Modern Intellectual History, 12, 2 (2015), pp. 497–509 © Cambridge University Press 2014
doi:10.1017/S1479244314000729

THE ORDER OF THINGS: SYMPATHIES AND COLLABORATIONS IN 1930S FRANCE AND THE VICHY REGIME

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Sandrine Sanos, *The Aesthetics of Hate: Far-Right Intellectuals, Antisemitism, and Gender in 1930s France* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2013)

Barbara Will, *Unlikely Collaborations: Gertrude Stein, Bernard Faÿ, and the Vichy Dilemma* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2011)

Sandrine Sanos has taken on a thorny topic in *The Aesthetics of Hate: Far-Right Intellectuals, Antisemitism, and Gender in 1930s France*. Sanos opens this compelling study of 1930s far-right French intellectuals by briefly discussing a scene in Jonathan's Littell's *The Kindly Ones* (*Les bienveillantes*).[1] Greeted with praise and controversy on publication, Littell's highly charged 2006 novel was steeped in sinister perversions and vicious physical perpetrations straight out of Klaus Theweleit's encyclopedic two-volume *Male Fantasies*, dedicated to analyzing German anti-Semitic, anti-Bolshevist, and misogynist belligerence. In Sanos's description, the fictional protagonist of *The Kindly Ones*, an SS officer named Maximilien Aue, visits occupied Paris in 1943, where he enjoys the company of two now-infamous and very real French fascists—Robert Brasillach and Lucien Rabatet. Aue muses with the two anti-Semites on the possibilities of a uniquely fascist literature, enacts homosocial bonds over mutual hatred for Jews and communists, and exploits the abject sexual availability of men at a "faggot bar." The pathology-filled narrative illuminates the mind of the protagonist even as it speaks to contemporary conceptions of the era's fanatical concern with self-regulation and masculinity.

Still, like much of the scholarship on the subject, *The Kindly Ones*, Sanos explains, glosses over the very real political use that such "language of perversion,

[1] Jonathan Littell, *Les bienveillantes* (Paris: Gallimard, 2008), in English as *The Kindly Ones*, trans. Charlotte Mandell (New York, 2009).

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1479244314000729 Published online by Cambridge University Press

gender, and sexuality" served for far-right intellectuals of the period. Nonetheless, novels set in 1930s France are infrequent, and the degree of acclaim that the novel received from the French public more than warrants discussing it. (That American critics either ignored or condemned the novel definitely deserves its own discussion.) Lamenting the failure of Littell—and, indeed, of scholars more generally—to offer more penetrating assessments of these tropes, Sanos presents a convincing argument in *The Aesthetics of Hate* that there is some substantial unfinished business in the study of the interwar far right and French fascism.

The monograph's sinister cover image of a charcoal-sketched skull sets up the reader for a different kind of reading of this murky period in French history, announcing that clear illustrations will depict the subjects within. And, indeed, Sanos attends to the range of horrors pronounced in the work of French far-right intellectuals, unflinchingly examining the noxious ideologies that drove them to write and, arguably, to cultivate the climate in which Vichy collaboration would flourish.

With chapters on well-known authors such as Maurice Blanchot and Louis-Ferdinand Céline and subsections dedicated to particular themes and events—"Frenchness," aesthetic insurgency, abjection, the anti-Semitic homosexual—Sanos takes an unsparing look at some of Frances's most vituperative expressions of anti-Semitism and provides a close look at the intellectual operations at two ambitious journals: *Je suis partout* and *Combat*, the former of which historians have portrayed as "the extreme and vulgar version of the interwar far right," while the latter was "the more respectable and serious version" (65). Sanos readily points out, however, that both groups pronounced racist invective and ideological condemnation of all foreign elements threatening the French nation from within and without.

