

# DOES THE WILL INFLUENCE KNOWLEDGE? SOME REMARKS ON BONAVENTURE'S EPISTEMOLOGY

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**Abstract:** In the current paper we would like to present briefly some of the results of a broader project which investigates the theories of the will and the epistemological theories in the High Medieval Franciscan thought. Modern historians of philosophy often characterize Franciscan thought as “voluntaristic”, i.e. one that puts a strong emphasis on the independence of the will and its significant place in the human soul. Based on this emphasis the project aims to study the relation between the will and the processes of acquiring knowledge. In the current paper we would present the epistemology of Bonaventure and its relation to the will, grace and *synderesis*.

**Keywords:** freedom of the will, free decision, epistemology, Bonaventure, grace, voluntarism, *synderesis*.

After the famous condemnation of 1277, when the Bishop of Paris condemned of 219 propositions as contrary to the faith, emerged a relatively new debate. Since more than 15 of the condemned articles were concerning the will and its dependency on the intellect or the desired object, a debate arose whether the will can act autonomously. Therefore, *libertas voluntatis*, or the freedom of the will became one of the preferred topics concerning freedom. In the previous decades and centuries, however, the discussions on freedom were mostly focused on *liberum arbitrium*, the free decision, and Bonaventure's texts are not in any regard exception from this.<sup>1</sup> Even though Bonaventure is a leading name in the Franciscan tradition, he was not familiar with the later discussions on independence and primacy of the will and therefore bringing up his name might seem as an anachronism. However, we would like to argue that already in his texts we might find a strong emphasis on the significance of the will, even if it was not precisely defined with respect to terminology

The main difference between discussing the freedom of the will and the free decision could be formulated in the following manner. The first question is interested to see how the will is free to actualize its decisions

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Kent, Bonnie, *Virtues of the will: the transformation of ethics in the late thirteenth century*, The Catholic University of America Press, Washington, D.C., 1995, pp. 68–79; 98–110. In the current text, we will keep Kent's translation of *liberum arbitrium* as “free decision”. He argues that translations such as “free choice” or “free will” are not quite accurate, since neither the Latin word for „choice” (*electio*), nor the word for „will” (*voluntas*) stands in the notion of *liberum arbitrium*.

without an external influence from the intellect or the object of desire. The second question, on the other hand, tries to discuss how the two capacities of the soul – will and intellect – are working together in order to produce the free decision. According to Bonaventure, the very name of the notion of free decision stems from the cooperation of will and intellect. The notion of *liberum*, free, comes from the activity of the will and *arbitrium*, decision, from the activity of the mind.<sup>2</sup>

There are two reasons why the free decision is said to be really free. The first is based on its immaterial nature, which enables it to rule over material objects. The second is based on the capability of both will and mind to turn towards himself or herself – the mind is self-reflexive, while the will is self-moving. Without the self-reflection of the mind, it will not be able to refrain from certain decisions and without the self-movement of the will, we will not be able to produce the act itself.<sup>3</sup>

Furthermore, the process of taking a free decision begins in the mind, since the variety of possibilities is presented from the intellectual part of the soul, and ends in the will, which is the final authority that realizes the act itself. Without the deliberation of the mind, the will will not be able at all to produce or abstain from an act.<sup>4</sup> Therefore, Bonaventure

2 Cf. Bonaventura, *Commentaria in Quatuor Libros Sententiarum, Opera Omnia*, t. II, Typ. Collegii S. Bonaventurae, Quaracchi, 1885, q. d. 25, p. 1, a. un, q. III, in c. (II 598b): “Ad praedictorum intelligentiam est notandum, quod liberum arbitrium simul comprehendit et rationem et voluntatem; et hoc manifestat ipsa nominatio, ipsa etiam notificatio, manifestat etiam suae proprietatis inquisitio. — Nominatio manifestat. Dicitur enim liberum, et dicitur arbitrium; et arbitrium est ipsius rationis, libertas vero ipsius voluntatis, ad cuius nutum et imperium moveri habent cetera, quae sunt in nobis.”

3 Cf. *ibid.* (II 599a): “Dominium potentiae respectu obiecti aut respectu actu. [...] Dominium autem potentiae respectu actu attenditur in hoc, quod potentia potest esse in actu et cessare ab actu secundum suum imperium et secundum proprium motum. Ad hoc autem quod aliqua potentia hoc dominium habeat, necesse est, quod ipsa possit movere se ipsam, et quod possit se super actum suum reflectere. Nisi enim posset se super actum suum reflectere, numquam posset illum refrenare; nisi posset se ipsum movere, nec posset in illum exire, quando vellet. Reflectere autem se super se, hoc est virtutim cognitivae, sublimatae a materia, quae quidem est ratio. Movere autem se, hoc est virtutis appetitivae, rationem consequentis. [...] Nam si rationem tantum haberet et non voluntatem, per quam moveret; posset se super actum suum reflectere, sed non posset movere vel imperare. Si vero appetitum solum haberet et non rationem, posset utique movere et in actum exire; sed quia non posset se super actum suum reflectere, non posset utique refrenare, et ita dominium non haberet.”

