I.—DISSOI LOGOI OR DIALEXEIS

BY ROSAMOND KENT SPRAGUE

TWO-FOLD ARGUMENTS

I. Concerning Good and Bad

(1) Two-fold arguments concerning the good and the bad are put forward in Greece by those who philosophize. Some say that the good is one thing and the bad another, but others say that they are the same, and a thing might be good for some persons but bad for others, or at one time good and at another time bad for the same person. (2) I myself side with those who hold the latter opinion, and I shall examine it using as an example human life and its concern for food, drink, and sexual pleasures: these things are bad for a man if he is sick, but good if he is healthy and needs them. (3) And, further, incontinence in these matters is bad for the incontinent but good for those who sell these things and make a profit. And again, illness is bad for the sick but good for the doctors. And death is bad for those who die but good for the undertakers and gravediggers. (4) Farming, too, which produces good crops, is good for the farmers but bad for the merchants. Again, if trading-vessels are staved in or smashed

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1 The Dissoi Logoi is an anonymous sophistic treatise written in literary Doric at some time subsequent to the Peloponnesian War. (See I. 8) The following translation, which is believed to be the first complete version in English, is based on the text in Diels-Kranz, Die Fragmente der Vorso-kratiker, vol. II, pp. 405-16.

2 A preliminary version of the translation was distributed to the members of the Society for Ancient Greek Philosophy for criticism. The translator wishes to thank Professors George A. Kennedy, William O'Neill, Gilbert Ryle, Friedrich Solmsen and Leonard Woodbury for their valuable suggestions.

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up, this is bad for the master and owner but good for the ship-
buiders. (5) And further, if a tool is corroded or blunted or
broken, this is good for the blacksmith but bad for everyone else.
And certainly if a pot gets smashed, this is good for the potters,
but bad for everyone else. And if shoes are worn out and ripped
apart, this is good for the cobbler but bad for everyone else.
(6) And, further, take the case of various contests, athletic,
musical, and military: in a race in the stadium, for instance,
victory is good for the winner but bad for the losers. (7) The
same holds true for wrestlers and boxers, and for all those who
take part in musical contests: for instance, victory in lyre-
playing is good for the winner but bad for the losers. (8) In the
case of war (and I shall speak of the most recent events first)
the victory of the Spartans which they won over the Athenians
and their allies was good for the Spartans but bad for the Athenians
and their allies. And the victory which the Greeks won over the
Mede was good for the Greeks but bad for the barbarians.
(9) And again, the capture of Ilium was good for the Achaeans
but bad for the Trojans. And the same is true of the disasters
of the Thebans and the Argives. (10) And the battle between
the Centaurs and the Lapiths was good for the Lapiths but bad
for the Centaurs. And, what is more, the battle which we are
told took place between the gods and the giants (with the resulting
victory for the gods) was good for the gods but bad for the giants.
(11) But there is another argument which says that the good is
one thing and the bad another, and that as the name differs, so
does the thing named. And I too distinguish in this fashion;
I think it not be clear what was good and what was bad
if they were just the same and one did not differ from the other;
in fact such a situation would be extraordinary. (12) And I
think a person who says these things would be unable to answer
if anyone should question him as follows: “Just tell me, did
your parents ever do you any good?” He would answer, “Yes,
a great deal.” “Then you owe them for a great deal of evil if
the good is really the same as the bad.” (13) “Well then, did
you ever do your kinsmen any good?” “Yes, a great deal.”
“Then you were doing your kinsmen harm. Well then, did you
ever do your enemies harm?” “Yes, a great deal.” “Then
you did them the greatest goods.” (14) “Come and answer me
this: isn’t it the case that you are both pitying beggars because
they have many evils, and again counting them lucky because
they have many goods, if good and bad are really the same thing?”
(15) There is nothing to prevent the Great King from being in
the same state as a beggar. His many great goods are many
great evils if good and bad are the same. We can consider that these things have been said in every case. (16) I shall go through the individual cases, beginning with eating, drinking and sexual pleasures. For the sick these things are bad to do and again they are good for them to do, if good and bad are really the same. And for the sick it is bad to be ill and also good, if good is really the same as bad. (17) And this also holds for all the other cases which were mentioned in the previous argument. And I am not saying what the good is, but I am trying to explain that the bad and the good are not the same but that each is distinct from the other.

