Utopian Aspirations
in Fascist Ideology:
English and French Literary
Perspectives 1914-1945

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This thesis argues that utopian aspirations are a fruitful way to understand fascism and examines the utopian ideals held by a number of fascist writers. The intention of this thesis is not to define fascism. Rather, it is to suggest that looking at fascism’s goals and aspirations might reveal under-examined elements of fascism. This thesis shows that a useful way to analyse the ideology of fascism is through an examination of its ideals and goals, and by considering the nature of a hypothetical fascist utopia.

The most common ways of examining fascism and attempting to isolate its core ideological features have been by considering it culturally, looking at the metaphysical and philosophical claims fascists made about themselves, or by studying fascist regimes, looking at the external features of fascist movements, parties and governments. In existing studies there is an unspoken middle ground, where fascism could be examined by considering practical issues in the abstract and by postulating what a fascist utopia would be like.

This thesis begins by looking at the ways historians have interpreted fascism, and shows that utopian ideals have been under-examined. The thesis then goes on to demonstrate the usefulness of such an examination by considering the fascist aspirations of four fascist writers. I use as case studies four individuals who were not politicians but were nonetheless political through their literary works. I have also chosen them for the fact that they did not live directly under fascist rule, at least for the majority of their careers. The four case studies are Ezra Pound and Wyndham Lewis, representing the Anglosphere, and Pierre Drieu la Rochelle and Robert Brasillach from France. All were sympathetic to various aspects of fascism and various fascist leaders, and advocated fascism through their literary and journalistic work.

This thesis explores the ideology of fascism by looking at the thoughts and aspirations of a group of intellectuals, and by looking at their concepts of ideal states or utopias. By examining the objectives of fascism separate from the manifestation of fascism and the activities of fascist regimes, and by treating fascism as a utopian ideology with specific aspirational goals, this thesis highlights nuances in the ideology of fascism and suggests avenues of future research.
DECLARATION

This work contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in any university or other tertiary institution to Ashley James Thomas and, to the best of my knowledge and belief, contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference has been made in the text.

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Ashley James Thomas
24 February 2010
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