Modern Criticism of the Thomistic Concept of Faculty

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MODERN CRITICISM OF THE
THOMISTIC CONCEPT
OF FACULTY

BY
DENIS E. SCHMITT, S.J.

THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF
THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE
OF MASTER OF ARTS

JUNE
1946
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CHAPTER I
THE PROBLEM

A discussion of the faculties of the soul should not be without some interest to modern scholastic philosophers. Faculty psychology, if we may use the modern term of derision, is the framework around which nearly all of scholastic psychology is built. Pick up almost any textbook of scholastic psychology, and you will find that the whole of our psychological experience is divided and subdivided and treated under the head of faculties. Vegetation, sensation, intellection, volition, locomotion, all are considered under the aspect of faculties. Modern psychology, on the other hand, is quite consistent in its reprobation of "faculty psychology." The Encyclopedia Britannica in its brief article on this subject, says:

"Faculty psychology" is the name given to the older psychology which "explained" the various mental processes by reference to corresponding faculties which exercise them. Although the faculty psychology has been frequently derided from the days of Locke onwards, it is not entirely dead, for it still seems to haunt some of the latest books on psychology in the guise of "abilities." 1

1 Encyclopedia Britannica, 14th ed., IX, 32
Again S.S. Colvin in his work, *The Learning Process*, says:

> The faculty psychology of the last century is long since dead, and its resting place almost has been forgotten by the scientists of today; its ghost, however, stalks abroad among the masses, and its spirit still lives in the pedagogical theories of many uncritical thinkers.²

These are but samples of the widespread opprobrium heaped upon faculty psychology, so widespread in fact, that "there have been few psychologists or educators who have not taken a fling at its supposed absurdities."³

Since faculty psychology then is the framework for nearly all of Scholastic psychology and at the same time meets with almost universal disapproval among modern non-Scholastic psychologists, investigation of this apparently sad state of affairs does not seem to be out of place.

The problem in its broadest outline seems to come to this: Are we scholastics wrong in propounding the faculty theory, or are the moderns wrong in repudiating it? In some cases the verdict may be against the latter. In other cases, however, we may perhaps find that neither are wrong. It may be that what the moderns repudiate under the name of faculties, Scholastics themselves would be the first to condemn.

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It is important to note here that it would be an over-simplification of the problem to infer that all criticism of faculty psychology is directed against the psychology of the Schools. Such, in point of fact, is not the case. Herbart's criticism of the faculties, for example, was directed primarily against the philosophy of Wolff and Kant. Yet since, as we have said, faculty psychology penetrates Scholastic psychology almost to the core, any attack on the faculties would, apparently at least, be a criticism of the Scholastic position. It will be a point of this thesis to show, however, that such an inference is unjust, and that some criticisms of the faculties are entirely justified, not because they criticize the theory as proposed by Scholastic philosophers, but because they criticize adulterations of that theory.

After this rather broad view of the problem we come now to a statement of the specific purpose of the thesis. It will be to outline the doctrine of the faculties of the soul according to the philosophy of St. Thomas, to present a cross-section of the many indictments against the faculties and faculty psychology, and to give an evaluation of these indictments in the light of the Thomistic position. It will not, then, attempt to prove the validity of St. Thomas' doctrine, nor will it attempt to show the error of any opposing system. Its purpose is merely to investigate and present St. Thomas' position on the
faculties, and then to examine the validity of some of the objections against his doctrine of the faculties.

Although Scholastic faculty psychology is not to be identified with Thomistic faculty psychology (for there are schools within Scholasticism which differ with St. Thomas on the doctrine of faculties); yet, when and if we achieve the specific purpose of this thesis, which is to study Thomistic faculty psychology in the light of modern opposition, we will at the same time be throwing light on the broader problem of the relationship between Scholastic faculty psychology as such and those same modern critics.

It is important to note at the outset that St. Thomas' approach to the problem is certainly not that of an educator, nor precisely that of a psychologist, but predominantly that of a metaphysician. He is interested principally in the ultimate causes of our psychic experiences. The modern approach, on the other hand, veering away from, and even in some cases denying the validity of metaphysics, is very largely that of the educator, the educational psychologist, and the empirical psychologist. This very difference of approach is one of the principle sources of the misunderstanding which has given rise to so much abuse against "faculty psychology."

The procedure to be followed in achieving the specific purpose of the thesis is suggested by that very purpose. First
in order will be the outline of the Thomistic position. Following this will come the presentation of the opposing views. Now, one source of opposition to the faculty theory is the incongruity of this doctrine with the philosophical systems of certain modern philosophers. Accordingly, we shall trace the fortunes of the faculty theory through the philosophies of some of the more prominent of the modern philosophers. We shall in this way see that the opposition on the part of some philosophers was demanded by the logic of their own system of thought.

After having traced the theory in this manner through the systems of some of the modern philosophers, we shall group the great number of objections found in later writers according to general types and then discuss in turn each of the typical positions. To attempt an answer to each individual objection would be a wearisome and fruitless process, for, stripped of their accidental differences, nearly all these objections turn out to be one of three or four general categories, and for our purpose it will suffice to handle them as such.
CHAPTER II

THOMISTIC CONCEPT OF FACULTY

Faculties play so important a part in St. Thomas' notion of the soul, that we find a number of references to them in his various works. In arranging, therefore, an outline of his position we have not limited ourselves to references from any one of his works, but have gathered them from several treatises.

St. Thomas, in the true Aristotelian fashion, is concerned with the explanation of things. The point of departure in his philosophy is not some sort of abstract idea but the concrete data of experience. All of us, he would say, are conscious of very definite and at the same time diverse psychical phenomena. We hear, we feel, we touch, we smell, we see, (acts of external senses); we attribute disparate sensations to the same object, we imagine, we remember, we have instinctive acts, (acts of internal senses); we think, we will, we have intellectual memory, (acts of intellectual faculties). Now what is the principle, the origin, the cause of these conscious experiences? Let us be more specific. I inhale the sweet perfume of a delicately scented rose. What within me produces this activity? We prescind here from the odor as partial cause, and consider
only the subjective cause. Does this sensation of smell come from the soul directly, from a faculty, from the suppositum (we are told: actiones sunt suppositorum)? Scholastics distinguish. My act of sensing the delicate perfume of the rose has a fourfold principle. There is the remote principle which, (principium quod remotum) acts, and that is the suppositum. I am the one who smells the rose. Then there is the proximate principle which (principium quod proximum) acts, and that is the sensorium. My nose is the proximate principle which smells. Again there is the remote principle by which (principium quo remotum) I act, and that is the soul or vital principle. It is by means of the sensitive power of my soul that I smell the rose. Lastly, there is a proximate principle by which (principium quo proximum) I act, and that is the faculty. I smell by reason of my smelling faculty, or sense of smell.

Now the problem that confronts us is just this; what precisely is this principium quo proximum, this faculty, and how does it differ, if at all, from the soul itself, the principium quo remotum? Are the different faculties nothing but the soul itself looked at from the point of view of its different activities? Or are the faculties entities really distinct from the soul; not independent from the soul, it is true, but really distinct entities inhering in the soul, through which
the soul acts? In other words, are the faculties only, rationally distinct from the soul, or are they really distinct from it, as res from res? And if they are really distinct, are they distinct as substance from substance, as, for example, one book from another; or as substance from accident, as redness from a red book?

There are, as St. Thomas says, some who think that the faculties are nothing other than the essence of the soul itself, considered under the aspect of its different operations. In the *Questio Disputata de Spiritualibus Creaturis*, under Article II, he remarks:

Respondeo dicendum quod quidam posuerunt potentias animae non esse aliud quam ipsam eius essentiam, ita quod una et eadem essentia animae, secundum quod est principium sensitivae operationis, dicitur sensus; secundum vero quod est intellectualis operationis principium, dicitur intellectus, et sic de aliiis. Et ad hoc praecipue videntur motiuisse, ut Avicenna dicit, propter simplicitatem animae.... Sed haeo positio est omnino impossibilis.

Again, in his *Quaestio Disputata de Anima*, under Article 12, "Utrum anima sit suae potentiae," he says:

Ponentes igitur, quod anima sit suae potentiae, hoc intelligunt, quod ipsa essentia animae sit principium immediatum omnium operationum animae; dicentes quod homo per essentiam animae intelligit, sentit, et alia huiusmodi operatur, et

These two quotations make it amply clear that for St. Thomas the faculties were certainly something other than the mere essence of the soul. So far, however, he has only affirmed that such a doctrine is impossible. Does he adduce any arguments to show such a position impossible? He does; decidedly so. Of the arguments he proposed, we shall note firstly, the one he seems to insist on most strongly. It comes to this: an act is in the same order of being as the potency to which it is ordained. Thus if the act is an accident, the potency too is an accident; if a substance, the potency too is a substance. But the act in this case,—the operations of the soul,—is an accident, for only in God are the operations and the substance one (in solo Deo est operatio eius substantia). Since therefore, in all creatures the operations are accidents, so too are the potencies. Therefore, the potencies or faculties are accidents, and not part of the substance or essence of the soul. Now let us hear St. Thomas:

Respondeo dicendum quod impossible est dicere quod essentia animae sit eius potentia; licet hoc quidem posuerint; et hoc dupliciter ostenditur....Primo, quia cum potentia et actus dividant ens, et quodlibet genus entis, oportet

quod ad idem genus referatur potentia et actus; et ideo, si actus non est in genere substantiae, potentia quae dicitur ad illum actum, non potest esse in genere substantiae. Operatio autem animae non est in genere substantiae, sed in solo Deo operatio est eiusmod substantia. Unde Dei potentia quae est operationis principium, est ipsa Dei essentia; quod non potest esse verum neque in anima, neque in aliqua creatura....

Let us now add a few of the subsidiary arguments given by St. Thomas.

Impossible apparet (quod essentia animae sit suae potentiae) hoc speciali ratione in anima....Primo quidem quia essentia una est, in potentissim autem oportet ponere multitudo propter diversitatem actum et objectorum. Oportet enim potentias secundum actus diversificari, cum potentia ad actum dicatur.4

The conclusion therefore is evident: the soul is one; the faculties or potentiae are many. Therefore, they cannot be identified. St. Thomas goes on:

Apparet idem ex ordine potentiarum animae, et habitudine earum ad invicem; inventur enim quod una aliam movet, sicut ratio irascibilem et concupiscibilem, et intellectus voluntatem; quod esse non potest si omnes potentiae essent ipsa animae essentia, quia idem secundum idem non movet seipsum, ut probat Philosophus. Relinquitur ergo quod potentiae animae non sunt ipsa eius essentia.5

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3 S. Thomas Aquinas, Summa Theologica, Marietti, Taurini, 1937, Tom. I, I, q. 77, a. 1, corp. cf. also q. 79, a. 1, corp., q. 54, a. 1, corp.; q. 54, a. 3, corp.; Sent. 1, dist. 5, q. IV, a. 2.
4 Aquinas, De Spiritualibus Creatis, a.II, corp.
5 Ibid.
The faculties then are not identical with the soul. But if they are not identical with the soul, they must be distinct. If they are distinct they are either substances or accidents. They cannot be substances, as we have already shown, for as potencies they are in the same order of being as their corresponding acts. But the corresponding acts are, as we have shown, accidents. Therefore, the potencies or faculties too must be accidents; accidents inhering in the soul alone in the case of the purely spiritual or inorganic faculties, or in the composite in the case of the organic faculties. Let us hear St. Thomas on this point:

Non enim inter substantiam et accidens potest esse aliquid medium, cum substantia et accidens dividant ens per affirmationem et negationem; cum proprium substantiae sit non esse in subjecto, accidentis vero sit in subjecto esse. Unde si potentiae animae non sunt ipsa essentia animae (et manifestum est quod non sunt aliae substantiae) sequitur quod sunt accidentia in aliquo novem generum contenta. Sunt enim in secunda specie qualitatis, quae dicitur potentia vel impotentia naturalis. 6

Considered thus from the viewpoint of the praedicaments, the faculties are accidents, qualities. Considered however, from the viewpoint of the praedicables, they are, as St. Thomas goes on to say, in the same article, "proprietates naturales vel essentiales, id est essentiam animae naturaliter consequentes." 7

6 Ibid.
7 Ibid.
Let us now draw together what we have so far seen: The faculties are not the essence of the soul considered merely under different aspects, but are realities distinct from, though not independent of, the soul. They are accidents, qualities inhering in the soul. They are proprietates naturales, which though not part of the essence, follow naturally from the essence of the soul.