Sanos's focus is sharp and resolved even as she trains it on a miscellaneous collection of subjects, including a novelist, a music and film critic, editors, and journalists. Some are well-known names in the fascist modernism pantheon (Brasillach, Blanchot, Céline) and some relatively unknown (Pierre-Antoine Cousteau). But however disparate their genres and ruminations, images and associations, this group of men shared the fierce conviction that a catastrophe was taking place in France and that the "Jew" represented its grotesque fulfillment.

For these young far-right intellectuals, the political and economic instability of the interwar period was embodied, Sanos argues, in the "*fragile self*"—the fragmented and porous masculine being as well as the social body, the polity, and the nation itself (24, original emphasis). French fascism congealed around abjection as a specifically "historical product" of World War I, from which flowed singular fixations on dissolution and bodily and psychic threat as well as a concomitant mania with "wholeness, purity, and regeneration" (14). Four years

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of brutal warfare had left France a "sick nation" populated by those whose masculinity had been irredeemably corrupted by the degradations of combat.

This crisis in the constitution of modern subjectivity was imagined through an explicitly Jewish and gendered framework. And "crisis" is no loosely applied term; it was the very watchword of far-right discourse. The pernicious deviance of the Jew had infiltrated and compromised every level of communal life. In his memoirs, the editor Jean-Pierre Maxence describes "the literary crisis, the political crisis, and the social crisis about to reveal and imply a crisis of culture" (cited at 23).

In her reading, Sanos dutifully acknowledges her scholarly forebears (among them Sander Gilman), and the long history of the Jewish threat to normative ideals of masculinity. She explains,

> The associations made between Jewishness and effeminacy, deviant sexuality, and perverse homosexuality, as well as a number of other non-normative practices and identities, has long infused European antisemitism, resurfacing at particular moments with great force while often forming the staple of stereotypes circulating in nineteenth- and twentieth-century Europe. (9)

With these words, Otto Weininger's notorious *Sex and Character* (1906) immediately comes to mind, epitomizing as it did the new century's pathologization of Jewishness and its vicious and relentless characterization of Jews as a morally inferior people. Weininger reaffirmed associations between Jewishness and femininity, casting them within broader Western traditions of misogyny. That Weininger's pathologically antifeminist, anti-Semitic work goes unmentioned in these pages is surprising given that her description of French prime minister Léon Blum could have come right from the pages of *Sex and Character*. Sanos's assertion—"The danger emanated from [Blum's] embodiment of effeminacy, the specter of deviant homosexuality, and excessive heterosexual desire" (219)—resonates directly with Weininger's claim, "The Jewish race is pervasively feminine. This femininity comprises those qualities that I have shown to be in total opposition to masculinity. The Jews are much more feminine than Aryans . . . and the manliest Jew may be taken for a female."[2] To Weininger, the Jew was both insidious phantom presence and real historical monster.

Likewise, the men in her study forged a bond through rancorous anti-Semitism and an acid bath of hate against colonial subjects, homosexuals, and women. They were the declared enemies of Jews, Blum, and the Third Republic, which since its inception in 1870 had come to represent a weak executive, deadlocked parliament, and ideological divisions—in essence, a irredeemably corrupt regime. In the ideological war these men waged, nothing less than French civilization,

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[2] Otto Weininger, *Sex and Character* (New York, 1906), 409.

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the French nation, French citizenship, and French normative masculinity were at stake.

With the exception of Blanchot, all of these men held up Charles Maurras as the ideal authoritarian anti-Semite. The elite conservatism of his organization Action Française and its daily newspaper of the same name had been constructing a reactionary, xenophobic, antidemocratic platform since the explosive Dreyfus affair of 1899. A catalyst to royalist, reactionary ideology, the Dreyfus affair confirmed anti-Semitism as *the* urgent political concern, rendering vituperative characterizations of the "Jew" as decadent and as the invidious heralds of the modern an everyday theme in journalistic reporting. Catholic Young New Right critic René Vincent praised the monarchist and ultra-nationalist Maurras in the pages of *Combat* with these words: "Charles Maurras' greatness is undeniable because he is one of the few without whom life would have been otherwise" (cited at 46).

