

Translation of excerpt of William of Hedon's *Tractatus de anima*

Parallel text and translation by Michael Stenskjær Christensen, made for the seminar within the Forschungskolloquium Kirchengeschichte, Faculty of Theology, University of Basel, Friday 19 October 2018.

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Distinction three, chapter six: Whether the intellect knows itself and how the same thing can be a sign of itself, arguments attacking that and further arguments refuting them.

Distinctio tertia, capitulum sextum: Utrum intellectus seipsum intelligat et qualiter idem contingat esse signum sui et quid contra hoc et ad hoc dici conveniat

10 From the preceding we see that the intellect, the knower and the thing known are the same. Against this somebody ignorant of philosophy usually raises objections, which we will present in order to be able to refute them. They therefore say, as if it were entirely impossible, that it follows from this that one and the same thing will be sign and signified in the same respect both before and after by itself and such similar things.

Ex praemissis habemus idem esse intellectum et intellectionem et rem intellectam, contra quod obici solet a quibusdam philosophicae facultatis ignaris quorum oppositiones, ut refellantur, proponamus. Dicunt ergo quasi pro magno inconvenienti quod inde sequitur unum et idem esse signum et signatum respectu eiusdem et prius ac posterius se ipso et huiusmodi.

C 134va, O 92ra

⟨Initial objections⟩

1.1 ⟨Argument: An instrument

⟨Rationes principales⟩

1.1 ⟨Text omitted⟩

cannot affect itself, the intellect is analogous to an instrument, hence the intellect cannot affect (and hence know) itself.)

5 1.2 Further, they want to argue the point by reducing it to a false or impossible point in this way: If a part cannot establish a knowledge about its whole, then it
10 is so much more impossible for the same thing to establish a knowledge of itself. They want to prove the antecedent premise by using insoluble terms such as ‘what I say is false’, for if this statement results
15 in a false understanding about me speaking a falsehood then, when I say ‘what I say is false’, that is the same as if I said ‘I say that what I say is false’, but so far the statement
20 ‘what I say is false’ gives the same meaning as before, hence it is the same as if I said ‘I say that I say that what I say is false’, and so forth in
25 infinity. But it is impossible for anything to proceed in infinity, ergo the first is impossible, i.e. that the statement establishes a false understanding of that to which it belongs, for
30 that from which something impossible follows is impossible.

Further, if that were the case, there would be a procedure in infinity, but it is not possible to follow
35 infinite procedures in thought, ergo it is impossible to understand that which is signified by the proposition ‘what I say is false’, ergo it does not signify anything. This is why
40 some say to this statement that “you

1.2 Item, hoc volunt probare ducendo ad metam falsi vel impossibilis hoc modo: Si pars non potest constituere intellectum de suo toto, multo fortius idem non potest constituere intellectum de se
5 ipso. Huius autem conditionalis antecedens volunt probare in terminis insolubilibus, ut in eo quod est ‘ego dico falsum’, si enim haec dictio falsum constituit intellectum de
10 eo quod est me dicere falsum, ergo cum dico ‘ego dico falsum’, idem est ac si dicerem ‘ego dico me dicere falsum’, sed adhuc haec ‘dicere falsum’ eundem constituit intellectum
15 quem prius, ergo idem est ac si diceretur ‘ego dico me dicere me dicere falsum’, et sic in infinitum, sed impossibile est aliquid in infinitum procedere; ergo impossibile est
20 primum, scilicet hanc dictionem falsum constituere intellectum de eo cuius est pars, impossibile enim est quo posito sequitur impossibile.

Preterea, si ita, procedit in
25 infinitum, sed infinita non contingit pertransire intelligentem, ergo impossibile est intelligi quod significatur hac propositione ‘ego dico falsum’, ergo nihil est quod ea
30 significatur, et haec est causa quare quidam ad talia proposita dicunt “nihil dicis”, et cum dicitur “ego

1 hoc] haec O 17 quem] que O 30 hac] *sup. lin. C*;

are saying nothing”, and when it is said that ‘what I state is false’, they say “you are not stating anything”, and that is the argument of annul-
 5 ment and the reason for that. But whoever thinks of the statement realizes that there is some meaning to the sounds ‘what I say is false’, hence the term ‘false’ does not es-
 10 tablish a knowledge of that to which it belongs, ergo it is not a sign of itself, and so it is for all other things.