Let us here note for future reference, with what degree of certitude St. Thomas holds this thesis of the real distinction between the soul and its faculties. Now the two opinions, namely, a real distinction and the absence of a real distinction, are contradictory positions. If then the Angelic Doctor says that the opinion opposed to his "est omnino impossibilis,"\(^8\) or that "stare non potest,"\(^9\) we may safely infer, I think, that he held his position as certain.

We have so far been discussing the nature of the faculties, what they are; let us consider now how they operate, how they work. Do they operate of their own right, independently of the soul? If not, how do they operate? Does the soul, as prime mover, so to speak, work through them, by means of them?

Sciendum quod potentia nihil aliud est quam principium operationis aliquius, sive sit actio sive passio; non quidem principium

\(^8\) Ibid.
\(^9\) Aquinas, De Anima, a.12, corp.
From this it becomes clear that, as Father Maher so well says,

A mental power or faculty is not... an independent reality [note that he does not say it is not a distinct reality, but that it is not an independent reality], a separate agent, which originates conscious states out of itself apart from the mind.11

That gives us some idea of how the faculties do not operate. How then do they operate? What is their function in the operations of the soul? Again let us hear St. Thomas:

Non quidem (est facultas) principium quod est subjectum agens aut patient, sed id quo agens agit, aut patient patitur, sicut ars aedificativa est potentia in aedificatore, qui per eam aedificat; et calor in igne, qui calore caelefacit; et sicum est potentia in lignis, quia secundum hoc sunt combustibilia.12

Accordingly we may with Father Siwek say:

Ex dictis apparet potentias operativas animae aequirarari posse instrumentis, quibus artista utitur in opere suo perficiendo; at haec instrumenta sunt naturaliter animae coniuncta.13

Likewise Father Calcaigno tells us in his excellent treatment of the faculties, that the action of the soul and its faculties is

10 Ibid.
12 Aquinas, De Anima, a.12, corp.
13 P. Siwek, S.J., Psychologia Metaphysica, Univ. Gregoriana, Romae, 1939, 73.
not a double action, one part of which proceeds from the faculty itself, the other from the soul; but that there is but one single action proceeding at once from both the soul and the faculty, just as the act of painting is one act that proceeds alike from the painter and from his brush.

(Facultates) se habent ad modum instrumenti, quod agit quidem, sed actione quae per prius est a causa principali. Unde sicut non proprie penicillus pingit, sed homo per penicillum, ita non proprie intellectus cogitat, sed anima per intellectum.\(^{14}\)

All along we have been speaking of faculties, assuming that there is more than one faculty. The assumption, however, is not gratuitous. St. Thomas holds that there is a plurality of faculties,\(^{15}\) and says that they are distinguished one from another by their acts and objects—Distinguuntur per actus et objecta. For, as we know, a potency is essentially ordained to its act, in such wise that the potency is known only insofar as its act is known. Again, an act is always ordained to some object, material object in vegetative and sensitive life, immaterial in intellectual life. The object, of course, that distinguishes the act is the formal object, for the same material object, for example, our sweet red rose, may cause two specifically different acts—the acts of smelling and of seeing—


\(^{15}\) Aquinas, S.T., I, q. 77, a. 2.
and, hence, could not be said to differentiate the faculties. 

The faculties, then, are distinguished proximately by their acts, but remotely by the formal objects. Here is the way St. Thomas puts it:

Respondeo dicendum quod potentia secundum illud quod est potentia ordinatur ad actum. Unde oportet rationem potentiae accipi ex actu ad quem ordinatur; et per consequens oportet quod ratio potentiae diversificatur, ut diversificatur ratio actus. Ratio autem actus diversificatur secundum diversam rationem objecti; omnis enim actio vel est potentiae activae vel passivae. Objectum autem comparatur ad actum potentiae passivae sicut principium et causa movens;...Ad actum autem potentiae activae comparatur objectum ut terminus et finis... Ex his autem duobus actio speciem recipit, scilicet ex principio, vel ex termino..... Unde necesse est quod potentiae diversificentur secundum actus et objecta.16

There are different faculties then, which are distinguished one from another by their formal objects. But what in the concrete are these faculties? In other words, how does St. Thomas classify them?

There are, first of all, three kinds of souls, vegetative, sensitive, and intellectual; and the faculties may correspondingly be divided into the vegetative, sensitive and intellectual faculties.17 The basis of this division is the degree in which the operations of the soul surpass the operations of natural bodies.

16 Ibid., q. 77, a. 3, corp.
17 Ibid., q. 78, a. 1, corp.
Another division, more detailed than the first, is the division according to the five genera of faculties,—the vegetative, sensitive, intellectual, appetitive and locomotive faculties. The basis of division in this case is the universality of the object and the manner by which the soul attains it. 18

At this juncture a question may arise as to the unity of the soul. If the faculties are entities really distinct from the soul, how can the soul be said to be one? We answer that a thing is one, or more than one, by reason of its substance. There exist two units, two una per se, only where there exist two complete substances. Now the faculties are accidents or propria, and as such do not form part of the essence or substance of the soul. Accordingly, they may be distinct between themselves and from the soul without causing any distinction in the substance of the soul, and without therefore, destroying the soul's unity.

Such, then, in sketchy form are some of the main points of St. Thomas' doctrine on the faculties. According to that doctrine, the faculties are not merely ways of classifying the different psychic phenomena produced by the soul; they are realities, really distinct from the soul, yet not so distinct as to be independent of the soul either in being or in operation.

18 Ibid., q. 78, a. 1.
They are accidents inhering in the soul, qualities of the soul, proprietates naturales, which the soul uses as quasi-instruments in the production of psychic acts. The faculties do not hear, see, feel, think, will, and so on, but the soul by and through the faculties produces these acts. The faculties are distinguished from one another by reason of their formal objects, and may be classified into vegetative, sensitive, and intellectual faculties according as their operations surpass the operations of natural bodies, or into vegetative, sensitive, intellectual, appetitive or locomotive, according to the division of the five genera of faculties. That, in brief summary, we may say is the Thomistic doctrine of the faculties.
CHAPTER III

FACULTY CONCEPT FROM OCCAM TO LEIBNITZ

Having completed the discussion of the faculties according to the philosophy of St. Thomas, we are faced now with the problem of tracing the fortunes of this theory through the maze of philosophic thought since his time. Of the various possible ways of conducting this investigation, we will, as noted above, use the following: first, we will consider separately some of the more prominent of the early modern philosophers, to see what place was accorded to the faculty theory in their philosophy. Secondly, since there is a superabundance of material relative to our problem to be found in the writings of the more recent modern psychologists and thinkers, it will be more to our purpose to categorize the matter they present, and then to handle collectively the material found in each category. This, accordingly, is the course we shall pursue.

The first major diversion from the doctrine of the faculties as presented by St. Thomas was that offered by the Nominalists under the leadership of William of Occam. Though Nominalism did not limit itself to the field of psychology but
permeated through the whole field of philosophy, it concerns us only insofar as it vitiates the Thomistic concept of the faculty. According to the nominalists, the faculties had not real existence. They were not entia realia; they were merely nomina. They were nothing more than mere names according to which we may conveniently classify mental phenomena. Pirotta clearly and succinctly analyzes their position:

Prima sententia quamlibet distinctionem praeter nominalem sive conceptualem seu ex modo significandi, negat, quatenus scilicet ipsa animae essentia est per seipsam proximum principium operationum, et ideo eadem essentia animae quia intellectus, dicitur vel significatur ut intellectus, quia vult, voluntas, etc., consequenter potentiae non sunt nisi nomina. Ita Nominalistae...

Dessoir in his discussion of Occam's psychology makes a somewhat similar statement. He says:

He is throughout opposed to a multiplicity of distinct faculties, and limits the notion to that of a multiplicity of directions in which the soul is active.2

This attitude toward the faculties attributed to Occam deserves special attention, for it is a viewpoint which is predominant in nearly the whole of subsequent non-scholastic thought on the problem. Pirotta marks well this fact, when, in conclusion to the passage quoted above, he states:

Ita Nominalistae tum antiqui...tum moderni, quibus plures alii, suis doctrinis cohaerentes, adhaerent, ut Cartesius et Cartesiani, Occasionalistae (v.g. Malebranche), Empiristae (Locke, Taine), Pseudo-Intellectualistae (v.g. Leibnitz), Phenomenalistae (v.g. Kant et Kantiani), Pantheistae (v.g. Spinoza), Transcendentalistae (v.g. Schelling, Hegel), Dynamistae-Psychici (v.g. Herbart, Beneke, Lindner), Rosmini, Galluppi, Gerdil et Garnier.  

For a refutation of this position, namely, that the faculties are only names or group concepts for the activities of the soul, we need only turn to the preceding chapter where we will find St. Thomas' explicit treatment of this matter. He emphatically denies that the faculties are merely the soul itself considered from the viewpoint of its various activities, and states with proof that they are real accidental entities inhering in the essence of the soul. Suarez also disposes of the Nominalists, though not with quite the same dispatch.

Potentiae quae ad has (vitales) operationes ordinantur, distinguuntur ex natura rei ab ipsa anima. Est contra Nominales, et videtur certa.  

The Nominalistic or even Conceptualistic viewpoint of faculties is very common among psychologists of the recent century. It even constitutes for one author, Sir William Hamilton, a means of defense against the critics who accuse the

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3 Pirotta, 440.
faculties of being "so many distinct and independent exist-
ences." 5

We pass now from Occam and the Nominalists to the early modern philosophers. Undoubtedly the first big name on the list of modern non-scholastic philosophers is that of Francis Bacon. It has been said 6 that Bacon is to be judged rather on the method which he inaugurated than on the content of his system. Certainly his content relative to the faculties differs little, if at all, from the traditional scholastic view. In the third chapter of the fourth book of De Augmentis Scientiarum, he says:

Secunda igitur partitio (circa animam humanam) fit, in doctrinam de substantia et facul-
tatibus animae, et doctrinam de usu et objectis facultatum. 7

From this it seems we can conclude that, implicitly at least, he distinguishes between the substance and the faculties of the soul; hence they are not identical. Moreover, he seems like-
wise to differentiate between the faculty and its use or function; hence they are not merely names to designate the

various functions of the soul, for if they were merely intended to be names for the functions, they certainly would not be used to designate the principles from which the functions flow, as
the above quotations seem to indicate that they are.

That such deductions are not merely implicit in his work, but that he held a variety of faculties, and that, if not fully satisfied, he was at least concerned about the nature of their distinction from the soul, we may gather from the following:

Facultates autem animae notissimae sunt; intellectus, ratio, phantasia, memoria, appetitus, voluntas; denique universae illae, circa quas versantur scientiae logicae et ethicae: Sed in doctrina de anima origines ipsarum tractari debent, idque physice, prout animae innatae sint, et inhaereant: usus tantum ipsarum, et objecta, illis alteris artibus deputantur. 8

It is interesting to note in this connection Bacon's use of the subjunctive mood in the phrase "prout innatae sint et inhaereant." In the doctrine of the soul, he says, the origin of the faculties ought to be investigated, as they may be innate and adhering in the soul. Accordingly, Bacon does not seem to be quite so certain as St. Thomas about the nature of the faculties and their relationship to the soul.