Although Maurras's writings exerted an extraordinary influence on the interwar far-right intellectual (especially the "neo-Maurrassian nationalists" behind the publication *Combat*), by many accounts his pupils far surpassed him in their anti-Semitic resentments. Maurras's carefully articulated ideology of the nation had an enduring place in the interpretive context of his successors. His distinctions imposed an important disciplinary knowledge on subsequent articulations and, even where digressions occurred, Maurras remained a spiritual founder of xenophobic politics.

To Maurras, the *pays réel* (the "ancient historical" and supposedly real country) maintained a vital distinction from the bastard iteration known as the *pays légal*, "embodied by the democratic republican regime that Maurras and his fellow far-right journalists deemed abhorrent and contrary to the nature of the French character" (49). Sanos goes beyond articulating the nature of the French far-right ideology to map the contours of its vital distinction from German anti-Semitism. Thus, even as Sanos widens the scope of analysis to complicate previous understandings of French reactionary politics, she also gives due attention to the eagerness of Maurras and his followers to draw a bright line between *their* fascism and the degraded version practiced by the Third Reich. One of the vital legacies of this period in French history is its homegrown fascism, a history that the myth of *résistancialisme* readily whitewashed after the war, as collaborators scrambled to fabricate a narrative that distracted from the brutal realities of their actions. Maurras referred to his more enlightened brand of anti-Jewish hatred as *anti-sémitisme d'etat* ("state-based anti-Semitism"), a far more logical iteration than Germany's "purely racial" anti-Semitism, which Maurras regarded as extremist and vulgar. In the pages of *Action Française*, Hitler was the "racist propagandist turned head of government" (cited at 52). His unsophisticated and brutish brand of anti-Semitism was far beneath the principled beliefs of Maurras

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and company, whose nationalism emphasized culture, soil, and tradition above all. Sanos makes deeply focused pronouncements on the distinctions between French anti-Semitism and Nazi anti-Semitism, two discrete phenomena that, for the French right at least, were attentively maintained as separate as a matter of ideology and with the purpose of preventing the French far right from being subsumed by the "totalizing discourse" of Nazi ideology.

With most members of the French far right, we are a substantial distance from Nazism's systematized "us" and "them"; here, the menace assaults from all sides, ingesting and digesting the integrity of the French nation. According to Blanchot, "'Communists' and 'Jews' were dictating France's foreign policy from within" (129). Alien interests had become so incorporated into the state as to be impracticably pointed to as a separate entity. The embodiment of this foreignness had led to abjection—"a favorite motif of the Young New Right and the theme most explicitly articulated by Blanchot," for whom it manifested through nausea, consuming, and hyperboles of peril (130).

For these far-right intellectuals, 1936 was a point of no return. With Blum's election, the Popular Front came to power, and all elements of Jewishness, decadence, contamination, and decay converged in a pulsating ideological campaign the likes of which had not been deployed since the Dreyfus affair. To the far right, Blum presented a seductive, feminized threat "often clad in feminine clothes, as a prostitute, or as the exemplar of the 'wandering Jew'" (101). In 1936, shared loyalty to the nationalist, monarchist group Action Française split into two journalistic affiliations: one, the Catholic, neo-Maurassian nationalist magazine *Combat*; the other, *Je suis partout*, founded by "a group of polemical and virulent fascist sympathizers" (3). Though their narratives diverge and converge between 1930 and 1939, Sanos argues, "this group formed an intellectual movement tied together by their definition of Frenchness through the language of gender, sexuality, and race" (4).

Still, the abjection of the "Jew" exerted itself on these writers like a tyranny—from the "mark of circumcision" that was the embodied absence and irrefutable signifier of Jewish otherness to the ubiquity of Jewish taint (219). The very presence of the Jew on French soil threatened coherent subjectivity; as Sanos starkly explains, "For *Je Suis Partout* journalists, all Jews without exception must be excluded from the nation" (217).

