



The last two works in More's publication are his translation of Lucian's declamation, "The Tyrannicide or Declamation on Behalf of the Tyrant-Slayer," and his own original declamation in response to Lucian's declamation. Taken together, these two works function somewhat like a dialogue: More's figure, a leading citizen moved by care for the common good, speaks against the supposed tyrannicide, the main speaker in Lucian's declamation. More's citizen critiques the tyrannicide's arguments and rejects his claim to a reward from the city.

Study Questions for Lucian's Defense of "The Tyrannicide":

1. As with the other dialogues in this Lucian section, we must consider what the details of the supposed tyrannicide's speech reveal about his motivations, outlook, passions, and judgment. More may be revealed by these details than the speaker intends. How does the speaker's character compare, for example, to the Cynic's? Or to that of Menippus and Tiresias? What of Eucrates' or Tychidiades'? Most importantly, how does the speaker's character, as revealed in this declamation, compare to the speaker in More's response?
2. What is the speaker's opening claim in section 1 about his "double action"?
3. How does the speaker imagine and present himself and his actions in sections 2 and 3? What has he given back to the city?
4. How does the speaker characterize his opponent (i.e., the speaker in More's declamation) and his motivation at the end of section 3?
5. Why does the speaker argue, in sections 4-9, that killing the tyrant's son is equal to – or greater than – killing the tyrant?
6. How, in the speaker's judgment, do the "mind's desires" sometimes "bring no end of injustice"?
7. What is the speaker's understanding of justice in this declamation? How does the understanding of justice in More's declamation compare?
8. The other Lucian translations suggest that human beings sometimes have strange desires, pursue surprising pleasures, and even lie for delight or glory. Is the speaker free from these frailties of human nature?
9. Did you find anything "absurd" in the declamation? Did any detail make you laugh? What did you think, for example, of the speaker repeating, "I alone, I alone advanced" and then adding, "well, not really alone" a few lines later, in section 7?
10. Is it true when the speaker says that those in the city "were all free" the moment the tyrant's son was killed?
11. What do you make of the speaker's soliloquy on "his entire project" beginning at line 53 in section 8?
12. In section 9, what does the speaker claim to have brought back to the city in the wake of tyranny?
13. In section 10, what does the speaker identify as his opponent's main criticism of his actions?
14. How many questions does the speaker ask in section 10? Why does he do so? What do his many questions reveal about his mind or his rhetoric?
15. Why does the speaker think there is no difference between killing the tyrant and providing the cause of his death in section 11? Are you persuaded by this argument?
16. The speaker invokes his understanding of "the law" and a right understanding of it in section 12. What do you think of his understanding of law in the declamation as a whole?

17. Why did the speaker leave his sword in the son, according to section 13? What do you make of this argument?
18. The speaker claims in section 13 that he has “restored the republic” through his actions, and that anyone who does not agree is “quibbling” against the one who worked a “complete removal” of the evil of tyranny. How do you assess the speaker’s reasoning here and elsewhere in the declamation?
19. What is the speaker’s main passion, according to paragraph 14? Do you agree with his self-presentation?
20. What do you make of the speaker’s argument in section 18 that he “knew [the tyrant] would soon die” after learning of the death of his son?
21. In section 20, the speaker presents himself as “the author of the entire tragedy,” and one who “left to the stage-actor the dead body, the scene, the sword, and what remained to be performed.” Considering the declamation as a whole, how do you judge his thinking, decisions, and deeds? Did he play “the leading part” in delivering his city from tyranny and returning them to “freedom”?