It seems, therefore, that we can say without fear of overstatement that Bacon's philosophy of the nature of the

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8 Bacon, Bk. IV, c. 3, 133.
faculties when compared with that of later philosophers, follows closely enough the Thomistic tradition.

Although, chronologically speaking, Bacon may be considered the first in importance among modern non-scholastic philosophers, yet from the viewpoint of his influence on the whole trend of modern philosophy, Descartes undoubtedly holds first rank among all modern philosophers. Certainly his views regarding the problem under discussion are of prime importance, not because of any astounding revolution he inaugurated in the doctrine of the faculties, but because, by his doctrine of the soul, and of the complete independence of the soul in its activity from the body, he prepared the ground for excessive subjective idealism on the one hand and gross materialism on the other, both of which extremes, reductively, have had great influence on the question of the faculties.

In order to understand what Descartes thought concerning the faculties, it is first necessary for us to get a glimpse at what he considered to be the nature of the mind, for on his view of the nature of the mind will depend in large measure his view concerning the nature of the mind's faculties.

Now the word substance, Descartes says, may be attributed univocally to soul and body, and the principal property of each constitutes its essence. But since thought is the principle property of the thinking substance, and extension the
principle property of corporeal substance, thought and extension constitute the essence of mind and body respectively.  

The immediate consequence of this is that thought and mind are not at all two things, but if distinct at all, are only rationally distinct. And indeed we cannot accuse Descartes here of any want of logic, for he says:

> For we experience some difficulty in abstracting the notions that we have of substance from those of thought or extension, for they in truth do not differ but in thought (ratione)...  

If, then, thought constitutes the essence of the soul's substance, what relation will the other activities of the mind (such as memory, imagination, volition) have to the soul. These activities, he states quite logically, are different types or modes of thought. "...everything that we find in mind is but so many diverse forms of thinking."  

With mind then in reality identical with thought, and with all the mental activity considered as modes or variations of thought, it would be relatively safe to conclude without further inquiry into his writings that he held that the mind

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and the one faculty of thought are one and the same thing. We
are not surprised then when we read:

...no one before me, so far as I know, asserted that mind consisted in one thing
alone, namely the faculty of thinking and
the inward source (sc. of thinking).12

Now, when Descartes speaks of the faculty of thought, he
does not use the term in the Thomistic sense of a potency that
can be actuated. For, according to Descartes, the essence of
the mind is its act of thinking, and it is this continuous act
or process of thinking that he loosely denominates a faculty.

In one place at least Descartes dropped a remark on what
he thought of the prevailing doctrine of faculties. In the
second part of his treatise on The Passions of the Soul, after
having given his enumeration of the various passions, he gives
his reason why he is differing in his enumeration from those
who preceded him:

Here we have the order which seems to me
to be the best for the enumeration of the
passions. In this I know well that I am
parting company with all those who have
written on this subject before, but it is
not without great reason that I do so.
For these derive their enumeration from
the fact that they distinguish in the
sensitive part of the soul two appetites
which they name the concupiscent and the
irascible respectively. And because in
the soul I recognize no distinction of
parts, as I have said above, this seems
to me to signify nothing but that it has
two faculties, the one of desire, and the

12 Descartes, Notes Directed Against A Certain Programme, etc.,
Note I, Vol. 1, 434.
other of anger, and because in the same way it has the faculties of wondering, loving, hoping, fearing, and thus of receiving in itself every other passion... I do not see why they have desired to refer them all to concupiscence or anger.13

If we were to paraphrase this statement, it would seem that his thought would run something like this: "Preceding enumerations of the passions divided them into faculties of desire (concupiscible) and anger (irascible). In that case we should also have faculties of love, hope, fear, etc., for they are as much passions as are anger and desire. But that would be putting in the soul a plurality of faculties. Now a plurality of faculties would involve a distinction of parts in the soul. Therefore, since I recognize in the soul no distinction of parts, such an enumeration is unsatisfactory."

It is not at all difficult to see then that Descartes' position differs radically from the Thomistic doctrine. For in the Thomistic doctrine the faculties are not activities, but potencies; the faculties are not limited to one so called "faculty;" and the plurality that does exist does not involve a distinction of parts in the soul, for they are not identified with the essence of the soul, but are qualities really distinct from the soul's essence.

To sum up then: the soul or mind according to Descartes
is thought, and all other types of mental activity are but
modes of thought. This activity, which Descartes in misleading
fashion calls the faculty of thought, constitutes the essence
of the soul. More than one "faculty" is impossible, for to
posit in the soul any further "faculties" would be to place in
it a distinction of parts, a thing which, of course, he would
not permit.

In any attempt to evaluate the doctrine of Descartes as
compared with that of St. Thomas, it is important to remember
that Descartes' approach was predominantly epistemological,
whereas the Thomistic approach is predominantly metaphysical.
Since the approaches are different it is difficult to evaluate
one in terms of the other. Nevertheless some evaluation can
be made.

Certainly it is untenable to identify soul with thought
merely because we can know of the soul's substance only by
knowing its act of thinking. Surely a person who is unconscious
through sickness or accident is not deprived of his mind because
there is a suspension of all thought. Yet that would have to
be the conclusion, if we identify the mind's substance with its
act of thinking. To this objection Descartes answers:

But why should it not always think, when it
is a thinking substance? Why is it strange
that we do not remember the thoughts it has
had when in the womb or in a stupor, when we do not even remember the most of those we know we have had when grown up, in good health, and awake? For the recollection of the thoughts which the mind has had during the period of its union with the body, it is necessary for certain traces of them to be impressed on the brain; and turning and applying itself to these the mind remembers. Is it remarkable if the brain of an infant or of one in a stupor is unfit to receive these residual impressions?  

The immediate conclusion from this position, namely, that the mind is a thinking substance, or, in other words, that the act of thinking is the essence of the mind, should be that the mind is the pure act of thought. According to Thomistic metaphysics, this is clearly impossible in a created being, for only God is the Pure Act of Thought.  

As for Descartes' classification of all our principle mental acts as different "modes" of thought, we certainly could agree with him, if we were to change the word "thought" to "consciousness" or "awareness"; for certainly, if we exclude the mysterious operations of the subconscious mind, there is a concomitant consciousness or awareness to all our mental acts. Hence all our mental acts are "modes," so to speak, of "consciousness," or in Descartes' terminology, "thought." Now there is definite evidence to support the hypothesis that "awareness" or "consciousness" is what Descartes meant by "thought." For he says:

By the word thought I understand all that of which we are conscious as operating in us. And that is why not alone understanding, willing, imagining, but also feeling, are here the same thing as thought. Nevertheless it still remains true that consciousness or awareness do not constitute the essence of mind as they seem to do for Descartes.

In conclusion then, it seems safe to say that the Cartesian and Thomistic concept of faculty were diametrically opposed. For St. Thomas the faculties are the proximate principles of conscious activity, inherent in the soul, and distinct from the soul as accidents from substance. Descartes thought otherwise. For him the operations of the soul could be reduced to one activity, thought, which he misleadingly called a faculty, but which in reality was for him identical with the soul, i.e., constituting its essence. Hence, the concept of faculty in the Thomistic sense was non-existent in the philosophy of Descartes.

The psychology of Baruch Spinoza, the next great figure after Descartes in the evolution of modern philosophy, is noteworthy here largely because of the similarity of his doctrine with that of Descartes, and because he has brought more clearly into focus some of the psychological principles enunciated by Descartes. Wallace, in his work on Hegel, remarks that in the philosophy of Spinoza, "The ideas are the mind: mind does not

have ideas,"¹⁶ and "...the faculties as such are no better than entia rationis."¹⁷ Though these remarks savor of the philosophy of Descartes, they were made, as we said, in reference to the psychology of Spinoza.

As in the case of Descartes, so in that of Spinoza, if we wish to come to an understanding of his position with regard to the faculties, it is important first of all, and for obvious reasons, to understand his concept of mind. For Descartes, as we saw, that which constitutes the mind is its principle property, thought. Spinoza is even more explicit; for him the actual being of the mind is its idea. In the second part of his Ethics, on the Nature and Origin of the Mind, we find him saying: "Therefore the first part which constitutes the actual being of the human mind is the idea of an individual thing actually existing."¹⁸ Now that individual thing, the idea of which constitutes the human mind is the body. "Therefore the object of the idea constituting the human mind is the body and that actually existing."¹⁹ That he really considered the idea of the body as constituting the mind, is beyond doubt, for in

¹⁷ Ibid., 58.
¹⁹ Ibid., Prop. XIII, 47.
another place he used the two terms, idea of the body and the mind as synonyms.20

Since, then, the mind is an idea, or, as he says elsewhere,21 "a fixed and determined mode of thinking," it would seem logical to infer that willing, which is an activity of the mind, must be a form of idea. And that is precisely Spinoza's position, for he says: "And what we have said of this volition (for it was selected at random) can be said of any other volition, namely, that it is nothing but an idea."22 And again in even more unmistakable terms he identifies idea and volition, intellect and will.

Will and intellect are nothing but individual volitions and ideas. But an individual volition and idea are one and the same thing. Therefore will and intellect are one and the same thing.23

The conclusions that we can draw with regard to Spinoza's view of the faculties are obvious. If the mind is its idea, the idea ceases to be considered a product of the mind. Hence, any notion of a faculty as the proximate principle in the production of an idea is obviously ruled out. Again, if volition

20 Ibid., Prop. XXI, 58.
21 Ibid., Prop. XLVIII, 74.
22 Ibid., Prop. XLI, 76.
23 Ibid., Prop. XLI, 76.
is the same as intellection, (or to put it more concretely, if an act of the will is but an idea), and the mind is identified with its idea, then there is no room for a faculty of will. Therefore, we are not surprised when we read: "There is not in the mind an absolute faculty of willing and unwilling, but only individual volitions..."24 That disposes of the will as a faculty; what about the intellect?

In the same manner it may be shown that there cannot be found in the mind an absolute faculty of understanding, desiring, loving, etc. Whence it follows that these and such like faculties are either entirely fictitious, or nothing else than metaphysical or general entities, which we are wont to form from individual things: therefore intellect or will have reference in the same manner to this or that idea, or to this or that volition, as "stoneness" to this or that stone, or man to Peter or Paul.25

Faculties, accordingly, are one of two things: they are either "entirely fictitious" somethings, or "metaphysical or general entities which we are wont to form from individual things;" that is, universal concepts.

Now Spinoza would certainly seem to be justified in considering the faculties entirely fictitious, for if the mind is an idea, it would surely need no faculty to form its idea.

24 Ibid., Prop. XLIX, 75.
25 Ibid., Prop. XLVIII, 75.
That would be putting a power of the mind prior to the mind,—manifestly absurd. Perhaps, however, in view of the prevailing tradition, to call the faculties "entirely fictitious" might have seemed to Spinoza to be rather abrupt; so he is willing to concede that if they are not utterly fictitious, then they are at best "metaphysical or general entities which we are wont to form from individual things." Thus, he says, "intellect"...has "reference to this or that idea, or [will] to this or that volition, as 'stoneness' to this or that stone, or man to Peter or Paul." Here we see in its full vigor the nominalistic or conceptualistic viewpoint of faculty, a view that is, as we said above, very prominent in the whole of modern non-scholastic psychology, and one which is entirely inconsistent with St. Thomas' conclusions. For St. Thomas, the faculties are not merely names or concepts, but actually existing realities inhering as accidents in the substantial soul.