Blanchot and Céline each receive one chapter, so extensive and extraordinarily scurrilous are their ultra-right journalistic contributions to the cause. Sanos undertakes extended analysis of the work by Blanchot that is not studied in your average literary-theory course. Although scholars have begun to face the "scandal" of Blanchot's early political writing, the mutual imbrications of "aesthetics and politics, culture and ideology," explains Sanos, "has yet to be fully historicized" (119). The importance of Sanos's critical correctives are made all the more clear

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in considering that Blanchot did not discuss his cries for a new social order after the war when frenzied assessments were taking place of all those guilty of fascist sympathy. Like the scandals of Paul de Man and Martin Heidegger, Blanchot's role in promoting a culture of hate commands reassessment "after Auschwitz," and Sanos acknowledges the challenge of recalibrating understandings of Blanchot's work in light of his early political journalism—no less, doing so in the face of critics who have been all too ready to dismiss his anti-Semitic public writing as "a biographical curiosity" (122). By exclusively focusing on his literary criticism and fiction—which he did not produce in the 1930s—scholars assert his "abandonment" of the early unsavory politics and summarily dismiss his career as a far-right journalist. A characteristic description of Blanchot reads,

> Despite his fierce nationalism and frequent attacks on Léon Blum, the first Jewish Prime Minister of France, Maurice Blanchot also worked diligently to combat fascism and hatred through his writing. In addition to his close friendship with Jewish philosopher, Emmanuel Levinas, Maurice Blanchot also edited the anti-Nazi publication, *Le rampart*, in 1933 . . . [3]

Sanos intrepidly rejects such biographical revisions, insisting,

> We must read the themes, issues, and rhetorical gestures that he made within the context of his far-right journalism and ideology—and especially his contributions to *Combat* and *L'insurgé*. The obsession with the "Jew" that appeared in 1937, especially after the Popular Front election, constituted the expression of a larger anxiety about the status of French citizen and subject motivating his interwar writings. (124)

As Sanos convincingly presents, Blanchot made careful calculations as a political journalist. Escaping abjection was exigent, and being an author was his designated solution for doing so. Leaving behind political journalism for literary criticism was by no means forsaking politics. For Blanchot—and Céline—aesthetics would serve as politics, so that their phobic preoccupation with the Jewish contamination of the nation was not being ignored, but rather effectively managed.

The thesis of aesthetics as a resolution and means out of political crisis serves as one of one of Sanos's primary interventions in the discussion of far-right intellectual ideology. Not to be confused with the "aestheticization of politics" or the "politicization of aesthetics" readily associated with the criticism of Susan Sontag and Walter Benjamin, Sanos terms this phenomenon the "aesthetics of hate," explaining, "The aesthetic alone offered a resolution to the abjection of the corrupt social body, and the possibility of a simultaneous binding and transcendence that enabled the recovery of a whole bounded and normative

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[3] Maurice Blanchot Biography, the European Graduate School website, at www.egs.edu/library/maurice-blanchot/biography.

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masculine self" (6). Sanos's argument rests on the careful delineation of the "aesthetics of hate" and the extent to which art and literature, and thus of beauty and the sublime, can be figured as sites of political expression.

The precise manifestations of this enterprise entail some tricky metacommentary on the productive acts of these far-right authors. As Sanos rightly asks, "What would literature offer that politics had not?" (149). Working through abjection meant "assign[ing] a privileged place to literature"—but, importantly, only *certain* types of literature (150). Some of the favored literature is less surprising than others. Realism and psychology were to be avoided, whereas the high modernist writing of Virginia Woolf was lauded for its absence of plot. Though Woolf may be a startling choice, her abstractions were precisely the appeal, for Blanchot saw her work as outside history and ideology (a curious formulation given the central importance of time and the historical moment in *Mrs Dalloway*).

