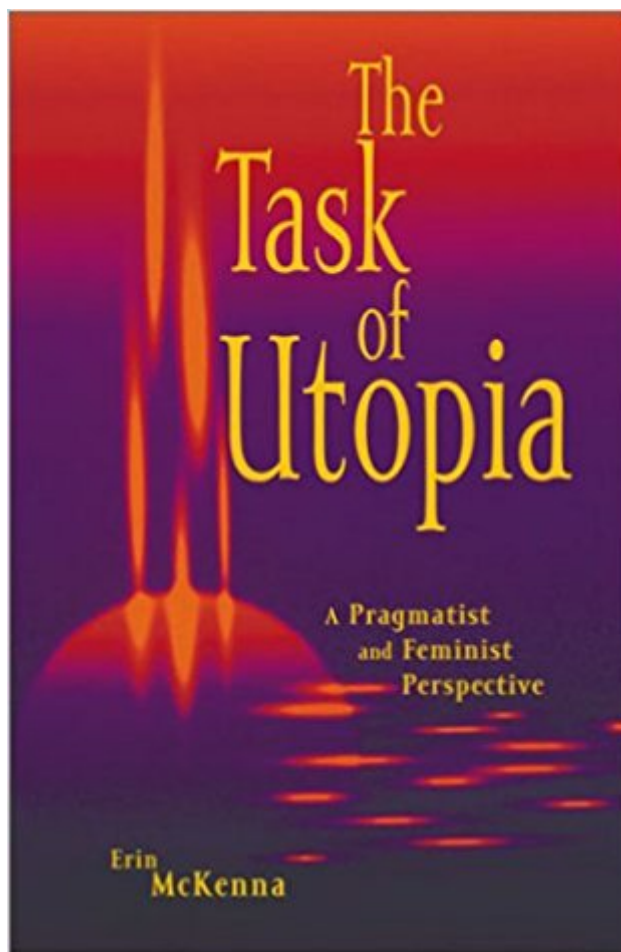




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The Task Of Utopia: A Pragmatist And Feminist Perspective



Synopsis

At their best, both American pragmatism and utopianism are about hope. Both encourage people to think about the future as a guide to understanding the past and forming the present. Just as pragmatism has often been misunderstood as valueless instrumentalism, utopianism has been limited to dreams of a static perfect world. In this book, Erin McKenna argues that utopian vision informed by pragmatism results in a process model of utopia that can help form the future based on critical intelligence. Using John Dewey's works with feminist theory and literature, McKenna develops this pragmatist feminist model of utopia.

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Customer Reviews

Erin McKenna has convincingly combined two approaches to utopia, pragmatism and feminism, that are unlikely companions. In doing so she has provided insightful readings of both feminist utopias and John Dewey as well as giving us an interesting new approach to utopianism. (Utopian Studies) In *The Task of Utopia* Erin McKenna reminds us how valuable utopias can be in structuring moral motivations and energies. *The Task of Utopia* signals a new level of maturity in feminist pragmatism. (Journal of Speculative Philosophy) "In *The Task of Utopia*, Erin McKenna writes imaginatively about imagination, constructively about the possibilities and forms of criticism, realistically about hope, and compellingly about the task of envisioning human communities worthy of human commitment. McKenna defends the utopian imagination with a sharp sense of the deep suspicions currently surrounding it, yet her utopianism is clear-eyed: it reckons with the actualities of

an irrevocable history as much as it projects the possibilities of a future different from the past. Thus, her processive, pragmatist, and feminist orientation to social philosophy is itself a sign of hope, and a feat of imagination." (Vincent Colapietro, Pennsylvania State University)

Erin McKenna is associate professor and chair of the Department of Philosophy at Pacific Lutheran University.

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