Sense Memory According to St. Thomas

Algimantas Jurgis Kezys
Loyola University Chicago

Follow this and additional works at: https://ecommons.luc.edu/luc_theses

Part of the Philosophy Commons

Recommended Citation

This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial-No Derivative Works 3.0 License.
Copyright © 1957 Algimantas Jurgis Kezys
SENSE MEMORY ACCORDING
TO ST. THOMAS

by
Algimantas J. Keays, S.J.

A Thesis Submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate School
of Loyola University in Partial Fulfilment of
the Requirements for the Degree of
Master of Arts

June
1957
Algimantas Jurgis Kezys was born in Vistytis, Lithuania, on October 28, 1928.

Having begun his high school (Gymnasium) in Lithuania, he was graduated from the Secondary School at Diepholtz, Germany, December, 1949.

In August, 1950, he came to the United States, and entered the Society of Jesus at Milford, Ohio, in September of the same year. He pursued his undergraduate studies in the Milford division of Xavier University until 1954, at which time he transferred to the West Baden, Indiana, division of Loyola University, Chicago, Illinois.

The degree of Bachelor of Arts was conferred upon him by Loyola University in the summer of 1955. Since that time, he has been doing his graduate work in the department of philosophy at West Baden College, West Baden Springs, Indiana, and at Loyola University, Chicago.
TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter                                                                 | Page
---                                                                      | ---
I. INTRODUCTION                                                          | 1
II. MEMORY AS AN INTERNAL SENSE                                           | 4
   Sense memory in St. Thomas is the memory proper—St. Thomas' theory of the internal senses—Memory in relationship to the other internal senses—Sense memory and the common sense—Sense memory and the imagination—Sense memory and the estimative sense—Really distinct from other internal senses.
III. THE OBJECT OF SENSE MEMORY                                          | 23
   The problem: is there one or two proper objects of sense memory in St. Thomas?—The intentions of the estimative sense as absent vs. something past as past—The influence of Aristotle and Avicenna—The meaning of intentions—The characteristics of intentions—Sensible per accidens—Concrete involvement of self—Pastness as an intention—Solution.
IV. THE FUNCTIONS OF SENSE MEMORY: RETENTION                             | 40
   Preliminary remarks—Receiving the impressions is not a function of sense memory—Nature of retention—Conservation of the species in the conjunctum—The role of the bodily organ—Retention in terms of act and potency—Conserving the phantasm under the aspect of an image—Distinction between the retention in sense memory and the retention in the imagination—Conclusion.
V. THE FUNCTIONS OF SENSE MEMORY: RECALL                                  | 66
   Two types of recall in St. Thomas: simple recall and
reminiscence—Some remarks on simple recall—What is reminiscence?—It is not the acquisition of new knowledge—It is not repeated recovery of memories—It is the recovery of the original impressions—Its object is something past as past—The cause of reminiscence—The order of the images in the soul—The laws of association—The guidance of reason—Reminiscence proper belongs to sense—Its distinction from the act of recall of the imagination—The problem of reminiscence being a faculty distinct from sense memory—Reminiscence is a function of sense memory—Relation of the act of recall with the acts of retention and recognition.

VI. THE FUNCTIONS OF SENSE MEMORY: RECOGNITION

Recognition: the final step in the memorative process—The key statement on recognition in St. Thomas—Motus rei et motus temporis in the act of recognition—The motus rei or the identification of the object of memory—Awareness of self—Three ways to identify an object—The motus temporis or the placing of the object in its proper past time—Knowledge of time—Passages from the In De Memoria et Reminiscentia—Knowledge of succession of acts—Knowledge of past as past.

VII. CONCLUSION

Practical application of St. Thomas' theory on sense memory—Four ways to improve one's memory—Summary—Possible topics for further study of sense memory in St. Thomas—Conclusion.

BIBLIOGRAPHY
CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Memory has always been a favorite topic of research, for it is one of the most precious gifts nature has given us. In the present thesis this topic is taken up again. As the title of the thesis indicates, it is a presentation of St. Thomas' doctrine on sense memory. The question to be answered by the thesis is simply this: What does St. Thomas say sense memory is?

There are two types of memory in the teachings of St. Thomas—intellectual and sense memory. That there is a memorative power on the intellectual level is proved by St. Thomas from a historical fact which he takes from the Scriptures. Discussing St. Paul's mystic experience of seeing God in rapture and of afterwards remembering the vision, Aquinas concludes that there is a pure intellectual memory in man. However, in the psychology of

---

1His argument is as follows: "Ad tertium dicendum quod Paulus, postquam cessavit videre Deum per essentiam, memor fuit illorum quae in illa visione cognoverat, per aliam species intelligibiles habitualliter ex hoc in eius intellectu relictas, sicut etiam, absente sensibili, remanent aliquae impressiones in anima: quas postea convertens ad phantasmata, memorabatur. Unde nec totam illam cognitionem aut cogitare poterat, aut verbis exprimere." S.T. II-II, 175, 4 ad 3. The subsequent references to the Summa will be made to the edition with the Leonine text, edited with notes and an introduction by Petrus Caramello. Taurini-Romae, 1950.
St. Thomas intellectual memory receives only a secondary consideration. The very notion of memory includes some consciousness of time, or more precisely, of past time. Since pastness is associated with material conditions, such as magnitude and distance, the knowledge of the past properly belongs to the sensitive part of the soul, and consequently memory proper is sense memory, not intellectual. In the *De Veritate* St. Thomas says: "Unde, cum memoria secundum propriam sui accessionem respiciat ad id quod est praeteritum respectu hujus nunc: constat quod memoria, proprie loquendo, non est in parte intellectiva, sed sensitiva tantum, ut Philosophus probat." St. Thomas' chief concern in dealing with memory, therefore, is not that memorative power which belongs to the intellectual part of the soul, but that which belongs to sense. Accordingly, the main burden of this work is going to be the explanation of St. Thomas' concept of sense memory. The intellectual memory will be mentioned only in so far as it will help to understand better sense memory.

As far as it could be ascertained, no one has undertaken a similar study on memory in St. Thomas. A number of authors have treated other internal senses quite extensively, but none of them


3Ibid. The place in Aristotle is *De Mem.* et *Rem.*, 1, 450 a, 14
has written anything, a book or even an article, devoted exclusively to the study of sense memory. Some discussion on this forgotten sense can be found in works such as The Discursive Power, by the Rev. George P. Klubertanz, S.J., or The Role of the "Sensus Communis" in the Psychology of St. Thomas Aquinas by the Rev. Edmund J. Ryan, C.PP.S. But there, too, sense memory is mentioned only in passing and in so far as it helps to explain the matter at hand, i.e., the vis cogitativa or the sensus communis. Brief expositions of St. Thomas' concept of sense memory can be found in textbooks and works in general psychology. These, as well as various commentaries on St. Thomas, such as Cajetan and John of St. Thomas, will be consulted and used in this study to point up or emphasize the implicit thought in St. Thomas' own works. The chief sources, however, will be the works of St. Thomas himself.

