Fascist Fantasies of Perversion and Abjection: Race, Gender, and Sexuality in the Interwar Far-Right

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In 2006, the French literary world was shaken by a controversy all too familiar to those attentive to the vagaries of critical and popular legitimacy throughout the twentieth-century, from Louis-Ferdinand Céline to Michel Houellebecq. It was sparked by the award of not one but two prizes—the Prix de l'Académie Française and the Prix Goncourt—to an almost thousand-page novel, Les bienveillantes, written in French by a young American author, Jonathan Littell. It posed the question whether one could (ethically) write a novel in the voice of a Nazi officer both guilty of and witness to murder and extermination.\(^1\) Few commented on a short episode in the hero's tribulations throughout Europe, namely his visit to Occupation Paris in 1943, when he socializes with some of the most notorious French fascists and collaborationists, among them Robert Brasillach and Lucien Rebatet, respectively editor and journalist for the pro-fascist newspaper, Je Suis Partout.\(^2\) Littell's rather accurate portrait of the intellectual far-right, however, reveals the tropes that have haunted depictions of the French intellectual far-right since 1945 and which he mines thoroughly throughout the novel: the association of fascism, deviant masculinity, homosexuality, and perversion.

The figure of Robert Brasillach is exemplary of the manner in which the tropes of perverse masculinity and homosexuality have circulated in accounts of French far-right intellectuals and

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\(^2\) Ibid., 464-71.
writers. As an intellectual trained in the most prestigious ranks of republican institutions and a journalist who emerged from the pages of the *Action Française* newspaper to find public notoriety as the editor of *Je Suis Partout*, Brasillach has become part of the literary canon, not so much because of his novels but for his activities during the Occupation and his trial and execution for treason in early 1945. In her "biography" of the trial, literary scholar Alice Yaeger Kaplan reminds her readers that, "the metaphoric charge made by the prosecution [was] that Brasillach's attraction to Germany was homosexual in nature." As many scholars have noted, but few have analyzed, "the accusation of homosexuality haunts" Brasillach. Brasillach tends to be portrayed either as an unworldly and sentimental "Romantic fascist" or deluded by his perverse desires. As historians Dagmar Herzog and Carolyn Dean have argued in relation to Nazism and fascism, Littell's portrayal of the intellectual far-right, like conventional historical accounts, explains Brasillach and other far-right intellectuals' choices and writings as the consequence of their fantasies of perversion and abjection.


4 Ibid., 7.

5 Kaplan writes that this issue is "the most difficult one to analyze," Ibid., xii. Also see her *Reproductions of Banality: Fascism, Literature, and French Intellectual Life* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986), 14-19. For an incisive critique of how the French far-right historiography's characterization of "romanticism" has downplayed the political content of Brasillach's ideological positions and how Brasillach reemerged as a somewhat depoliticized figure in the late 1980s, see Paul Mazgaj, "Ce Mal de Siècle: The "Romantic" Fascism of Robert Brasillach," *Historical Reflections/Réflexions Historiques* 23, no. 1 (1991): 49-72, and, *Imagining Fascism: The Cultural Politics of the French Young Right, 1930–1945* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2007).

6 The historians Carolyn Dean and Dagmar Herzog have expertly shown how, "from 1930 to 1970," there has been a "stubborn" and "persistent" "association [being made] of male homosexuality and Nazi fascism." Carolyn Dean, *The Fragility of Empathy after the Holocaust* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2004), 108; for Germany, see Dagmar Herzog, *Sex After*
This essay argues that these gendered and sexual tropes articulated around fantasies of perversion and abjection obscure a more thoughtful engagement with twentieth-century fascist, antisemitic, and far-right ideologies—precisely the ideologies that articulated and deployed these images and metaphors against their political enemies. I suggest that this troping results from a failure to analyze the manner in which fantasies of abjection and perversion were central to how the far-right imagined "Frenchness" and how it articulated these fantasies in an interwar context of heightened anxieties around gender, sexuality, race, and nation.\(^7\) The constitutive role of masculinity in ideals of citizenship and nationalism has a long history in modern France, dating back to the French Revolution. As Robert Nye has argued, throughout the nineteenth century, the embodiment and performance of specific masculine qualities allowed bourgeois men to mark their legitimacy and superiority.\(^8\) Yet masculinity was an inherently unstable category that required normative definitions connecting manliness and virility with ideals of political autonomy, citizenship, and moral superiority. In the fin-de-siècle, prescriptions and pronouncements sought to regulate and domesticate those that might deviate, such as "the bachelor,"

