

DUAL CLAIMS¹

1. Concerning good and bad²

1. Dual claims are made in Greece by those who philosophize about the good and the bad. For some say that the good is one thing and the bad is another, while others say that they are the same and that what may be good for some may be bad for others and that for the same person a thing may be good at one time and bad at another.

2. I myself side with the latter, and I will consider their claim in terms of human life and its concern with food, drink, and sex. For these things are bad for one who is sick, but good for one who is healthy and one who needs them. 3. In addition, lack of self-control over these things is bad for those who lack self-control, but good for those who sell and make money from them. Also, illness is bad for those who are sick, but good for the doctors. And death is bad for those who die, but good for the undertakers and the gravediggers.

4. In addition, farming, when it has produced fine crops, is good for the farmers and bad for the merchants. Also, when merchant ships wear out and break down, it is bad for the shipowner, but good for the shipwrights. 5. Further, when an iron tool corrodes, becomes blunt, and wears out, it is bad for others, but good for the smith. Also, when a ceramic pot breaks, it is bad for others, but good for the potters. And when shoes wear down and tear, it is bad for others, but good for the shoemaker.

6. In addition, in contests, athletic, musical, and martial – to begin with, in the athletic contest of stadium running, victory is good for the one who is victorious, but bad for those who lose. 7. Likewise also wrestlers and boxers and all other musicians – to begin with, victory in cithar playing and singing is good for the one who is victorious, but bad for those who lose.

8. And in war – I will first speak of the one that occurred most recently – the victory of the Spartans and defeat of the Athenians and their allies was good for the Spartans, but bad for the Athenians and for their allies. And the victory of the Greeks over Persia was good for the Greeks, but bad for the barbarians. 9. Further, the capture of Ilium was good for the Achaians, but bad for the Trojans. Likewise what happened to the Thebans and Argives was also the same. 10. And the battle of the Centaurs and Lapiths was good for the Lapiths, but bad for the Centaurs. And also the so-called battle of the gods and Giants; victory was good for the gods, but bad for the Giants.

11. But another claim is made: that the good is one thing and the bad is another and that just as the name differs, so too does the thing. And I myself also distinguish them in this way. For I think it would not at all be clear what sort of thing is good and what sort of thing is bad if each were the same and not different – that would be amazing.

12. And I think that he who was committed to this claim would not be able to answer if someone said the following things to him: "Tell me now, have your parents ever done you some good?" He would say: "Indeed, a great deal." "Therefore, you owe them a great deal of harm, if in fact the good is the same as the bad." 13. "And what about this — did you ever do your relatives some good?" "Yes, a great deal." "So then, you did your relatives harm. And have you ever done

¹ This title is derived from the first two words of the main text (*dissoi logoi*). It is not in the manuscript tradition and owes to late nineteenth and early twentieth century editors.

² Section and subsection numbers follow DK. Section headers for sections 1-4, e.g., "Concerning good and bad," are editorial additions in the manuscript tradition. The manuscript tradition does not recognize divisions of sections 5-9; these owe to modern editors.

your enemies harm?" "Yes, a great deal." "Then you did them the greatest good." 14. "Come now and answer me also this. Do you not pity beggars since they suffer many bad things, but at the same time consider them prosperous since they are doing very well – if in fact the same thing is bad and good?" 15. "And nothing prevents the Great King from being in the same condition as beggars. For his many and great goods are many and great bad things, if the same thing is good and bad. And let the same be said of every case."

16. I will go through each case, beginning with eating, drinking, and having sex. For these harm those who are sick, but again they benefit them, if the same thing is good and bad. And being sick is bad, but also good for those who are sick, if indeed that which is good is the same thing as that which is bad. 17. And this also holds for all the other cases, which were mentioned in the preceding account.

But I am not saying what the good is. Rather, I am trying to teach that the bad and the good are not the same, but different from one another.