The method or procedure of the thesis will be exegetical. The texts of St. Thomas will be studied directly. The explicit statements will be analyzed and then further developed in the light of other texts. The incidental references to sense memory will be used to throw further light on the truth contained in the direct statements on memory. The development of the thesis will follow the logical rather than the chronological order. There will be a need of making an occasional use of the secondary sources, but this will be done only to clarify and point up the primary sources.
CHAPTER II  

MEMORY AS AN INTERNAL SENSE

Before saying what sense memory for St. Thomas is, it will be helpful to know what it is not. The problem of specification of memory is the problem of distinguishing it from other internal senses, with which, as will be seen, it is closely connected. To understand the nature of memory, it is necessary to study it first in its relationship to the other powers of internal sensation.

For this purpose a somewhat detailed discussion of St. Thomas' own summary on the theory of the four internal senses will be helpful. In S.T., I, 78, 4 c he outlines the main points of his teachings on the common sense, imagination, the estimative sense, and memory. St. Thomas begins the article by stating the principle of distinguishing the powers: "[C]um natura non deficiat in necessariis, oportet esse tot actiones animae sensitivae, quot sufficient ad vitam animalis perfecti. Et quaecumque harum actionum non possunt reduci in unum principium, requirunt diversas potentias: cum potentia animae nihil aliud sit quam proximum principium operationis animae."1 This is a brief recapitula-

---

tion of what he has to say on the same point in the third article of the preceding question of the Summa. There he states:

[P]otentia, 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: color enim inquantum movet visum, est principium visionis. Ad actum autem potentiae activae comparatur objectum ut terminus et finis: sicut augmentativae virtutis objectum est quantum perfectum, quod est finis augmenti. Ex his autem duobus actio speciem recipit, scilicet ex principio, vel ex fine seu termino: differt enim califactio ab infrigidatione, secundum quod haec quidem a calido, scilicet activo, ad calidum; illa autem a frigido ad frigidum procedit. Unde necesse est quod potentiae diversificentur secundum actus et objecta.2

Potencies, then, are determined proximately by their acts, ultimately by their objects. Potency, as such, is ordered to act. Therefore, the nature of the potency is discovered from the nature of the act. The act, in its turn, is determined by the object with which it is concerned.

The object is not any object existing outside the knowing faculty, but an object in so far as it affects the cognoscitive power: "Sic igitur non quaecumque diversitas objectorum diversificat potentias animae; sed differentia eius ad quod per se poten-
tia respicit."3 It is that part or that aspect of an object which

2S.T., I, 77, 3 c.

formally affects the faculty. Hence, the name—the formal object. The distinction of formal objects requires the distinction of faculties, and therefore the distinction of internal senses ultimately must be based on the distinction of their formal objects.

What are the formal objects of each of the internal senses?

St. Thomas discusses this point in the subsequent paragraphs of the same article. First he distinguishes common sense and imagination:

Est autem considerandum quod ad vitam animalis perfecti requiritur quod non solum apprehendat rem apud praesentiam sensibilis, sed etiam apud eius absentiam. Alioquin, cum animalis motus et actio sequantur apprehensionem, non moveretur animal ad inquirendum aliquid absens; cuius contrarium appareat maxime in animalibus perfectis, quae moventur motu processivo; moventur enim ad aliquid absens apprehensum. Oportet ergo quod animal per animam sensitivam non solum recipiat species sensibilium, cum praesentialiter immutatur ab eis; sed etiam eas retinet et conservet. Recipere autem et retinere reducuntur in corporalibus ad diversa principia: nam humida bene recipiunt, et male retinent; e contrario autem est de siccis. Unde, cum potentia sensitiva sit actus organi corporalis, oportet esse aliam potentiam quae recipiat species sensibilium, et quae conservet.

Sic ergo ad receptionem formarum sensibilium ordinatur sensus proprius et communis: de quorum distinctione post dicetur. —Ad harum autem formarum retentionem aut conservationem ordinatur phantasia, sive imaginatio, quae idem sunt: est enim phantasia sive imaginatio quasi thesaurus quidam formarum per sensum acceptarum.4

We find that higher animals are capable of receiving sense impressions such as hard, sweet, white. This is the task of the external senses which receive the impressions according to their

4St. I, 78, 4 c.
own formal objects, and of the common sense which distinguishes between the different sensibles and knows the operations of the external senses. From observation it is evident that animals know objects not only when they are present to the senses, but also when they are absent, for they go out in search of such objects. The sensitive soul of the animal must, therefore, be able not only to receive the sensible species, but also to retain them once they have been received. The power of reception is distinct from the power of retention, for the senses belong to the realm of material things where to receive and to retain are based on different principles. For instance, what is damp receives well, but retains poorly; what is dry, on the contrary, receives poorly, but retains well. Therefore, as regards the reception and retention of sensible forms, we must assume two different powers in the sensitive soul of an animal. The power of reception is the *sensus communis* (and the external senses), and the power of retention is imagination or phantasy.

Having discussed the distinction of the common sense and imagination, St. Thomas moves on to consider the other two correlative senses—the estimative sense and memory. Of these he says:

[Si animal moveretur solum propter delectabile et contristabile secundum sensum, non esset necessarium ponere in animali nisi apprehensionem formarum quas percipit sensus, in quibus delectatur aut horret. Sed necessarium est animali ut quae rat aliqua vel fugiat, non solum quae sunt convenientia vel non convenientia ad sentiendum, sed etiam propter alias commoditates et utilitates, sive demonstra: siut ovis videns lupum venientem fugit, non propter in-
decentiam coloris vel figurae, sed quasi inimicum naturae; et similiter avis colligit paleam, non quia delectet sensum, sed quia est utilis ad nidificandum. Necessarium est ergo animali quod percipiat huiusmodi intentiones quas non percept sensus exterior. Et huius perceptionis oportet esse aliquod alius principium: cum perceptio formarum sensibilium sit ex immutatione sensibilis, non autem perceptio intentionum praedictarum.

Ad apprehendendum autem intentiones quae per sensum non accipiantur, ordinatur vis aestimativa. —Ad conservandum autem eas, vis memorativa, quae est thesaurus quidam huiusmodi intentionum. Cuius signum est, quod principium memorandi sit in animalibus ex aliqua huiusmodi intentione, puta quod est nocivum vel conveniens. Et ipsa ratio praeteriti, quam attendit memoria, inter huiusmodi intentiones computatur.5

From experience we know that animals react to certain situations in such a way as to indicate that they have more than just sensory cognition. There is instinctive knowledge in an animal by which it knows that an object is good or harmful for it. This kind of knowledge is not perceived by the external senses. A sheep flees a wolf regardless if it is brown or black. The animals must be conscious of something over and above what they perceive by their external senses. This "something" is called by St. Thomas intentiones or intentiones insensatae.

Since these "intentions" are not caused directly by what is properly sensible and hence no phantasm corresponding to them is produced either in the external senses or in the common sense or the imagination, their presence in an animal requires a distinct power by which the sensitive being perceives them. This power is

5Ibid.
called the estimative sense.

But the intentions must be retained after they have been received. Receiving and retaining belong to different principles; therefore there must be another interior sense whose function would be to retain the intentions of the estimative sense. This interior sense is called memory.