Still, the prominence of the title's "aesthetics of hate" is a bit misleading, as Sanos ultimately subordinates full explication of this beguiling phrase to a study of the more charged themes of anti-Semitic fantasies and realities, the stupefaction of modernity, and the crisis of virile masculinity. Sanos herself admits the sketchy contours of these associations between politics and aesthetics. The essential but convoluted bond between these entities ("They did not call for an aestheticization of politics but saw the aesthetic as the place for the political to be enacted. Neither should the aesthetic be political as such" (110)) is most unambiguously explicated in her discussion of Thierry Maulnier, the leader of the Young New Right and an editor of *Combat*. Central to Maulnier's aesthetics of civilization were the genealogical ties that held one generation to another—an "inheritance" that rested on an obligation "to refuse democracy, socialism, communism, and reject Jews within the nation, since all conspired to uproot the filiation necessary for the survival of French culture" (112). Not surprisingly, Maulnier held that only specific literary forms could return the nation to its prelapsarian state—before the divisions wrought by "Jews and other internal enemies" (112). Sanctioned work included Greek tragedy; the writing of Racine, Ronsard, d'Aubigné, and Corneille; and even some more startling selections—Baudelaire, Rimbaud, Apollinaire, and Cocteau; "a new civilization can emerge only in light of poetry" (113), Maulnier assuredly declared.

Within the web of far-right intellectuals, Louis-Ferdinand Céline is exceptional. The scope of his anti-Jewish expression is wide, and his expositions on the scourge of decadence are extensive. But among literary scholars, he remains known primarily for his enormously popular novel *Voyage au bout de la nuit* (1932). As she does throughout the book, Sanos trains her critical lens on the less well-received work, the 1937 pamphlet *Bagatelles pour un massacre*, which condemned Jews for their embodiment of modern urbanism, their menace

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to heterosexual masculinity, and their "jewification" of culture. Indeed, the relish with which Céline characterizes his hatred of Jews is, by turns, excessive, nauseating, at times nearing the comic and parodic. Céline's delight in graphically describing the Jew's filth and excrement, sexual submissiveness and yearning for abjection presents a more extreme version of Henry Miller's spitting hatred of women in such work as *Tropic of Cancer*. And, like Céline, Miller (with a few exceptions) has been given a pass for his unapologetic misogyny in critical favor of appreciation for his wit and cavalier disdain for the pieties of correct thought. What Sanos seeks to argue is that Céline's assured canonical place in French literature has, in a sense, perpetuated itself, allowing generations of scholars to bypass close scrutiny of his anti-Semitic writings, even to cast it as anomalous and therefore not relevant to discussions of his body of work.

With Sanos's close analysis, however, Céline's staunch anti-Semitism and misogyny is beyond dispute; one special strength of her argument is how themes of the "colonial imaginary" shape her readings of his work. Unlike others in his cohort—Maurras prominent among them—Céline couched his anti-Semitism in specifically racial terms. Like others of the far right, he saw French civilization under duress, its moral degeneration a prevalent symptom of political discourse, but did not shun race as the terms through which to articulate these tropes. In *Voyage au bout de la nuit*, Céline dramatizes radical theories of race and blackness to explain the degradation of Western and French bodies. Ferdinand, the novel's protagonist, articulates these tropes through his strident depiction of colonial bodies; his visit to a French colony indicates just how overidentified the French citizen has become with the savage African. The "transgression of racial boundaries" is a fait accompli; white colonial bodies have already been contaminated by the black other. Indeed, so deep is the degradation and disease of the white colonial body that the French nation itself has been infected. Through the eyes of Ferdinand, Céline articulates the precise nature of this defilement. Sanos explains:

> That the colony had contaminated the metropole—a fact made abundantly clear for Céline by the vogue for jazz, the presence of (African) black and (North African) Arab bodies within the Parisian cultural scene, as well as migrant workers, and the simultaneous fascination and repulsion by all things African—fueled his anxiety regarding the integrity of white Western bodies that would be the subject of *Bagatelles*. (170)