4 Cf. *ibid.* q. 6, in c. (II 605a): “[S]icut ratio movendi se inchoatur in ratione et consummatur in voluntate, sic et arbitrii libertas residet penes rationem et voluntatem, ita quod in una illarum potentiarum inchoatur et in alia

holds that the mind on itself is ruling in a consulting or a predisposing manner. However, only through the will the mind is enabled to rule authoritatively.<sup>5</sup> Here, however, Bonaventure introduces a stronger role of the will, which seems to be autonomous with respect to the dictate of reason. The two different types of ruling constitute two different types of decision taking – the first is a dictating one and it takes place only in the mind, and the second is a decisive one and cannot be actualized without the will. Furthermore – however much the reason might dictate, the decisive choice lies only in the power of the will. Therefore when it is said that the will follows the dictate of the mind, than this does not mean that it does so necessarily. Moreover, in its decisive ruling, the will does not follow the act of an external power, rather it draws this very act to its own act.<sup>6</sup>

This is why the will is able to take decisive decisions against the dictating ruling of the mind, even if the latter shows that the desired object is actually bad. The will never abstains unless it wills to do so.<sup>7</sup> Concerning this Bonaventure reasons that even though the *liberum arbitrium* is the highest capacity in the soul that is able to rule, the will is more authoritative, since whatever the reason dictates, it always happens this, which the

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consummatur. – Idem autem dico, motum inchoari in ratione, quia non movetur appetitus nisi praeambulo cogitatu; nequaquam enim amare possumus quod non cognoscimus; et ideo ad hoc, quod motus fiat, praeit cognitio disponens, et subsequitur voluntas perficiens. Quantumquomque enim praecedat cogitatus, nunquam motus sequitur, nisi ipsum imperet voluntatis affectio. – Et sicut voluntas non habet moveri ad obiectum, amplectendo vel refugiendo illud, nisi praeambulo cogitatu, sic etiam non habet approbare, vel respuere, sive elicere et refrenare actum proprium, nisi rationis actus praecedat, qui dictet, ipsum esse bonum vel malum, perficiendum vel refrenandum.”

- 5 Cf. *ibid.* (II 605b): “[D]icendum, quod sive vis irascibilis et concupiscibilis intelligatur de appetitu brutali, sive de potentia appetitiva rationali, utramque habet regere ratio per modum disponentis et consulentis, quantum est de se. Quod autem regat per modum imperantis, hoc non est nisi mediante voluntate, quae dat ei auctoritatem.”
- 6 Cf. *ibid.* ad. 3 (II 606a): “[D]icendum, quod duplex est iudicium rationis: quoddam est in solo dictamine, et hoc est rationis secundum se; aliud est iudicium definitivum, ut fiat vel non fiat, et illud nunquam est sine voluntate. Quantumcumque enim ratio deliberet, in eam partem terminatur definitivum iudicium, quam praeoptat voluntas. Et ideo, cum dicitur, quod voluntas sequitur iudicium, si intelligatur de iudicio, quod consistit in solo dictamine, non est semper verum, quod ad illud sequatur voluntas necessario. Si autem intelligatur de iudicio definitivo, ex hoc non sequitur, quod voluntas, sequatur principaliter actum alienum; immo potius actum alienum trahit ad proprium.”
- 7 Cf. *ibid.* ad. 4 (II 606ab): “[D]icendum quod verum est, quod actu rationis requiritur, sed nunquam ab illo principaliter est refrenatio. Quantumcumque enim ratio dictet actum voluntatis esse malum, nunquam voluntas se retrahit, nisi velit.”

will prefers.<sup>8</sup>

This discussion on itself, however, should not lead us to rule hastily that Bonaventure was a “voluntarist” in one way or another. As Robert Pasnau notices “If a voluntarist is someone who holds that the will is what controls human choices, then Aquinas is as much a voluntarist as anyone on the medieval scene.”<sup>9</sup> As Thomas himself writes, “The will is in control of its act, and has it to will and not to will. This would not be the case if it did not have the power to move itself to will.”<sup>10</sup> Therefore, in the current paper we would refrain from labeling Bonaventure’s thought as “voluntarist” (in any of the different meanings this notion might bear). Moreover, as we already expressed the whole discussion on the primacy of the will is anachronistic for Bonaventure.

Saying all this, we would like nevertheless to defend that already in his texts we can trace a tendentious emphasis on the capacity of the will. If we look more closely, we can notice that Bonaventure ascribes some attributes that are of great significance only to the power of willing. Thus, for example he quotes quite often a statement of Anselm of Canterbury, who says that the will is the only self-moving capacity in our soul. At one place, Anselm discusses the three different meanings the notion of “will” has<sup>11</sup>, and as far as the will is taken in the sense of our foremost capacity to will something, it is a self-moving instrument, *instrumentum se ipsum movens*. Through this self-moving instrument we are able to move all instruments, that we use freely – both inside us (such as our hands, tongue and sight) and outside us (such as a pen or an axe). Therefore, it moves not only its own movement, but also the movement of all volitions.<sup>12</sup>

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8 Cf. *ibid.* f. 2 (II 605a): “Item, liberum arbitrium est illud quod est in nobis maxime imperativum; sed magis est imperativa in nobis voluntas quam ratio, quidquid enim ratio dictet, semper illud fiet, quod voluntas praeoptat.”

9 Pasnau, Robert, *Olivi on Human Freedom in Pierre De Jean Olivi (1248–1298)*, Vrin, Paris, 1999, pp. 15–25, p. 19.

10 Quoted *ibid.*

11 Cf. Anselmus Cantuariensis, *De Concordia praescientiae et praedestinationis et gratiae dei cum libero arbitrio in S. Anselmi Cantuariensis. Opera Omnia*. t. 1, vol. 2, ed. Franciscus Salesius Schmitt, Stuttgart-Bad Cannstatt, Friedrich Frommann Verlag, 1968, q. 3, 11, p. 280, 1–4: “Dicitur autem “voluntas” et instrumentum volendi, et affectio eius, et usus eius. Instrumentum quidem voluntatem vocamus, quando dicimus nos convertere voluntatem ad diversa; modo scilicet ad volendum ambulare, modo ad volendum sedere, modo ad volendum aliud et aliud.”