2. Concerning admirable and shameful

1. Concerning the admirable and the shameful, dual claims are also made. For some say that the admirable is one thing and the shameful is another and that just as the name differs, so too does the thing. But some say that the same thing is admirable and shameful.

2. And I myself will try to explain the (latter) claim in the following way. For example, it is admirable for a boy in the bloom of youth to gratify a beneficent lover, but it is shameful for him to gratify a non-lover. 3. And it is admirable for women to bathe indoors, but shameful for them to bathe in a wrestling school. But for men it is admirable to bathe in a wrestling school and in a gymnasium. 4. And for a woman to have intercourse with her husband in private, where she will be concealed by walls, is admirable; but outside, where someone will see, is shameful. 5. And for women to have intercourse with their husband is admirable, but with another man is most shameful. And for a man to have intercourse with his wife is admirable; but with another man's wife is shameful. 6. And to adorn oneself and use white lead and put on gold jewelry is shameful for a man, but admirable for a woman. 7. And to benefit one's friends is admirable, but to benefit one's enemies is shameful. And to run away from one's enemies in war is shameful, but to run away from one's competitors in a foot race is admirable. 8. And to kill one's friends and fellow citizens is shameful, but to kill one's enemies in war is admirable. And these things can be said about all cases.

9. I will turn to what city-states and peoples regard as shameful. Among the Spartans, for girls to exercise and to go around without sleeves and tunics is admirable. But for the Ionians it is shameful. 10. And among the Spartans, for children not to learn music and writing is admirable. But among the Ionians for children not to know all these things is shameful. 11. Among the Thessalians it is admirable for a man to take horses and mules from a herd and to break them himself. And it is admirable for him to take an ox and to slaughter, skin, and butcher it. But in Sicily this is shameful and the work of slaves. 12. The Macedonians think it is admirable for girls, before they are married, to fall in love and have intercourse with a man; but when they are married, it is shameful. The Greeks think that both are shameful. 13. Among the Thracians, it is an adornment for girls to be tattooed. But for others these markings are punishments for those who break the law. And the Scythians think it is admirable for anyone who has killed a man to scalp him and carry the scalp on the front of his horse. And having coated the skull with gold and silver, he may drink from it and pour a libation to the gods. Among the Greeks, no one would be willing to enter the same house as someone who did these things. 14. The Massagetai cut up their parents and eat them, and they think that the finest funeral is to be buried inside one's children. But in Greece, if someone did these

things, he would be driven from Greece and would die an awful death, since he did shameful and horrible things. 15. The Persians think it is admirable for men to adorn themselves just as women do, and they think it is admirable for a man to have intercourse with his daughter, mother, and sister. But the Greeks think these things are shameful and lawless. 16. The Lydians think it is admirable for girls to make money by prostituting themselves and then to get married. Among the Greeks, no one would be willing to marry such a girl. 17. The Egyptians do not think that the same things are admirable as others. For here it is admirable for women to weave and work in wool; but there it is admirable for the men to do these things; and what the women do there, the men do here. And those people think it is admirable to moisten clay with their hands and wheat with their feet, whereas we think the opposite.

18. And I think that if someone commanded all human beings to bring together into one place what they regard as shameful, and again from these heaps to take the things that each regarded as admirable, nothing would be left; but everyone would take everything; for they do not all consider the same things to be admirable and shameful. 19. And I will also offer some poetry relating to this:

For you will see this other law for mortals, if you discern well.
Nothing is admirable in every way, nor shameful.
But occasion takes the same things and makes them shameful
and changing them makes them admirable.

20. In sum, all things are admirable in the right circumstance, and shameful in the wrong circumstance. So, what have I achieved? I said I would show that the same things are shameful and admirable. And I have shown this in all these cases.