II. Concerning Seemly and Disgraceful

(1) Two-fold arguments are also put forward concerning the seemly and the disgraceful. Some say the seemly is one thing and the disgraceful another, and that as the name differs, so does the thing named, and others say that the seemly and disgraceful are the same. (2) And I shall try my hand by expounding the matter in the following way: for example, it is seemly for a boy in the flower of his youth to gratify a lover, but for him to gratify one who is not a lover is disgraceful. (3) And for women to wash themselves indoors is seemly, but for them to do so in the palaistra is disgraceful (although for men to do so in the palaistra and gymnasion is seemly.) (4) And to have intercourse with a man in a quiet place where the action will be concealed behind walls is seemly, but to do so outside, where someone will see, is disgraceful. (5) And for a women to have intercourse with her own husband is seemly, but to do so with another woman's husband is most shameful; and for a man to have intercourse with his own wife is seemly, but to do so with the wife of another is disgraceful. (6) And to adorn and powder oneself and wear gold ornaments is disgraceful in a man but seemly in a woman. (7) And it is seemly to do good to one's friends but disgraceful to do so to one's enemies. And it is disgraceful to run away from the enemy but seemly to run away from one's rivals in the stadium. (8) To murder one's friends and fellow-citizens is wicked but to slaughter the enemy is admirable. And examples like this can be given on all topics. (9) I go on to the things which cities and peoples regard as disgraceful. For instance: to the Spartans it is seemly that young girls should do athletics and go about with bare arms and no tunics, but to the Ionians this is disgraceful. (10) And to the former it is seemly for their children not to learn music and letters but to the Ionians it is disgraceful not to
know all these things.  (11) To the Thessalians it is seemly for a man to select horses and mules from a herd himself and train them, and also to take one of the cattle and slaughter, skin and cut it up himself, but in Sicily these tasks are disgraceful and the work of slaves.  (12) To the Macedonians it appears to be seemly for young girls, before they are married, to fall in love and to have intercourse with a man, but when a girl is married it is a disgrace. (As far as the Greeks are concerned it is disgraceful at either time.) (13) To the Thracians it is an ornament for young girls to be tattooed but with others tattoo-marks are a punishment for those who do wrong. And the Scythians think it seemly that who <ever> kills a man should scalp him and wear the scalp on his horse's bridle,\(^1\) and, having gilded the skull <or> lined it with silver, should drink from it and make a libation to the gods. Among the Greeks, no one would be willing to enter the same house as a man who had behaved like that.  (14) The Massagetes cut up their parents and eat them, and they think that to be buried in their children is the most beautiful grave imaginable, but in Greece, if anyone did such a thing, he would be driven out of the country and would die an ignominious death for having committed such disgraceful and terrible deeds.  (15) The Persians think it seemly that not only women but men should adorn themselves and that men should have intercourse with their daughters, mothers, and sisters, but the Greeks regard these things as disgraceful and against the law.  (16) And again, it strikes the Lydians as seemly that young girls should first earn money by prostituting themselves and then get married, but no one among the Greeks would be willing to marry a girl who did that.  (17) Egyptians do not think the same things seemly as other people do: in our country we regard it as seemly that the women should weave and work <in wool> but in theirs they think it seemly for the men to do so and for the women to do what the men do in ours. To moisten clay with the hands and dough with the feet is seemly to them but we do it just the other way round.  (18) And I think that if someone should order all men to make a single heap of everything that each of them regards as disgraceful and then again to take from the collection what each of them regards as seemly, not a thing <would> be left, but they would all divide up everything, because not all men are of the same opinion.  (19) And I shall offer some verses on the subject [TGF 844 adesp. 26]:

\(^1\) The Greek says "carry it in front of his horse", but see Herodotus IV, 64.
And if you investigate in this way, you will see another law for mortals: nothing is always seemly or always disgraceful, but the right occasion takes the same things and makes them disgraceful and then alters them and makes them seemly.