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while rendering them more visible, such as "the homosexual." Christopher Forth has shown how the modern antisemitism that erupted around the Dreyfus Affair must be situated within a larger normative discourse on masculinity and Jewishness and how depictions of "deficient manhood" and "effeminacy" functioned to point out the suspect origins of French Jews. Similarly, the manliness of intellectuals appeared ambiguous, for some associated male intellectual activity with effeminacy while others sought to recast it in terms of manly virility. After World War I, critics, intellectuals, and journalists built upon these long-standing tropes to delineate the nation and the social body. Far-right intellectuals (who had not experienced the war because they were too young to fight) also articulated their critique through the prism of gender, race, and class.

In the 1930s, the men associated with the far-right newspaper *Je Suis Partout* articulated not just a discourse of masterful virility, but a grammar of race, gender, and sexuality as the solution to the dissolution of the social body. This gendered and sexual discourse underscored their vision of male identity, citizenship, and civilization. In their writings, the figure of the "Jew"—abject, foreign, feminized—provided the fantasmatic space in which anxieties about the precariousness of masculinity and identification with the female body of the


12 There has surprisingly been little work on the ways in which the intersection of gender, sexuality, and race are central to the deployment of *Je Suis Partout*'s politics. See Joan Tumblety, "Revenge of the Fascist Knights: Masculinity in *Je Suis Partout*, 1940–1944," *Modern and Contemporary France*, 7, no. 1 (1999): 11-20.
nation—Marianne—were given shape. For these writers, from 1936 onwards the sexual threat suggested by this perverse Jewish body—often under the guise of Léon Blum—allowed them to call for a racialized French civilization in which the colonies acted as a site of aesthetic reconciliation where (male) citizenship would find a (tenuous, if illusory) sense of unity and boundedness, once French mastery over "Arabs" and "African" male bodies was reaffirmed.

Like many of the intellectual far-right, Je Suis Partout's young journalists were obsessed with the dissolution of the nation and its citizens.\textsuperscript{13} The borders of the national community were threatened, made porous by the assault both from within and without by elements irreducibly foreign to the "true" character of France. Unsurprisingly, as many historians have noted and in keeping with traditional far-right rhetoric, they perceived their era as decadent, perverted, and unstable, a degradation made manifest in the existence of a democratic regime they deemed not only illegitimate, but antithetical to French history.\textsuperscript{14} Republican principles had failed to protect against the dangers of unbridled capitalism and had allowed the invasion of Communist ideas. Most significantly, the commitment to "assimilation," which they associated with republican politics, had allowed the most dangerous individuals to invade the nation: Jews. Je Suis Partout called for the

\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{13} On how dissolution and abjection characterized the interwar intellectual far-right's rhetoric, see Sandrine Sanos, "'From Revolution to Literature:' The Political Aesthetics of the Young Far-Right, 1936–1937," Sites: Contemporary French and Francophone Studies 10, no. 1 (2006): 85–95.}

\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{14} On Je Suis Partout, see the ideologically-motivated but rigorously researched study by Pierre-Marie Dioudonnat, Je Suis Partout 1930–1944: Les maurrassiens devant la tentation fasciste (Paris: La Table Ronde, 1973); Jeannine Verdes-Leroux, Refus et violences: Politique et littérature à l'extrême-droite des années trente aux retombées de la Libération (Paris: Gallimard, 1996). However, literary scholars have most productively engaged the interwar intellectual far-right's politics and aesthetics. See especially Kaplan, Reproductions of Banality; David Carroll, French Literary Fascism: Nationalism, Antisemitism, and the Ideology of Culture (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995).}
emergence of a "new" nationalism, which would be led by oppositional critics (the young intellectuals of the far-right) and which would restore "a pure nation, a pure history, a pure race." 15 While their political critique of decadence kept within the terms of Maurrassian thought, its obsession with dissolution and perversion was novel and underscored their racial and colonial imagination of Frenchness. French citizenship could only be defined through the reaffirmation of a masculine, bounded, and antisemitic individual who should be infused with the innate sense of the nation's history and civilization. Je Suis Partout and its most prominent contributors—Robert Brasillach, Lucien Rebatet, and Pierre-Antoine Cousteau—thus became the champions of a new "virile politics." 16