21. It is also said about the shameful and the admirable that each is different from the other. For if someone were to ask those who say that the same thing is shameful and admirable if ever something admirable has been done to them, they will (be compelled to) agree that it was also shameful, if in fact the shameful and the admirable are the same thing. 22. And if they know that some man is admirable, they also know that this same man is shameful.³ And if they know that someone is white, they also know that this same man is black. And it is admirable to worship the gods, and again it is shameful to worship the gods, if indeed the same thing is shameful and admirable. 23. And grant that I have said these things concerning all cases.

I will turn to the claim that they make. 24. For if it is admirable for a woman to adorn herself, it is also shameful for a woman to adorn herself – if indeed the same thing is shameful and admirable. And the same holds for the rest in the same way.

25. In Sparta, it is admirable for girls to exercise; in Sparta it is shameful for girls to exercise. And the same holds for the rest likewise.

26. They say that if some men were to assemble shameful things from all peoples everywhere, and then having called the peoples together to command them to take whatever anyone considered admirable, all admirable things would be taken away. I myself would be amazed if the shameful things, having been brought together, would be admirable and that they would not be just as they were brought in. 27. At least, if they brought in horses, oxen, sheep, or human beings, they would not have led away anything else. Nor if they had brought in gold would they carry away bronze in its place; nor if they had brought in silver, would they carry away lead. 28. Do they then

³ "Handsome" and "ugly" would probably be better translations of the Greek terms *kalon* and *aischron* here. Either the Greek terms are polysemous or their meanings are broader than admirable and shameful. But no single English translation is satisfactory.

carry away admirable things in in place shameful things? Come now, if someone brings in a shameful man, would he then take him away as admirable?⁴

And they appeal to the poets as witnesses, who create for pleasure, not for truth.

3. Concerning just and unjust

1. Dual claims are made about the just and the unjust. For some say that the just is one thing and the unjust is another, while others say that the same thing is just and unjust. And I myself will try to support the latter claim.

2. First, I will say that it is just to lie and to deceive. One might think that it would be admirable and just to do these things to one's enemies, but shameful and base to do these things to one's friends. But how is it just to do these things to one's enemies, but not to those closest to one? For example, consider one's parents. If it is necessary for one's father or mother to drink or eat some medicine, but they are unwilling, is it not just to give them the medicine in porridge or in a drink and not to say that it is in there? 3. Therefore, in this case it is also just to lie and to deceive one's parents. And it is also just to steal one's friend's property and to do violence to those closest to one. 4. For example, if someone from one's household, being in a state of grief over something and distraught, intends to kill himself with a sword or rope or some other thing, it is just to steal these things, if it is possible; and if one arrives too late and catches the person holding the object to take it away by force.

5. And how is it not just to enslave one's enemies, if one is able to seize a whole city and sell it into slavery? And it is just to break into the public buildings of one's fellow citizens. For if as a consequence of civil strife one's father is facing execution and has been imprisoned by his enemies, is it not just to dig through the wall and steal away and save him?

6. And oath-breaking is just. If someone has been captured by his enemies in war and takes an oath that if he is set free he will betray his city-state, would this man act justly by keeping his oath? 7. I myself do not think so. Rather, I think he should save his city-state and friends and ancestral temples by breaking his oath. So, in this case it is also just to break one's oath.

And it is just to rob temples. 8. I am ignoring here the temples of one's own city-states. I am speaking of the common temples of Greece, those of Delphi and Olympia. For when the barbarian was intent on capturing Greece and salvation lay in the temple funds, was it not just to take them and use them for the war?

9. It is just to kill those closest to one. For both Orestes and Alcmaion did. And the divine declared in an oracle that they acted justly.

10. And I will turn to the crafts and the works of the poets. For in composing tragedy and in painting, whoever deceives the most by making things similar to the truth, this person is best.

11. And I want to introduce as a witness one of the more ancient poems, that of Cleobuline:

I saw a man forcefully stealing and deceiving,
And his achievement of this by force was the most just thing.

12. Those verses were ancient. But the following ones are from Aeschylus:

The divine does not refrain from just deception.

and:

⁴ See note 3.