(20) To sum up, everything done at the right time is seemly and everything done at the wrong time is disgraceful. What have I then worked out? I said I would show that the same things are both disgraceful and seemly, and I have done so in all these cases.—(21) But there is also an argument about the disgraceful and <the> seemly which says that each is distinct from the other. Since if anyone should ask those who say that the same thing is both disgraceful and seemly whether they have ever done anything seemly,¹ they would admit that they have also done something disgraceful, if disgraceful and seemly are really the same thing. (22) And if they know any man to be handsome,² they would also know the same man to be ugly.³ And if they know any man to be white, they would also know the same man to be black. And it is seemly to honour the gods and again disgraceful to honour the gods, if disgraceful and seemly are really the same thing. (23) We can take it that I have made the same points in absolutely every case, and I shall turn to the argument which they put forward. (24) If it is seemly for a woman to adorn herself, then it is <also> disgraceful for a woman to adorn herself, if disgraceful and seemly are really the same thing. And all the other cases can be treated in the same way. (25) In Lacedaemon it is seemly for girls to do athletics; in Lacedaemon it is disgraceful for girls to do athletics, and so forth. (26) And they say that if a group of people should collect from all the nations of the world their disgraceful customs and then should call everyone together and tell each man to select what he thinks is seemly, everything would be taken away as belonging to the seemly things. I would be surprised if things which were disgraceful when they were collected should turn out to be seemly and not what they were when they came. (27) At least if people had brought horses or cows or sheep or men, they would not have taken away anything else. Nor, again, if they had brought gold would they have taken away brass, nor if they had brought silver would they have taken away lead. (28) Do they then take away seemly things in exchange for disgraceful ones? Now really, if anyone had brought an ugly <man>, would he take him away handsome?

¹ sc. “and they should say ‘yes’.”
² The Greek words are still kalon and aischron, but the seemly-disgraceful antithesis seems unsuitable here.
³ Ibid.
They give as witnesses the poets—<who> wrote to give pleasure and not for the sake of truth.

III. Concerning Just and Unjust

(1) Two-fold arguments are also put forward concerning the just and the unjust. And some say that the just is one thing and the unjust another, and others that the just and the unjust are the same. And I shall try to support this latter view. (2) And in the first place I shall argue that it is just to tell lies and to deceive. My opponents would declare that it is <right and just> to do these things to one's enemies but disgraceful and wicked to do so <to one's friends>. <But how is it just to do so to one's enemies> and not to one's dearest friends? Take the example of parents: suppose one's father or mother ought to drink or eat a remedy and is unwilling to do so, isn't it just to give the remedy in a gruel or drink and to deny that it is in it? (3) Therefore from this one example it is <just> to tell lies and to deceive one's parents. And, in fact, to steal the belongings of one's friends and to use force against those one loves most is just. (4) For instance, if a member of the household is in some sort of grief or trouble and intends to destroy himself with a sword or a rope or some other thing, it is right, isn't it,\(^1\) to steal these things, if possible, and, if one should come in too late and catch the person with the thing in his hand, to take it away by force? (5) And how is it not just to enslave one's enemies <and> to sell a whole city into slavery if one is able to capture it? And to break into the public buildings of one's fellow-citizens appears to be just. Because if one's father has been imprisoned and is under sentence of death as a result of having been overthrown by his political rivals, then isn't it just to dig your way in to remove your father stealthily and save him? (6) And what about breaking an oath: suppose a man is captured by the enemy and takes a firm oath that, if he is set free, he will betray his city: <would> this man do right if he kept his oath? (7) I don't think so, but rather if he <should> save his city and his friends and the temples of <his> fathers by breaking it. Thus it follows that it is right to break an oath. And it is right to plunder a temple. (8) I'm not talking about the civic temples but about these common to the whole of Greece, such as the ones at Delphi and Olympia: when the barbarian was on the point of conquering Greece, and the safety of the country lay in the temple funds, wasn't it right to take these

\(^1\) An affirmative answer is clearly required, although the Greek does not make this plain.
and use them for the war? (9) And to murder one's nearest and
dearest is right: in the case of Orestes and of Alcmæon, even the
god answered that they were right to have done as they did. (10)
I shall turn to the arts and to the writings of the poets. In
the writing of tragedies and in painting, who <ever> deceives the
most in creating things similar to the true, this man is the best.
(11) I want also to present the testimony of older poetry, of
Cleobulina, for instance [fr. 2 Anth. lyr. I 47 Diehl]:

I saw a man stealing and deceiving by force
And to do this by force was an action most just.