It is evident that the faculties are ruled out of the psychology of Spinoza, not because of any flaws he found in the doctrine as proposed by St. Thomas, but because faculties are inconsistent with his theory of the nature of the mind. Since Spinoza identified the substance of the mind with its idea, there is obviously no place in his psychology for a faculty as a proximate principle of an act distinct from the mind. Destroy or change the nature of the soul, and, of course, you destroy or change the nature of the soul's faculties.
In our approach to the doctrine of the faculties according to the philosophy of John Locke, it will not be necessary for us first to enter upon a discussion of his theory of mind in order to understand his position with regard to the faculties, for on the question of faculties he is very explicit. Very little, if any, interpretation of his general psychological theories is required in order to arrive at a rather clear understanding of what he thought of faculties.

Strangely enough, when the present writer was beginning his investigation of the problem, it seemed rather apparent from the citations read that Locke was to be a fruitful source of material for the side of the opposition. Thus Baldwin, in his *Dictionary of Philosophy and Psychology* leaves the reader under the distinct impression that Locke is an arch-enemy of faculty psychology. Stout and Muller-Freienfels present Locke in similar fashion. Spearman also, although a very generous defender of the faculty doctrine, leaves one with the same impression; namely, that Locke is an antagonist of the doctrine of the faculties. So far is this from being the

case, that anyone who reads more than a few detached sentences will see clearly that Locke is not only a "faculty psychologist" himself, but also goes to great pains to free it from the absurdities which might be attached to it at the hands of those not careful in their use of terms.

First of all Locke definitely claims existence for the two principal faculties of "understanding" and "will."

The two great and principal actions of the mind which are most frequently considered, and which are so frequent that everyone that pleases may take notice of them in himself, are these two: perception or thinking, and volition or willing. The power of thinking is called "the understanding" and the power of volition is called "the will;" and these two powers or abilities in the mind are denominated "faculties." 30

And in another chapter of the same book he says:

These powers of the mind, viz., of perceiving and of preferring, are usually called by another name: and the ordinary way of speaking, is that the understanding and will are two faculties of the mind. 31

Lest, however, he should be misunderstood when he uses the word 'faculty', Locke proceeds immediately to warn against an improper use of the term.

31 Ibid., Bk. II, Ch. XXI, 6.
...and the ordinary way of speaking, is that the understanding and will are two faculties of the mind; a word proper enough, if it be used, as all words should be, so as not to breed any confusion in men's thoughts by being supposed (as I suspect it has been) to stand for some real beings in the soul, that performed these actions of understanding and volition. For when we say, the will is the commanding and superior faculty of the soul; that it is or is not free; that it determines the inferior faculties; though these and the like expressions... may be understood in a clear and distinct sense; yet I suspect, I say, that this way of speaking of faculties has misled many into a confused notion of so many distinct agents in us, which had their several provinces and authorities...as so many distinct beings; which has been no small occasion of wrangling, obscurity, and uncertainty in questions relating to them.32

If many of our modern psychologists and historians of psychology, who seem to have a mortal dread of the word 'faculty', were to read this passage of Locke written three centuries ago, they would not merit the 'dig' administered by Spearman against those 'who wrote more than they read.'33

The passages quoted above from the writings of Locke should be sufficient to establish him as a proponent of the faculties in the genuine Thomistic sense of the word, that is, as powers of the mind. Moreover, it should not be necessary to quote further to show his dislike for the incorrect usage

32 Ibid., Bk. II, Ch. XXI, 6.
33 Spearman, I, 189.
of the term 'faculty'. But since his mind in this matter is so much akin to the Thomistic position, and since it comes from one who is sometimes presented as an antagonist, we will not hesitate to quote a still more explicit clarification of what he meant when he spoke of the soul's faculties. The argument in the following quotation runs something like this: If the faculties are distinct beings and as such do the acting, then it would be proper to have a separate faculty for every different type of operation. But since a faculty is a power, and a power is the power of something, it is the something, in this case the soul, that does the acting not the distinct faculty.

if it be reasonable to suppose and talk of faculties as distinct beings that can act (as we do when we say, "The will orders," and "The will is free," it is fit that we should make a speaking faculty, and a walking faculty and a dancing faculty...; and we may as properly say that it is the singing faculty sings, and the dancing faculty dances, as that the will chooses, or the understanding conceives... This way of talking, nevertheless, has prevailed, and as I guess produced great confusion. For these being all different powers in the mind or in the man to do several actions, he exerts them as he thinks fit: but the power to do one action is not operated on by the power of doing another action. For the power of thinking operates not on the power of choosing, nor the power of choosing on the power of thinking... I grant that this or that actual thought may be the occasion of volition...; or the actual choice of the mind, the cause
of actual thinking on this or that thing... But in all these it is not one power that operates on another, but it is the mind that operates and exerts these powers; it is the man that does the action, it is the agent that has power, or is able to do. 34
(Sublineations not in original)

It is the first part of this statement, we believe, that writers have referred to in considering Locke an enemy of faculty psychology. If taken alone out of its context, such an opinion would be justified; taken, however, in its context it provides an excellent defense for the true faculty concept. There are two phrases, however, one in each of the last two quotations, that require a little attention, as they may be possible sources of misunderstanding or error. In the first of these two quotations, Locke says that we should not suppose faculties "to stand for some real beings in the soul." And in the second quotation, in words with much the same import, he says in effect that we should not "talk of faculties as distinct beings that can act." Now if he had meant that the faculties were not "real beings" but existed only in the rational order, or that they were not beings "distinct" from the essence of the soul, we would, of course, be obliged to consider his position to be in disagreement with that of St. Thomas. But it is obvious from the context that Locke was not at all concerned with the ultimate metaphysics of these "powers" of the soul. He was satisfied to state that the soul definitely had powers or

34 Locke, Bk. II, Ch. XXI, 17, 18, 19.
faculties, and that these powers were not self-subsistent, and were therefore the powers of something else—in this case the soul. Accordingly, he was not concerned about the ultimate nature of these powers, nor how they were related in action with the substance of which they were the powers. Therefore, when he said that the faculties were not "real beings," or were not "distinct beings that can act," he very obviously meant that they were not independently existing and independently operating entities,—a point that scholastic philosophers insist on most strenuously.

In view of Locke's position as here presented, Spearman's following remark insofar as it refers to Locke seems entirely unfounded.

The bitterest attacks upon the faculties go back at least as far as Malebranche, who saw in them an opportunity for cen­suring his chronic foes, the Aristotelian Schoolmen. Locke followed suit by making them the butt for his keenest satire.35

Locke could hardly have made the faculties the "butt of his keenest satire" if he himself advocated a faculty theory. "His keenest satire" was directed against a misuse of the term 'faculty,' for which he should be justly lauded as having rendered a great service to, and not an indictment of, the faculty theory.

35 Spearman, I, 184.
As in the case of Descartes and Spinoza, so in that of Leibnitz, it is necessary, in order to understand his attitude toward faculties, to have some general idea of his philosophy of mind.

Leibnitz is famous for his philosophy of monads. According to that philosophy monads are incorruptible,36 simple37 substances, the ultimate constituents of created being.38 Each of these ultimates, though immune to any change from an external agent,39 is, nevertheless, as a result of an internal principle,40 undergoing continuous41 internal change. Moreover, in each monad there is a particular series of these internal changes, which series being different in the different monads constitute the specific nature that differentiates them.42

So much for the nature of the monad; now about its activity. The monad, as seen above, is by its very nature continuously undergoing change. These continuous internal changes Leibnitz calls "Perceptions."43 When the continuous change from one

37 Ibid., n. 1, 217.
38 Ibid., n. 2, 217.
39 Ibid., nn. 7, 11, 219, 223.
40 Ibid., n. 11, 223.
41 Ibid., n. 10, 222.
42 Ibid., n. 12, 223.
43 Ibid., n. 14, 224-225, cf. also n. 17, 227-229.
perception to another takes place, the activity of the internal principle that causes this change is called "Appetition." All monads have these perceptions and appetitions or desires (appetits), and therefore may be called souls. Nevertheless, he says, it is better to distinguish between those monads which have bare perceptions only, and those in which perception is more distinct, which have feeling, and whose perception is accompanied by memory. The former may better be called bare monads or entelechies, and the latter, Souls. Souls, and a fortiori bare monads, by their very nature are never without perception. However, these perceptions can be more or less distinct and striking, and the degree of this distinctness constitutes the various degrees of consciousness from sleeping to waking. Accordingly, all our ideas are within us in germ, so to speak, and by the process of this constant internal change they become more and more distinct. That which distinguishes our rational souls from those of animals is that through this continual evolution of internal perception rational souls can come to the knowledge of necessary and eternal truths, whereas animals cannot arrive at such knowledge.

44 Ibid., n. 15, 226.
46 Ibid., n. 21, 230-231.
48 Ibid., n. 29, 233.
There is one last aspect of this novel system which we must especially note. Man, as is rather evident, is composed not only of rational soul but also of body. But the soul, as we saw, is incapable of being determined in any way from without. All its activity is internal. How, then, can the knowledge the soul gets through the senses by the agency of the body's sense organs be explained. The explanation is rather simple. God in establishing the universe so ordered all monads that they would each work in perfect harmony. Accordingly, when the bare monads of matter by their own internal change bring about sensible physical phenomena, the soul by its own internal changes concomitantly makes the corresponding changes, so that perceptions arise in the mind corresponding to, but not caused by, the external phenomena. 49

With this as a general background, we are now in a position to examine what place can be found in that background for the doctrine of faculties. Stout claims 50 that Leibnitz ought to receive as much credit for attacking innate faculties as Locke has received for attacking innate ideas. Yet it seems that Leibnitz does not entirely reject faculties. On the contrary his philosophy demands the two principle faculties of Perception

49 Ibid., nn. 52, 78, 246–247, 262.
and Appetition. It is true his idea of faculty, because of his own peculiar philosophic system, is different from the Aristotelian-Thomistic notion, and this latter he does attack. Nevertheless, the real object of his attack seems to be, as we shall see, rather a caricature of the faculties than that which is actually proposed by St. Thomas.

Leibnitz, of course, will have none of Locke's tabula rasa which receives its ideas through the medium of sensation and reflexion. The mind according to Leibnitz is not a blank something that receives its perceptions from without, but it contains within itself the germ of all its ideas. These ideas contained in germ within the soul come into consciousness through the continuous process of internal changes or "perceptions." But, Leibnitz says, you may object and say that the "tabula" is not entirely "rasa" but has faculties by means of which it can contact the reality without.

You may perhaps reply that this tabula rasa of the philosophers means that the soul has by nature and originally only bare faculties. But faculties without some act, in a word the pure powers of the school, are also only fictions, which nature knows not, and which are obtained only by the process of abstraction. For where in the world will you ever find a faculty which shuts itself up in the power alone without performing any act?

