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# UTOPIA

MERLIN COVERLEY

NEW TITLE

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## SALES POINTS:

- An accessible and informative overview of the entire history of Utopia, from Plato's Republic to the present day
- Utopian writing attracts a broad audience across a wide range of subjects, from philosophy and political thought, to classical literature and science fiction
- Taps into the current resurgence of interest in utopian thought, coinciding with academic and political debates concerning the 'Death of Utopia', appealing not only to a student readership but also to the popular market for literary reference

## DESCRIPTION:

For more than 2,000 years utopian visionaries have sought to create a blueprint of the ideal society: from Plato to HG Wells, from Cloudcuckooland to Shangri-La, the utopian impulse has generated a vast body of work, encompassing philosophy and political theory, classical literature and science fiction. And yet these utopian dreams have often turned to nightmare, as utopia gives way to its dark reflection, dystopia.

*Utopia* takes the reader on a journey through these imaginary worlds, charting the progress of utopian ideas from their origins within the classical world, to the rebirth of utopian ideals in the Middle Ages. Later we see the emergence of socialist and feminist ideas; while the twentieth century was to be dominated by expressions of totalitarian oppression. From the novel to the political manifesto, from satire to science fiction, utopias have always reflected the age that gave rise to them, and this guide will explore this historical context, offering both an analysis of the key texts and an account of their political and cultural background.

Today, it is claimed that we are witnessing the death of utopia, as increasingly the ideals that give rise to them are undermined or dismissed. These arguments are explored and evaluated here, and contemporary examples of utopian thought used to demonstrate the enduring relevance of the utopian tradition.

## BIOGRAPHY:

**Dr Merlin Coverley** is a writer and bookseller. He is the author of the Pocket Essentials, *London Writing*, *Psychogeography* and *Occult London* and currently lives in London.