1.3 <Argument: There must be a difference between the knower
 15 and the known in the process of knowing; if the intellect knows itself there is no difference between knower and known; hence, the intellect cannot know itself.>

20 1.4 <Argument: The process of understanding combines an accidental and an essential element in the soul; self-knowledge is an identity between knower and known;
 25 the differences between the two elements makes an identity and hence self-knowledge impossible.>

30 1.5 <Argument: If the intellect knows itself by being present to itself, it would always know itself; the intellect can only know one thing at the time; hence, if the intellect knew itself it could not know anything else; the intellect cannot
 35 therefore know itself by itself.>

<Determination>

2 We now prove by arguments and through authority that this is not the case, but that the intellect is

propono falsum”, dicunt “nihil proponis”, et haec est sententia cassationis et causa eius; sed cuilibet consideranti constat quod huic voci ‘ego dico falsum’ aliquis subest intellectus, ergo iste terminus | ‘fal-
 5 sum’ non constituit intellectum de
 10 eo cuius est pars, ergo non est signum sui et ita de omnibus aliis.

O 92rb

1.3 <Text omitted>

1.4 <Text omitted>

10

1.5 <Text omitted>

<Determinatio>

2 Quod autem non ita sit, sed quod ipse intellectus sit signum et iudex sui per se, et non per aliud, ra-
 15

a sign and judge of itself by itself.

2.1 <Doctrinal arguments supporting the idea of essential self-knowledge.>

5 2.2 <Arguments based on authorities.>

2.3 <Qualifications and closing reflections.>

tione et auctoritate probemus.

2.1 <Text omitted>

2.2 <Text omitted>

2.3 <Text omitted>

<On the initial objections>

10 *Ad 1.1* <Refutation: The impossibility of self-affection only applies to material objects and senses.>

Ad 1.3 <Refutation: There is a difference between the knower and
15 known in their definition, but not in existence.>

Ad 1.4 <Refutation: As
above, there is a difference between knower and known in their
20 definition, but not in existence.>

Ad 1.5 <Refutation: Although
the intellect is always present to itself it need not always know itself,
and it can therefore also know other
25 things. Self-knowledge implies process of consideration.>

Ad 1.2 From these discussions it is clear that when I say ‘What I
say is false’, that statement can easily establish a false understanding
30 about that which it is a part and about something untrue, to which (to make it more clear) it could be objected as follows: When I say
35 ‘What I say is false’, it is either true or false that is say something false; if it is true, then that statement does not constitute a false understanding

<Ad rationes principales>

Ad 1.1 <Text omitted>

5

Ad 1.3 <Text omitted>

Ad 1.4 <Text omitted>

Ad 1.5 <Text omitted>

Ad 1.2 Ex hiis manifestum est quod cum dico ‘ego dico falsum’ haec dictio falsum bene potest
10 constituere intellectum de eo cuius est pars et de quolibet falso, quod (ut melius intelligatur) obiciatur sic: Cum dico ‘ego dico falsum’, me
15 dicere falsum aut est verum aut falsum; si verum ergo haec dictio falsum non constituit intellectum de ipso, sed tantum de aliis quae sunt
20 falsa, nihil autem aliud dicitur a me,

10–13 ex ... constituere] *hoc et pars remanens huius capituli del. O*

about it, but still about other things
 which are false, although I do not
 say anything else, ergo it is false
 that I say something false, and the
 5 previous statement is true; if it is
 false that I say something false, and
 I say this, then I say something false,
 ergo it is true that I say something
 false, and something false has been
 10 said. In this way and in many ways
 counter-arguments can be made.

Let us say to this that there is
 nothing in the way of one and the
 same thing to be true and false at
 15 the same time, because <the state-
 ment> ‘man is white’ is true with
 respect to one and false with re-
 spect to another. But it is impos-
 sible for the same thing to be true
 20 and false in the same way and with
 respect to the same at the same
 time. For speakable truth is an equal
 relation between composite pieces
 25 of understanding and the disposi-
 tion of signified things in a per-
 fect composition or division (with
 ‘perfect composition’ I mean affir-
 mative statements, with ‘perfect di-
 vision’ I mean negations). But if
 30 there is not an equal relation be-
 tween the elements of understand-
 ing and the things, we have a falsity.
 Thus truth is some kind of equality,
 falsity some kind of inequality, just
 35 as also Augustine testifies to. But
 the concept ‘human’ is common to
 any particular human, regardless of
 whether it refers to Socrates, Plato,

ergo falsum est me dicere falsum,
 et prius dictum est quod verum; si
 falsum est me dicere falsum, et hoc
 dicitur a me, ergo ego dico falsum,
 ergo verum est me dicere falsum, et
 5 prius dictum est quod falsum. Hoc
 modo et multipliciter potest opponi. 5

