

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

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Thesis presented as the requirement for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
in the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences
University of Adelaide

March 2010

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ABSTRACT

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

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

T.S. Eliot wrote in “Gerontion” that “History has many cunning passages”, and I have not been able to navigate those passages without help from a number of people whom I would like to acknowledge.

I would like to sincerely thank my supervisor, Dr Vesna Drapac, for all the hard work she has put into supporting me and this dissertation. Without her guiding influence and comments on multiple drafts, this project could not have been completed.

The faculty, staff and postgraduates of the Department of History and the School of History & Politics at the University of Adelaide provided a collegial and friendly intellectual environment where new ideas could be tested and discussed. Thanks to all for the valuable comments they have made on drafts, presentations and in conversation. In particular I would like to give thanks to Professor Robert Dare, Professor Roger Knight, Dr Ric Zuckerman and Dr André Lambelet for the support and advice they have given.

I would like to acknowledge the patience and faith shown by my wife Rebecca during the years this has taken to produce. Her encouragement and confidence in me were essential in difficult times.

My family and friends deserve recognition for the tolerance, understanding and loyalty they have shown. Thanks go out to my mother Fran, brothers Scott and Jason, and Ben, David, John, Buckley and Elliot.

Finally, I would like to dedicate this dissertation to my father, Christopher Robert James Thomas (1950-2003), who tragically passed away during its writing. I hope that he would be proud