(12) These lines were written a long time ago. The next passages
are from Aeschylus [fr. 301, 302]:

God does not stand aloof from just deceit,
and

There are times when god respects an opportunity for lies.

(13) But to this too an opposite argument is put forward: that
the just and the unjust are different things, and that as the name
differs, so does the thing named. For instance, if anyone should
ask those who say that unjust and just are the same whether
they have yet done anything just for their parents, they will say
yes. But then they have done something unjust, because they
admit that unjust and just are the same thing. (14) Now
take another case: if you know some man to be just, then you
know the same man to be also unjust, and again if you know a
man to be large, you also know him to be small, by the same argu-
ment. And <if> the sentence is pronounced, "let him die the
defath for having done many acts of injustice", then let him die
the death for having done <many acts of justice>. (15) Enough
on these topics: I shall go on to what is said by those who claim
to prove that just and unjust are the same. (16) To state that
to steal the enemy's possessions is just, would also show the same
action to be unjust if their argument is true, and so in the other
cases. (17) And they bring in the arts, to which just and unjust
do not apply. As for the poets, they write their poems to give
men pleasure and not for the sake of truth.

IV. Concerning Truth and Falsehood

(1) Two-fold arguments are also put forward concerning the false
and the true, concerning which one person says that a false state-
ment is one thing and a true statement another, while others say
the true statement is the same as the false. (2) And I hold the
latter view: in the first place because they are both expressed in the same words, and secondly, because whenever a statement is made, if things \(<\text{should}\) turn out to be as stated, then the statement is true, but if they should not turn out to be as stated, the same statement is false. (3) Suppose the statement accuses a certain man of temple-robery: if the thing actually happened, the statement is true, but if it did not happen, it is false. And the same argument is used by a man defending himself against such a charge. And the law-courts judge the same statement to be both true and false. (4) And again suppose we are all sitting in a row and each of us says "I am an initiate," we all utter the same words, but I would be the only person making a true statement since I am the only person who is one. (5) From these remarks it is clear that the same statement is false at the time when falsehood is present in it and true at the time when truth is present (just the way a man is the same person when he is a child and a young man and an adult and an old man.)\(^1\) (6) But it is also said that a false statement is one thing and a true statement another, and that as the name differs, \(<\text{so does the thing named}>\). Because if anyone should ask those who say that the same statement is both false and true whether their own statement is false or true, if they answer "false" then it is clear that the true and false are two different things, and if they answer "true," then this same statement is also false. And if anyone ever says or bears witness that certain things are true, then these same things are also false. And if he knows some man to be true, he knows the same man to be false. (7) As a result of the argument they say that if a thing comes to pass, the statement they make is true, but if it does not, then the statement is false. If so, it isn't the name that differs in these cases but the thing named. (8) And, again, if anyone should ask jurymen what they are judging (because they are not present at the events), (9) even they themselves agree that that in which falsehood is mingled is false, and that in which\(^2\) truth is mingled is true. This constitutes a total difference. . . .

V. [No Title]

(1) "The demented and the sane and the wise and the foolish both say and do the same things. (2) And in the first place they use the same names for things, such as 'earth' and 'man' and

\(^1\) According to DK's notes, Wilamowitz places the contents of this parenthesis at the end of V, 4. I cannot see that it makes much better sense there.

\(^2\) DK has δ, which appears to be a misprint for Δ.
horse' and 'fire' and all the rest. And they do the same things: they sit and eat and drink and lie down, and so forth. (3) And, furthermore, the same thing is larger and smaller and more and less and heavier and lighter. Thus all things are the same. (4) A talent is heavier than a mina and lighter than two talents; therefore the same thing is both heavier and lighter. (5) And the same man is both alive and not alive, and the same things both are and are not: the things that are here are not in Libya, nor are the things in Libya in Cyprus. And the same argument takes care of the other cases. Therefore things both are and are not."