Memory is a complementary sense to the vis aestimativa, just as imagination is complementary to common sense. St. Thomas calls the imagination the treasury of forms, and memory the treasury of intentions.

The common sense and imagination are concerned with the forms of sensible things. The common sense receives them, the imagination retains them. The notion of receiving, as opposed to retaining, implies that the object is present to the sense when it is received. The common sense, then, operates only when the forms are presented to it by the external senses. Its concern is with the sensible forms as present.6

The object ceases to be "received" and begins to be "retained" as soon as it becomes absent to the external senses. The imagination retains the original impressions when the object is no longer present to the perceiving consciousness. The formal object of the imagination, therefore, is the sensible forms as

6Ibid. (paulo post init.).
absent. 7

The same distinction of formal objects holds also for the estimative sense and memory. The formal object of the former is the intentions as present, and of the latter the intentions as absent. The insensate forms are evoked in animal consciousness when useful or harmful things are actually stimulating the senses, that is, when they are present. The function of sense memory, on the other hand, is to retain these insensate forms, when the object is absent. "[C]um de ratione memoriae sit conservare species rerum quae actu non apprehenduntur." 8

The distinction of faculties according to the difference of the presence or absence of the object requires a little further explanation. Is the presence or absence of an object a real formality, sufficient to justify the real distinction of the powers of the soul, or is it not? To this St. Thomas has a ready answer. In the following statement St. Thomas speaks of the object of memory which is the past, not merely absent. Hence, the question is: Do the past and the present differentiate the powers? In the Summa St. Thomas says: "[P]raeteritum et praesens possunt esse proprie differentiae potentiarum sensitivarum

7Ibid. Cf. also Robert Brennan, O.P., "The Thomistic Concept of Imagination," The New Scholasticism, XV (1941), 157, where he says: "If, then, the formal object of common sense is the sensible qua present, the formal object of imaginal power is the sensible qua absent."

8S.T., I, 79, 6 c.
The characterization of objects as "past" and "present" is valid for the distinction of the faculties of sense, but not valid for the distinction of the faculties of the intellect. It may be asked, why? John of St. Thomas commenting on the passage says:

... [R]ationem praeteriti et praesentis ex parte objecti posse distinguere potentias apprehensivas materiales, non vero potentiam intellectivam, eo quod ista ex suo genere et propria ratione objectiva abstrahit a conditionibus materialibus et respicit res in universali. Unde modus praeteriti vel praesentis, qui sunt modi singularitatis, non possunt variare potentiam intellectivam, bene tamen potentiam sensitivan, quae versatur circa singularia secundum immutationem, qua ab objecto immutatur potentia et trahuntur res ad ipsam. Unde quod ista mutatio pendet a praesentia sensibili et singulari ipsius objecti vel ab illa abstrahat et independenter ab illa movat, diversum modum abstractiorem ponit in ipsa immutatione et motione objecti.10

The intellect abstracts from the material conditions of singulars. It knows the essences of things which are always the same, universal. Absence or presence of an object does not affect the understanding in knowing its essence, for it is not limited by the here-and-now conditions by which the sensibility is limited. Sense knowledge is of singulars and is dependent on their action. Hence, they must be present to the sense, in order to be known by them. In his commentary on the De Sensu et Sensato, St. Thomas says: "[S]ensus autem est singularium quae sunt hic et nunc. Et

9Ibid., I, 79, 7 ad 2.
ideo secundum suam propriam rationem non est cognoscitivus nisi praesentium."¹¹ Properly speaking, sense knows the present. But if it knows something absent or past, it must be moved by a principle which is independent of the presence of the object, and as such diverse from that which is dependent. Presence and absence of the object requires, then, a diverse moving principle, and therefore the differentiation of sense powers according to the presence or absence of the object must be valid. As the distinction between the two moving principles is real, the distinction of the faculties must be real, too.

And so, St. Thomas concludes the article of the *Summa* on the distinction of the internal senses, stating: "Et sic non necesse ponere nisi quatuor vires interiores sensitivae partis: scilicet sensum communem et imaginationem, aestimativam et memorativam."¹² These are the four internal senses which are required for the perfect life of a perfect animal. They are really distinct from each other, because their formal objects are distinct.

Although the interior senses are really distinct, nevertheless, they are closely related to each other. It was already pointed out that common sense and imagination, the estimative


¹² *S. T.*, I, 78, 4 c (ad fin.).
sense and memory are complementary to each other. Imagination can be understood as a continuation of the common sense; for as the common sense perfects the external senses, so the imagination perfects and completes the operation of common sense. The estimative sense, although distinct from common sense and imagination, is dependent on them. The insensate intentions which the estimative sense perceives, are in the other senses fundamentally, for the estimative sense depends on common sense when the object is present, and on the imagination when the object is absent.13

The memorative process cannot be regarded in isolation either. There exists an intimate relationship between memory and other internal senses. Aristotle considered memory and imagination as not really distinct powers. For him they were functions of the common sense. The imagination was a function of the common sense, because it followed the total mutation of sense which began with proper sensibles and terminated at the common sense. Memory, thought Aristotle, belongs per se to the primum sensitivum or the sensus communis, because it is in the part of the soul which knows magnitude and time. And this, according to

13"Contingit tamen quod diversarum potentiarum est una quasi radix et origo aliarum potentiarum, quorum actus actum ipsius primae potentiae praesupponunt, sicut nutritiva est quasi radix augmentativae et generativae potentiae, quorum utraque utitur nutrimento. Similiter autem sensus communis est radix phantasiae et memoriae, quae praesupponunt actum sensus communis." In De Mem. et Rem., 2, n. 322 (edited with In De Sensu et Sensato; see note 11).
Aristotle, is the common sense. 14

St. Thomas abandons the teaching of Aristotle on this point to follow Avicenna who had demonstrated that memory and imagination were two powers distinct from the sensus communis:

Posset autem alicui videri quod ex his quae hic dicuntur, phantasia et memoria non sunt potentiae distinctae a sensu communis, sed sunt quaedam passiones ipsius. Sed Avicenna rationabiliter ostendit esse diversas potentias. Cum enim potentiae sensitivae sint actus corporalium organorum, necesse est ad diversas potentias pertinere receptionem formarum sensibilium quae pertinet ad sensum, et conservationem earum, quae pertinet ad phantasiam sive imaginacionem; sicut in corporalibus videmus quod ad aliud principium pertinet receptio et conservation: humida enim sunt bene receptiva, siccus autem et dura bene conservativa. Similiter etiam ad aliud principium pertinet recipere formam, et conservare receptam per sensum et intentionem aliquam per sensum non apprehensam, quamvis aestimativa percipit etiam in aliis animalibus, vis autem memorativa retinet, cuius est memorari rem non absolute, sed prout est in praeterito apprehens a sensu vel intellectu. 15

Aristotle arrived at the conclusion that memory was a function

14 In De Memoria et Reminiscentia Aristotle says: "Now, one must cognize magnitude and motion by means of the same faculty by which one cognizes time [i.e., by that which is also the faculty of memory], and the presentation [involved in such cognition] is an affection of the sensus communis; whence this follows, viz., that the cognition of these objects [magnitude, motion, time] is effected by the [said sensus communis, i.e., the] primary faculty of perception. Accordingly, memory [not merely of sensible, but] even of intellectual objects involves a presentation: hence we may conclude that it belongs to the faculty of intelligence only incidentally, while directly and essentially it belongs to the primary faculty of sense-perception." De Memoria et Reminiscentia (450 a, 10-14), The Student’s Oxford Aristotle, trans. and ed. W. D. Ross (London, 1942), Vol. 3. [There are no numbers for the pages in this edition]. Cf. In De Mem. et Rem., 2, n. 319; also Edmund Joseph Ryan, C. PP. S., The Role of the Sensus Communis in the Psychology of St. Thomas Aquinas (Carthagena, Ohio, 1951), p. 98.

