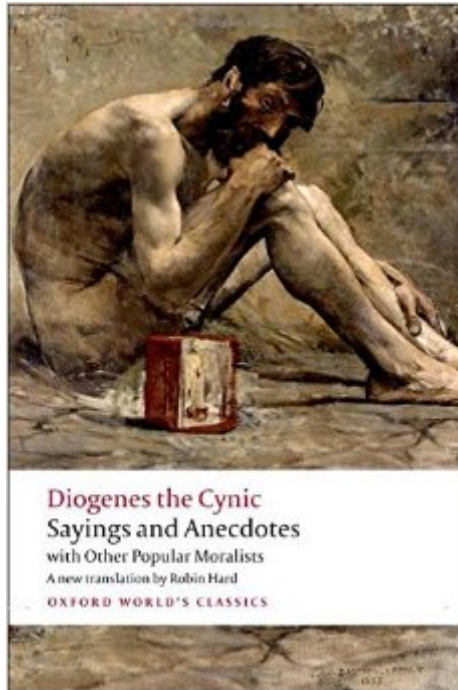


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# Diogenes The Cynic: Sayings And Anecdotes, With Other Popular Moralists



## Synopsis

Diogenes the Cynic is famed for walking the streets with a lamp in daylight, looking for an honest man. His biting wit and eccentric behavior were legendary, and it was by means of his renowned aphorisms that his moral teachings were transmitted. He scorned the conventions of civilized life, and his ascetic lifestyle and caustic opinions informed the Cynic philosophy and later influenced Stoicism. This unique edition also covers his immediate successors, such as Crates, his wife Hipparchia, and the witty moral preacher Bion. The contrasting teachings of the Cyrenaic school, founded by Aristippos, a pleasure-loving friend of Socrates, complete the volume, together with a selection of apocryphal letters. About the Series: For over 100 years Oxford World's Classics has made available the broadest spectrum of literature from around the globe. Each affordable volume reflects Oxford's commitment to scholarship, providing the most accurate text plus a wealth of other valuable features, including expert introductions by leading authorities, voluminous notes to clarify the text, up-to-date bibliographies for further study, and much more.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Much of Ancient Cynicism can be encapsulated in the phrase "Coming to see the world as it is...". Diogenes and his entourage made it the objective of their lives to provide an honest (parrhesia), prophetic, and corrective assessment of the world as they saw it - prideful, misguided, ill, clouded. The Cynics' job was to show others how to "See the world aright" and begin living in accordance with Virtue. This is the only way to begin to cure the ailments of the world. If much of this seems to have commonalities with religious sects and their message, it is no mistake - Cynicism was a

missionary philosophy (though not religious by any means). It is critical to understand the Cynics and Diogenes if you want to understand ancient thought. Traditionally, ancient philosophy has focused on the "big" philosophers like Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle, but that is doing a disservice to many other thinkers whose influence was quite extraordinary in its own light. Aristippus, who is part of this volume and compliments Diogenes and his Cynic gang, is a very good example of a lesser known philosopher who had a profound influence (think Epicurus) and is interesting in his own way. If Ancient Philosophy was more about lifestyle (as Pierre Hadot would have it) than theory, Cynicism is a perfect example of a living philosophy. See Hadot's work here: [What Is Ancient Philosophy?](#) The Cynic perspective can be glimpsed from looking at some of the section titles of this brilliant (and brave) compilation from Oxford World Classics: *The Sage as Beggar, A Shortcut to Philosophy and Virtue, The World of Illusion, Politicians and Rulers, Diogenes as Wit, Old Age & Death*, amongst others. Because the book is constructed using aphorisms and segments of works, it makes good sense to categorize the pieces into sections like these, and it really streamlines the message of Cynicism a great deal. Oxford has done a fantastic job in this volume of getting to the root of what Cynicism is all about without resorting to becoming a secondary source book. The material is made from actual quotes and snippets from the Ancient Authors themselves. The end notes of the volume are essential to grasping an understanding of the text and it is recommended that the reader cross-reference with the end notes for each passage. When I first saw this volume being produced, it was exciting to see a publishing house coming out with Cynic material instead of the next translation of the Iliad. We have enough Iliads; we need more volumes like this one. The Iliad is a great read, but reading about a figure like Diogenes is just as pleasurable. It may just change your life.

= When someone chided Diogenes on seeing him come out of a brothel, he said, "What's the matter then? Should I have been coming out of your house?" =Diogenes' "Sayings and Anecdotes: With Other Popular Moralists" arrived yesterday. This is only just released by Oxford University Press. In a word - wonderful. This is in the "must have" category for all dogs. Virtually all of the original Cynic writings and records have been obliterated - all that remains are small seeds of anecdote and aphorism scattered to the winds. There has never been a systemic effort to collate all the fragments in the one place in a coherent manner. This book does exactly that - it has sifted through all available literature to date and extracted the verified seeds and catalogued them by context and history. It not only lists all of the surviving scraps, but also all of the variants that have mutated. Superb. In fact, if you are new to the enlightenment of Cynicism (which is antithetical to

cynicism), this is probably the very best place to start.

Review of "Diogenes the Cynic: Sayings and Anecdotes with other Popular Moralists (A new translation)," by Robin Hard. The Oxford World's Classics edition includes an introduction, textual notes, bibliography with explanatory notes, and indexes of names and themes. This edition "also covers Diogenes' immediate successors, such as Crates, his wife Hipparcha, and the witty moral preacher Bion." Diogenes the Cynic "modeled himself on the example of Hercules. He believed that virtue was better revealed in action than in theory. He used his simple lifestyle and behavior to criticize the social values and institutions of what he saw as a corrupt society. He declared himself a cosmopolitan. There are many tales about him dogging Antisthenes' footsteps and becoming his faithful hound. Diogenes made a virtue of poverty. He begged for a living and slept in a large ceramic jar in the marketplace. He became notorious for his philosophical stunts such as carrying a lamp in the daytime, claiming to be looking for an honest man. He embarrassed Plato, disputed his interpretation of Socrates and sabotaged his lectures. Diogenes was also responsible for publicly mocking Alexander the Great. After being captured by pirates and sold into slavery, Diogenes eventually settled in Corinth. There he passed his philosophy of Cynicism to Crates, who taught it to Zeno of Citium, who fashioned it into the school of Stoicism, one of the most enduring schools of Greek philosophy. None of Diogenes' many writings has survived, but details of his life come in the form of anecdotes (chreia), especially from Diogenes Laërtius, in his book 'Lives and Opinions of Eminent Philosophers.' All that is left is a number of anecdotes concerning his life and sayings attributed to him in a number of scattered classical sources." Compared to Socrates, Diogenes then is one of the unsung rarely remembered philosophers of Ancient Greece. "The people of Athens called Diogenes 'the Dog' because he made the ground his bed and would spend the night in the streets in front of doors; but Diogenes liked this nickname because he saw that it was appropriate to the way in which he conducted himself. For he knew, as Plato recounts about the nature of dogs, that it is their way love those whom they know and to fawn on them, whilst they growl at those they do not know, and that they distinguish enemies from friends, not because they have any knowledge of good and evil, but because they either know people or do not know them." Diogenes should be remembered and praised for all time. This edition makes it so. "He said that education is a source of self-control for the young, a consolation for the old, a treasure for the poor, and an adornment for the rich." Five stars!

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