51 Leibnitz, n. 48, 244-245, also What Is Idea, New Essays trl. by Langley, Open Court, Chicago, 1916, 716.
There is always a particular disposition to action, and to one action rather than to another. And besides the disposition there is a tendency to action, of which tendencies there is always an infinity in each subject at once; and these tendencies are never without some effect. 52

This quotation is an excellent epitome of the meaning of 'faculty' in Leibnitz' monadological system. After first impugning the faculties of the Schoolmen, he brings out clearly that he does not consider the powers of the soul to be dependent on external stimuli for their activity; they are internal "dispositions" and "tendencies to action" which, moreover, are always in action for they are "never without some effect." A pure potency or power in the strict Aristotelian sense, he says, cannot exist, for there is no potency or power possible without its being here and now reduced to act. These powers are tendencies which are always in the process of act. "Real powers are never simple possibilities," says Leibnitz; "they have always tendency and action." 53 Wallace explains this position of Leibnitz with regard to the faculties very well:

It is out of the variety, the complication, and relations of these minature or little perceptions and appetitions that the conspicuous phenomena of consciousness are to be explained, and not by supposing them due to one or the other faculties. 54

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52 Leibnitz, trl. Langley, Bk. II, Ch. I, n. 2.
53 Ibid., Bk. II, Ch. I, n. 10.
54 Wallace, 58-59.
The powers of the soul, then, in Leibnitz' philosophy are internal dynamic evolutionary forces which produce conscious phenomena wholly within the mind. Hence the scholastic concept of a power as being only in part immanently active and in part passive, that is, requiring some determination from external phenomena, will not fit with his system. Accordingly, to the scholastic dictum, "Nihil est in intellectu quod non prius fuerit in sensu," Leibnitz logically adds, "Nisi ipse intellectus." 55

In view of his system, then, it is quite intelligible why Leibnitz should consider "faculties without some act, in a word the pure powers of the school...only fictions, which nature knows not, and which are obtained only by the process of abstraction." If they were more than fictions, his system would be a fiction; if nature would condescend to "know them," his system would have to be one "which nature knows not."

Moreover, Leibnitz misses the mark rather badly when he says that the faculties are "obtained only by the process of abstraction." There is a great deal of difference between the process of abstraction and the process of deduction. The process of abstraction is that employed in the formation of

55 Leibnitz, trl. Langley, Bk. II, Ch. I, n. 2.
universal concepts, and the faculties of St. Thomas definitely are not universal concepts. The process of deduction is that used in arriving at the nature of a cause by examining the nature of the effect. By examining the manifold of consciousness, one deduces the necessity of a principle for such activity, and thus arrives at the necessity of the soul as the ultimate principle, and of the faculties as the proximate principles of the phenomena of consciousness.

It is true, however, that the faculties, considered from the viewpoint of Leibnitz' own philosophy, could perhaps be considered mere "abstractions," for in his system the "faculty" (entelechy) is never without some "act" (perception). Hence the idea of a "faculty" alone without some "act" would be a sort of abstraction. In his strictures against the faculties, therefore, Leibnitz, by considering them merely abstractions, makes clear that he, as the Nominalists, does not recognize the validity of the realism of the Schools. The Thomistic Schoolmen would, therefore, reject his criticism, as it rejects that of any nominalistic position which denies a parte rei foundations for generalizations arrived at by a process of reasoning.

Leibnitz, then, out of loyalty to his system was constrained to disagree with that which did not fit into it. Even if he had rightly understood (which is possible) the scholastic doctrine of the faculties, out of sheer consistency he would
have been forced to disagree with it. Yet it seems very likely, as we shall show presently, that he did not understand the scholastic position, and, accordingly, that when he attacked the faculties of the Schools, he attacked shadows; that he attacked not the scholastic doctrine but its caricature.

In the process of discussing the proposition whether a purely material thing thinks or not, he says:

"To speak in an entirely simple manner of giving or according powers is to return to the naked faculties of the Schoolmen and to imagine minute self-subsisting entities which may go in and out like pigeons from a pigeon house. It is making substances of them without being aware of it." 56

Certainly one who calls the faculties of the Schoolmen "minute self-subsisting entities which may go in and out like pigeons from a pigeon house," definitely does not understand their doctrine at all. For it is of the very essence of the Schoolmen's "naked faculties" that they are not self-subsisting, and that they cannot "go in and out like pigeons." The scholastic doctrine is emphatic on this point, that the faculties are not independent either in nature or in operation. Moreover, they were never in any sense considered to be substances, but only accidents.

It seems likely that such a distortion of the faculties was

56 Ibid., Bk. IV, Ch. III, n. 6.
not malicious, but was due partially at least to a misunderstanding of what the Schoolmen, especially the Thomistic Schoolmen, really held. Leibnitz seemed at least to understand that notion of faculty which the Schoolmen actually held, but erroneously attributed to them a distortion of that theory. For in commenting on Locke's warning that by loose speech one can distort the true nature of the faculties, Leibnitz remarks that he does not care to decide the problem whether or not the faculties are real and distinct entities; and quite correctly adds that if they are, they certainly could not be considered as real agents, for it is not the faculties that act but the substance, by means of the faculties:

The question has exercised the scholastics a long time whether there is a real distinction between the soul and its faculties, and whether one faculty is really distinct from another... The Realists said yes, and the Nominalists, no, and the same question has been agitated as to the reality of many other abstract entities, which should meet the same fate. But I do not think we need here decide this question and plunge into these difficulties... However, if they were real and distinct entities, they can pass for real agents only in extravagant speech. It is not the faculties or qualities which act, but substances by means of the faculties. 57

If we except the remark about "abstract entities," the propriety of which terminology we discussed above, there is very little exception that can be taken to such a statement. It gives

57 Ibid., Bk. II, Ch. XXI, n. 6.
evidence that Leibnitz both knew something of the problem and something of the form the solution must take. Accordingly, the mistake he made in attacking the Schoolmen seems to be not so much a mistake of theory as a mistake of fact. He understood the theory sufficiently well, but he falsely accused the Scholastics of holding as their doctrine of the faculties such distortions as "self-subsisting entities which go in and out like pigeons from a pigeon house." To accuse the Schools of propounding such a doctrine is certainly to be unacquainted with, and, consequently, to misrepresent the facts.

With the section on Leibnitz we conclude this chapter on the early modern philosophers. Suffice it to say, in concluding this chapter, that we have already noted some of the principle objections against the faculties: that they are not realities, but merely names convenient for classifying mental phenomena; that they are self-subsisting beings; that they are beings independent or autonomous in their activity; that they are fictions of the mind. That these objections cannot justly be alleged against the Thomistic faculties is a fact, the proof of which has been made sufficiently obvious, we hope, as not to require repetition here.
CHAPTER IV

FACULTY CONCEPT FROM WOLFF TO HERBART

"Faculty Psychology" received an entirely new impetus in the philosophy of Christian Wolff, Emmanuel Kant, and later by Gall and his phrenology. Following almost immediately upon this new impetus, came a theory diametrically opposed to that of the "so-called" faculties of the mind. This new theory was that of the Associationists, of which group Johann Herbart was the leader. It will be the purpose of this chapter to analyze these two counter positions and to evaluate each according to the Thomistic position.

Wolff's findings, it seems, were not new and in some respects they recapitulated the opinions of the earlier faculty psychologists. Perhaps more than anyone else, however, Wolff is responsible for calling explicit attention to a new trend that had been showing itself in the field of psychology. Psychologists had been becoming more and more empirically minded and less concerned with the metaphysics of psychology. Recognizing this growing distinction, Wolff divided the field into Rational and Empirical Psychology. The gap between these two disciplines became wider and wider in the ensuing years, so
that today the greater portion of psychological endeavor is no longer philosophic but scientific. We are here calling explicit attention to this important historic fact, for as we shall later see, this pronounced change of approach to the field of psychology has been the source of many attacks on the faculty theory.

Kant, a disciple of Wolff who was destined to outshine by far his master, occupies a very important position in the history of "faculty psychology." So important is the place he occupies, that it is our reasoned opinion that later condemnations of the faculty theory are directed largely, though, perhaps, in many cases unconsciously, against his doctrine. Herbart, for example, whose work was considered at one time to be so devastating, that it was said he not only "killed" the faculties, but "cremated" them and scattered their ashes, mentions as the object of his attack not the faculties of the Schoolmen, but those of Wolff and Kant.¹ Our present concern, then, will be to inquire, with a degree of thoroughness proportionate to its importance, into the psychology of Kant, and to determine as clearly as possible his theory of the faculties.

When we read through the works of some of the earlier modern philosophers, we find with difficulty any use of the

term "faculty." Such is certainly not the case with regard to the works of Kant. Mention of the various faculties is very frequent in his pages. In order to understand them properly, however, it will be necessary to see them in their setting. In other words it will be necessary to get a general idea of Kant's theory of knowledge.

All knowledge, says Kant, has its source in sense impressions. The manifold of sense impressions become intuitions only when invested with the a priori forms of time and space. Sense intuition, then, is the manifold of sensation organized or synthesized by the forms of time and space. ²

However, the manifold of sense impressions synthesized by the forms of time and space into sense intuitions are not as yet intellectual knowledge. They must first pass into the a priori forms of the cognoscitive faculties, and must be synthesized by the categories of the understanding into conscious intellectual knowledge, much in the same way that sense impressions are synthesized into intuitions by being invested with the forms of time and space. Conscious knowledge, then, is formed, constituted, synthesized by the categories. The

² "Space and time are the pure forms of our intuition, while sensation forms its matter. Whatever our sensation may be, these forms are necessarily inherent in it, while sensations themselves may be of the most different character." Immanuel Kant, Critique of Pure Reason, trl. by Max Muller, Macmillan, New York, 1927, 34–35.
categories are the universal, necessary, a priori forms of thought. They constitute the intellectual element of knowledge. They receive the sense intuitions through the mediation of the blind faculty of imagination, and invest them with one of the twelve universal a priori forms called categories. All this process of 'investiture' is anterior to consciousness. Sense intuitions become conscious knowledge only after having been invested with the forms of the categories. Such is the process involved in the synthesis of thought.

The evolution of thought, then, begins with the collection of sense phenomena into the manifold of sense impressions, which, sifted into and unified by the a priori forms of time space, constitute sense intuitions. These intuitions in turn are further unified by the imagination and sifted into the

3 Ibid., 64, also 101-102.

4 "The spontaneity of our thought requires that what is manifold in the pure intuition should first be in a certain way examined, received, and connected, [by the categories] in order to produce [underlining mine] a knowledge of it. This act I call synthesis. ...Knowledge is first produced by the synthesis of what is manifold... We shall see hereafter that synthesis in general is the mere result of what I call the faculty of imagination... But to reduce this synthesis to concepts is a function that belongs to the understanding [with its categories], and by which the understanding supplies us for the first time with knowledge properly so called." Ibid., 64-65.

5 Ibid., 64-65, also 101-102.
categories, which are the constitutive principles of conscious knowledge. ⁶

However, the unity of constituted knowledge is not enough. There must be a further unifying of the acts of knowledge into the forms of reasoning or ratiocination. Man is not only a judging animal; he is also a reasoning, syllogizing, rationalizing animal. Hence the knowledge already constituted by the categories is now regulated by the three transcendental forms a priori of the faculty of reason called Ideas. ⁷

This unifying of the thought material of the categories by the a priori regulative forms, called Ideas, constitutes the final step used by the mind in the synthesis and unification of its product—thought. Such a process reminds us strongly of the functioning of a factory where the raw materials are poured in at one end, and the finished product drops out at the other.

⁶ "The first that must be given us a priori for the sake of knowledge of all objects, is the manifold in pure intuition. The second is the synthesis of the manifold by means of imagination. But this does not yet produce true knowledge. The concepts [categories] which impart unity to this pure synthesis and consist entirely in the representation of this necessary synthetical unity, add the third contribution towards the knowledge of an object, and rest on the understanding." Ibid., 65.

⁷ "Ideas, however, are still further removed from objective reality than the categories,... They contain a certain completeness unattainable by any possible empirical knowledge, and reason aims in them at a systematical unity only,..." Ibid., 459.

We have traced in brief the process of cognoscitive operation. Now we must investigate the individual factors that are responsible for this process. In other words we must determine the number, classification, nature, and function of Kant's faculties of the soul.

First we shall consider the number and classification of the faculties.

