



Utopia: Social Theory and the Future (Classical and Contemporary Social Theory)

Keith Tester

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In the light of globalization's failure provide the universal panacea expected by some of its more enthusiastic proponents, and the current status of neo-liberalism in Europe, a search has begun for alternative visions of the future; alternatives to the free market and to rampant capitalism. Indeed, although these alternatives may not be conceived of in terms of being a 'perfect order', there does appear to be a trend towards 'utopian thinking', as people - including scholars and intellectuals - search for inspiration and visions of better futures. If, as this search continues, it transpires that politics has little to offer, then what might social theory have to contribute to the imagination of these futures? Does social theory matter at all? What resources can it offer this project of rethinking the future? Without being tied to any single political platform, *Utopia: Social Theory and the Future* explores some of these questions, offering a timely and sustained attempt to make social theory relevant through explorations of its resources and possibilities for utopian imaginations. It is often claimed that utopian thought has no legitimate place whatsoever in sociological thinking, yet utopianism has remained part and parcel of social theory for centuries. As such, in addition to considering the role of social theory in the imagination of alternative futures, this volume reflects on how social theory may assist us in understanding and appreciating utopia or utopianism as a special topic of interest, a special subject matter, a special analytical focus or a special normative dimension of sociological thinking. Bringing together the latest work from a leading team of social theorists, this volume will be of interest to sociologists, social and political theorists, anthropologists and philosophers.

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