



MORE'S UTOPIA / MORE UTOPIAS – From The Renaissance To '68 And Beyond

Panelists:

PROF DESMOND MANDERSON:

Australian National University, College of Law

DR MACARENA IRIBARNE:

University of Wollongong, School of Law

DR LUIS GÓMEZ ROMERO:

University of Wollongong, School of Law

FRIDAY 14 SEPTEMBER - 3:30 PM TO 5.30PM

(ROOM 67.208)

In 1516, Thomas More published the first edition of Utopia in Leuven under Erasmus's editorship. Almost two years later, in 1518, he published a revised version in Basel. Since then, both the book and the fictional island-nation whose institutions and laws are its subject matter have come to embody one of the richest paradigms in modern political thought. Utopia is both a literary genre and a deeply contested political concept: a beacon of hope and dissent and, at the same time, a source of unease and fear.

Five hundred years after the publication of the definitive edition of Utopia, the Legal Intersections Research Centre celebrates the wonders and perils of utopian thought in relation to the fiftieth anniversary of May 1968 – a historical moment in which the questions that Utopia raises were revisited, challenged and reinvented. As China Miéville suggests, we are all Thomas More's children. At least once in our lifetime we have all dreamt about justice, recognition, deliverance, empowerment and a world that is otherwise. The panel will explore the relevance of utopia today and its latent possibilities for advancing positive social change.

But under the conditions of late capitalism, is utopia futile or, worse, counter-productive? Can utopia still open wide the cracks in history, teaching – as Miguel Abensour claims – “desire to desire, to desire better and, above all, to desire in a different way”? The conversation arising from the panel, in this sense, might embody the humblest of utopian seeds, recalling the closing words in William Morris' News from Nowhere: “if others can see it as I have seen it, then it may be called a vision rather than a dream.”



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