



The Story of Utopias

Lewis Mumford

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Utopia has long been another name for the unreal and the impossible. We have set utopia over against the world. As a matter of fact, it is our utopias that make the world tolerable to us: the cities and mansions that make people dream of are those in which they finally live. The more that men react upon their environment and make it over after a human pattern, the more continuously do they live in utopia; but when there is a breach between the world of affairs and the over world of utopia, we become conscious of the part that the will-to-utopia has played in our lives and we see our utopia as a separate reality.

The Story of Utopias Details

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Rodolfo Fioribello says

Interessante lettura che prende in considerazione alcuni dei filosofi più importanti che hanno scritto di utopia. Ho trovato più affascinante la prima parte

Chris says

Concerning himself with utopias of escape and utopias of reconstruction, Lewis Mumford takes a hard look at the utopian dreams that people have had throughout the ages. Mumford holds these stories up against our own world and shows that there really are no simple solutions without work and effort. Anything else is just day-dreaming.

CL Chu says

The walk-through Mumford led his reader in the various (or not so various) utopias probably deserved three stars, but the last three chapters added another to this book.

By re-focusing on the social issue of his time through the lens of his criticism of the contemporary partial utopia or anti-utopian sentiment, Mumford has touched so many interesting contradictions consciously and unconsciously.

At certain points he spoke like a prophet, and I believe he is right to point out the lack of true "scientific" inquiry of social fact in ideological charged social sciences, the problem of over-specialization of a science (and consequently also technology) detached from the benefit of community, and the "art for artist sake", or the culture industry as Frankfurt philosophers would later describe it, that prevents people to increase their aesthetic capability of perceiving and thinking about a better world.

Nonetheless, Mumford reserved too little space to elaborate his vision, and the book ended with an ambivalent and vague advocacy on some sort of local corporatism. Hope I will later found more intriguing thought in his magnum opus: Technics and Civilization.

Enrique Oviedo says

Historia de las Utopías es un volumen de consulta más, sin analizar profundamente las motivaciones que llevan al hombre a elaborar los mundos ideales.

Hugo Filipe says

Most of the utopias presented are quite boring and repetitive, so this would work better as a consultation book, but not the way the information is organized. Could have done quite well without reading it.
