



This "dialogue," like the later *Utopia*, involves one main speaker who dominates the conversation. Although this may seem a rather unusual approach to dialogue, like earlier Platonic dialogues, this conversation is designed to reveal the main speaker's character (habits of thought, speech, and living) and his dominant and motivating idea of the good.

Detecting irony can be very challenging; see the "Lucian and Irony" Study Guide.

1. What is the Cynic's idea of the good life? What does the Cynic think is best about his own way of life? Why does the Cynic criticize everyone who does not share his way of life?
2. What is the Cynic's understanding of living "frugally"? How does the Cynic's understanding of frugality (*frugalitas*) compare to the understanding of someone like Cicero in *Tusculan Disputations* 3.16?
3. How does the Cynic's way of life compare to the lives of "ordinary" mortal beings and their "softness"?
4. What does the Cynic think about the power of passion and pleasure in human life?
5. At one point, the Cynic describes human passions and appetites as a "raving horse" out of control in the life of most human beings. Does the Cynic himself exhibit any particular passions in his own speeches? How well does the Cynic govern and direct his horse, so to speak?
6. Is the Cynic "godlike"? Is he independent from the life of the city? Why include a detail like the Cynic's argument that he is "godlike" because he does not wear clothes, just like the statues of the gods? Did you find this persuasive, or funny, or...?
7. How are human beings like and unlike the gods, who "have need of absolutely nothing"? Does the dialogue point out anything that the Cynic fails to see? Does the dialogue suggest any lack or need in him?
8. In later writings of More and in the plays of Shakespeare, characters often reveal more than they intend when they speak. Does the Cynic say anything in this dialogue that reveals something different from his intentions?
9. In the prefatory letter to Ruthall, More praises Lucian's wit, especially its power for pricking "our human frailties." What frailties does "The Cynic" reveal and prick? Does the Cynic exhibit any points of frailty, or is he immune from humanity's woes in this regard? When you consider "The Cynic" as a whole, is the dialogue an affirmation, a denial, or a qualification of the Cynic's ideas and arguments? Does the Cynic grasp the truth of "nature," the gods, and what makes someone "the most outstanding human being"?
10. What are the major objects of satire in "The Cynic"?

**For Further Reflection:** How does the Cynic compare in character, outlook, speech, and action to later figures in the Morean cosmos, such as Pico in *The Life of Pico*, Raphael in *Utopia*, King Richard in *The History of King Richard the Third*, Meg Roper in the *Dialogue of Conscience*, or Vincent and Antony in the *Dialogue of Comfort against Tribulation*? How does the Cynic compare to More's various presentations of himself throughout his writings?