adjustment of one element of discourse to each element of meaning, but an *operation of language upon language* which suddenly is thrown out of focus toward meaning.” p. 44

^{xxxi} Charles Olson, PROJECTIVE VERSE as found in The New American Poetry ed. Donald Allen, University of California Press. 1999. pgs. 386 – 397. (Originally appeared in *Poetry New York* No. 3, 1950.) Olson writes that the principle which governs “Projective Verse” is that “form is never more than an extension of content (or so it got phrased by one R. Creeley...)” Gertrude Stein is not writing “Projectively” in TB, but this concept is important because it speaks of the interconnectedness of form and content. This notions towards the structure of TB.

^{xxxii} Charles Harris and Paul Wood, ed. Art in Theory: 1900 – 1990, Blackwell, Cambridge. 1993. p. 157: “Contemporary Achievements in Painting”. (– Or, as Stein said, “The painters were naturally looking...”)

^{xxxiii} *Ma Jolie* is cited by Gertrude Stein as being the first Cubist work in Picasso, Dover Publications, Inc., New York, 1984. p. 13.

^{xxxiv} Ferdinand de Saussure, Course in General Linguistics, McGraw-Hill Book Company, New York. 1966. p.120: “A linguistic system is a series of differences of sound combined with a series of differences of ideas . . .”

^{xxxv} *ibid* p.127: This concept is referred to as *Syntagmatic Solidarities*. which De Saussure refers to as the “most striking” aspect of the organization of language.

^{xxxvi} *ibid*. p. 139: “word-order alone expresses thought.”

^{xxxvii} *ibid*. p. 126: “A word can always evoke everything that can be associated with it in one way or another.”

^{xxxviii} Patricia Meyerowitz, Gertrude Stein: Writings and Lectures, Penguin Books, Inc. Baltimore. 1971.

^{xxxix} “It is important to remember that all views of what exists change when there is a sense, a notion, in the mind that there is an interwovenness, a web of layers of events and discourses, that exist in one form or another beneath the immediate surface of things.” (My notes from Course)

^{xl} Maurice Merleau-Ponty, The Prose of the World: Science and the Experience of Expression p. 24

^{xli} *ibid*. pgs 9 – 46. “Everything I say about language presupposes it, but that does not invalidate what I say; it only shows that language is not an object, that it is capable of repetition, that it is *accessible from the inside*.” p.24

^{xlii} De Saussure, Course. p.108 – 109.

^{xliii} De Saussure uses the example of two Geneva-to-Paris trains that leave at twenty-four hour intervals. The trip travels the same course, and we feel that it is the same train; yet, the cars and personnel are different.

^{xliv} Maurice Merleau-Ponty, Science and the Experience of Expression. p.30

^{lv} As De Saussure on p. 115 of Course points out: “...outside language all values are apparently governed by the same paradoxical principle. They are always composed: (1) of a *dissimilar* thing that can be *exchanged* for the thing of which the value is to be determined...”

^{lxvi} Course p. 115.

^{lxvii} Wittgenstein Philosophical Investigations #523: “I should like to say ‘What a picture tells me is itself.’”

^{lxviii} TB p. 3 (note: hereafter page numbers will be noted directly after passages.)

^{lxix} Ludwig Wittgenstein, Philosophical Investigations I, Macmillian, NY. 1968. Section #500: “When a sentence is called senseless, it is not as it were its sense that is senseless. But a combination of words is being excluded from the language, withdrawn from circulation.”

^l *ibid*. Section #499: “To say ‘This combination of words makes no sense’ excludes it from the sphere of language and thereby bounds the domain of language.”

^{li} *ibid*. In Section # 7: “In the practice of the use of language one party calls out the words, the other acts on them. [...] I shall also call the whole, consisting of language and the actions into which it is woven, the “language-game.” In section #23 Wittgenstein lists a series of examples of the “multiplicity of language-games” : “Giving orders, and obeying them / Speculating about an event / Making a joke; telling it / etc . . .

^{lii} *ibid.* Section # 23.

^{liii} In How to Write – Dover Publications, Inc., New York. 1975. – Gertrude Stein says: “What is a sentence for if I am I then my little dog knows me. Even if it is all tenderness. What is tenderness. First there must be a way of going about waiting. There are two things a dictionary and the country.”