15 In De Mem. et Rem., 2, n. 321.
of the *sensus communis* because he thought that time was a common sensible and was perceived by the *sensus communis*. It also should be remembered that the common sense in Aristotle's psychology is synonymous with the sensitive soul.\textsuperscript{16}

This, however, can be interpreted correctly. Since the common sense is the root and origin of the imagination and of the memory (for both presuppose and are dependent in their activity upon the act of the common sense), imagination and memory may be called *passiones* of the common sense. But this does not prevent them from being distinct powers of the soul. By saying that memory is a modification (*passio*) of the first sensitive power, its dependence upon sensation and its relationship to it is shown, but this does not mean that it is not a distinct power.\textsuperscript{17}

The relationship of the common sense with memory having been discussed, the next point to be taken up is the relationship existing between memory and imagination.

These two (imagination and memory) are also distinct from each other, as it is proved in the *Summa*, I, 76, 4. Yet because of the close similarity of function, there can easily arise confusion in an effort to distinguish them.

\textsuperscript{16}Arist., *De Mem. et Rem.*, 1 (449 b 26-451 a 17).

\textsuperscript{17}Q.D. de An., 13 ad 18: "[C]um potentiae animae sint proprietates quaedam, per hoc quod dicitur memoria esse passio primi sensitivi, non excluditur quin memoria sit alia potentia a sensu; sed ostenditur ordo eius ad sensum."
As was shown above, Aristotle thought memory and imagination were merely modifications of the sensus communis and as such not really distinct from each other. That there is a close connection between memory and imagination is evident also from the fact that the images of memory over a period of time tend to deteriorate into the images of the imaginative power. And mere imaginings, from having been told too often, come to be believed as historical events of one's own past. Thus imagination may be falsely turned into memory.

How does St. Thomas distinguish imagination from memory? At this point the discussion of the difference of function could be introduced, for, as was said above, the confusion in trying to distinguish these two powers arises chiefly from the close similarity of function. But as this problem shall be discussed in the chapters on the functions of memory, there is no need of going into it now. At this place it can be noted, however, that St. Thomas does distinguish them and holds that they are really distinct powers. The chief reason for this distinction lies, of course, in the difference of their formal objects. The formal object of imagination is sensible forms of absent objects, while that of memory is intentions of absent objects. The word "absent" is a generic word. When modifying "intentions", it applies to time and can be specified to mean "past." For memory does not

abstract the absent intentions from the relation of time, as does the imagination with the sensible forms, but reproduces them in a definite setting of past time: "Memory is a power that apprehends the past."19

So far the distinction between memory and the common sense and between memory and imagination has been discussed. A few words must be said on the distinction of the correlative powers of the soul, the estimative sense and its treasury, the memory. The chief problem that needs consideration here, it seems, is the principle of distinction. St. Thomas seems to distinguish these two faculties (just as he does with the other two closely related powers, the common sense and imagination) not by the diversity of the formal objects but by the different manners of operating.

In the article of the Summa, a part of which was reproduced in the beginning of this chapter, St. Thomas lays down the principle that operations which cannot be reduced to one principle require distinct powers, since the power of the soul is nothing else than the proximate principle of the operations of the soul: "Et quaecumque harum actionum non possunt reduci in unum principium, requirunt diversas potentias: cum potentia animae nihil aliud sit quam proximum principium operationis animae."20 But what is the norm to determine whether or not an action can be

19S.T., III, 85, 4, ad 3.
20S.T., I, 78, 4 c (init.).
reduced to one power? From what he says further in the same chapter, it seems that the standard of distinguishing the powers of the soul is the nature of the operation itself: "Recipere autem et retinere reducuntur in corporalibus ad diversa principia: nam humida bene recipiunt, et male retinent; e contrario autem est de siccis. Unde, cum potentia sensitiva sit actus organi corporalis, oportet esse aliam potentiam quae recipiat species sensibilium, et quae conservet." Since to receive and to conserve cannot be reduced to one principle, these acts require diverse powers, the estimative sense and memory. Did St. Thomas abandon his own principle that powers are distinguished by acts and acts by objects?

Cajetan, commenting on the *Summa*, I, 78, 4, says that St. Thomas is using here two principles of distinguishing the internal senses. One is the multiplication and diversification of operations according to the needs of a perfect animal, the other according to the nature of the operations themselves:

> [P]onuntur duae radices distinguendi ac multiplicandi potentias animae. Prima est de multiplicatione actionum: scilicet, tot oportet ponere actiones, quot ad perfectam vitam animalis perfecti sufficiunt. Probatur: quia natura non deficit in necessariis; nec etiam abundat superfluis, quia nihil otiose agit. —Secunda est de habitudine diversitatis actionum ad diversitatem potentiarum: scilicet, actiones quae non possunt in unum reduci principium, exigunt diversas potentias. Et probatur: quia potentia animae nihil aliud est quam proximum principium operationis ipsius animae. —Et

---

21 *S.T.*, I, 78, 4 c.

22 *Ibid.*, I, 77, 3 c; the passage was quoted on page 6.
sunt hae verae radices, quia causas ferunt diversificandi potentias, cum sint propter actus.²³

Cajetan thinks that the manner of operating is a source (radix) of the diversification of powers. The act of retaining is not the same as the act of receiving. Therefore, there must be two distinct powers to perform these acts.²⁴

Although St. Thomas does not say explicitly that the acts of receiving and retaining are further specified by their objects, nevertheless, when he speaks of these operations, he does refer to their objects. Thus he says: "Est autem considerandum quod


²⁴The rest of Cajetan's commentary is as follows: "Dicit ergo, ex prima radice, quod in animali perfecto sunt duae actiones necessariae, scilicet non solum recipere, sed retinere. —Probatur: quia oportet apprehendere rem non solum præsentem sed absentem. Probatur ducendo ad impossibile: quia alter non appeteret et movetur ad absens. Et tenet sequela: quia appetitus et motus animalis cognitionem sequitur.

Ex secunda vero radice, quod haec duo opera non sunt eiusdem corporei principii. Probatur: quia bene recipere est humid, bene retinere est sicci. —Et sic sequitur prima conclusio subserviens: conservativae virtutes sunt aliae a receptivis.