12 Cf. *ibid.* pp. 283, 21–284, 1–4: “Voluntas quidem instrumentum movet omnia alia instrumenta, quibus sponte utimur, et quae sunt in nobis – ut manus, lingua, visus –, et quae sunt extra nos – ut stilus et securis –, et facit omnes voluntarios motus; ipsa vero se suis affectionibus movet. Unde dici potest instrumentum se ipsum movens. Dico voluntatem instrumentum omnes voluntarios motus facere;

This notion of *instrumentum se ipsum movens* becomes one of a great significance for the Franciscan school and Bonaventure himself uses it freely. Sometimes he ascribes it to the will<sup>13</sup>, sometimes to the free decision<sup>14</sup> and sometimes to both of them,<sup>15</sup> but it is noteworthy that he does not do so anywhere with respect to the mind. Therefore, since we saw that Bonaventure bases the authoritative power of the free decision mainly on the authoritative power of the will, it would be reasonable to assume, that this power stems from the self-moving ability of the will. Furthermore, Bonaventure mentions on different places that the will is this power in the human being that is the most authoritative one and therefore it is able to rule over all other powers.<sup>16</sup>

Based on this strong emphasis that Bonaventure puts on the capacity of the will over itself and the other powers, we would like to present a specific influence that the will bears with respect to the process of acquiring knowledge. Since the will is attributed as the only one responsible for taking the choice, as self-moving and controlling all other powers in the soul, we can reasonably ask the question – so what effect might that have on the sphere of our thought and our knowledge? If the will dominates and moves all other capacities, how should we understand this with regard to the intellect? Even though Bonaventure never explicitly discusses the questions raised, we argue that on base of different texts we can find such an influence, which we would like to discuss now.

Since the will is the most changeable (*vertibilis*) of all capacities, it is the only one that is evil, because sin arises only through it.<sup>17</sup> At the same

sed si diligenter consideramus, ille verius dicitur facere omne quod facit natura aut voluntas, qui facit naturam et instrumentum volendi cum affectionibus suis, sine quibus idem instrumentum nihil facit.”

13 Cf. Bonaventura, *II Sent.*, d. 25, p. 1, a. un. q. 2, in c. (II 596b): “[...] sicut dicit Anselmus ‘voluntas est instrumentum se ipsum movens’”.

14 Cf. *ibid.* d. 26, a. un., q. 6 (II 645a): “‘liberum arbitrium est instrumentum se ipsum movens’, sicut dicit Anselmus.”

15 Cf. *ibid.* d. 25, p. 1, a. un. q. 2 (II 594a): “‘voluntas enim et liberum arbitrium’, ut dicit Anselmus, ‘est instrumentum se ipsum movens’”

16 Cf. *Commentaria in Quatuor Libros Sententiarum, Opera Omnia*, t. 1, Quaracchi, 1882, d. 45, a. 1, q. 1, f. 3 (I 798b): “Item ratione videtur, quia voluntas est illud, penes quod residet inter creata summa potestas: ergo si voluntas de se dicit potestatem, quia omnibus praesidet in regno animae, et nihil potest sibi imperare; *Ibid.*, in c. (I, 799a): Et quia in ideo aliis praesidens et secundum diversos actus variabilis. Propter differentiam enim a substantia, in qua possunt et aliae potentiae radicari, praesidet aliis potentiis, ut sensui et appetitui.” Cf. also *II Sent.*, 952; *III Sent.* 591a; *IV Sent.* 324a.

17 Cf. *I Sent.*, d. 45, a. 1, q. 1, ad op. 3, (I 798a): “[Q]uia voluntas est potentia nobis maxime vertibilis, unde aliae potentiae non possunt in malum, sed sola voluntas est, a qua est peccatum.”

time that does not mean that sin might not somehow corrupt the activity of the other capacities. According to Bonaventure, three types of sin occur in the intellectual part of the soul – in memory, in thought and in opinion – and they would not have been sinful without the will. Memory, reasoning and opinion would have never had any guilt if they were not somehow mixed with the will. Even the godly image of the human being is veiled because of the sin. Moreover, because the fault is introduced within the capacities on behalf of the will, it is not that the capacities themselves, but only their actions that are corrupted.<sup>18</sup>

We find again this state of corruption of all capacities, and especially of all cognitive capacities, in one of the most important works of Bonaventure's epistemology. In the first chapter of the *Itinerarium mentis in Deum* Bonaventure enumerates six capacities, each of which is a separate step in the process of acquiring knowledge – the senses, imagination, reason, understanding, intelligence and the summit of the mind or the spark of *synderesis*. These capacities were implanted in us by nature, deformed by the sin and reformed by grace.<sup>19</sup>

In the initial state of man's creation, he was created able to enjoy the quiet of contemplation. However, he turned away from the light and towards the changeable good. This brought deformation in man because of his own sin and in mankind because of the original sin. Therefore, the human nature was infected in two ways – in the mind through ignorance and in the body through *concupiscens*. Thus man sits blinded and bent over in darkness and cannot see the heavenly light unless grace with justice come