In a section entitled "The Figure of the Fascist and the Antisemitic 'Homosexual'," Sanos foregrounds the place that homosexuality played in the threat to national integrity and to fascist ideology (as the brief discussion of *The Kindly Ones* makes clear). Robert Brasillach's vituperative writings on Jewishness come in for extensive analysis, and Sanos is right to note that Brasillach's trial and subsequent execution in February 1945 not only made him one of the most

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known of the interwar anti-Semitic writers, but also transformed him into something of a tragic figure. "Once executed, Brasillach forever remained the emblem of a far-right celebration of youthful masculinity infused with nostalgic and poetic sentimentality. He was the 'Romantic Fascist'" (200). And with this characterization came accusations of homosexual desire. The trial's prosecutor pointed to Brasillach's homosexuality as a damning factor. "To have been a collaborator and thus committed treason implied a lack of proper manliness and a deviant character" (200). Thus the very terms of far-right anti-Semitism furnished the argument for anti-Semitic expression itself. Either way, Sanos convincingly suggests, perversions of gender and sexuality were enlisted as the psychological condition of sinister identity.

Sanos's conspicuously intelligent reading of the prevalent themes of the intellectual far right recalibrates the terms with which this period should be interpreted, facing head-on the charged intersections among fascism, masculinity, homosexuality, and perversion. Although these tropes have hardly passed unnoticed (see, for example, Susan Sontag's essay "Fascinating Fascism," Liliana Cavani's *The Night Porter* and Luchino Visconti's *The Damned*, Laura Frost's *Sex Drives: Fantasies of Fascism in Literary Modernism*, Pier Paolo Pasolini's *Salò, or the 120 Days of Sodom*, Andrew Hewitt's *Political Inversions* . . . the list is quite long, as Sanos readily acknowledges), Sanos brings a newly sharp and sustained interest in the intimate intermingling of these tropes to the burgeoning field of gender and fascism studies, asserting a fresh and necessary sense of controversy in readings of their work.[4]

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In literary studies today, Vichy and the politics of interwar France are receiving steady attention in part because for so long this era of French history has hidden in the shadows of the comparative atrocities of Nazi Germany. Likewise, the more overt fascist sympathies and reactionary tendencies of writers such as Ezra Pound, T. S. Eliot, D. H. Lawrence, and W. B. Yeats have been subject to close scrutiny, while the place of women writers in the canon of literary fascism has been much rarer. Gertrude Stein is a modernist author subject to infinite feminist interpretations and queer theorization, praised for her anti-patriarchal poetic

[4] Susan Sontag, "Fascinating Fascism," in Sontag, *Under the Sign of Saturn* (New York, 2002), 73–108; Liliana Cavani, dir., *Il portiere di notte* (*The Night Porter*) (Ital-Noleggio Cinematografico, 1974); Laura Frost, *Sex Drives: Fantasies of Fascism in Literary Modernism* (Ithaca, NY, 2001); Pier Paolo Pasolini, dir., *Salò, or the 120 Days of Sodom* (Produzioni Europee Associati, 1976); Andrea Hewitt, *Political Inversions: Homosexuality, Fascism, and the Modernist Imaginary* (Standford, CA, 1996).

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1479244314000729 Published online by Cambridge University Press

experimentation, her disordering of masculine political agency, her embrace of formal radicalism, and her lifelong partnership with Alice B. Toklas. Implicit conclusions about her politics have been based on these contexts. Scholars of Gertrude Stein can be a possessive bunch, careful to mark their critical territory, at times, defending Stein's choices and insisting on particular interpretations. Thus to assess Stein's politics as unsavory in spite of all literary evidence that she was anti-authoritarian is brave, indeed.