Those who say these things (that the demented <and the sane, and> the wise and the foolish do and say the same things) and maintain the other consequences of the argument, are mistaken. (7) Because if you ask them this sort of question, whether madness differs from sense, or wisdom from folly, they say "yes". (8) For each of them makes it pretty well clear even from his actions that he will agree. Therefore, if they<sup>2</sup> do the same things, both the wise are demented and the demented wise, and everything will be thrown into confusion. (9) And we ought to bring up the question whether it is the same or the demented who speak at the right moment. For whenever anyone asks this question they answer that the two groups say the same things, but that the wise speak at the right moment and the demented at the wrong one. (10) And in saying this, they appear to be making a small addition, "<the> right moment" or "the wrong one," so that the situation is no longer the same. (11) I, however, think that things are not altered by such a small addition, although they can be altered by a change of accent, for instance: Ἰλαῦκος ("Glauce") and γλαῦκος ("white"), or Ξάνθος ("Xanthus") and ξανθός ("blonde"), or Ξυθός ("Xuthus") and ξούθος ("nimble"). (12) These examples differ from each other by a change in accent, the next ones by whether they are pronounced with a long or short vowel: Τύρος (Tyre) and τύρος ("cheese"), σάκος ("shield") and σάκος ("enclosure"), and still others differ by a change in the order of the letters: κάρτος ("strength") and κρατός ("of the head"); ὅνος ("ass") and νόος ("mind"). (13) Since there is such a great difference in cases in which nothing is taken away, what about those in which someone does add or take away something? And I shall show in this next example what sort of thing I mean. (14) If someone takes one from ten, <or adds one to ten>, the result is no longer either ten or one, and so forth. (15) With respect to the assertion that the same man

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<sup>1</sup> See above, n. 2.  
<sup>2</sup> I.e. the wise and the demented.
both is and is not, I put the following question: "Does he exist
with respect to some particular thing, or just in general?"
Then if someone denies that the man exists, he is mistaken, because
he is treating (the particular and) universal senses as being the
same. Because everything exists in some sense.

VI. Concerning Wisdom and Virtue, Whether they are teachable
(1) A certain statement is put forward which is neither true nor
new: it is that wisdom and virtue can neither be taught nor
learned. And those who say this use the following proofs: (2)
That it is not possible, if you were to hand a thing over to some-
one else, for you still to have this thing; this is one proof. (3)
Another proof is, that, if they had been teachable, there would
have been acknowledged teachers of them, as in the case of music.
(4) A third proof is, that the men in Greece who became wise
would have taught their art to their friends. (5) A fourth proof
is, that before now some have been to the sophists and derived
no benefit from them. (6) A fifth proof is, that many who have not
associated with the sophists have become notable. (7) But
I think this statement is very simple-minded: I know that
teachers teach letters, these being the things a teacher knows,
and that lyre-players teach lyre-playing. In answer to the
second proof, that there are in fact no acknowledged teachers,
whatever else do the sophists teach except wisdom and virtue?
(8) And what were the followers of Anaxagoras and Pythagoras?
With respect to the third point, Polycleitus taught his son to be a
sculptor. (9) And even if a particular man did not teach, this
would not prove anything, but if a single man did teach, this
would be evidence that teaching is possible. (10) With respect
to the fourth point, that some do not become wise in spite of
associating with the sophists, many people also do not succeed
in learning their letters in spite of studying them. (11) There
does exist also a natural bent by means of which a person who
does not study with the sophists becomes competent, if he is well-
endowed, to master most things easily after learning a few
elements from the very persons from whom we also learn our
words. As for our words, one man learns more from his father
and fewer from his mother, and another man the other way
around. (12) And if someone is not persuaded that we learn our
words but thinks we are born knowing them, let him form a judg-
ment from what follows: if someone should send a child away
to the Persians as soon as he was born and should bring him up
there, hearing nothing of the Greek tongue, he would speak
Persian. And if one were to bring a Persian child here, he would speak Greek. We learn our words in this fashion and we don't know who our teachers are. (13) Thus my argument is complete, and you have its beginning, middle and end. And I don't say that wisdom and virtue are teachable, but that these proofs do not satisfy me.