Dicimus ad hoc quod nihil
 prohibet unum et idem simul et
 semel esse verum et falsum, quia
 10 hominem esse album est verum
 pro aliquo falsum pro aliquo, sed
 non contingit idem secundum idem
 et pro eodem simul esse verum et
 falsum; veritas enim enuntiabilis
 15 est dispositio intellectuum compos-
 itorum aequalis dispositioni rerum
 designatarum in compositione per-
 fecta sive divisione (compositione
 perfecta dico pro enuntiationibus
 20 affirmativis, divisione perfecta
 pro negationis); si autem non sit
 aequalis dispositio intellectuum et
 rerum, falsitas est. Veritas igitur
 est quaedam aequalitas, falsitas
 25 quaedam inaequalitas, sicut etiam
 testatur Augustinus. Iste autem
 intellectus ‘homo’ communis est
 ad omnem particularem hominem,
 et sive praefigatur pro Socrate
 30 sive pro Platone sive pro quovis
 alio, semper eundem significat
 intellectum. Cum igitur dico ‘homo
 est Socrates’, hunc terminum com-

27 Aug. *Soll.* II, cap. XV (Patr. Lat. 32, cols. 898–9, §29).

21 aliud] *sup. lin.* C 6 dictum est] dicitur O 12 pro¹] per O 19 divisione] dicere
 perfecta O 21 divisione] dicere O 32 alio] aliquo O

or anybody else, it still refers to the same concept. Thus when I say ‘Socrates is a human’ then I could have that shared term, ‘human’, refer to whichever human that I want, and if it refers to Socrates, then there is a truth in the composition. For the thing is the same as what the concept holds, and thus there is an equality between concept and thing. But if it refers to somebody else than Socrates, then there is an inequality in that same composition between the concept and the thing, for the thing is not the same as what the concept holds. Thus one and the same composition of concepts can be true and false at the same time, but on account of different things.

Aristotle gives evidence to this in *Topics*, in the book about definitions, towards the end where he says: “If someone has to define something in relation to something else, and he does not relate it to that which it is said in relation to in the definition, but to something that contains more things, then he has given a bad definition. Suppose for example that somebody said that medicine is the science of all things that exist. For if medicine is not a science about anything that exists, then it is clear that the statement is completely false, but if it is a science of some things, and not of some other things, then it is false in some sense and true in another sense.” Similarly, when I say ‘Socrates is

munem ‘homo’ possum praefigere pro quocumque hominum voluero, et si praefigatur pro Socrate, fit veritas in compositione, sicut enim est res ita dicit intellectus, et ita est ibi aequalitas inter intellecum et rem; si autem praefigatur pro alio a Socrate, est in eadem compositione inaequalitas inter intellectus et res, non enim ita est res sicut dicit intellectus; una igitur et eadem compositio intellectuum simul et semel potest esse vera et falsa, sed gratia diversorum.

Hoc idem testatur Aristoteles in *Topicis*, libro de definitione, versus finem ubi ait: “Si debeat quis definire ad aliquid, et in eius definitione non ponitur illud ad quod dicitur sed aliquid plura complectens, male definivit, ut si dixerit medicinam dis|ciplinam entis, nam si nullius eorum quae sunt medicina est disciplina, palam quoniam totaliter | oratio falsa est, si autem alicuius est disciplina alicuius non, in aliquo mentitur et in aliquo verus est.” A simili, cum dico ‘homo est Socrates’, cum aliquis homo sit Socrates aliquis non, pro aliquo sum verus pro aliquo falsus.

51–62 Arist. *Top.* VI 12.149b4–9 (Arist. Lat. 3.1, p. 139.15–21).

34–1 communem] om. O 37 pro] in marg. C 51 ait] aiot a.c. O 56 entis] eritis O

a human', when Socrates is a certain human and not another, then it is true in one sense and in another sense false.

5 And so in the same way we say that this composition, 'What I say is false', is at the same time true and false, but on account of different things. For when the statement
10 'false' signifies the common concept of any false thing, and nothing else that is false is said by me, it is clear that on account of other false things it is false that 'what I say is false'.
15 But when that itself is false, and the part can establish an understanding of the whole, as it has been outlined, then because of that falseness that I say, it is true that 'what I say is false'. Ergo 'what I say is false' is false on account of other false things, but it is true on account of that falsehood that I am saying, and thus the same composition is true
20 and false.
25

<Discussion of the liar paradox continues with many further refinements.>

Pari itaque modo hanc compositionem 'ego dico falsum' dicimus esse simul et semel veram et falsam, sed gratia diversorum; cum enim haec dictio 'falsum' significet intellectum communem ad omne falsum
5 et nullum aliud falsum dicatur a me, evidens est quod gratia aliorum falsorum falsum est 'me dicere falsum', cum autem hoc ipsum sit falsum et pars possit constituere intellectum de toto, sicut praeostensum est,
10 gratia huius falsi quod a me dicitur verum est 'me dicere falsum', ergo 'me dicere falsum' falsum est gratia aliorum falsorum, verum autem
15 gratia istius falsi quod dicitur a me, et ita eadem compositio est vera et falsa.

<Text omitted>