

Gaulle's at best haughty opinions of "the Jews" expressed after the Six Day War of 1967, Cassin proved a tireless advocate for human equality. This had been precisely his struggle since his activism on behalf of the veterans and orphans of the Great War.

In the end, any biography of de Gaulle would have to be mostly about de Gaulle. This fine biography of Cassin is at least as much about Cassin's causes as about Cassin himself. Cassin, I believe, would have been well pleased by it. And we can look forward to an augmented and translated edition, *René Cassin and Human Rights: From the Great War to the Universal Declaration*, to be published by Cambridge University Press this year.

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**Unlikely Collaboration: Gertrude Stein, Bernard Faÿ, and the Vichy Dilemma.**

By *Barbara Will*. Gender and Culture. Edited by *Nancy K. Miller* and *Victoria Rosner*.

New York: Columbia University Press, 2011. Pp. xx+274. \$35.00.

Bernard Faÿ was a professor of American civilization at the University of Clermont-Ferrand. In the second half of the 1920s, he published a few books on France and America. Then, in February 1932, he got elected to a chair at the Collège de France. In the 1930s, he railed against the decadence of the modern world, the occult influence of Freemasonry, and the threat posed by the Jews. After Marshal Pétain discarded democratic institutions (1940), Faÿ made himself one of the chief propagandists of the new regime. His area of specialty was the fight against Freemasonry. He lectured, published articles in antisemitic and pro-Nazi journals (*Je Suis Partout*, *La Gerbe*), and carved for himself a sphere of power and influence after he was appointed general administrator of the French National Library (August 1940). His fame and publicity apparently were quite high. A Gestapo agent (serial number VM FR1), he was a man of high moral standards too, denouncing colleagues and employees who did not seem politically compliant enough (164, 170, 248, 150).

Gertrude Stein and Bernard Faÿ were great friends. They congratulated, reviewed, and supported each other. Underlying their friendship were shared political convictions and, so it seems, a sense of mutual admiration. This friendship provides the lens through which *Unlikely Collaboration* explores Stein's politics and Faÿ's activism as a publicist and political actor. The lens is original, and the exploration turns out to be revealing for two reasons. First, the book draws on a wide array of textual evidence, ranging over lectures, newspaper articles, literary texts, private letters, and personal papers—sources that make the conclusions stout and sound. Second, *Unlikely Collaboration* is attentive to historical contexts and aptly reconstructs them through broad strokes.

Stein's politics were "profoundly reactionary" (130). She attacked Roosevelt's New Deal for instilling in Americans a "passion to be enslaved" (1934; 95), celebrated Hitler for having restored peace in Germany ("Hitler should have received the Nobel peace prize" [interview with Stein in the *New York Times Magazine*, May 1934; 71]), castigated the unemployed for their laziness (1936; "You can never get anyone to do any work" [10]), blasted "liberals" (1937; 96), welcomed France's military defeat by Nazi Germany as a moment of rebirth (103), and praised Pétain for bringing France back to its rural peace (140–41). Her enthusiasm for Pétain was such that at the end of 1941, she embarked on a project to translate his speeches (138–43). It should be noted that this

project took shape long after the regime had made antisemitism one of its ideological tenets (October 1940). From Stein's perspective, authoritarian regimes had considerable appeal: "The majority does want a dictator, it is natural that . . . a big mass likes to be shoved as a whole" (private letter, 1937; 96–97).

In some quarters, beliefs and representations of that kind were quite common and standard at the time. Stein's claims to originality and perceptiveness notwithstanding, there was nothing properly original in asserting the decadence supposedly brought by democracy or the modern world, in lamenting the loss of order, and in essentializing the "Jews," represented as agents of dissolution and thus decline. All this was part of the doxa of the radical Right. Nor was there anything distinctive in calling for strong, bold regimes firmly held by fearless, imperious dictators. Stein was echoing, "parrotting" (10), and "reiterating" (102, 105) themes and obsessions that had currency among writers of various stripes: some posing as, or identified with, the avant-garde—F. T. Marinetti, Ezra Pound, T. S. Eliot, Louis-Ferdinand Céline, Pierre Drieu La Rochelle, to cite a few—others displaying more conservative aesthetic tastes—Charles Maurras, Léon Daudet, Robert Brasillach.

Of this ideological configuration, *Unlikely Collaboration* highlights multiple dots and underscores a significant element of continuity. Central to Stein's charges against the "organization" (48, 95, 131)—an all-encompassing code term that, in Stein's typical fashion, served to denote, evoke, and suggest rather than explicate—was the theme of individual liberty against collective welfare. The representation of eighteenth-century America as the embodiment of Jeffersonian individualism pervaded her political pronouncements. Simultaneously, in the context of European politics, she could not help express her preference for dictatorial regimes, thereby endorsing the call for an authoritarian state against individual freedoms.