There is a time when the divine honors the right circumstance for lies.

13. A claim opposed to this is also made: that the just is one thing and the unjust is another; and that as the name differs, so too does the thing. For if someone were to ask those who say that the same thing is unjust and just if they have ever done something just with regard to their parents, they will agree. Then they have also done something unjust. For they agree that the same thing is unjust and just.

14. Consider another case then. If you know that some man is just, then you know that the same man is unjust. And so, by the same argument you know that the same man is both great and small. And if it is said "having done great injustice let him die," then let him die having also accomplished much that is just.

15. But enough about these things. I will come to what they say who claim to prove that the same thing is just and unjust. 16. For one can prove that to steal the property of one's enemies is just and that this same thing is unjust, if the argument of these people is true; and the rest in the same way.

17. And they introduce the crafts, in which the just and the unjust do not exist. And the poets do not create their poems for the sake of truth, but for the sake of giving human beings pleasures.

4. Concerning true and false

1. Concerning the false and the true, dual claims are also made. One of these states that a false claim is one thing and a true claim is another, while the other states that they are the same.

2. And I myself also endorse the latter. First, they are both spoken with the same words. Then, whenever a claim is made, if as the claim is made so the event has taken place, the claim is true; but if it has not taken place, then the same claim is false. 3. For example, a claim accuses someone of temple robbery. If the act occurred, the claim is true. But if it did not occur, the claim is false. And the same claim is used by the defendant. And the law-courts judge the same claim false and true.

4. Furthermore, if, sitting next to one another, each of us says, "I am an initiate," all of us say the same thing; but only I say what is true, since indeed I am an initiate. 5. Therefore, it is clear that the same claim, whenever the false is present to it, is false; but whenever the true is present to it, it is true – just as a human being is the same thing as a child, an adolescent, a man, and an old man.

6. It is also said that a false claim is one thing and a true claim is another, and that just as the name differs, so too does the thing. For if someone were to ask those who say that the same claim is false and true whether this is what they themselves are saying,⁵ if they say that it is false,⁶ then it is clear that the true and the false are two different things. But if they say that it is true, then this same reply is also false. And if someone ever says something true or testifies that something is true, then these same things are also false. And if one knows that some man is true, (he knows that) the same man is also false.⁷

7. On the basis of their claim, they say these things, that a claim is true when the event occurs, and false when the event does not occur. So, it is not the language of the claims that differs, but the event.

⁵ i.e., that their own claim is true and false.

⁶ i.e., if they say that it is false that their own claim is both true and false.

⁷ In this sentence, the Greek terms *alethēs* and *psenstas* appear to mean "honest" and "dishonest."

8. And further, if someone were to ask the jurors what they judge (for they are not present to the events), 9. and they themselves agree that if the false is mixed in with it, it is false, whereas if the true is mixed in with it, it is true. This differs entirely.⁸

5.⁹

1. The insane and the sound-minded and the wise and the ignorant say and do the same things. 2. First, they use the same words: earth, human being, horse, fire, and all the rest. And they do the same things: they sit, eat, drink, lie down, and all the rest in the same way.

3. Furthermore, the same thing is larger and smaller, greater and lesser, and heavier and lighter. For in this way all things are the same. 4. A talent is heavier than a mina and lighter than two talents. And so, the same thing is both lighter and heavier. 5. And the same man lives and does not live. And the same things both are and are not. For the things that are here are not in Libya. Nor are the things in Libya in Cyprus. And the rest conforms to the same claim. Therefore, things both are and are not.

6. Those who say these things, that the insane and the sound-minded and the wise and the ignorant do and say the same things, and the other things that follow from the claim, do not speak correctly. 7. For if someone asks them if insanity differs from sound-mindedness and wisdom from ignorance, they say, "Yes." 8. For each group is clearly distinct on the basis of their actions, as they will agree. Therefore, if they do the same things, the wise are insane and the insane are wise, and all things will be confused.