^{liv} All of this is strikingly similar to the relationship between Wittgenstein’s A and B since B is continually giving and A is continually receiving^{liv}; however, the component that is missing in TB, which is present between A and B is that B receives orders from A. There is reciprocity between the two. If the text is viewed as B then I have yet to determine who A is; unless, A is – the reader. But, if the text is A then that would make me, the reader, B, and in this case I have just gotten fired, because if there are orders being given, I am not hearing them in the text. But, many of the passages have a tone, when read aloud, of order-giving.

^{lv} *ibid.* Section # 24.

^{lvi} Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Science an the Experience of Expression*. p. 17.

^{lvii} *ibid.* p.28

^{lviii} Course in General Linguistics pgs. 67 – 70.

^{lix} *ibid.* p. 120

^{lx} *ibid.* p. 114

^{lxi} *ibid.* p. 115. “. . . and this is something quite different” refers to signification’s dependence upon, yet distinct separation from, value.

^{lxii} Roland Barthes. The Responsibility of Forms trans. Richard Howard. Hill and Wang, New York. 1985. pgs. 28 – 29.

^{lxiii} *ibid.* p. 56

^{lxiv} In Course De Saussure says: “Each time I say the word *Gentlemen!* I renew its substance; each utterance is a new phonic act and new psychological act. The bond between the two uses of the same word depends neither on material identity nor on sameness of meaning but on elements which must be sought after and which will point up the true nature of linguistic units.” p. 109

^{lxv} The Responsibility of Forms p. 29 and p. 30: “Anchoring is the most frequent function of the linguistic message; we frequently encounter it in press photographs and in advertising.”

^{lxvi} *ibid.* p.28

^{lxvii} The Responsibility of Forms p. 28.

^{lxviii} *ibid.* p. 28

^{lxix} please refer back to the discussion of the “Linguistic Sign” in Part One.

^{lxx} The Responsibility of Forms p. 51.

^{lxxi} *ibid.* p. 55

^{lxxii} *ibid.* p.55

lxxiii *ibid.* p. 57

lxxiv *ibid.* p. 48

lxxv *ibid.* p. 56

lxxvi Philosophical Investigations I. Section # 530.

lxxvii *ibid.* Section #522.

lxxviii The Responsibility of Forms p. 160

lxxix *ibid.* p.158

lxxx This the same passage from Wittgenstein referred to in footnote #23.

Notes on Part Klee

lxxxi Ranier Crone and Joseph Leo Koerner, Paul Klee: Legends of the Sign, Columbia University Press, New York. 1991. *Cosmic Fragments of Meaning: On Syllables of Paul Klee.* p.6.

lxxxii Paul Bauschatz, “Paul Klee’s speaking pictures” in *Word & Image*, volume 7, No. 2, April – June 1991. pgs 149 –163.

lxxxiii *ibid.* p.162: “At some point, language fails. All human communication fails. As Klee knew, even visual communication fails.”

lxxxiv The Responsibility of Forms: Is Painting Language? p. 152.

lxxxv In viewing the arrangement of colors in Klee’s painting(s), we must let our gaze roam freely about the surface of the image, finding echoes and correspondences and discovering therein a pictorial structure. Joseph Leo Koerner fully discusses this in his essay *Paul Klee and the Image of the Book* in Paul Klee: Legends of the Sign.

lxxxvi Jim Jordan, Paul Klee and Cubism, Princeton University Press, New Jersey. 1984.

lxxxvii Painting and System p. 14

lxxxviii Paul Klee and Cubism pgs. 10 – 25.

lxxxix *ibid.*

xc The Diaries of Paul Klee ed. Felix Klee, University of California Press. 1964.

xc1 Paul Klee Notebooks: Volume I: The Thinking Eye. ed. Jurg Spiller, trans. Ralph Manhiem. Lord Humpries, London. 1961. p.95.

xcii Among the works done on these subjects are Paul Bauschatz’s *Paul Klee’s Anna Wenne and the Work of Art, Image/Music/Text* vol. 19, no. 1, March 1996, pgs. 74 – 101. Association of Art Historians 1996, Blackwell Publishers, Cambridge, MA. And also the earlier cited “Paul Klee’s speaking picture” and finally Joseph Leo Koerner *Paul Klee and the Image of the Book*.

xciii Munsell: A Grammar of Color ed. Faber Birren, Van Nostrand Reinhold Company, New York. 1969. p. 11.

^{xciv} M. Luckliesh, The Language of Color, Dodd, Mead, and Co., New York. 1920. p.3.

^{xcv} Maurice Merleau-Ponty, “Indirect Language and the Voices of Silence” in The Prose of the World. p. 45.

^{xcvi} *ibid.* p. 46.

^{xcvii} *ibid.* p. 46.