VII. [No Title]

(1) Some of the popular orators say that offices should be assigned by lot, but their opinion is not the best. (2) Suppose someone should question the man who says this as follows: Why don't you assign your household slaves their tasks by lot, so that if the teamster drew the office of cook, he would do the cooking and the cook would drive the team, and so with the rest? (3) And why don't we get together the smiths and cobbler's, and the carpenters and goldsmiths, and have them draw lots, and force each one to engage in whatever trade he happens to draw and not the one he understands? (4) The same thing could also be done in musical contests: have the contestants draw lots and have each one compete in the contest he draws; thus the flute-player will play the lyre if that falls to his lot, and the lyre-player the flute. And in battle it may turn out that archers and hoplites will ride horseback and the cavalry-man will use the bow, with the result that everyone will do what he does not understand and is incapable of doing. (5) And they say that this procedure is also not only good but exceptionally democratic, whereas I think that democratic is the last thing it is. Because there are in cities men hostile to the demos, and if the lot falls to them, they will destroy the demos. (6) But the demos itself ought to keep its eyes open and elect all those who are well-disposed towards it, and ought to choose suitable people to be in command of the army and others to be the law-officers, and so on.

VIII. [No Title]

(1) I think it belongs to (the same man) and to the same art to be able to discourse in the brief style and to understand (the) truth of things and to know how to give a right judgment in the law courts and to be able to make public speeches and to understand the art of rhetoric and to teach concerning the nature of all things, their state and how they came to be. (2) And, first of all, how will it not be possible for a man who knows about the nature of all things to act rightly in every case and (teach the city) to do so too? (3) And, further, the man who knows the
art of rhetoric will also know how to speak correctly on every subject. (4) Because it is necessary for the man who intends to speak correctly to speak about the things which he knows. It follows that he will know everything. (5) The reason for this is that he knows the art of all forms of speech, and all forms of speech (have for their subject 'matter') everything that (exists). (6) It is necessary for the man who intends to speak correctly to have a knowledge of whatever <things> he might discuss and to give the city correct instruction in doing good things and thus prevent it from doing bad ones. (7) If he knows these things he will also know the things which differ from them, because he will know everything. For the same things are the elements of everything, and <a man> confronted with the same thing will do what is necessary if occasion arises. (8) And if he knows how to play the flute, he will always be able to play the flute, whenever it is necessary to do this. (9) And a man who knows how to give a judgment ought to have a right understanding of the just, because this is what cases are about. And if he knows the just, he will also know its opposite and the things which differ from <both of these>. (10) It is also necessary for him to know all the laws; if, therefore, he is not going to know what goes on, he won't know the laws either. (11) The same man who knows the rules of music is the one who knows music, but if he doesn't know music he won't know its rules. (12) If a man <nevertheless> knows the truth of things, the argument readily follows that he knows everything; (13) and so he is <also> <able to discourse> in the brief style on all subjects, <whenever> he has to answer questions. Therefore it must be that he knows everything.

IX. [No Title]

(1) The greatest and fairest discovery has been found to be memory; it is useful for everything, for wisdom as well as for the conduct of life. (2) This is the first step: if you focus your attention, your mind, making progress by this means, will perceive more. (3) The second step is to practice whatever¹ you hear. If you hear the same things many times and repeat them, what you have learned presents itself to your memory as a connected whole. (4) The third step is: whenever you hear something, connect it with what you know already. For instance, suppose you need to remember the name "Chrysippos", you must connect it with *chrusos* (gold) and *hippos* (horse). (5) Or another example: if you need to remember the name

¹ Reading ἀ κα with Blass.
“Pyrilampes” you must connect it with *pyr* (fire) and *lampein* (to shine). These are examples for words. (6) In the case of things, do this: if you want to remember courage, think of Ares and Achilles, or metal working, of Hephaistos, or cowardice, of Epeios... . . .

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