Deinde rursus ex prima radice dicit: In animali perfecto sunt necessariae duae actiones, scilicet non solum circa sensibilia ut sic, sed circa intentiones insensatas, ad commodum et utile suum spectantes. —Probatur: quia animal non solum movetur propter delectabile aut tristabile secundum sensum, sed propter commodum et utile suum. Probatur quoad tristabile, in fuga ovis respectu lupi: quod delectabile vero, in collectione paleae hirundinis in respectu ad constructionem nidi.

Ex secunda vero radice, quod hae actiones non eiusdem sunt principii. Probatur ex diversitate immutativorum: quia scilicet ad illam immutat sensibile exterius; ad hanc non, sed interius. —Et sic sequitur secunda praesambula conclusio: Potentiae versantes circa intentiones insensatas, sunt aliae a respicientibus sensata." Ibid.
ad vitam animalis perfecti requiritur quod non solum apprehendat rem apud praesentiam sensibilis, sed etiam apud eius absentiam. Oportet ergo quod animal per animam sensitivam non solum recipiat species sensibilium cum praesentialiter immutatur ab eis; sed etiam eas retineat et conservet." A perfect animal must be able to apprehend an object not only when it is present to its senses, but also when it is absent. Therefore, continues St. Thomas, it must be able to receive the impressions when the object actually affects its faculties, i.e., when it is present, and also to retain them when it no longer affects them, i.e., when it is absent. The act of receiving is conjoined here with the presence of the object, and the act of retaining and conserving is conjoined with the absence of the object. This may be taken as an indication that the correlative internal senses which are distinguished by St. Thomas in the present article by their manner of operating, are ultimately distinguished by their formal objects.

In confirmation of this conjecture, the following consideration may be offered. In the De Veritate St. Thomas says that the genera of the powers of the soul are doubly distinguished: (1) on the part of the object; (2) on the part of the subject or the manner of operating. But it may be asked, what is the cause of the diversity in the manner of operating? Is it the nature of the

---

25 S.T., I, 78, 4 c (init.).
26 De Ver., 10, 1, ad 2.
faculty itself? If it is, it may be further asked, as to the cause of its being of such a nature. What has determined the faculty to be of this particular nature? Has it determined itself to act in a certain way? It has not, for it is the end for which the power exists that determines its nature. So, the end must be taken into consideration. To what end is a power directed? A power, being a potency, of its very nature is directed to its act. But the act, according to the principle laid down in the Summa, is diversified according to the diverse character of the object to which it is directed: "[P]otentia, 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 diversificetur, ut diversificatur ratio actus. Ratio autem actus diversificatur secundum diversam rationem objecti." 27 Therefore, though the manner of operation may diversify powers, ultimately all diversification of operation is dependent upon diverse objects.

Since, as was shown above, the characterization of objects as "present" and "absent" is valid for the real distinction of the faculties of sense, the conclusion that the correlative internal senses are really distinct from each other seems to be established. The act of receiving of the estimative sense (and of the common sense) does not have the same object as the act of

27S.T., I, 77, 3 c.
retaining of memory (and of imagination), and therefore they are distinct powers of the soul.

As a conclusion to the present chapter, it can be stated that sense memory for St. Thomas is a really distinct internal sense, which means that it is not the common sense, the imagination, or the estimative sense. This, of course, is a negative approach. It must be supplemented by the positive exposition of the matter. The problem of specification of memory still requires extensive investigation. The next chapter will attempt to determine more fully its proper object.
CHAPTER III

THE OBJECT OF SENSE MEMORY

Since a power is known through reference to its act, and the act is specified by its object,\(^1\) the problem of specification of a faculty involves not only its distinction from other faculties but also the determination of its proper object and its proper functions. In the previous chapter the distinction of sense memory from other internal senses was singled out for discussion. The purpose of this chapter is to find its proper object.

What, according to St. Thomas, is the proper object of sense memory? It must be recalled that the proper object of any faculty is defined by St. Thomas as a formality of a material object by which the faculty perceives the object: "Proprie autem illud assignatur objectum alicuius potentiae vel habitus, sub cuius ratione omnia referuntur ad potentiam vel habitum: sicut homo et lapis referuntur ad visum inquantum sunt colorata, unde coloratum est proprium objectum visus."\(^2\) This formality is an aspect of a material object which makes it an object of the faculty. Under what formality does sense memory perceive the material object?

\(^1\)De Ver., 15, 2 c (init.).
\(^2\)S.T., I, 1, 7 c.
It can be said right from the start that St. Thomas seems to assign two proper objects to sense memory. One is the intentions of the estimative sense, the other simply anything past. In the Summa St. Thomas says that the memorative power is a faculty which retains the intentions apprehended by the estimative sense: "Ad apprehendendum autem intentiones quae per sensum non accipiuntur, ordinatur vis aestimativa. —Ad conservandum autem eas, vis memorativa, quae est thesaurus quidam huiusmodi intentionum." And again in De Veritate: "Memoria quae communis est nobis et brutis, est illa in qua conservantur particulares intentiones." In other places, however, St. Thomas says something different. In the Summa we find these words: "Memoria est vis apprehensiva praeteriti." And again: "Praeteritum est proprium objectum memoriae." The proper object of sense memory, according to this passage, is something past.

Since for St. Thomas sense memory is one faculty and not two, it may be rightly asked, which of the two is its proper object? Is it the intentions apprehended by the estimative sense, or is it something past as past?

Just to elaborate on the problem a little more, it can be

3Ibid., I, 78, 4 c (paulo post med.).
4De Ver., 10, 3 ad 1.
5S.T., III, 85, 4 ad 3.
6Ibid., III, 85, 4 ob. 3.
pointed out that there is a historical background of influences which may have had something to do with the origin of this problem. There were two philosophers who by their doctrine on the proper object of memory may have influenced St. Thomas' own idea of that object. These philosophers were Aristotle and Avicenna. Aristotle said that the proper object of memory was something past. Avicenna, on the other hand, thought that it was the intentions of the estimative sense. In De Memoria et Reminiscentia Aristotle says: "As already observed, there is no such thing as memory of the present while present, for the present is the object only of perception, and the future, of expectation, but the object of memory is the past." It is common usage to speak of those things which are recalled by the memorative power as past. It is impossible to remember the future, for future is the object of opinion or expectation. Nor is there memory of the present, for it is only the sense perception that knows the present. No one would say that he remembers a white object at the moment he sees it. Memory is, therefore, neither sense perception nor expectation. Since it is conditioned by a lapse of time, its proper object is the past.