18 Cf. *II Sent.*, d. 41, a. 2, q. 3, ad. 2, 3, 4, 5 (II 953ab): "Ad tria sequentia, quae subiungit, quod peccatur oblivione, cogitatione et suggestione patet responsio ex his quae dicta sunt; nam talia non sunt peccata, nisi quia voluntaria. Unde nunquam circa actum memoriae culpa consistit nec etiam circa actum intelligentiae, nisi eis immisceat se voluntas vel antecedenter, vel concomitanter, vel consequenter. Similiter nec suggestio, si est omnino ab extrinseco, est culpa, sed illa quae est ab intrinseco, quae quodam modo voluntaria est, sive quia a voluntate Adae habuit ortum, sive quia a voluntate peccantis non praecavetur. [...] etsi tota imago deformatur et vitietur, illa tamen sola deformatio, quae est in voluntate, est illa quae est ratio inculpani; et ideo non sequitur, quod culpa respiciat alias potentias animae sub ratione culpae quamvis circa actus earum consistat corruptio vitiosa."

19 Cf. Bonaventura, *Itinerarium Mentis in Deum, Opera Omnia*, t. 5, Quaracchi, 1891, cap. 1, 6 (V 297b): "Iuxta igitur sex gradus ascensionis in Deum sex sunt gradus potentialium animae, per quos ascendimus ab imis ad summa, ab exterioribus ad intima, a temporalibus conscendimus ad aeterna, scilicet sensus, imaginatio, ratio, intellectus, intelligentia, et apex mentis seu synderesis scintilla. Hos gradus in nobis habemus plantatos per naturam, deformatos per culpam, reformatos per gratiam; purgandos per iustitiam, exercendos per scientiam, perficiendos per sapientiam."

to his aid against *concupiscens* and knowledge with wisdom come to his aid against ignorance.<sup>20</sup>

Therefore, fault comes in the capacities of the soul only through the will and grace comes in order to clean the will and reform it. Grace is a specific spiritual force that is given to the soul so that it can direct itself upwards. Indeed, says Bonaventure, the will can move itself because of its nature, but with the help of grace, it can do this in an excellent manner. Therefore, grace motivates the free decision. Grace does not work together with the free decision but moves in the free decision the same way a light beam does not act with the air, but acts in it. In the first manner, grace comes consequently to the free decision as a gift and it is said to be *cooperanti* or *subsequenti*. In the second manner, grace comes to clean and reform and therefore then it is *operanti* or *praevenienti*.<sup>21</sup>

After that, Bonaventure says that the free decision moves itself freely by its nature, but desires worthy things through grace. Therefore, it would not be a contradiction that the will moves itself and is also moved by grace.<sup>22</sup> However, when the will moves itself voluntarily, it does not de-

20 *ibid.* 7 (V 297b–298a): “Secundum enim primam naturae institutionem creatus fuit homo habilis ad contemplationis quietem, et ideo posuit eum Deus in paradiso deliciarum. Sed avertens se a vero lumine ad commutabile bonum, incurvatus est ipse per culpam propriam, et totum genus suum per originale peccatum, quod dupliciter infecit humanam naturam, scilicet ignorantia mentem et concupiscentia carnem; ita quod excaecatus homo et incurvatus in tenebris sedet et caeli lumen non videt, nisi succurrat gratia cum iustitia contra concupiscentiam et scientia cum sapientia contra ignorantiam.”

21 Cf. Bonaventura, *II Sent.*, d. 26, a. un., q. 6, in c. (II 645b): “Gratia autem est quoddam spirituale pondus, datum animae, per quod habet sursum tendere; et quoniam liberum arbitrium est natum se ipsum movere secundum actus, in quos potest de se; cum est adiutum et informatum gratia, excelentius movet se ipsum, ita quod, cum liberum arbitrium sit movens et motum gratia disponit ipsum sub ratione moventis. [...] Unde sicut lumen non solum operatur cum aere, sed etiam operatur in ipsum aerem ratione continuationis cum suo fonte; sic et gratia non solum operatur cum libero arbitrio, sed etiam operatur in liberum arbitrium et liberum arbitrium movet. [...] Nam primus competit gratiae cooperanti sive subsequenti; secundus competit gratiae operanti sive praevenienti. Gratia enim operans liberum arbitrium praevenit et movet, quia Deus illam infundendo voluntatem hominis sanat et praeeparat. Gratia vero cooperans sive subsequens liberum arbitrium dicitur movere, quia voluntas, tali dono gratiae informata, movet se ipsam.”

22 Cf. *ibid.* ad. 1 (II 646ab): “Sicut enim voluntas movet se ipsam ad opera naturalia, sic adiuta per gratiam movet se ipsam ad opera meritoria. - Vel secundum alium modum intelligendi, Deus per gratiam movet voluntatem; nec tamen hoc voluntati repugnat, quia voluntas vult sic moveri a Deo. Unde sic movetur a Deo, quod movetur etiam a se ipsa et ideo omne opus meritorium attribuitur gratiae

sire grace itself, but it is the already sanctified through grace free decision, that wants to move itself.<sup>23</sup> Thus, the first impetus from grace would be the first necessary step for the restoration of the will and therefore for all other capacities, inclusive the cognitive capacities. Only from this point on, according to Bonaventure, knowledge and wisdom come in order to respectively exercise the capacities and perfect them.