In terms of political values, these two stances cancel each other out. While noting the contradiction between Stein's attacks on "fathering" in *Everybody's Autobiography* (New York, 1937) and her longing for a "strong male authority figure" (96), *Unlikely Collaboration* does not gauge how this apparently strange combination of stances actually reveals the extent to which Stein's "views" were shaped and informed by ideological representations. Stein was hardly thinking by herself. Even the golden age of prerevolutionary America was quite frequently a subject among reactionary circles with an American touch. Bernard Fay and Ezra Pound had been laboring the same myths and representations (48–49, 219).

Nor does this book explore the connection between an inflated and complacent conception of personal greatness and the inability to think outside the bearings of an ideological milieu. Stein was a self-proclaimed genius—the equivalent of "Einstein" as "the creative literary mind of the century" (74). Primarily concerned with her visibility, the impression she could make, and the significance of her acquaintances, she had very little reason to engage in the solitary task of thinking off some beaten tracks. She had, on the other hand, every reason to make sure that her thought and style would have all the exterior signs of depth and uncommon meaning—hence, the rhetorical awkwardness and stylistic mannerisms, the repetitions with an air of mantras, the juxtaposition of contradictory claims within the same sentence, or the use of words detached from their semantic contexts. As a typical example, consider the following statement about the "Jews," who "being always certain that money is money finally decide and that makes a Marxian state that money is not money" (95).

At times, whenever the lack of meaning seems too obvious or the ideological convictions too painful, *Unlikely Collaboration* quits the shores of paraphrase to enter the realm of psychological considerations (72–74, 82–93, 121, 140, 144–45). Conjectural,

ad hoc, often arbitrary or justifying (see the interpretation of Stein's praise of Hitler as a sign of "personal crisis" [74]), these psychological bits and snippets do not add much, but they do divert attention away from the issue of ideology suffusing the pose of originality. It is also interesting to note that, in parallel to these attempts to preserve as much as possible the presumption that Stein is a figure of importance, Barbara Will intermittently reveals her own evaluative judgments: "troubling" (20, 23, 96, 104), "abject" (36), "chilling" (47, 97), "disturbing" (48), "ambiguous" (48, 122), "spectacularly inconsistent" (60), "out of her depth" (102–3), "painfully glib" (103), "cryptic" (129, 134), "incongruous" (139), "inept" (139), "far from coherent" (226).

There remains a pending question. If, indeed, as *Unlikely Collaboration* suggests, "in light of her own claims to genius and in the wake of her own experience of American celebrity in the 1930s, Stein . . . seems to have identified with Pétain to the extent that she imagined . . . a continuity between her own experimental writing and the cultural project of the National Revolution" (141), then should we not quietly let this beautiful opus of experimental writing and vacuous thoughts intensively look at itself in blissful admiration of its own poses (e.g., Stein extolling her own writing as "as exact as mathematics" [130])? And should we not, instead, devote our attention to writers whose literary and intellectual achievements by contrast demonstrate the artistic significance of an ethos far devoid of any interest in self-aggrandizement?

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### **L'adieu au voyage: L'ethnologie française entre science et littérature.**

By *Vincent Debaene*. Bibliothèque des Sciences Humaines.

Paris: Éditions Gallimard, 2010. Pp. 521. €25.00.

At a time when ethnologists' works are read only by a tight circle of specialists, Vincent Debaene focuses in *L'adieu au voyage* on the "ethnological moment in French culture" (11), the years from 1925 to 1970, during which intellectuals, poets, and writers read ethnological works. It is to that golden age of French ethnology—signaled by the creation of the Institut d'Ethnologie de Paris and by epistemological redefinition of that body of knowledge, including construction of its objects of investigation—that his erudite and fascinating book is dedicated.

Why do ethnologists, on their return from the field, write two books—a learned monograph and a "second book," a sort of "literary supplement" (40) that recounts their experiences? If Debaene returns to the eternal debate on the relations between ethnology and literature, it is in order to situate that debate in the context of "what predisposed them to meet" (87). Debaene, who teaches in Columbia University's Department of French and Romance Philology and is the editor of the works of Claude Lévi-Strauss (*Oeuvres*, Bibliothèque de la Pléiade [Paris, 2008]), is particularly well placed to propose a new and fruitful reading of the relations between ethnology and literature.

Thus, by taking as his point of departure the writings of the ethnologists, Debaene centers his analysis on those "second books" and how they were "received, described, consecrated, or neglected" (20). That methodological choice is also a way for the author to distance himself from the rhetorical turn famously exemplified in the collection of essays edited by James Clifford and George Marcus, *Writing Culture: The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography* (Berkeley, 1986), and attach himself less to ethnographic writ-