



The Cambridge Companion to Utopian Literature (Cambridge Companions to Literature)

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Since the publication of Thomas More's genre-defining work *Utopia* in 1516, the field of utopian literature has evolved into an ever-expanding domain. This Companion presents an extensive historical survey of the development of utopianism, from the publication of *Utopia* to today's dark and despairing tendency towards dystopian pessimism, epitomised by works such as George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four* and Margaret Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale*. Chapters address the difficult definition of the concept of utopia, and consider its relation to science fiction and other literary genres. The volume takes an innovative approach to the major themes predominating within the utopian and dystopian literary tradition, including feminism, romance and ecology, and explores in detail the vexed question of the purportedly 'western' nature of the concept of utopia. The reader is provided with a balanced overview of the evolution and current state of a long-standing, rich tradition of historical, political and literary scholarship.

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- Sales Rank: #435315 in eBooks
- Published on: 2012-10-17
- Released on: 2012-10-17
- Format: Kindle eBook

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About the Author

Gregory Claeys is Professor of the History of Political Thought at Royal Holloway, University of London. He has edited *Utopias of the British Enlightenment* (1994), *Modern British Utopias. c.1700-1850* (8 volumes, 1997), *Restoration and Augustan British Utopias* (2000), *Late Victorian Utopias* (6 volumes, 2008) and other works. He has written several studies of aspects of the Owenite socialist movement, of the French revolution debate in Britain, and of Thomas Paine's thought. His most recent book is *Imperial Sceptics: British Critics of Empire, 1850-1920* (Cambridge, 2010).

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