With *Unlikely Collaborations: Gertrude Stein, Bernard Faÿ, and the Vichy Dilemma*, Barbara Will does the intrepid and important work of considering Stein's writing of the 1930s and 1940s within the era's stark, unvarnished historical context, boldly posing the question of how two Jewish women were able to live out the war in a France under Vichy control that, by 1942, was increasingly under Nazi control? And, equally important, "Who was Bernard Faÿ, and how could he have performed such widely divergent roles: scholar, academic, Americanophile, high modernist aesthete, Gestapo agent?" (11). This question—which is posed in the opening pages of her book—seems an overly ambitious one. That Will manages to answer it meticulously and thoroughly is one of the book's remarkable achievements.

What most Stein scholarship does not address—and Will's book makes this omission a glaring one—is Stein's complex political alliances, affiliations, and identifications, which have proven particularly unnerving to politically and ideologically sensitive readers of her work. By way of (dramatic) example, consider one particularly troublesome issue that has amused, divided, and outraged Stein critics: her advocacy of Hitler for the 1934 Nobel Peace Prize in the pages of the *New York Times Magazine* (6 May 1934). "I say that Hitler ought to have the peace prize, because he is removing all the elements of contest from Germany. By driving out the Jews and the democratic and Left elements, he is driving out everything that conduces to activity. That means peace."[5] While the formidable Stein scholars Edward Burns and Ulla Dydo contend that this "proposal . . . is ironic, a point of black humor," Will opens her chapter "Moving Rightward (1935–1940)" with this anecdote, acknowledging both sides of the interpretive divide: those who defend the remarks as gallows humor and those (some Stein's contemporaries) who see the declaration as awkward confirmation of her admiration for "great men."[6] Will sees Stein as playing both sides—scandalizing and provoking and yet revealing some deeply felt convictions about the muddled state of 1930s politics.

[5] Lansing Warren, "Gertrude Stein's View on Life and Politics," *New York Times*, 6 May 1934 available at www.nytimes.com/books/98/05/03/specials/stein-views.html.

[6] Gertrude Stein, *The Letters of Gertrude Stein and Thornton Wilder*, ed. Edward Burns and Ulla E. Dydo (New Haven, 1996), 414.

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Scholarship on Stein has moved at a steady clip for several decades, with her impressively sizable canon and extensive archives offering abundant primary material. While modernist studies in English have addressed her poetic experimentation, her queer sexuality, her early research with William James, her perspectives on science and pragmatism, her relationships with a constellation of artists and writers, and so forth, until 2009 only one book (in French and as yet untranslated) has methodically considered Stein's life in the French countryside of Bugey, located in eastern France between Lyon and Geneva.[7]

A graduate student's discovery of Stein's project to translate the speeches of Philippe Pétain into English marked a sea change in Stein studies. Will brings much-needed context to this event in Stein's literary career, seeking to elucidate the precise circumstances of Stein's translation of the volume of speeches—*Paroles aux Français: Messages et écrits 1934–1941*—and the friendship that was integral to the project itself. In chronological order, *Unlikely Collaborations* tells the story of Stein's political development through the optic of Bernard Faÿ's pervasive presence in her life as a friend, translator, admirer, and professional ally. Will pronounces their bond in unadorned terms:

> There were two things that Gertrude Stein and Bernard Faÿ had in common when they met in 1926: both had received Medals of Honor for their participation in World War I, and both were admirers of Philippe Pétain, the French general who had cut short the German offensive at Verdun in 1916 and had come to represent, for Stein, Faÿ, and many others, the triumph of French fortitude and resilience over German aggression. (3)

Will shapes the contours of this relationship through two central trajectories: the arc of professional success that both Faÿ and Stein experienced during this period and the important role that America and France and French–American relations played in the substance of their friendship. American civilization and its representative great men fascinated Faÿ; Stein wrote extensively of the heroes and protagonists of American history, but had also developed a deep interest in French national identity—most expressly in *Paris France*, published just as France was falling to the Germans. Will's consideration of this 1940 essay-memoir is succinct and effective. Eschewing the conventional critical focus on Stein's discussion of fashion, daily living, childhood, and servants, Will roots out the reactionary currents in the work, making clear that there is more than one way to read Stein's ambivalent feelings for France.