Their vision of a new order depended upon restoring a heterosexual masculine subject, which, in turn, necessitated the simultaneous refusal and disavowal of the "threat" of homosexuality. Because "homosexuality" was a deviant perversion that constantly hovered on the borders of their masculine world while always threatening to erupt from within, they needed to reiterate the need for a heterosexual social world, bound by the celebration of masculine virility and "proper" gender roles. 17 In their articles, Je Suis Partout's writers told tales of homosocial friendship and restored virility. They called for a fraternity of manly intellectual brothers who could save the nation because they were a political avant-garde. In the years following Blum's accession to power, they called for the eradication of "Blum," a fantasized figure embodying of all corruption and, with him, the seemingly proliferating faceless

16 For a full list of the newspaper's many contributors, occasional and regular, see Pierre-Marie Dioudonnat, Les 700 rédacteurs de 'Je Suis Partout,' 1930–1944: Dictionnaire des écrivains et journalistes qui ont collaboré au "grand hebdomadaire de la vie mondiale" devenu le principal organe du fascisme français (Paris: Sedopols, 1993).
17 On the reaffirmation of "proper" gender roles, see Roberts, Civilization Without Sexes.
Jews who had transformed the nature of the nation. "Blum" and his Jewish acolytes personified the perversion of the rightful gendered and sexual order of French society. Just as the "body of Dreyfus" had become an obsession, the body of Blum also became the focus of far-right rhetoric. A return to a "normal" order therefore meant the re-appropriation of French culture and its take-over by men who could speak in the name the nation.

**Masculinity and the "Jewish Republic"**

In 1936, the right and the far-right was horrified, this time by the coming to power of the Popular Front led by the Jewish socialist leader, Léon Blum, who became the target of vociferous attacks. For *Je Suis Partout*, the "confusion" brought about by foreign Jewish influence was made visible by the "confusion" now characterizing metropolitan France. Under socialist and communist influence, culture had been contaminated. This was especially evident in the popular cultural activities that then enthralled the French people, such as the cinema. Cousteau observed that those queuing to watch a newly-released Russian film were "smelly women carefully bundled up in expensive furs." These (presumably) Jewish women were accompanied by overly-groomed and athletic young men, and also by some "oriental and effete dandies with hair that is too nappy and who represent the pride of the Popular Front's Negroid intelligentsia." For Cousteau and his peers, the cosmopolitanism and "Negrophilia" inherited from the 1920s had wreaked havoc upon French civilization by allowing the ascendance of "inassimilable" Jews. Parisian public spaces

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were overrun by distasteful women and perverted male youths whose foreignness, like Blum's, was signified by their association with "Marxism," deviant gender, and primitive character, still visible under the superficial accoutrements of civilization. Cousteau used the clichés typical of subsequent far-right accounts of the Popular Front years: bourgeois women, insensitive to the plight of the French people, were the living emblem of selfish luxury, and their bodies revealed their racial origin.

But Cousteau especially directed his wrath at those "oriental" androgynous dandies whose masculinity and sexuality were, for him, obviously questionable and who acted as the champions of the necessarily foreign—that is, Jewish—Popular Front intellectuals. Culture had been undone, politics were in disarray, and civilization had been corrupted. Typically, Cousteau thus held that that any public expression of Communism was nothing more than the expression of an international Jewish conspiracy. For the authors of Je Suis Partout, it was not anti-Communism and antisemitism which formed the cornerstones of their oppositional politics, but Jewishness under the guise of Communism that horrified them. Pierre Gaxotte had said as much in January 1936: "Marxism was [Blum's] homeland and birth certificate." As Rebatet explained in the special issue he authored on "The Jews" in 1938, "The proletarian was the socialist slave of the Jew" in Soviet Russia "and everywhere Communism and Marxism took hold."

After 1936, it was "Blum" that embodied all ills at once—war, revolution, Communism, capitalism, parliamentary democracy, and modernity. Je Suis Partout never ceased to attack him, even after he resigned from his position as head of


the government in June 1937. The indignation and horror of *Je Suis Partout*'s writers was, in fact, just as virulent in 1938 when Blum returned to power for his second tenure. "Blum" was both the cause and symptom of the decadent state of the nation. Here, *Je Suis Partout* enthusiastically echoed the novelist Céline's claim from his controversial but popular 1937 antisemitic *Bagatelles pour un Massacre* that "the Jew" was the "most uncompromising parasite, most voracious, most likely to dissolve! The Jew!" As editorialist Pierre Gaxotte had complained the previous year, "It was Him, again Him, always Him."