St. Thomas, commenting on this passage, says: "Ostendit quod memoria est praeteritorum." Then a little further he says:

8In De Mem. et Rem., 1, n. 307.
"[E]jus quod nunc apprehenditur, in ipso nunc non est memoria, ut dictum est, sed sensus quidem est praesentis, spes vero futuri, memoria vero praeteriti."\(^9\) That St. Thomas accepted Aristotle's doctrine on the proper object of memory as true is clear from the fact that he incorporated it into his works other than the commentaries on Aristotle, such as the *Summa*, where, as it was noted above, he affirms that memory is of the past.\(^10\)

For the idea of intentions St. Thomas is indebted to the Arabian philosopher, Avicenna. He himself, while on the subject of intentions, refers to Avicenna several times in his works. In the commentary on the first book of the *Sentences* he says: "[U]nde sumitur hic pro memoria quae est potentia sensitivae partis, quae habet organum in postrema parte capitis, et est thesaurus intentionum sensibilium cum sensu, non a sensu acceptorum [sic], ut dicit Avicenna, lib. De Anima, part. IV, cap. IV."\(^11\) For Avicenna the power which apprehends the intentions is the estimative sense, and that which retains them is the memory. In his *De Anima* he says: "Thesaurus vero apprehendentis intentionem est virtus custoditiva, cuius locus est posterior pars cerebri, et ideo cum contingit infirmitas corrumpitur id cuius proprium est custodire has

---

\(^9\)Ibid., n. 309.

\(^10\)St. T., I, 79, 6 c (ad fin.).

\(^11\)In I Sent., 3, 4, 1, ad 2; ed. R. Mandonnet, O.P., *(Parisii, 1929)*, I, p. 113.
intentiones; quae virtus vocatur etiam memorialis, et etiam re-
tinens."\(^{12}\) Memory is the treasure house of intentions, whose
proper function is to retain and to preserve them. St. Thomas
makes use of Avicenna's doctrine of intentions, and when he deals
with the subject of the proper object of memory, he expresses him-
self in terms very similar to those used by this Arabian philos-
opher.

To come back to the original statement of the problem: what
is the proper object of memory for St. Thomas? Is it the inten-
tions of the estimative sense, or is it anything past as past?

Does St. Thomas give the answer to the problem? In the
Summa there is a statement which may be of help to find a solu-
tion. In the article on the internal senses Aquinas says that
the object of memory is the intentions of the estimative sense,
and then he adds: "Et ipsa ratio praeteriti, quam attendit memoria,
inter huiusmodi intentiones computatur."\(^{13}\) The memory is the
power of retaining the intentions, but pastness, the very ratio
praeteriti, is nothing else but one of such intentions.\(^{14}\)

\(^{12}\) Avicenna, De Anima, pars IV, cap. 1; transcription from the
Venice edition of 1508 by G. P. Klubertanz, S.J. (St. Louis, 1949),
p. 84.

\(^{13}\) S.T., I, 78, 4 c (med.).

\(^{14}\) There are many meanings of intention in St. Thomas. On
this cf. H. D. Simonin, O.P., "La Notion d'Intentio' dans l'oeuvre
de S. Thomas d'Aquin," Revue des Sciences Philosophiques et Théo-
logiques, XIX (1930), 445-463; and André Hayen, S.J., L'inten-
Pastness, then, falls within the general category of intentions. Since this is so, St. Thomas is not inconsistent when he refers to the proper object of memory in two different ways; for the object designated in one way falls within the scope of the object under the other designation. Although it may be hopefully affirmed that this is the correct answer to the problem, yet it needs an explanation. It must be shown how pastness is an intention. For this purpose it will be necessary to consider St. Thomas' concept of intentions.

It must be noted that an adequate analysis of the nature of intentions will be somewhat difficult to make. The reason for this is the fact that St. Thomas does not have any detailed and comprehensive exposition of it in any of his works. Perhaps he supposed his readers to be familiar with the technical meaning of intentions, and so he did not attempt any lengthy explanation of them. The information about the nature and meaning of intentions must be obtained from brief passages and incidental remarks scattered over all his works. The most adequate statement about the intentions of the estimative sense is found, it seems, in the Summa, question 78, article 4. There St. Thomas says:

[S]i animal moveretur solum propter delectabile et contrista-
bile secundum sensum, non esset necessarium ponere in animali
nisi apprehensionem formarum quas percipit sensus, in quibus
delectatur aut horret. Sed necessarium est animali ut
quaerat aliqua vel fugiat, non solum quia sunt convenientia
vel non convenientia ad sentiendum, sed etiam propter aliqus
commoditates et utilitates, sive nocumenta: sicut ovis videns
lupum venientem fugit, non propter indecentiam coloris vel
figurae, sed quasi inimicum naturae; et similiter avis col-
ligit paleam, non quia delectet sensum, sed quia est utilis
ad nidificandum. Necessarium est ergo animali quod percipiat huiusmodi intentiones, quas non percipit sensus exterior. Et huius perceptionis oportet esse aliquod alius principium: cum perceptio formarum sensibilium sit ex immutatigne sensibilis, non autem perceptio intentionum praedictarum.¹

From observation we know that animals perceive not only forms which are received through the external senses, but also intentions which are not so received. From the mode of acting the animals show that they perceive utility or harmfulness of objects presented to them. Since these "advantages" do not cause any physical change in the organ of the external sense, they must be apprehended by some other sense faculty distinct from the external sense. This is the estimative sense.

In this passage St. Thomas defines intentions basically in terms of their distinction from the sensible forms. These forms are sensate in nature, i.e., apprehended by the external senses; intentions are insensate, i.e., not apprehended by the external senses. Intentions are not even dependent upon any particular sense quality. No particular sound, color, etc., determines the insensate intention: the sheep experiences fear whether the wolf is gray or brown, whether it howls or approaches its victim silently. This indicates the peculiar character of intentions. Since they are not apprehended by the external senses and yet are sensible in nature, they are called sometimes sensible per accidens. This term refers to the fact that cognition of insensate inten-

¹S.T., I, 78, 4 c.
tions is not sensed *per se* by any external sense. Ordinarily and perhaps more properly the intelligible is what is referred to as sensible *per accidens*, but St. Thomas adds to this category also the object of the estimative and discursive powers.\textsuperscript{16}

If intentions are not perceived by the external senses, one may wonder, what role do the external senses play in their production? What is their contribution? St. Thomas in the commentary on the first book of the Sentences says that these intentions are perceived "*cum sensu, non a sensu*."\textsuperscript{17} What does this mean? Just as the intellect cannot completely know the universal except against the background of the material singular, so the estimative power cannot apprehend the import, the bearing of a concrete situation except against the background of sensate apprehension. A lamb experiences fear only when the sensible form of a wolf is actually present to him. There is always need of a sensible substratum with which the intention is perceived. The sense data, therefore, must be present, but the apprehension of their "meaning," or the intentions, is not determined by its sensible content.

Dealing with this matter, John of St. Thomas makes a distinction which is to the point. He says: "*[R]espondetur species insensatas accipi per sensus exteriores, non ut formaliter cognitas ab eis, sed ut virtualiter contentas in ipsis rebus sensibilibus,\textsuperscript{16}"

\textsuperscript{16}In II de An., 13, nn. 395-398.

\textsuperscript{17}In I Sent., 3, 4, 1 ad 2.
quas apprehendunt. Res enim insensatae continentur et accipiuntur ex sensatis, nec est necesse, quod omnia, quae cognoscuntur ab intellectu vel sensu interno, cognoscantur formaliter in externo, sed sufficit in objecto illo contineri, ut ex illo accipi possint."\(^\text{18}\) The external senses apprehend the intentions virtually, not formally. The estimative sense apprehends them formally by abstracting them from the sense data in which they are virtually contained.