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[7] Dominique Saint-Pierre, *Gertrude Stein, le Bugey, la guerre: D'août 1924 à Décembre 1944* (Bourg-en-Bresse, 2009)—a scrupulously researched account of Stein's life in Bugey, including an impressive array of local documents, detailed timelines, and inventories of Stein's visitors during their life in the area.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1479244314000729 Published online by Cambridge University Press

Faÿ was a historian of the eighteenth century with a special interest in American intellectual history. His upbringing in a family of bankers and lawyers with strong royalist and Catholic ties—"opposed, above all, to the French Revolution and its liberal democratic legacy"—determined the political attitudes to which he would closely adhere (6). He was deeply embedded in Parisian intellectual and political circles, was committed to dismantling the Third Republic, contributed to journals associated with Action Française as well as the venomously anti-Semitic publication *Je suis partout*, and led an unrivaled and pathological campaign against Freemasons. Mapping the brutality of his campaign of "identifying, exposing, and persecuting hundreds of French Freemasons" makes clear the extent of Will's stunning archival research (11). She traces the arc from his early scholarly interests in Freemasons and his "significant interpretation" in *Revolution and Freemasonry, 1680–1800* (1935), to his deep sense of foreboding about the fraternal organization, to the full-blown paranoia that characterized his systematic campaign and designation as "delegate of the French government for the liquidation of Masonic lodges" (cited at 166). Over the course of this trajectory, Faÿ and Stein remained friends, although contact tapered off toward the end of the war.

Will's deep research in the archives at Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library at Yale University, her access to holdings in the Bernard Faÿ estate, the archives of the Collège de France, and work at the Harry Ransom Humanities Research Center make *Unlikely Collaborations* an authoritative work on the subject of Stein's entanglements in the Vichy regime and the extent to which her associations with Faÿ protected her from persecution under Vichy's sinister Statut des Juifs and during the Nazi occupation. Importantly, Will examines all of the implications and explications of Stein's eagerness to translate Pétain's speeches and present them to an American readership. And even as Will does not claim to offer an ironclad answer to the question whether Stein was "a committed propagandist for Vichy—or a shrewd survivor," she presents irrefutable evidence that Stein shared many of Faÿ's opinions about the corruption of the nineteenth century and the "catastrophe" of FDR's leadership (117, 131). Material from autobiographies of Stein's contemporaries augments the case for Stein's fascist sympathies, for example in a description offered by James Laughlin, the founder of New Directions Publishing, who recalled an exchange between Faÿ and Stein: "They got on the subject of Hitler, speaking of him as a great man ... I was stunned. Hitler's persecution of the Jews was well publicized in France by that time, and Miss Stein was a Jew" (cited at 69).

What Will's book lacks in close literary study of Stein's work it makes up for in historiographical investigation. *Unlikely Collaborations* presents a formidable intervention into the received narrative of Stein's own safe distance from the horrors of war, benignly concerned with "daily living," writing, entertaining, and

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1479244314000729 Published online by Cambridge University Press

trimming her box hedges in the French countryside as trains rattle through town, their grim destinations going unquestioned.[8] And, in spite of his death sentence for treason (which was commuted to life imprisonment by Charles de Gaulle), Pétain's legacy has died a surprisingly slow death: in May 2013 the local council of a village near Verdun (where Pétain secured a hero's status in World War I) has only just decided to give rue du Maréchal-Pétain a new name.

[8] New studies of the Vichy government and its aspiration to purify culture and reinstate a national, soil-bound tradition still appear on a regular basis. France's role in promoting Pétain as the "Savior of France" and the legacy of his regime remain of enduring interest. See, for example, the recently published Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie, *L'héritage de Vichy: Ces 100 mesures toujours en vigueur* (The Heritage of Vichy: One Hundred Measures That Are Still in Force) (Paris, 2013).

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