9. One should also raise the question whether the sound-minded or the insane speak when it is appropriate. For whenever someone asks them, they say that the wise and the insane say the same things. But the wise speak when it is appropriate, whereas the insane speak when it is not appropriate. 10. And in saying this, they appear to add something small, "when it is appropriate and not," so that it is no longer the same thing.

11. I myself do not think that things are altered so much when a thing is added, but by the change of a tone; for example, "*Glaukos*" and "*glaukós*" and "*Xanthos*" and "*xanthós*" and "*Xouthos*" and "*xouthós*."¹⁰ 12. These things differ when the accent is changed, whereas some things that are spoken differ through lengthening or shortening the vowel: "*Turos*" and "*turós*" and "*sakos*" and "*sakós*." And others are changed through alteration of the order of the letters: "*kartos*" and "*kratos*" and "*onos*" and "*noos*."¹¹

13. Therefore, since the difference is so great when nothing is taken away, how will it be if someone adds or takes away something. And I will show what this is like. 14. If someone takes away one from ten or adds one to ten, no longer would it be ten or one, and similarly in other cases.

15. And with respect to the same person both being and not being, I ask, "Do you mean in some way or in all ways?" Therefore, if someone were to deny that he is, he speaks falsely, if he says that some way and all ways are the same things. For all things exist in some way.

⁸ These lines seem corrupt.

⁹ The logic or argumentative integrity of the text is particularly degraded in this subsection. I presume this owes to the transmission of the text. Here, as throughout, I have attempted to render the Greek faithfully, with minimal attempt to salvage or ameliorate the author's logic or argumentation.

¹⁰ "*Glaukos*" is a proper name; "*glaukós*" means gleaming. "*Xanthos*" is a proper name; "*xanthós*" means golden-haired. "*Xouthos*" is a proper name; "*xouthós*" means yellowish.

¹¹ "*Turos*" is a proper name; "*turós*" means cheese. "*sakos*" means shield; "*sakós*" means pen or enclosure. "*kartos*" means endurance; "*kratos*" means power. "*onos*" means donkey; "*noos*" means thought or mind.

6.

1. A claim is made that is neither true nor novel, that wisdom and goodness are neither teachable nor learnable. And those who say these things employ the following arguments. 2. That it is not possible if you transmit something to someone to still retain that thing. This is one argument. 3. And there are others – that if they were teachable, there would be demonstrated teachers, as there are in the case of music. 4. A third argument is that those men in Greece who have become wise would have taught their friends their skill. 5. A fourth argument is that some have gone to sophists but received no benefit. 6. A fifth argument is that many who have not associated with sophists have become estimable speakers.

7. But I myself think this last claim is very simple-minded. For I know that there are teachers who teach letters, which are also things that the teacher himself knows. And lyre-players teach lyre-playing. Regarding the second proof that there are no demonstrated teachers, what do the sophists teach if not wisdom and goodness? 8. And what about the Anaxagoreans and Pythagoreans? Third, Polycleitus taught his son to make statues. 9. And if someone has not taught others, it is not a sign (that it is not possible to teach others). But if one someone has taught others, it is an indication that it is possible to teach others. 10. Fourth, if some do not become wise despite having gone to sophists, there are many who have not learned their letters despite having they studied them. 11. And there is also a certain natural ability in virtue of which one who has not learn from sophists may still become competent – at least if he has the natural ability to grasp many things with ease, after having learned only a few things from those whom we learn our words. And these, one person may learn more or less from one's father and another from one's mother.

12. And if someone doubts that we learn our words, but thinks that one is born knowing them, let him consider the following. If someone were to send away a child, as soon as he had been born, to the Persians and to raise him there without ever hearing the Greek language, he would learn to speak Persian. And if someone were to bring him from there to here, he would speak Greek. In this way, we learn our words, without even knowing who our teachers are.

13. So, I have presented my account, and you have the beginning and end and middle. And I am not saying that they are teachable, but those proofs do not convince me.

