



# **The Utopian Fantastic: Selected Essays from the Twentieth International Conference on the Fantastic in the Arts (Contributions to the Study of Science Fiction & Fantasy)**

*By Martha A. Bartter*

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Utopia forms a major aspect of human desire, one that is as important as religion. Understanding utopia and the ways in which it can collapse into dystopia is crucial in many disciplines. Fantastic literature (including science fiction and fantasy) is the only form of literature that takes utopia/dystopia seriously. Therefore, analysis of these works provides a basis for serious experimentation in social science.

In this volume, critics analyze contemporary literary thought experiments such as *1984* and *We*. They show how utopian experiments can easily slide into dystopia. Exploring these fictional sociocultural, political experiments gives us new ways to think about our lives and culture. While literature, history, and political science professors may find this book useful, it can also serve as a call to arms to anyone dedicated to maintaining freedom and humane living in the world today.

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Review

[R]eaders will be provoked through the utopian aim of all scholars. - **Science Fiction Studies**

By taking a long historical view of this genre which has become especially popular in today's technological, futuristic age as well as in-depth critical views on some of the most popular and influential works, the collected articles bring a new appreciation of the utopian fantastic literature. It is no longer seen as essentially escapism or fantasy, but as central to the modern psyche. - **Reviewer's Bookwatch/The Midwest Book Review**

"...highly recommended not only for those interested in utopian, fantastic, or dystopian fiction, but to all students who find it difficult to cope with the variety of theoretical approaches. . . . For those who are well versed in these theories and do not need such an aid, the book will provide ample entertainment and inspiration." - **Hungarian Journal of English and American Studies**

About the Author

MARTHA BARTTER is Professor of English, Division of Language and Literature, Truman State University.

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