In the field of epistemology, it might be argued that there is a parallel of similar to the grace instance that seemingly “doubles” its function. When Bonaventure discusses his theory of illumination, we find descriptions that are similar to those that discussed grace. For example, Bonaventure says that certain knowledge is acquired from the intelligent soul, as far as it is a godly image and thus it comes upon the eternal ideas. As we already said this godly image is, however, deformed through the will. Because man finds himself on the path of journey and therefore he is still not fully godlike, he cannot see the eternal ideas clearly and with certainty. Since the image is in the state of the fallen nature and its godlikeness is deformed, it can discern the eternal ideas in a partial and enigmatic manner.<sup>24</sup>

Even though man cannot have full knowledge of the eternal ideas because of deficiencies of his fallen godly image, he can nevertheless know with certainty and clarity the created principles.<sup>25</sup> Certain knowledge of the eternal ideas can be acquired only in the beatitude in the after-life, when the godly image will retain its full godlikeness. This journey for

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et libero arbitrio.”

- 23 Cf. *ibid.* ad. 3 (II 646b): “Ad illud quod quaeritur: aut movet naturaliter etc; dicendum, quod movet voluntarie, non a voluntate, qua ipsa gratia sit volens, sed a voluntate, qua Deus gratiam influens est volens, et a voluntate, qua liberum arbitrium gratificatum vult movere se ipsum.”
- 24 Cf. Bonaventura, *De scientia Christi, Opera Omnia*, t. 5, Quaracchi, 1891 q. 4, in c. (V 24a): “Quoniam igitur certitudinalis cognitio competit spiritui rationali, in quantum est imago Dei, ideo in hac cognitione aeternas rationes attingit. Sed quia in statu viae non est adhuc plene deiformis, ideo non attingit eas clare et plene et distincte; sed secundum quod magis vel minus ad deiformitatem accedit, secundum hoc magis vel minus eas attingit, semper tamen aliquo modo, quia nunquam potest ab eo ratio imaginis separari. Unde quia in statu innocentiae erat imago sine deformitate culpae, nondum tamen habens plenam deiformitatem gloriae, ideo attingebat ex parte, sed non in aenigmate. In statu vero naturae lapsae caret deiformitate et habet deformitatem, ideo attingit eas ex parte et in aenigmate. In statu vero gloriae caret omni deformitate et habet plenam deiformitatem, ideo attingit eas plene et perspicue.”
- 25 Cf. *ibid.* ad. 22 (V 26b): “[D]icendum quod in statu viae non cognoscitur in rationibus illis aeternis sine velamine et aenigmate propter divinae imaginis obscuritatem. Ex hoc tamen non sequitur, quod nihil certitudinaliter cognoscatur et clare, pro eo quod principia creata, quae aliquo modo sunt media cognoscendi, licet non sine illis rationibus, possunt perspicue et sine velamine a nostra mente videri.”

Bonaventure is however manifold. First, even in the state of innocence the man did not possess full godlikeness even though it was not sinful. Now, in the state of the fallen nature, the certainty of knowledge depends on the different level on which the knowing subject finds himself to be – a traveller, an understanding person, a man of knowledge, a man of wisdom or a prophet.<sup>26</sup> This is how one can still have a grasp of the eternal ideas, even though he might not be a man of wisdom. But because there are less people who are able to lead all their knowledge back to the first principle, there are also less men of wisdom. Furthermore only few people are aware of this and even less people want to believe in this.<sup>27</sup>

Therefore, there are two instances that according to Bonaventure provide aid for the cognitive powers of the human soul – the first, the soul, is necessary for the restoration of the correct activity of the cognitive powers and the second, the eternal ideas, are the unknowable guide for the created ideas. However, if we look closely, we shall find that on the top of the epistemological process, Bonaventure places a power that is both appetitive and does not need restoration through grace. On the last six place in the first chapter of the *Itinerarium* Bonaventure speaks of the *apex mentis seu synderesis scintilla*. When we turn first to the notion of *mens* we will find out that it is a notion with a broader meaning, which embraces intellect, memory and affect. Therefore it is not the intellectual part of the *per se*.<sup>28</sup>

The notion of *synderesis*, on the other hand, describes a capacity that is purely affective. When Bonaventure discusses exactly this – if *synderesis counts to* the rational or the affective part of the soul – he mentions

26 Cf. *ibid.* in c. (V 24b): “Cognoscendum est igitur, sicut rationes ostendunt et Augustini auctoritates expresse asserunt, quod in omni certitudinali cognitione rationes illae cognoscendi a cognoscente attinguntur, licet aliter a viatore et aliter a comprehendente, aliter a sciente et aliter a sapiente, aliter a prophetante et aliter a communiter intelligente, sicut iam patuit et patebit in obiectorum solutionibus.”

27 Cf. *ibid.* ad. 19 (V 26a): “Huiusmodi enim rationes attinguntur ab intellectibus scientium ut ductivae, sed ab intellectibus sapientium ut reductivae et quietativae. Et quia pauci sunt, qui isto modo illas attingant, ideo pauci sunt sapientium ut reductivae et quietativae. Et quia pauci sunt, qui isto modo illas attingant, ideo pauci sapientes, licet multi scientes; pauci quidem sunt, qui illas rationes sciant se attingere; immo quod plus est, pauci sunt, qui velint hoc credere.”