"Blum" appeared obsessively in *Je Suis Partout* articles because he represented the gender and sexual disorder far-right intellectuals wanted to undo. One of the great causes of anxiety had, indeed, been the disorder wrought in the social body, the simultaneous erasure and dissolution of sexual difference, and the perversion of conventional definitions of masculinity and femininity, which, for far-right critics, corresponded to a specifically French arrangement of society and provided its foundation. The figure of "Blum" provided the site where differences between men and women were revealed as unstable. It was not that "Blum" conflated both male and female qualities (the accusation of "hermaphrodism" appeared only once in *Je Suis Partout*). These journalists experienced anguish especially because "Blum" could, in their minds, embody either masculinity or femininity, thereby transgressing the "proper" French sexual and gendered order. That instability was a particular obsession of Lucien Rebatet, who proved the most

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26 Lucien Rebatet, "Les attractions de Luna-Park, choses vues par Lucien Rebatet," JSP, 12 May 1937, 5. This distinction matters because historians, have often attempted to explain the far-right antisemites’ particular obsession with gender and sex with the notion of hermaphroditism. See Birnbaum, *Un mythe politique*, 196-236.
virulent antisemite of the group and most obsessed with Blum, and who single-handedly authored *Je Suis Partout's* special issues on immigrants, foreigners, and Jews. For him and his peers, the danger emanated from his effeminacy, deviant homosexuality, and excessive heterosexual desire.

It was undeniable that "Blum," as they saw him, was different from "us Frenchmen [emphasis added]". He embodied that difference. His foreignness lay in the fact that he was literally marked as different in his own body. Indeed, journalist Dorsay asked whether "he was a man like all others?" He answered that Léon Blum "has been marked at birth with an indelible sign," which explained the "natural instinct [that] he had developed in the heat of the last few years' political events." The indelible mark that obsessed far-right intellectuals, infused with Catholic tradition, was circumcision, which was seen as the literal inscription on a Jewish body of his absolute and irreducible difference as well as his unmanly character. Another journalist Jean-Jacques Brousson thus reminded his readers that "there is an impassable abyss—that probably came from those ritual mutilations—between the circumcised and the uncircumcised [emphasis added]." Circumcision was a reminder of the Jew's unmanly character; lack characterized the male Jewish body.

The figure of Blum was dangerous because he was not a "real" and "proper" man. French masculinity should be infused with manliness, a quality Léon Blum was shown to be incapable of possessing. Indeed, in caricatures and articles, Blum was systematically portrayed as both feminized and effeminate. While the association of effeminacy and Jewishness had a long history, it took on a particular force for young far-right intellectuals eager to intervene in interwar cultural and political

Blum embodied the feminized intellectual. "Blum" was both fascinating and repugnant, offering a "burlesque and disgusting spectacle." Interestingly, in these accounts Blum's imagined feminity provoked a repulsive pleasure: he could seduce against one's normal instincts, but, at the same time, the realization of that seductive power provoked uncontrollable revulsion. Journalist Georges Blond observed that, during one of Blum's public appearances, "everyone around [him] was swept through with delight and exaltation by the spectacle of Léon Blum's dance," while he found himself "taken by a physical discomfort." He asked: "How can one stand the spectacle of [Blum's] trance-like state without shuddering?" For him, that seductive body elicited only "physical illness." In another instance, Rebetet commented that, while Blum "was blowing kisses to the crowd," he thought very little of these "feminine perversions." The effeminacy inherent in Jewishness was emblematic of "feminine perversion," echoing the characteristic attributed to the 1920s Modern Woman who had captured the popular imagination.

"Blum" was often described as a hysterical woman. Writers often mentioned his "female" or "falsetto voice" with "precious accents" and coquettish gestures. His body was convulsed with "ondulations" and "spasms." Here hysterical femininity—

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30 On the discursive production of the male Jewish body in late nineteenth century France, see: Forth, The Dreyfus Affair and the Crisis of French Manhood.
31 Rebetet, "Les attractions de Luna-Park," 5.
33 Rebetet, "Les attractions de Luna-Park," 5.
36 Blond, "Léon Blum ou la plainte," 3.
nervousness, impulsiveness, unbridled passion—were the opposite of manly reason. He was the only politician who was described as a prostitute, seduced by the brutish yet manly French communist leader, Maurice Thorez. Blum was the syphilitic prostitute in the hands of his communist pimp, the "handsome Maurice."\(^{37}\) As a "Woman," "Blum" represented the decadence of modernity.