The next question about the insensate intentions is this: how are they perceived by the internal senses? Are they a product of a judgment? The power of judging particulars is attributed by St. Thomas to the *vis cogitativa* in man, but it is denied to the *vis aestimativa* of animals.\(^\text{19}\) How does he explain the animal perception of intentions? —By a natural activity of instincts. He says: "[A]nimalia percipiunt huiusmodi intentiones solum naturali quodam instinctu; homo autem etiam per quandam collationem."\(^\text{20}\) The insensate intentions are perceived by an innately determined power, the instinct, or the estimative sense. This sense is endowed by nature to recognize some presentations of the external senses as good for the individual, others as evil.


\(^\text{19}\)S.T., I, 78, 4 c (ad finem).

\(^\text{20}\)Ibid.
Is this in accord with experience? It seems so, for if the estimative sense were not determined by nature to act in a definite way, there could not be any adequate explanation of the uniformity and necessity of instinctive activity which is so manifest in animal life.

There is still another characteristic of intentions which should be brought out. Since suitability or harmfulness of an object are relative terms, the cognitive being in knowing them knows both the object which is suitable and the subject for which the object is suitable. When it perceives them, it has the knowledge of a concrete subject-object relation. This note of intentions can be called the concrete involvement of self. St. Thomas seems to indicate this in his commentary on Aristotle's De Memoria et Reminiscentia. In order to bring out the difference between the image of imagination and that of sense memory, he compares the two to a painting looked at from two different aspects. He says that a sense form (the object of imagination) differs from an intention (the object of sense memory) in the same way as a painting taken as a painting differs from the same painting taken as an image of that which it represents, or of something previously seen and experienced. He concludes with the following remark:

Sic igitur manifestum est, quod quando anima convertit se ad phantasma, prout est quaedam forma reservata in parte sensitiva, sic est actus imaginationis sive phantasiae, vel etiam intellectus considerantis circa hoc universale. Si autem anima convertatur ad ipsum, inquantum est imago ejus, quod prius audivimus aut intelleximus, hoc pertinet ad actum
The image of imagination is a representation considered in itself, e.g., human face in general, a rose in general, etc. The image of memory is a representation of something previously experienced. Here the object is identified as having been a part of the subject's consciousness: "quod prius audivimus aut intellectimus," says St. Thomas. In these images there is an added note which is absent in those of imagination. It is the note of self-involvement.

A well-known human face or a rose which was seen by the subject are examples of images with consciousness of self involved in them.

The notion of self-involvement needs a further clarification. What is this self-involvement? Basically, it is a consciousness of one's own operation as well as the object or the thing which is being known in that operation. It is the knowledge of being affected by the sensible object or simply of sensing a thing. This can be explained with some simple examples, as we say, for instance, "I remember hearing Verdi's Otello," or "I remember learning that theorem in geometry." Expressions of this kind show that the subject remembers not only the object (Verdi's Otello or the theorem in geometry), but also his own act in which the object was presented to him (hearing or learning). Self-involvement is

21 In De Mem. et Rem., 3, n. 343.
consciousness of undergoing a modification or of receiving an impression from the object.

St. Thomas brings out this idea quite fully in some of the texts from the In De Mem. et Rem. To quote a few of them: "dicitur memorari praeteritorum actuum;"22 "memoratur aliquis, quia [i.e., that] didicit ab alio, vel quia speculatus est per seipsum; ex parte vero sensibilis apprehensionis memoratur, quia audivit vel vidit, vel aliquo alio sensu percepit. Semper enim cum anima memoratur, pronunciat se vel prius audivisse aliquid, vel sensisse, vel intellexisse."23 And again: "memoria est praeteritorum quantum ad nostram apprehensionem, idest quod prius sensimus vel intelleximus."24 In the next lecture St. Thomas says: "aliquis memoratur se intellexisse."25

From this it can be seen that "intentions" imply a much wider field of knowledge than may appear at first sight. The

22 Ibid., 1, n. 307; italics added.
23 Ibid.; italics added.
24 Ibid., 1, n. 308; italics added.
25 Ibid., 2, n. 320. There is a problem in the interpretation of the third lecture. The general doctrine is that in memory we know both the impression of modification and the thing of which it is the impression. In Aristotle the modification (παθώσι—passio) would mean not only the form resulting but also the undergoing, the being affected or modified or impressed. Thomas tends to interpret it only in the first sense: the form resulting (phantasma); but there are still enough indications of the passivity, the undergoing, the being affected. E.g., n. 345: "motus phantasmatum"; "ex immutatione sensus."
standard examples of intentions which St. Thomas constantly uses are suitability and harmfulness, fear of a wolf and love of one's mother. Since St. Thomas says that these as absent are the object of memory, a superficial reader may wonder at times whether what is recalled by the sense memory is only suitability, harmfulness, fear, love, and the like. It must be remembered that these are only examples of intentions. The general category of insensate intentions implies a much greater variety than appears at first sight. One can think of objects apprehended which are neither harmful nor suitable. They may be indifferent. Are such apprehensions intentions, or are they forms? The answer may be this: if they possess the note of concrete involvement of self, they are intentions. If they do not, they are forms. When the sense forms are recognized as a part of the subject's own experience, in which the known is not merely the sensible forms but also the operation through which these forms are apprehended, they are not forms but forms with an intention. They are sensible images taken not qua images, but qua representations of something the subject identifies as his own experience or knows with the note of concrete self-involvement.

To sum up what has been said about the nature of the intentions in question as the object of memory, it can be stated that according to the present investigation these intentions are found to belong to the category of sensible per accidens and to be insensate in nature. It has further been found that in sensing the
intentions the animal has a concrete knowledge of the involvement of self. It knows the object as it affects it, i.e., whether the object is suitable for it, or good, or evil. This implies a concrete knowledge of the subject-object relation.

Is pastness such an intention?

It has been said already that, although St. Thomas does not explain it in greater detail, nevertheless, he says explicitly that "ipsa ratio praeteriti," the very character of being past, "inter huiusmodi intentiones computatur," is reckoned among such intentions, namely, the intentions apprehended by the estimative sense, such as suitability, harmfulness, and the like. Pastness, then, is an intention and not a mere form. Does it have the characteristics of these intentions? Is it insensate in nature? The answer is in the affirmative. Pastness is not per se apprehended by any of the external senses. But it is sensible, because it is associated with time, and is perceived by the sensitive being. Thus, it belongs to the category of sensible per accidens, and as such can be ranked among the insensate intentions: "inter huiusmodi intentiones computatur."

Is there in pastness the note of concrete involvement of self? Does an individual in recognizing some past experience perceive somehow his own involvement in it? It seems that he does. In order to recognize a past event the sensitive being must know that this event is an item of his past experience. Otherwise there could be no real recognition. In the Summa St. Thomas says that
animal memory extends in two directions: it remembers the objects of past experience and also the subject which had that experience. Here are his words: "[A]nimal memoratur se prius sensisse in praeterito, et se sensisse quoddam praeteritum sensibile." In a real recognition the element of self should be somehow perceived. How it is perceived is another question which will have to be explained eventually. It will be treated, however, in the chapter on the function of recognition, and therefore there is no point of going into it now. For the present it is sufficient to indicate that in the recognition of past events the sentient being must be aware of his own concrete involvement in the process. This demonstrates that pastness is an intention similar to suitability and harmfulness and other intentions apprehended by the estimative sense in which the note of concrete involvement of self is also present.