For all the faculties of the soul, or capacities, are reducible to three, which do not admit of any further deviation from a common ground: the faculty of knowledge, the feeling of pleasure or displeasure, and the faculty of desire.9

The faculty of knowledge, however, is not single. It is composed of the cognoscitive faculties of understanding, judgment, and reason. Speaking of his Critique of Pure Reason, Kant remarks:

Hence it makes our cognoscitive faculties its sole concern, to the exclusion of the feeling of pleasure or displeasure and the faculty of desire; and among the cognoscitive faculties it confines its attention to understanding and its a priori principles, to the exclusion of judgment and reason,...10

Within the faculty of understanding, moreover, we have the twelve a priori constitutive forms or concepts called categories.11 Within the faculty of reason are found the three

9 Ibid., Introduction, 15-16.
11 Kant, (Muller), 66.
regulative principles called Ideas. Besides these, Kant enumerates the faculty of Imagination.\(^\text{12}\)

The faculties thus far explicitly enumerated have been on the intellectual level. On the sense level there is the "faculty of receiving representations...called sensibility."\(^\text{13}\) This faculty of sensibility in turn contains the "two pure forms of sensuous intuition, namely, Space and Time."\(^\text{14}\)

With all this evidence of a diversity of faculties, we certainly can consider Kant's psychology a "faculty psychology."

Our next problem after having enumerated the various faculties (and this enumeration professes to be substantially but not absolutely complete) is to investigate the nature of the faculties and their a priori forms.

Are the faculties and their forms inherent qualities of the soul, by reason of which the soul can act? Are they the powers the soul possesses, by reason of which it is capable of producing its own acts? Or are they conceived of as independent and autonomous parts of the soul, or as containers, so to speak, into which phenomenal content is poured, so as to take the shape or form of sensation or thought as the case may be.

\(^{12}\) Ibid., 64-65, also 101-102.
\(^{13}\) Ibid., 15.
\(^{14}\) Ibid., 17.
These latter two conceptions of the faculties seem to come closest to the doctrine of Kant.

Turner, for example, speaks of the categories as "empty forms of intellectual knowledge, all the contents of intellectual knowledge being derived from experience." Again, "the categories without representative or other empirical content are empty." Henderson makes the following remarks concerning Kantian faculties:

> According to the notion of the faculties, the sorts of consciousness are the results of the manipulation by these inner powers of the material given by the senses... They merely arrange the materials of sense in a different manner; manufacture it, as it were, into new forms.

The views thus expressed are easily substantiated by quotations from the works of Kant himself. Speaking of empirical sense intuitions, he says: "Space and time are pure forms of our intuition while sensation forms its matter." Again in his discussion of the categories we find the following statement:

> Transcendental logic, on the contrary, has before it the manifold contents of sensibility a priori, supplied by transcendental

18 Kant (Muller), 34.
aesthetic as the material for the concepts [categories] of the pure understanding, without which those concepts would be without any contents, therefore entirely empty.¹⁹

Note especially the words, "without which (manifold contents of sensibility a priori) those concepts (categories) would be without any contents, therefore entirely empty."

Dr. Paul Carus, in an essay on Kant's philosophy compares Kant's faculties and forms to mental pigeon-holes:

The difference between the cabinet with pigeon-holes and the human mind is this, that the former is artificial, the latter natural. The human mind with its rationality has been developed according to mechanical law and the classification of sense impressions is done by it as automatically as the distribution of the different letters in a type distributing machine.²⁰

If the faculties with their forms are, according to their nature, distinct compartment-like beings, one might expect that in their operation they should be equally distinct, and therefore, in their functions independent of each other or autonomous. And such is precisely what Kant held: principles autonomous and independent in their operations. Speaking of the faculties of understanding and of reason, he says:

Both faculties, therefore, besides their application in point of logical form to principles of whatever origin, have, in

¹⁹ Ibid., 63-64.
²⁰ Immanuel Kant, Prolegomena, edit. in English by P. Carus, Open Court, Chicago, 1933, 220.
addition, their own peculiar jurisdiction in the matter of their content, and so, there being no further a priori jurisdiction above them, the division of Philosophy into theoretical and practical is justified.  \(^{21}\) (Sublineations not in original)

Each of these two faculties then have "their own peculiar jurisdiction" and, moreover, have "no further jurisdiction above them." In another place Kant speaks of the higher faculties "as faculties containing an autonomy."  \(^{22}\) Clearly, this is a far cry from the Thomistic doctrine of the faculties, according to which the faculties are by essence dependent on the soul, which alone is the efficient principle.

As a result of this investigation of the nature and function of the Kantian faculties, we have found that they are independent in existence and autonomous in operation. Such a conclusion would naturally give rise to the question, "Whence the unity of consciousness that we actually experience?" "How does Kant achieve unity in the mind?"

Kant does achieve a unity in the mind, but it is the unity of integral parts in a composite whole, and not the substantial unity of the soul according to the Thomistic doctrine. Meredith in an essay on the Critique of Judgment speaks of the "mind as a

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21 Kant (Meredith), Introduction, 15.
22 Ibid., Introduction, 38.
system with various special faculties, all combining harmoniously in a teleological unity." Then quoting Kant, he says:

...reason is, in regard to the principles of cognition, a perfectly distinct, independent unity, in which, as in an organized body, every member exists for the sake of the others, and all for the sake of each, so that no principle can be viewed, with safety, in one relationship, unless it is, at the same time, viewed in relation to the total use of pure reason.

(Sublineation not in original)

At this point it is proper to give ear to a reasonable objection that may be raised against the form that this brief Kantian analysis has taken. To speak of Kantian faculties as moulds or forms into which thought is "sifted" or "poured," it may be objected, is graphic but is hardly representative of Kant's real meaning. To speak of the faculties as we have done is to consider them as noumena, whereas Kant never reaches the noumena; his critique remains wholly in the phenomena. One cannot properly speak of Kantian faculties as actually existing as this present analysis would lead one to assume. For Kant the soul and its faculties were no more actually existent than the external world of sense. The \textit{a priori} forms are rather simple ways or forms according to which the mind by its very nature must think, much as Scholastic philosophers would say

that whenever our minds think, they always must think according to, or be regulated by, first principles.

Nevertheless, in spite of this objection, it seems safe to state that Kant's manner of speaking has left his writings open to the interpretation here given, and has made it possible for subsequent psychologists to conceive of the notion of "faculty" as a sort of "mould" or "form," or even "pigeon-hole," and for that very reason, has made it possible for them to reject it.

Consequently, we are now in something of a position to form a rather important conclusion with regard to the Kantian faculty psychology. Subsequent to Kant author after author has used all sorts of abusive language against the faculties. "The mind was not unlike a series of pigeon-holes, or hermetically sealed compartments." 24 "...composite of abstract energies." 25 "...bundle of detached powers, somehow standing side by side." 26 "The faculty theory bids us search for the energy of the mind...in the manipulating power of certain abstract agencies..." 27 "The mind is regarded as a machine of which the different faculties are parts." 28 "...the mind is a storage

25 Ibid., 351.
26 James Sully, Outlines of Psychology, Appleton, New York, 1885, 26.
27 Henderson, 285.
battery which can be loaded with will power or intellect or judgment..."29 ...bank to be drawn on at leisure."30 ...fabulous entities which worked out the destinies of the individual."31 True, most of these accusations come from educational psychologists, who are confronted with the problem of training the mind, a problem slightly different from that of the pure psychologist. Nevertheless, if there is any basis for their accusations in the purely psychological doctrine of the faculties, it certainly would not be in the faculty psychology of St. Thomas. Justifications for such accusations according to our opinion could be found only in one or both of two places; that is, either in the loose and careless terminology of an orthodox Thomistic faculty psychologist, or in the caricatures of orthodox faculty psychology such as that suggested in the philosophy of Kant. As we saw, his faculties and a priori forms may be considered as "compartments," "detached powers," integral "parts," forms to be filled, etc. It is just such concepts that have given the handle to many of our modern psychologists, educational or otherwise, for much of the vituperation or dignified disdain meted out to "faculty psychology."

29 Ibid., 237.
30 Ibid., 237.
The history of the faculty theory reaches an important phase in the philosophy of Johann Freidrich Herbart, Kant's successor at Koenigsburg. Herbart's utter rejection of faculties and faculty psychology was the first great impetus towards the modern "overthrow" of the faculty theory. The transition from Kantian Idealism to the Associationism of Herbart lies in the similarity with which the content or raw material of consciousness in both rival systems somehow slips in 'unawares'. For Kant this unconscious content is rendered conscious through the "manipulation" of the a priori forms. Herbart will have none of this inner manipulation of faculties. For him the unapprehended content material is lifted into the realm of consciousness by "the force of other kindred ideas that are already in this realm."32 New ideas are lifted into consciousness because of their relation with old ones.

It may possibly be legitimate to consider such a change in doctrine a transition, but it would seem more accurate to call it a cleavage, a hiatus, or a complete break; for a fathomless philosophical abyss separates the two positions. Kant still clung to the notion of a soul. For Herbart the soul was at best meaningless and virtually non-existent.

The simple nature of the soul is totally unknown and will forever remain so. It is as little an object of speculative as of empirical psychology.33

32 Henderson, 290-291.
33 Herbart, 130.
If the mind, then, is utterly superfluous insofar as the production of ideas is concerned, it is not hard to conceive what place is reserved for the mind's faculties. Bode rightly saw the immediate illation when he remarked, "The repudiation of the substantive mind involves, as its implication, abandonment of the belief in faculty psychology and formal discipline." However, it is not necessary to rely merely on an illation to arrive at Herbart's position on faculties. He is quite explicit in their condemnation.

The soul has no innate natural talents nor faculties whatever, either for the purpose of receiving or for the purpose of producing. It is, therefore, no tabula rasa in the sense that impressions foreign to itself may be made upon it; moreover, in the sense indicated by Leibnitz, it is not a substance which includes in itself original activity. It has originally neither concepts, nor feelings, nor desires. It knows nothing of itself, and nothing of other things; also in it lie no forms of perception and thought, no laws of willing and action, and not even a remote predisposition to any of these.

We are not surprised then when we find that Herbart is universally held up as an implacable enemy of "Faculty Psychology." Author after author makes the remark that with Herbart, faculty psychology met with a deadly foe.

34 B.H. Bode, Conflicting Psychologies of Learning, Heath, Chicago, 1929, 88.

35 Herbart, 120.
It is not our purpose here to enter upon a refutation of Associationism. It is sufficient to note that the nature of the doctrine essentially excludes anything like faculties of the soul. Moreover, it is clear, that in order to establish his position, Herbart was forced to wage war on the doctrine of faculties. Yet to get a clear picture of this situation it is essential to note against whose doctrine of faculties his guns were leveled. Was it against the faculties of St. Thomas? Herbart himself tells us against whom his artillery was directed.

It may be briefly stated here, but not shown in detail, that in modern times psychology has rather gone backward than forward. In regard to this science, Locke and Leibnitz were both upon a better path than that along which we have been led by Wolff and Kant. The two latter advocate in a peculiar manner the discrimination of mental faculties, and for this reason must be classed together, however much they differ from each other in other respects. Wolff had in mind the logical task of classifying mental phenomena, without troubling himself more closely with their inner origination, and for this reason he is unequaled in the thoughtlessness with which he covers up the greatest difficulties with mere verbal definitions. Kant makes use of the hypothetical mental faculties to present his investigation clearly according to form, that he might accompany human knowledge in its progress from the senses to the understanding and the reason, and it is not easy to rid his writings of this hypothesis. 36

(Sublineations not in original)

36 Herbart, 7, (Note).
Certainly no one would hold up Wolff and much less Kant as authors of the best expression of Thomistic faculty psychology. As a matter of fact, it would be hard for Herbart to rival the invective that a Thomistic faculty psychologist would level at Kantian faculties. Therefore since the criticism of Herbart is not primarily directed against the theory as propounded by St. Thomas, a refutation of his criticism here would seem to be superfluous. However, for sake of completeness, and since any attack on faculties reductively affects the Thomistic theory, we will add Professor Spearman's devastating comment on the Associationism of Herbart.