28 Cf. Bonaventura, *I Sent*, d. 3, p. 2, a. 2, q. 1 (I 89ab): “Et praeterea, cum actus proprius mentis, ut stat pro memoria, sit meminisse, ille deberet tangi; sed Augustinus in hac assignatione nunquam facit mentionem nisi de duobus actibus, scilicet nosse et amare, qui non sunt memoriae, sed aliarum potentiarum. [...] Restat ergo, quod necesse est ponere, quod trinitas ista attenatur quantum ad substantiam animae, ratione mentis se noscentis et amantis, et quantum ad habitus, ratione notitiae et amoris; et sic est trinitas, cum substantia sit una, et habitus sint duo.”

also that some people tend to hold that *synderesis* is the highest part of the intellect. However, this is not true, because the intellect itself can be mixed with the other sinful powers. If *synderesis* were the highest part of the intellect, it would be surely mixed with the other sinful powers.<sup>29</sup>

Another indication that *synderesis* belongs only to the affective part of the soul is its relation with conscience. The relationship between *synderesis* and conscience is similar to the relationship between will and mind. The difference is that while mind and will build up the faculty of free decision and therefore work freely, *synderesis* and conscience move naturally. Therefore while the free decision can sometimes turn towards good and sometimes towards evil, *synderesis* and conscience are always inclined towards good. Since conscience belongs to the intellectual part of the soul (which Bonaventure discusses in a previous question), therefore *synderesis* belongs to the affective part. Further Bonaventure says just as there is a natural light in the mind that leads it in the process of acquiring knowledge, there is a similar natural light also in the affect, which guides it to be always inclined towards good. This natural tendency in the affect is namely *synderesis* and it always incites the will towards *bonus honestum* (i.e. the morally virtuous good).<sup>30</sup>

Arguably, the most interesting property of the natural tendency of *synderesis* is the fact that it cannot be destroyed. With this view, Bonaventure stays close to the introducer of the notion of *synderesis* – Hieronymus

29 Cf. Bonaventura, *II Sent.*, d. 39, a. 2, q. 1, in c. (II 909b): “Hic autem modus dicendi satis videtur esse probabilis, nisi repugnaret illi Glossae prius habitae, quae dicit, quod *synderesis* aliis peccantibus non se immiscet. Cum enim consistit consummatio peccati; si *synderesis* esset superior portio rationis, utique aliis peccantibus se imisceret. Praeterea, superior portio rationis dicit ordinationem ad Deum; actus autem *synderesis* non tantum respicit Deum, sed etiam proximum, secundum quod lex naturalis respicit utrumque.”

30 Cf. *ibid.* (II 909b–910a): “Et ideo est alius modus dicendi, quod cum potentiae rationales dupliciter habeant moveri, scilicet intellectus et affectus, et per modum naturae et per modum deliberationis; quemadmodum libertas arbitrii consistit in ratione et voluntate, secundum quod movetur deliberative; sic conscientia et *synderesis* respiciunt rationem et voluntatem, in quantum moventur per modum naturae – tam *synderesis*, quam conscientia, quam etiam lex naturae semper ad bonum inclinant; sed liberum arbitrium aliquando ad bonum, aliquando ad malum [...]. Sed quia, ut habitum fuit prius, conscientia dicit habitum se tenentem ex parte intellectus; aut necesse erit praeter conscientiam et *synderesim* ponere in nobis aliquod directivum, aut necesse est ponere, quod *synderesis* se teneat ex parte affectus. Et propterea est tertius modus dicendi, quod quemadmodum ab ipsa creatione animae intellectus habet lumen, quod est sibi naturale iudicatorium, dirigens ipsum – in appetendis. [...] [S]ic *synderesis* non nominat illud pondus voluntatis sive voluntatem cum illo pondere, nisi in quantum illam habet inclinare ad bonum honestum.”

– and says that *synderesis* cannot be removed because of the sin that is present in human nature.<sup>31</sup> Even though it might be obscured because of obstinacy and lust, it cannot be extinguished or taken away.<sup>32</sup> When we are speaking about *synderesis* in itself, we have in mind the natural tendency of the will that always stimulates towards the good and murmurs against evil. Unlike the deliberative act of the will, *synderesis* can never be deformed through sin.<sup>33</sup> From these examples, we could see that even though Bonaventure did not discuss this concept in great detail<sup>34</sup>, he assigned it great importance. *Synderesis* inclines always only towards good and it leads the will as well as the whole affective part of the soul towards good. It can be neither taken away, nor extinguished. Even though sin is able to block the effect of *synderesis* it is not able to extinguish its natural tendency towards good.

If we turn back to the *Itinerarium* and more precisely to its end we will see that *synderesis* is said to have also an important (if not the most important) role in the epistemological process. In the fifth chapter of the *Itinerarium* Bonaventure gives the classical description of the first principle as the first and the last, the endless, eternal and uncreated simple being, which is also the first principle of our knowledge. In the sixth chapter, Bonaventure says that in order the first principle could be understood correctly, it should be seen as a triunity. However, Bonaventure warns the reader not to think that he is able to grasp that, which could not be grasped with the mind. Because there are so many miracles on one place, says

31 Cf. Hieronymus, *Commentariorum in Hiezechielem*, in *Corpus Christianorum*, Series Latina, 75, Turnholti Typographi Brepols Editores Pontificii, 1964, pp. 11–12. For discussion on the emergence and development of *synderesis* cf. Lottin, D. Odon, *Psychologie et morale au XIIe et XIIIe siècles. Tome II: Problèmes de morale*, Louvain, 1948, pp. 101–349; Davis, Robert, *The Force of Union: Affect and Ascent in the Theology of Bonaventure*, Doctoral dissertation, Harvard University, 2012, pp. 31–44.

