

Beyond *Utopia*: Thomas More as Political Thinker?

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The author:

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The paper:

Thomas More's place in the history of political thought is a precarious one, and is balanced almost solely on the reputation of a short text he published at the mid-point of his literary career, *Utopia*. This paper seeks to establish a profile of Thomas More as a political thinker, beyond an engagement just with his best-read work, *Utopia*. In so doing, we discover the foundation of More's thoughts in an acknowledgement of essential equality, and a fear of the fragmentation of authority. For More, the body of the people holds authority, whether linguistic, religious or, as this paper shows, political. By way of an imagined moment of authorization, this power can be represented in institutions, such as parliament, which then become the ultimate source of legitimate political authority. By examining More's political ideas beyond *Utopia*, we see that More devises a rich political theory that calls attention to the artificiality of the political and the authority of the people.

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