Herewith we reach the very antithesis of the doctrine of faculties; every different mental process now stands for itself; we pass from the "oligarchic" doctrine of a few reigning principles to the "anarchy" of a disordered multitude of particular cases... Drop this [some sort of generalization of mental activity either by 'faculties', or "substantially the same doctrine under other names"] and the scope of all knowledge is reduced to that of particular cases. Generalities disappear; and therewith, science. The whole of the psychology fabricated after this fashion comes clattering down like a house built up of cards. 37

At about the time Herbart was writing his Lehrbuch zur Psychologie (1816), which contained his utter rejection of the faculties, a novel scheme of faculty psychology was being devised by Gall and his pupil Spurzheim in their work Anatomie et

Physiologie du Système Nerveux (1810). A good description of this bizarre system of faculties is given us by Bode.

The doctrine of phrenology is of interest here because it represents a combination of faculty psychology and physiology...The suggestion advanced by the phrenologists was that the different faculties of the mind had their "seat" in certain specific parts of the brain, and that if a given trait or faculty was highly developed, this fact would show itself in the prominences or the "bumps" of the skull...In order to make this scheme work, the whole set of faculties was largely made over. Instead of determining the faculties of the mind by such abstract qualities as reasoning, imagining, perceiving, etc., the phrenologists studied individuals for the purpose of noting outstanding traits of behavior, such as amativeness, pugnacity, conscientiousness, and the like. These traits were classed as faculties, and the attempt was made to correlate them with the configurations of the skull...38

Although almost entirely physiological, the doctrine was, nevertheless, considered to be a variant of "faculty psychology." Since later it degenerated into a species of parlor game amusement, it helped to plunge Faculty Psychology deeper into the disrepute into which it had fallen. Consequently when we find an author calling into question the existence of faculties because there "is no such thing as a center for memory" since "the facts indicate that the various acts of remembering involve all sorts of 'centers',"39 we come to see

38 Bode, 51-52.
39 Ibid., 52.
more clearly how such an attack on the "faculties" can have no reference whatever to the metaphysical faculties of St. Thomas.

There is an important fact, which though obvious, is of sufficient importance to deserve explicit attention here; namely, that the term "Faculty Psychology" is anything but univocal. Anyone who should, in studying Gall's or Kant's "tectonic" faculties, feel that he has reached a full understanding of "faculty psychology," would be similar to the student of political science who felt that he was fully conversant with the theory of Democracy after making an intense study of "democracy" as found in the U.S.S.R. The variants of "faculty psychology" are so divergent as hardly to deserve the same generic term. Consequently, an attack against one kind of faculty psychology could hardly be considered as justified against any or every other variation. Surely an attack against the physiological theory of phrenology would be most unjustly urged against the metaphysical theory of Thomistic faculty psychology.
CHAPTER V

LATER CRITICISMS

The vast amount of psychological literature that has been published since the beginning of the nineteenth century has contained a large number of varied criticisms of the faculties and faculty psychology. And yet strangely enough many of the avowed enemies of the faculties have given surprising evidence of inconsistency, and have "themselves very often introduced what are essentially faculties...although usually other terms are employed, such as 'abilities', 'capacities', 'instincts', and 'temperaments'..."¹ Nevertheless the fact remains that the attacks have been many and varied. Throughout them all, however, there runs a remarkable similarity, and despite the accidental differences resulting from the varied approaches and contexts in which the attacks have been made, nearly all can be reduced to three or four types or forms.

There are, first of all, those who criticize the faculties as independent agents distinct in being, and autonomous in operation. The second large division of objectors centers its

attacked on this point, that whereas the faculties are postulated in order to serve as an explanation of mental phenomena, they offer, as a matter of fact, no explanation whatever. At best, so it is claimed, they are but helpful concepts for classifying the varying phenomena of consciousness, which phenomena, even after such classification, remains wholly unexplained.

The third score brought against the faculties is that they destroy the unity of the mind. This is a serious objection and one that deserves a careful answer. The fourth and last major type of objection is that the classification of mental phenomena under the head of faculties has been a stumbling block in the way of progress in psychology. For instead of stimulating further investigation into the process of conscious activity, it has, by assigning each process to the activity of a special faculty, closed the door with a certain air of finality to any further research. For those who understand something of the Thomistic concept of faculty, this seems to be the only objection that carries any weight at all. And yet it is purely an extrinsic argument, not in the least affecting the validity of the theory. However, even here a careful distinction will clear away much of the difficulty for an unprejudiced thinker.

**Objection I** Faculties Considered as Independent Agents.

As it will be recalled, Leibnitz berated the faculties for being "minute self-subsisting entities which may go in and out
like pigeons from a pigeon house." Sully claims that faculty psychology "had led to the false supposition that mental activity, instead of being one and the same throughout its manifold phases is a juxtaposition of totally distinct activities answering to a bundle of detached powers, somehow standing side by side, and exerting no influence on one another." Wundt, one of the most prominent of the modern psychologists, has a similar ax to grind.

It is in the doctrine of feeling and will more than anywhere else that psychology still wears the pattern of the old faculty theory. And so it has usually taken a radically false view of these intimately connected processes, regarding each constituent as an independently existing whole, which might incidentally, but need not necessarily, exert an influence upon the constituents of the other... We must pronounce this theory a purely imaginary construction from beginning to end.

Again there are authors making remarks like these: "the mind is regarded as a machine of which the different faculties are parts"; "The mind was not unlike a series of pigeon-holes, or hermetically sealed compartments"; "...fabulous entities

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which worked out the destinies of the individual."

Now it may be asked: What possible justification can be found for accusations of such a nature? Surely anyone who is in the least acquainted with the Thomistic concept of faculty will see that they are manifestly unjust. And yet they are not nearly so unjust as they seem. It must be remembered that the term "faculty" and "faculty psychology" have been made to apply as well to Kantian faculties and other concepts of faculties as to those of the Schoolmen. Now Kantian faculties, as has been seen, take on the appearance of being just what these accusations accuse them of being. They appear to be independent, autonomous compartments of the soul that manipulate the content presented by sensation, and manufacture, so to speak, the finished thought processes. No one can condemn a critic too severely for accusing a thing for being what it appears to be.

Another partial justification for such accusations is the unguarded use of words by the very ones who profess to uphold the true concept of faculty. Thus we find a former President of Saint Louis University, The Reverend A.J. Burrowes, S.J., in a monograph entitled, "Why Study Latin and Greek" making the following statement: "the human mind is a complicated bit of mechanism, requiring the highest skill of the educator to adjust

its parts." 7 Obviously he is speaking metaphorically. Nevertheless, although not a professional psychologist, yet as a man "long prominent in Jesuit educational circles" he should be expected by reason of his prestige to be scientific enough in his phraseology as not to use the sort of language, which in the words of Locke, has "produced great confusion."

The last explanation for the type of accusations at present under consideration, lies in an imperfect understanding of the doctrine of St. Thomas himself. To be sure, St. Thomas does claim for the various faculties, real and distinct existence. Hence they are real and distinct entities. But to say that a being is real and distinct is not at all the equivalent of saying that it is a being independent in existence and operation. 'Substances' and 'accidents' are both real existent beings, but a 'substance' in its own order is an independently existing being, whereas the 'accident' is not. Now the faculties, according to the position of St. Thomas, are 'accidents', real beings, to be sure, and distinct from the substance which is the soul, but by no means independent of the soul either in their existence or in their operation. In like manner, the faculties demand for their operation the activity of the soul. They are,

7 A.J. Burrowes, S.J., Why Study Latin and Greek, Milwaukee, 1901, 5-6, found in McGucken, The Jesuits and Education, Bruce, Milwaukee, 1932, 162.
as it were, channels or instrumental causes for the activity of the soul. So completely are they dependent on the activity of the soul for their operation, that if and when that activity ceases, the operation of the faculties necessarily ceases. It is the soul that acts through or by means of the faculties.

Such a concept of faculty as here outlined is certainly far removed from "minute self-subsisting entities which go in and out like pigeons from a pigeon house."

**OBJECTION II**  
**FACULTIES ARE HELPFUL FOR CLASSIFYING THE PHENOMENA OF CONSCIOUSNESS, BUT OFFER NO EXPLANATION OF IT.**

This, perhaps, has been the most popular of all objections offered by psychologists opposed to faculty psychology. The objection, variously worded by the different authors, comes to this: the faculties are not realities but mental constructs; useful perhaps for the purpose of classifying conscious acts, but unfortunately personified or hypostatized, and wrongly presented as an explanation of the varied acts of consciousness.

The following excerpt from Dessoir is a rather clear expression of this position:

It may indeed be of advantage, for purposes of exposition, to bring similar phenomena under a generic concept, but such a concept must not be inflated to a mythological force or entity. Strictly speaking, each faculty means simply a repetition of the fact whose nature one wishes to explain, with the addition of the word "power" or "faculty."\(^9\)

Wundt likewise places the same objection:

The attempt to present a discriminating description of the different psychical processes, gave rise to the need of an appropriate classification. Class-concepts were formed, under which the various processes were grouped; and the attempt was made to satisfy the need of an interpretation in each particular case, by subsuming the components of a given compound process under their proper class-concepts. Such concepts are, for example, sensation, knowledge, attention, memory, imagination, understanding, and will.... these derived psychical concepts may serve for a first grouping of the facts, but they contribute nothing whatever to the explanation of these facts. Still, empirical psychology has often been guilty of confusing this description with explanation. Thus, the faculty-psychology considered these class-concepts as psychical forces or faculties, and referred psychical processes to their alternating or united activity.\(^10\)

Vaihinger, however, wins the prize in his outline of the objection; for besides giving a very clear statement of the

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objection itself, he adds a sufficient amount of ridicule to make the statement interesting.

A whole series of well-known concepts, such as "soul," "force," and the various "psychical faculties," etc., belong here. Although these conceptual constructs were formerly, and are still today regarded as expressions for real and existing entities, they are, in truth, nothing but summational expressions for a series of interconnected phenomena and interconnected processes....No more is stated in these nominal fictions than what the single phenomena could tell us themselves, and if we believe that we have understood or actually said anything in using these words—a naive view that still survives—we are simply forgetting that these expressions are purely tautological.11

When these and similar attacks are analyzed closely, it is found that they really contain three separate objections: first, that regardless what the faculties are claimed to be, they are in reality nothing but general concepts convenient for the purpose of classification; second, that unfortunately they have been hypostatized into real agents; and third, that, in any case, they offer no explanation of the psychic processes.

That the faculties are merely class concepts is the position long ago assumed by the Nominalists. Hamilton, in trying to defend faculties against those who would call the faculties a series of "mannikins," declared that the faculties were "nothing more than names determined by various orders of

11 H. Vaihinger, The Philosophy of 'As If', trl. by C.K. Ogden, Harcourt, New York, 1925, 212.
mental phenomena." Now if the faculties are merely names, the obvious conclusion is that the activity of the psyche is merely called intellectual when it thinks, volitional when it wills, memory when it remembers; but that in reality there is no such thing as an intellect, a will, a memory, and so on. St. Thomas explicitly refutes this view, and shows that the faculties are not of the essence of the soul, as this objection logically demands that they be.

Respondeo dicendum, quod quidam posuerunt, potentias animae non esse aliud quam ipsam ejus essentiam; ita quod una et eadem essentia animae secundum quod est principium sensitivae operationis, dicitur sensus; secundum vero quod est intellectualis operationis principium, dicitur intellectus; et sic de alis... Sed haec positio est omnino impossibilis.13

The reason why St. Thomas rejects this position, has already been indicated in Chapter II, pp. 8-11.