7.

1. Some of the public speakers say that it is necessary for civic offices to be allocated by lot; but their thought about these things is not the best. 2. For if someone were to ask a man who said those things, "Why do you not assign your domestic slaves their tasks by lot, so that if an ox-cart driver drew the lot of a cook, he would cook, and the cook would drive the cart, and the rest in the same way?" 3. And why is it that we do not assemble bronzesmiths and leather smiths and carpenters and goldsmiths and draw lots and require each to work at whatever skill he draws, rather than the one in which he has knowledge? 4. And the same thing in musical contests — the competitors would draw lots, and whatever lot each one draws he competes in that contest. A flute-player will play the lyre, if he happens to choose that lot, and a lyre-player will play the flute. And in war, an archer and a hoplite will ride in the cavalry, and a cavalryman will be archer; so that all will do things that they lack knowledge of and are unable to do.

5. But they say that (this way of assigning civic offices) is good and extremely democratic. I myself think it is least democratic. For in all city-states there are individuals who are hostile to the people, and if the lot falls to them, they will destroy the people. 6. But it is necessary for the people themselves to be watchful and to choose all who are well-minded toward them, and to choose

suitable individuals to serve as generals, and others to be guardians of the law and the remaining cases.

8.

1. I think it is characteristic of the same man and the same skill to be able to speak briefly and to know the truth of things and to know how to conduct a lawsuit correctly and to be able to make public speeches and to have verbal skills and to be able to teach (others) about the nature of all things, how they are and how they came to be.

2. First, the person who knows the nature of all things, how will he not be able to act correctly in all cases and to instruct the city-state? 3. In addition, he who has verbal skills will know how to speak correctly about all things. 4. For it is necessary for one who is going to speak correctly to speak about those things that he knows. And he will know about all things; 5. for he has verbal skills, and all words concern all the things that exist.

6. And it is necessary for one who is going to speak correctly to know about the things that he speaks, and to teach the city-state correctly to do good things, and to prevent it from doing bad things likewise. 7. And he who knows these things will also know the opposites of them, for he will know all things. For the same things are those of all things; and he will do what is necessary in relation to the same thing if it is necessary.¹² 8. And if one knows how to play the flute, he will always be able to play the flute, if the need to do this arises.

9. And it is necessary for a man who knows how to conduct a lawsuit to have correct knowledge of what is just. For lawsuits concern this. And knowing this, he will know the opposite of this and what is different from these things.

10. And it is necessary for him to also know all the laws. But if he doesn't know the facts, he won't know the laws either. 11. For the same man knows the rules in music who knows music;¹³ and he who does not know music does not know the rules either.

12. And whoever knows the truth of things, the claim readily follows that he knows all things. 13. So, he is able to speak briefly, if it is necessary for him, when asked, to respond concerning all things. Therefore, it is necessary for him to know all things.

9.

1. The greatest and finest invention that has been discovered is memory, useful for all things, both for wisdom and for life.

2. This is the first thing. If you direct your thought, proceeding through these things, your mind will perceive more. 3. The second thing is that you must practice whenever you hear something. Since for someone who has heard and said the same things many times, what you have learned comes to be present in memory as a whole. 4. Third, whatever you hear, connect it to things you know, for example, as follows. If you have to remember Chrysippus, connect it to gold (*chrysoi*) and to horse (*hippos*). 5. Another example. Connect Pyrilampes to fire (*pyr*) and to shining (*lampein*). These are examples for names. 6. In the case of things, proceed in the following way. In the case of courage, connect it with Ares and Achilles. In the case of metal-working, connect it with Hephaistus. In the case of cowardice, connect it to Epeius.¹⁴

¹² These lines seem irredeemably corrupt.

¹³ Here and in the following clause "rules" translates the Greek term *nomos*, which elsewhere I have rendered as "law."

¹⁴ The manuscript abruptly terminates here.