Through his feminization, Blum evoked the danger of homosexuality which was unthinkable, of course, for these far-right intellectuals obsessed with virility. A Jewish man could not embody manly heterosexuality. Instead, he was shown to be a homosexual, willing to seduce foreign leaders and epitomizing the dual threat of seduction and perversion. Like others, Rebatet never tired of reminding his readers that Blum was "like a decadent éphèbe of the 1890s. As the emblem of sexual deviance, male homosexuality appeared, for interwar far-right critics, to be the repository of the forces corrupting the nation and the symbol of degradation and perversion.\(^{38}\) Their descriptions of homosexuality were haunted especially by the figure of celebrated novelist André Gide, who had long figured in Je Suis Partout's pantheon of deviance. According to Cousteau in an interview with nationalist author Gonzague Truc, Gide was "an artist of incredible seduction." Truc added that, in order to recognize Gide's literary greatness, one needed to "close eyes on the taste for perversion in which [he] takes delight [emphasis added]."\(^{39}\) It was precisely that "taste for perversion" which, they argued, could be found in Blum, whose cultural prestige as an author—on the topic of sex and marriage, no less!—made him suspect. Perversion, as the chief defining

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\(^{38}\) On the discursive production of homosexuality as perversion and deviance, see Dean, \textit{The Frail Social Body}, Ch. 4 "The Making of Gay Male Sexuality," 130-72.

characteristic of homosexuality, was perceived to be constitutive of Jewishness and of the French socialist leader's body and personality.

But "Blum" did not just appear as effeminate, feminized, or homosexual. He also embodied a sexual threat to the nation as symbolized by Marianne. He was portrayed raping Marianne, leading her astray, lying to her as a heartless seducer would. Journalists described the formless and sinuous predator as holding a mysterious and irrepresible sexual power over French women, who were bewitched by his appearance. Brasillach explained that "[h]e likes to be comforted and held by experienced women." 40 His instinct was to seduce because, as Rebatet portrayed him, he was "mealy-mouthed, undulating, whispering and incredibly exotic [emphasis added]." 41 French women—naturally weak-minded and in need of male guidance—succumbed to Blum's charm and insinuating words. It was his alleged foreignness—the difference of circumcision—that made him attractive. Though paradoxical (that which was unacceptable was precisely that which attracted women), this argument reflected Je Suis Partout's gender politics. Rebatet insisted that Blum was especially attractive to the socialist "regime's female chattel" that were Parisian women. 42 For Je Suis Partout, Blum's ability to embody the dissolution of sexual difference and his sexual perversions had caused the undoing of France. In 1937, they clamored that "Blum practically holds absolute power in France. And he uses it to undo France." 43 The dissolution of France needed to be fought; the survival of the French man was at stake.

41 Rebatet, "Les attractions de Luna-Park," 5.
Conclusion: The Pleasures of the Colonial Sublime

How to resolve this unbearable situation? The answer came from the colonies. In order to restore French civilization and culture—the foundations of the French nation—these writers and intellectuals built on their antisemitic vision to re-imagine a bounded nation whose very boundedness depended upon their mastery of borders. Since the self and the nation were held together in a sacred relationship, according to far-right intellectuals, the boundedness of the metropolitan nation required more than the purification of the national body. It also required the enactment of control and possession over the borders of the French empire as well as an uncanny ability to gaze at and master what lay beyond (metropolitan) France. Je Suis Partout did this by promising masterful ubiquity, which was always coded masculine since those writing, traveling, and consuming were always men, united in a metaphorical fraternity undisrupted by feminine presence.44

Throughout the 1930s and in the pages of Je Suis Partout, the colonies were the nostalgic site of a harmonious pleasure and the joys of rule. Whether pondering the economic value of French colonial holdings or reflecting upon the political stakes of the preservation of the French empire, Je Suis Partout's colonial pages—aptly titled "Our Empire" [emphasis added]—offered a rather different vision of Frenchness.45 While one commentator nostalgically lamented the faded glories of Chandernagor, one of the "remnants of the great French empire in the Indies," another celebrated the idyllic and sensuous natives of the island of La Réunion, whose existence, he argued, should not be disrupted by the impersonal destruction of mindless modern tourism.46

44 The most vivid portrayals of trips by the JSP "brotherly gang" reveling in its homosociability are found in Robert Brasillach's memoir Notre Avant-Guerre (Paris: Plon, 1941).
45 For example, René Maran, "Pourquoi ne vend-on plus d'automobiles françaises dans nos colonies?" JSP, 25 April 1936, 11.
Nostalgia for colonial spaces uncorrupted by modernity characterized many of these articles.