The second part of the objection is directed against the 'fact' that these mere classificatory concepts have been hypo-statized into real agents. In answer to this, it is necessary, in the light of what has just been said, to deny the 'suppositum'; namely, that the faculties are "mere classificatory concepts." Since the faculties are not mere classificatory concepts but real existences, albeit essentially dependent on

13 Aquinas, Vol. II, De Spiritualibus Creaturis, Art. XI.
the soul's substance for existence, it is not necessary to hypostatize them; they already exist. As for their being hypostatized into real agents, it is necessary but to recall that St. Thomas definitely did not consider the faculties as real agents, if by real agents is meant things possessing the power of independent action. If they can be called agents at all, and they can, it is only in an analogous sense, such as the agency of an instrument in the hands of an artist, the latter being the principal agent. 14

The third element of the criticism is that the faculties offer no explanation of conscious processes.

To say that an individual mind possesses a certain faculty is merely to say that it is capable of certain states or processes. To assign the faculty as a cause, or as a real condition of the states or processes, is evidently to explain in a circle, or in other words it is a mere failure to explain at all. 15

In answer to this objection, a distinction is necessary. That the theory of faculties does not give a quantative or qualitative analysis of the processes of consciousness, can be conceded. That the theory of faculties offers no philosophical or metaphysical explanation of the ultimate source of conscious

acts, a Thomist is forced to deny. If through a process of deduction a cause is assigned to a certain effect or group of effects, there is offered at least a partial explanation of the phenomena by assigning the source of their causation. Moreover, this cause or principle or agent producing the effects must of necessity be **real** and **existing**, because the effect is real and existing. Therefore the postulation of the soul as the principle agent, and of the faculties as the channels or instruments of that agency, is simply a response to the demands of reason, and, consequently, **does** offer at least a partial philosophic explanation.

However, as intimated above, no intelligent scholastic philosopher would claim that the concept of faculty offers a **scientific** explanation of the processes of conscious acts. Faculties assist in assigning the **cause** of conscious acts; they do not attempt to explain the processes. **Explanation of the process is a task that pertains more to science than to philosophy. Sully saw the distinction but failed to draw the proper conclusion.**

The discussion of the ultimate nature of the so-called faculties and powers of the mind belongs to rational psychology, or that branch of philosophy which treats of mind as substance. The hypothesis of faculties can, however, be criticized from the point of view of empirical psychology in so far as it succeeds or does not succeed in giving a clear account of the phenomena.16

It is precisely the failure of modern scientific psychologists to understand clearly the distinction between philosophic and scientific psychology, that has caused them to berate the faculties for failure to offer the type of explanation that they were never intended to offer. Moreover, many of our modern scientific psychologists unfortunately went to the extreme in denying to the faculties any explanatory power whatever, a position which, for reasons given above, must of necessity be rejected.

**OBJECTION III  FACULTIES DESTROY THE UNITY OF THE SOUL**

Explicit statements that the theory of faculties destroys the unity of the soul are rather infrequent, yet many criticisms reductively allege that objection. Thus, nearly all descriptions of faculties as "pigeon holes," "compartments," "parts of a machine," "cells of a storage battery," etc., implicitly conceive of them as components of the mind, thus destroying the essential unity of the mind. The following is an example in point, from Thorndike:

The mind is regarded as a machine of which the different faculties are parts. Experience being thrown in at one end, perception perceives them, discrimination tells them apart, memory retains them and so on... Or, in a still cruder type of thinking, the mind is a storage battery which can be loaded with will power, or intellect, or judgment, giving the individual 'a surplus of mind to expend.'

17 Thorndike, 236-237.
This objection to the faculties as destroying the unity of the soul, when directed against certain "faculty psychologies," is not without some justification. Kant appears to succeed pretty well in departmentalizing the mind; and, according to Ueberweg, Beneke, although opposed to the "innate abstract faculties of the soul," held that the truly elementary faculties "are the elements of the substance of the soul itself; [that] they are not inherent in a substratum distinct from themselves. A thing is only the sum of its own combined forces."18

However, when directed against the concept of faculty according to St. Thomas, this objection is baseless. For St. Thomas clearly shows that the faculties are 'accidents', and that it is the essential aptitude of an accident to exist in a substance. Now, the addition of accidents to a substance does in no way create a division in the substance or cause it to become multiple. To anyone acquainted with scholastic terminology this conclusion is obvious. Consequently, the concept of faculty in no way mars the essential simplicity of the soul. On the contrary, this concept of faculty, by accounting for the diversity of conscious acts without demanding that the ultimate principle of these acts be itself diverse, in reality protects and defends the soul's essential unity and simplicity.

OBJECTION IV  FACULTY PSYCHOLOGY HAS IMPEDED THE PROGRESS
OF SCIENTIFIC PSYCHOLOGY

This is an objection that is hard to answer, because it appears to be, at least to a certain extent, justified. Faculty psychology, especially the orthodox faculty psychology of the St. Thomas, has a certain air of finality about it that tends to discourage further research. Certain processes are attributed to certain faculties, and that seems to end the matter; there seems to be little else that need be or can be said about it.

On studying without favor or affection the whole typical development of psychology as based on the notion of faculties, it is hard to resist the impression that these have often been treated as if they supplied psychology with its main end and brought it to a full stop. When once any mental operation has been assigned to and swallowed up in its appropriate faculty, the last word is taken to have been said about it.

In particular there is no further need felt for either analysis or synthesis. In this way the determining of the faculties has in good truth seemed to paralyse further inquiry; it has left the science of the psyche more or less stunted and ineffective. 19

This statement by Spearman is one which we might expect to have been made by almost anyone but himself. For besides being a generous defender of the "faculties," he has done perhaps more than any other modern psychologist to develop the science of psychology along solidly progressive lines. He is undoubtedly the finest modern example we have of one who did not waste his

19 Spearman, I, 193.
time, as so many others did, in opposing a faculty psychology that is metaphysically sound. Rather he recognized the value of the metaphysical explanation of the causation of conscious phenomena, and then, as a true scientist, proceeded to analyze carefully the actual processes of conscious phenomena. Accordingly, a criticism of such a nature, coming from such an authority, demands more than the usual consideration.

A Thomistic psychologist is willing to admit that the doctrine of faculties does possess an air of finality simply because metaphysical solutions are supposed to be 'final' (i.e., ultimate), else they would not be metaphysical. Unfortunately, however, too many psychologists for too long a time did not realize that orthodox faculty psychology is metaphysical and not scientific. Faculty psychology in itself did not so much discourage scientific research; it simply did not bother about it, because such research was not necessary in order to arrive at the metaphysical solutions at which the philosopher was aiming. The scientific psychologists, however, by neglecting to conduct extensive scientific research into mental processes, failed to develop their science to any great extent. The cause, therefore, of lack of progress in scientific psychology may be attributed not so much to the "finality" of metaphysical faculty psychology, as to the failure of scientific psychologists to develop their science by extensive and intensive research. Fortunately, within the last few decades this
research has been made. Scientific psychology has made great progress. The result has been that contemporary psychology is in a position to combine the best of philosophic thought with the extensive data of scientific research, and thus to synthesize psychology into the discipline in which "the philosopher makes his contribution by defining the essence of man, setting forth the essential distinction of his powers, analyzing the nature underlying his habits and acts; [and in which] the scientist makes his contribution by investigating the phenomenal correlations among human operations, and discovering thereby the material and accidental determinants of his habits and powers."20

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

The problem as it was conceived at the outset was to determine, in view of the widespread opposition among the moderns to the concept of mental faculty, whether the Thomistic Schoolmen were propounders of philosophical nonsense and dispensers of empty verbalism in proposing a faculty theory, or whether the moderns themselves were either erroneous or laboring under a misconception of the theory in repudiating it. The findings of this thesis seem to warrant the conclusion that a large portion of the opposition to the faculty concept is rooted in two principle causes, error and misconception.

The prevailing nominalism running through modern non-scholastic philosophy combined with the peculiar doctrines of the various philosophic systems, produced a concoction of error incompatible with a "realistic" faculty concept. Whatever of that concept remained subsequent to this disintegration of philosophy became either so mangled and distorted, or so radically changed, that it found little if any resemblance to the Thomistic concept. The predominant nominalism of later writers, together with the distorted view they had of the
faculty concept, gave rise to misconceptions which in turn were productive of the flood of ridicule heaped upon the faculty concept.

Early modern philosophers, then, such as Descartes, Spinoza, and Leibnitz, opposed the Thomistic concept of faculty because it was inconsistent with their own peculiar systems. A large body of subsequent criticisms of the notion of faculty, had it source not in any absurdity latent in the Thomistic theory itself, but in the absurdities evident in caricatures of the faculty concept. Moreover, when psychology itself abandoned philosophy, and substituted the physical and epiphenomenal for the metaphysical, the Thomistic notion of faculty, which is essentially metaphysical, was scrapped, and labeled antique, naive, and at best meaningless.

This thesis made no attempt to establish the validity of the Thomistic concept of faculty. Its purpose was to examine that concept in the light of the opposition against it. As a result of this investigation it seems safe to draw the conclusion that the Thomistic concept of faculty is as valid today as when it came from the pen of St. Thomas, and that most, if not all, subsequent opposition has done little or nothing to jar it from the place it holds in the metaphysics of the soul.
APPENDIX

Since the time of Herbart, who was supposed to have sounded the death knell for faculty psychology, the moribund faculties have been derided, abused, ridiculed, and ignored. Any author who referred to them was out of date. Any serious use of them was anathematized. Yet somehow or other, without anyone's even trying to present an organized defense, they have survived.

Thorndike, of Columbia University, in his extensive experimentation tried hard to disprove anything like a faculty psychology. Spearman, on the other hand, using some of the experimental data of Thorndike, the findings which he himself had made, and the data of other experimentalists, has reached conclusions from this vast range of experimental data, that have proved on a purely scientific basis the validity of the theory, which, on a metaphysical basis, St. Thomas and the host of earlier philosophers had established centuries before.¹

The faculty psychology propounded by St. Thomas is a metaphysical or philosophical discipline. Modern psychology

¹ An excellent outline of this modern experimental phase of mental abilities is contained in C.A. Hart's, The Thomistic Concept of Mental Faculty, Cath. Univ. of America, Washington, D.C., 1930, 119 sqq.
revolted against philosophy largely because the only philosophy it knew was the bewildering mass of conflicting modern philosophies. For revolting against such prostitutions of human knowledge, we can hardly blame them. Divorced, therefore, from the guiding and regulating influence of sound philosophy, the modern experimental and scientific psychologists wandered about, lost in the maze of their own research. However, in recent years scientific psychology, so long groping in the dark, has begun to see the path to progress. It has come to see that it has much to gain by accepting the conclusions of correct philosophy. Modern research correlated with sound metaphysics has been found both to corroborate the conclusions of metaphysics and to profit by the guiding influence of sound philosophy.

It is not to be supposed, of course, that metaphysics has nothing to profit from the factual date of modern research. Metaphysics is nothing if it is not an attempt to explain facts in their ultimate causes. Hence facts can always be of service to metaphysics. Of course, the fundamental aspects of the metaphysics of the soul will not change, for they are based upon the obvious facts of human nature, which were the same at the time of the first philosopher as they will be at the time of the last. Nevertheless, the more detailed knowledge of human experience presented by scientific psychology cannot help being of assistance to metaphysics, which, if it is sound, should,
when necessary, alter its conclusions in the light of known facts.

Scientific and philosophic psychology then, can be and should be of immense assistance to each other, and there has probably been no field of research where this has been and will be more clearly shown than in the field of "faculty psychology."
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