Discussion questions on Sir Thomas More’s *Utopia*

1. The Renaissance refers to a “rebirth” of what? What are a couple or a few ways *Utopia* may be said to embody key interests of the Renaissance? Provide examples from the text of *Utopia.* (See esp. 519, 537, 542-3)

2. When Peter suggests that Rafael Hythloday should enter the king’s service, what is Hythloday’s reply? Why? (527-28; 542 shows contrast)

3. What is Hythloday’s attitude toward the punishment given to thieves (529-30)? Why? To whom does he compare thieves (530)? Why? What remedies to this problem does Hythloday offer on page 532? On pages 534-35, how does he suggest criminals should be treated?

4. What is the story of the Archorians (538-39)? What ideals does it convey? According to Hythloday, how does his advice regarding such matters of state conflict with other counsel a king would likely be given (539-41)?

5. Who are the Macarians, and what are Hythloday’s ideas regarding private property (541)?

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*Moore’s* *Utopia*, Set 2:

1. Briefly sum up how Utopia is introduced at the beginning of Book 2 (545-48), and then explain how occupations are divided among the Utopians and how idleness is prevented (550-52). What do you think of this system—do you especially like any parts of it or see any problems with it?

2. Explain how gold is used in Utopia and explain the moral behind the story about the Anemolian ambassadors (558-559).

3. According to the Utopians, what are the false and true pleasures (563-66).

4. Highlight a few striking points about how the Utopians handle slaves and wars (574-77). Do you find any of these ideas especially wise, foolish, or problematic?

5. Highlight a few striking points regarding the Utopians’ attitudes and beliefs concerning religion (esp. 579-83). How do they differ from religious attitudes in England during Sir Thomas More’s lifetime?