

Is the Epicurean Always Happy?

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I'm very sympathetic to the idea that the Cynics don't have a philosophy or 'clear doctrine' in the sense of a system of commitments that hang together as a defensible whole. And I don't disagree that Cynicism can come across as little more than a series of colorful anecdotes. But I guess I'm sympathetic to the people who think we can ascribe some somewhat distinctive commitments to them--that virtue is often best cultivated by hard work of the physical sort rather than book-learning; that living an authentic life means being willing to reject and openly mock most of the pretenses of polite society; and that the fewer possessions the better.