32 Cf. *ibid.* q. 2, in c. (II 912 ab): “Dicendum, quod *synderesis* quantum ad actum impediri potest, sed extingui non potest. Ideo autem non potest extingui, quia, cum dicat quid naturale, non potest a nobis omnino auferri. [...] Quamvis autem actus eius omnino auferri vel extingui non possit, potest tamen ad tempus impediri, sive propter tenebram obcaecationis, sivi propter lasciviam delectationis, sive propter durtitiam obstinationis.

33 Cf. *ibid.* q. 3, in c. (II 914b): Sed quoniam, sicut dicunt Sancti et Glossae manifeste, *synderesis*, quantum est de se, semper habet ad bonum stimulare et peccato remurmurare, quamdiu sumus in statu viae: ideo dixerunt alii aliter, scilicet quod *synderesis* nominat ipsam voluntatem, secundum quod habet naturaliter moveri. Et quoniam peccatum non habet esse circa actum voluntatis, ut natura est vel ut movetur naturaliter, sed solum ut movetur deliberative; hinc est, quod *synderesis* per peccatum non habet depravari.

34 It should be noticed that Bonaventure discusses the notion of *synderesis* in only 3 questions and in his texts as a whole he uses it rather seldom.”

Bonaventure, it is perfectly normal that the intellect might be astonished, and therefore not able to grasp what it sees.

In the last seventh chapter, Bonaventure says that the first six steps served the mind so that it could exercise its intellectual abilities, but now it has come to the place where the mind will come to peace and tranquility. In order to explain this clearly we will firstly turn to the very beginning of Bonaventure's commentary on the Sentences, where he says that the essential act of the will is to feel delight (*frui*). *Frui* means to feel delight or to come to peace. Here Bonaventure quotes Anselm, saying that the will inclines all other powers and serves all of them and this is how its peace and delight flow in all other powers. Just as the will cannot know itself without the intellect, which knows both itself and the will, the intellect cannot come to peace without the will, which brings both itself and the intellect to peace.<sup>35</sup>

The same line of thought we find in the last chapter of *Itinerarium*. In the first six steps the mind has exercised in such a way, that now, in this seventh step, the mind contemplates that, which transcends both the visible world and its intellectual capacity. Therefore, now the mind has to transcend the sensible world as well as itself.<sup>36</sup> In order that this transition would be perfect all intellectual operations should be left behind and the summit of the affect, *apex affectus*, should fully transcend and be transformed in the divine.<sup>37</sup>

It should be noticed that Bonaventure is not terminologically systematic when he speaks about this last highest part of the soul – *apex mentis*, *apex affectus*, *synderesis*. Nevertheless, the notion that all these terms hold is more or less the same. It is a capacity that holds the highest part of the soul and hence it is named *apex*. Furthermore, this *apex* is not intellec-

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35 Cf. Bonaventura, *I Sent*, d 1, a. 2, q. un., in c. (I 36b–37a): “Quia ergo frui secundum omnem acceptionem dicit delectationem vel quietem vel utrumque, et omne tale habet rationem boni, et hoc est obiectum voluntatis: ideo loquendo essentialiter, frui est actus voluntatis. [...] Et sicut etiam dicit Anselmus: “Voluntas inclinat alias vires et aliis meretur”, ideo eius quietatio et delectatio redundat in alias vires. Unde sicut voluntas non sibi cognoscit, sed ratio cognoscit sibi et voluntati, ita voluntas sibi et rationi delectatur et ipsam quiescere facit.”

36 Cf. Bonaventura, *Itinerarium Mentis in Deum*, c. 7, 1 (V 312 ab): “[C]um tandem in sexto gradu ad hoc pervenerit, speculetur in principio primo et summo et mediatore Dei et hominum lesu Christo ea quorum similia in creaturis nullatenus reperiri possunt, et quae omnem perspicacitatem humani intellectus excedunt: restat, ut haec speculando transcendat et transeat non solum mundum istum sensibilem, verum etiam semetipsam.”

37 Cf. *ibid.* 4 (V 312b): “In hoc autem transitu, si sit perfectus, oportet quod relinquuntur omnes intellectuales operationes, et apex affectus totus transferetur et transformetur in Deum.”

tual but affective by its own nature. Therefore, in the end two parts of this chapter Bonaventure puts a strong emphasis on grace, desire, delight and inner joy in contrast with nature, diligence, study and intellect.<sup>38</sup>

It is noteworthy that even though Bonaventure seemingly rejects this experience as an intellectual one, sometimes he refers to it as knowledge of different kind. The mind find itself in darkness and cannot investigate further, but this is, following Dionysius, *docta ignorantia*. Even though the mind is left behind, when one reaches this final point, he acquires the most excellent knowledge, which is the ultimate and most noble way of knowing.<sup>39</sup>

A similar line of reasoning we find in another text of Bonaventure, which is important to his general understanding of knowledge and its relation to theology. In *De reductione artium ad theologiam* we find a strong emphasis on leading a righteous life, moral philosophy and the final union with the divine. Thus for example in each different sphere of knowledge Bonaventure finds a threefold structure which is a representation of emergence or birth, the order of life and the unity of the soul and the divine. This emphasis becomes even stronger when we reach the end of the text.

