



Utopianism: A Very Short Introduction

Lyman Tower Sargent

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There are many debates about what constitutes a utopia. Are utopias benign or dangerous? Is the idea of utopianism essential to Christianity or heretical? What is the relationship between utopia and ideology? In this *Very Short Introduction*, Lyman Sargent, one of the leading scholars in the field of utopian studies, explores these issues and examines utopianism and its history, discussing the role of utopianism in literature and in the development of colonies and in immigration. The idea of utopia has become commonplace in social and political thought, both negatively and positively. Sargent notes that some thinkers see a trajectory from utopia to totalitarianism, with violence an inevitable part of the mix. Others see utopia directly connected to freedom and as a necessary element in the fight against totalitarianism. In Christianity, utopia is labeled as both heretical and as a fundamental part of Christian belief, and such debates are also central to such fields as architecture, town and city planning, and sociology among many others. Sargent addresses all these issues in this clear, compact introduction.

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