It is striking that *Je Suis Partout* insisted on the luxury and delights offered by exotic colonial spaces to illustrate their desire for the boundedness of the self. For, since the late nineteenth century, French hygienists and civil servants had been concerned with and warned against the potentially debilitating and contaminating effects on French bodies of such foreign environments and climates.\(^{47}\) This ability to contaminate and corrupt had formed the staple of Louis-Ferdinand Céline's depiction of Bardamu's trials and tribulations as a colonial civil servant in West Africa. But rarely did *Je Suis Partout* mention disease, contamination, or fatigue.\(^{48}\) Instead, the control forced upon unnamed and undifferentiated "natives" as described in *Je Suis Partout*'s colonial pages is what provided individuality to French citizens. The figure of the unnamed native offered these far-right intellectuals a seeming resolution to potential disorder. It acted as a mirror, confirming the borders of the self. Because tenuous and illusory, the sensuous pleasure and peaceful harmony offered by the colonies needed to be constantly reaffirmed.

*Je Suis Partout*'s ethnographic gaze contrasted greatly with the newspaper's front pages devoted to domestic politics, which were littered with angry and vitriolic denunciations of the government and which proclaimed that, "for the first time, a messianic Jew was now in power."\(^{49}\) While colonized territories offered soothing and restorative comfort, a site of harmony and order with their "swaying palm trees," "plentiful resources," and "peaceful natives," France was to be the site of a heroic and vital struggle for its embattled male citizens. Those aesthetically


\(^{49}\) Dorsay, "Sous le règne du paradoxe," *JSP*, 16 May 1936, front page.
pleasing colonial motifs and illustrations—directly influenced by the "colonial craze" for all things African and foreign, which had beset France in the 1920s and been celebrated in the 1931 Colonial Exhibit—contrasted with the freakish caricatures of "ugly" and repulsive Jews that began appearing in the newspaper from late 1937 onwards.\textsuperscript{50} That contrast was central, however, to Je Suis Partout's imagination of Frenchness. Even more so, most journalists argued, Popular Front Policies would undo the "natural" hierarchy and order of the French empire. As Gaxotte had warned in May 1936, Blum's "government will undoubtedly provide guns to the natives so that they can kill the 'colons'."\textsuperscript{51}

The colonies both helped reaffirm a French masculinity and, increasingly, served to prop up the antisemitism characterizing Je Suis Partout in the mid- and late 1930s. It was therefore hardly surprising that Brasillach wrote in his front-page editorial for a special issue on Jews that, "[w]hether you want it or not, France rules over seventy millions of white, yellow, black, Muslim, converts, fetishists, civilized, barbarian men who do not have a single idea in common, except one: they do not like the Jews."\textsuperscript{52} The racial and colonial underpinnings of French antisemitism infused Je Suis Partout's turn towards fascism, which would be a cause for controversy among the traditional far-right. That racialized and gendered articulation of French citizenship was best illustrated by their embrace of another controversial author in the mid-1930s. Following Rebetet, Je Suis Partout championed novelist Louis-Ferdinand Céline, whose 1930s antisemitic pamphlets fictionalized a world where male French bodies had been violated and repulsive female bodies had been contaminated by "Negroid Jews."\textsuperscript{53} Again, championing Céline was no accident. These fantasies of

\textsuperscript{50} For background, see Herman Lebovics, \textit{True France: The Wars over Cultural Identity} (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1992).

\textsuperscript{51} Pierre Gaxotte, "Tandis que M. Blum accouche d'un ministère," JSP, 30 May 1936, front page.

\textsuperscript{52} Robert Brasillach, "La question Juive," JSP: Special Issue on the Jews, 15 April 1938, front page.

abjection, perversion, and dissolution were translated into an aesthetic of politics where these far-right authors reimagined nation, race, and bodies. Celebrating a colonial sublime and embracing Céline's pamphlets thus paved the way for their 1939 public embrace of fascism as the solution to decadence, dissolution, and abjection.