For Bonaventure the field of moral philosophy is directed mainly towards rightness because it is interested in justice, which according to Anselm of Canterbury is defined as rightness of the will. Rightness means however three different things. First, it has the meaning of something, the ends of which are equally distant from the center. The second meaning of right is of something that follows the leading principle and therefore right is used with regards to the order of life. The third meaning of right is that the summit of which is straightened upwards just as man has an erect posture. In this last sense, we see a resemblance of the unity of the soul and the divine, which takes place only when the summit of the mind – *apex mentis* – is directed upwards. This occurs when the rational part of the soul knows the truth, when the spirited part leans on the supreme generosity and the appetitive unites with the goodness.<sup>40</sup>

38 Cf. *ibid.* 5, 6 (V 312b–313a): “Quoniam igitur ad hoc nihil potest natura, modicum potest industria, parum est dandum inquisitioni, et multum unctioni; parum dandum est linguae, et plurimum interna laetitiae; [...] Si autem quaeras, quomodo haec fiant, interroga gratiam, non doctrinam; desiderium, non intellectum; gemitum orationis, non studium lectionis; sponsum, non magistrum.”

39 Cf. Bizotto, Natale, *Existenz und Erkenntnis. Eine Untersuchung über die Erkenntnislehre Bonaventuras*, Verlag Notring, Wien, 1972, S. 213–218.

40 Cf. Bonaventura, *De Reductione Artium ad Theologiam*, *Opera Omnia*, t. 5, Quaracchi, 1891, 23, 24, 25 (V 325b): “[Q]oniam intentio moralis philosophiae principaliter versatur circa rectitudinem; versatur enim circa iustitiam generalem, quae ut dicit Anselmus, “est rectitudo voluntatis”. Rectum autem habet tripliciter notificari, et secundum hoc tria praemissa lucent in consideratione rectitudinis.

We would like to provide one last text that speaks in favor of the current interpretation. The practical element of knowledge and its influence on behalf of the affective part of the soul could be seen in the very way Bonaventure defines theology. The Franciscan says that science perfects the intellect, which then effects the affect and the external actions. In its own acts, the intellect perfects itself in contemplation and hence it is justly named speculative. On the other hand, the intellect effects the acts in order that we become better. And the last one is the practical science or the morality. Between these two extremes stands wisdom, which is both speculative and practical, and here both habits – that of speculative science and of self-improvement. However, theology serves mainly for self-improvement.<sup>41</sup>

In order to emphasize this practical element Bonaventure repeats that theology does not serve in order to reveal the hidden just statically and therefore theology is subordinated to the affect.<sup>42</sup> In addition, against those, who claim that theology is neither for the *mores*, nor for the things on the near side, Bonaventure says that theology serves the goal of self-improvement and practice.<sup>43</sup>

In conclusion, we would like to highlight briefly the most important passages. Even though Bonaventure did not intend to debate the priority of the will, he put a strong emphasis on the autonomy and superiority

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Uno modo dicitur “rectum, cuius medium non exit ab extremis.” [...] Alio modo dicitur rectum quod dirigenti se conformatur. Et secundum hoc in consideratione rectitudinis conspicitur ordo vivendi. [...] Tertio modo dicitur rectum cuius summitas est sursum erecta, sicut homo habet staturam rectam. Et secundum hoc in consideratione rectitudinis manifestatur Dei et animae unio. Cum enim Deus sit sursum necesse est quod apex ipsius mentis sursum erigatur. Hoc autem est, cum rationalis assentit primae veritati propter se et super omnia, cum irascibilis innititur summae largitati, et cum concupiscibilis adhaeret bonitati; tunc qui hoc modo Deo adhaeret unus spiritus est.”

41 Cf. Bonaventura, *I Sent.*, pr. q. 3, in c. (I 13ab): “Nam si consideremus intellectum in se, sic et proprie speculativus et perficitur ab habitu, qui est contemplationis gratia, qui dicitur scientiae speculativa. Si autem consideremus ipsum ut natum extendi ad opus, sic perficitur ab habitu, qui est, ut boni fiamus; et hic est scientia practica sive moralis. Si autem medio modo consideretur ut natus extendi ad affectum, sic perficitur ab habitu medio inter pure speculativum et practicum, qui affectum: Sapientia enim doctrinae est secundum nomen eius, Ecclesiastici sexto. Unde hic est contemplationis gratia, et ut boni fiamus, principaliter tamen, ut boni fiamus.”

42 Cf. *ibid.* in c. 1 (I 13b): “Quod obiicitur, quod est ad pandendum abscondita; dicendum, quod ibi non est status, quia illa revelatio ordinat ad affectum.”

43 Cf. *ibid.* 2, 3: “Quod obiicitur, quod non est de moribus nec, de his quae sunt ab opere nostro; iam patet responsio ad illud, quia ipse loquitur de illa quae proprie est, ut boni fiamus, ut de practica.”

of the will in contrast to the intellect, which might be seen as effecting his epistemology. The emphasis on the will in connection with the sinful nature of man leads to a deformation in the activity of the numerous cognitive powers and only thanks to grace both the will and through it, all other powers could be reformed and restored. Nevertheless, there is a volitional power – *synderesis* – that always leads man towards good and realizes the end goal of knowledge. When the intellect reaches the limits of its weakened nature, this power is enabled to transcend both this world and the soul and therefore to be transformed.

If our current interpretation were plausible, it would propose that Bonaventure's understanding of epistemology finds itself in a somehow different context. The variety of epistemological theories of the 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> century in Franciscan thought might be examined of redefining or simply discussing speculative knowledge in a broader context. Thus, speculative knowledge would not be necessarily seen as opposed to practical knowledge, but rather innermost and deeply connected to it. Speculation would be an activity of the mind that is not self-sufficient, but rather put in the broader context of morality and the moral condition of the human being.