Now that St. Thomas' doctrine about the nature of insensate intentions has been seen, the final explanation of the original problem must be given. How is there only one object of sense memory and not two? St. Thomas says that memory is the treasury of intentions, and also that its proper object is something past as past. It has been suggested in the beginning of this chapter that these two are really one and the same thing with two names or looked at from two different aspects. Is this true?

26St.T., 1, 79, 6'ad 2.
It has been shown that pastness is an intention just as suitability and harmfulness are intentions. The word "intention" is, then, a generic term; it is a genus, while pastness, suitability, harmfulness, etc., are its species. It is clear that intention and pastness are not coextensive, for in every object recognized as past there is an intention, but not every intention contains the characteristics of pastness. But it must be remembered that the object of sense memory is not all intentions of the estimative sense, but only those whose objects are absent. This puts a limitation on the intentions to be included under the title of proper object of sense memory. How is pastness related to the intentions of absent objects? It is not difficult to see that all intentions of absent objects really belong to the individual's own past and not to his future. Once the object which caused the perception of an intention is removed from consciousness, the intention that remains is a vestige of a past experience. The intentions of absent objects are apprehended by the sentient being with the note of pastness. These two (the intentions of the absent objects and the note of pastness), then, seem to stay together.

Can a mere sensible form be an object of sense memory? It seems that it can, provided it is recognized as past experience. Since pastness is an intention, such a form is apprehended under the aspect of an intention, and therefore is not a mere form any more, but a form within an intention, and as such can be the ob-
ject of sense memory.

Since the intentions of absent objects are past, and since pastness itself is an intention, it can be said that these two are coextensive, so that where one is, there the other is as well. In this sense, it may be hopefully affirmed, the note of pastness and the intentions of the absent objects are really one thing. The difference of names comes from the difference of aspects from which it is considered. And thus, St. Thomas' seemingly different statements on the proper object of sense memory can be reconciled. There is but one proper object of sense memory. It is the insen-
sate intentions of absent objects, to the category of which belongs also the ratio praeteriti. Since St. Thomas says that pastness is that aspect under which sense memory attains the ob-
ject, pastness can be taken as the formal object of sense mem-
ory. But since pastness itself is an intention, St. Thomas cor-
rectly calls sense memory the treasure house of intentions of
this kind: "[T]hesaurus huiusmodi intentionum."28

27S.T., I, 78, 4 c (med.).
28Ibid.
CHAPTER IV

THE FUNCTIONS OF SENSE MEMORY: RETENTION

Two things have been discussed with regard to sense memory in St. Thomas: its distinction from other internal senses, and its proper object. The present chapter and those that follow will treat of the functions of sense memory.

What does sense memory do?

In the Summa, after having pointed out that the insensate intentions are apprehended by the estimative sense, St. Thomas says that they are preserved in the memorative power: "Ad conservandum autem eas ordinatur vis memorativa, quae est thesaurus quidam huiusmodi intentionum."¹ And in the De Veritate: "[M]emoria quae communis est nobis et brutis, est illa in qua conservantur particulares intentiones."² Sense memory is a treasure house of intentions, i.e., a place where the insensate intentions are retained. The act of retaining or preserving, then, is a function of sense memory.

Sense memory also recalls the intentions to actual consideration after they have been stored. There are two ways in which

¹S.T., I, 78, 4 c.
²De Ver., 10, 3 ad 1.
recall can be had: spontaneously and discursively. Spontaneous recall is common to men and animals, the discursive is proper only to men: "Ex parte autem memoratiae, non solum habet homo memoriam, sicut cetera animalia, in subita recordatione praeteritorum; sed etiam reminiscendiam, quasi syllogistice inquiringo praeteritorum memoriam, secundum individuales intentiones."\(^3\)

Moreover, sense memory is the power which apprehends the past, i.e., recognizes something as past experience: "Est vis apprehensiva praeteriti."\(^4\) And again: "Animal memoratur se prius sensisse in praeterito et se sensisse quoddam praeteritum sensibile."\(^5\)

In terms of its functions sense memory can be defined as the power which retains, recalls, and recognizes the object of past experience.

This enumeration of the operations of sense memory forms a logical pattern according to which the treatment of the functions can be conveniently presented. The act of retention, therefore, shall be discussed first, then that of recall, and finally the act of recognition.

But there is still another operation which is treated by St. Thomas in connection with sense memory, and which was not mentioned in the above enumeration. It is the act by which the

\(^3\)S.T., I, 78, 4 c.
\(^4\)Ibid., III, 85, 4 ad 3.
\(^5\)Ibid., I, 79, 6 ad 2.
original impression is received. Before the sensible species are retained or recalled or recognized, they must be received. The act by which the insensate intentions are received into the store-house of memory is presupposed in all the three subsequent acts of sense memory. Although the reception of original impressions is not considered by St. Thomas as a proper function of memory, nevertheless he spends some time talking about it when dealing with memory, and hence a few words must be said about it here before taking up the presentation of St. Thomas' doctrine of the proper functions of sense memory.

In his commentary on the De Memoria et Reminiscentia St. Thomas shows that the act of receiving is not a function of sense memory. Explaining Aristotle he says: "Primo ostendit [Philosophus] quod acceptio non est memoria, quia ille qui accipit non memoratur. Secundo ostendit, quod nec e converso memorari est acceptio, eo quod ille qui memoratur non de novo accipit." Reception is not an act of memory, because he who receives an impression does not remember it. The very notion of receiving excludes the notion of remembering; for the act of memory presupposes a previous act to which it refers, while reception does not, as St. Thomas does say: "[C]um aliquis primum addiscat vel patiatur quantum ad apprehensionem sensitivam, nullam memoriam tunc resumit.

6In De Mem. et Rem., 4, n. 352. (The italics of the Spiazzi text are omitted. They will also be omitted in all subsequent quotations from the same text.)
quia nihil resumitur nisi prius existens: nulla autem memoria praecessit; ergo primum addiscere vel sentire non est memoriam resumere."7

Reception is not an act of memory for the further reason that memory is of the past, while reception is of the present: "Cum enim memoria sit facti, ut supra habitum est, tunc est memor, quando notitia per modum habitus vel saltem passionis iam est in facto esse. Sed, cum fit prima passio in ipsa, scilicet acceptione notitiae, nondum est in facto esse; ergo nondum fit in homine memoria."8 Memory is of the past, and unless some interval of time intervenes between the actual reception and the recall of that reception, there can be no memory.

The same idea is expressed even clearer in the following paragraph: "Non enim memoramur ea inquantum in praesenti eorum scientiam habemus, sed per se memorari non contingit ante factum tempus, scilicet antequam interveniet tempus medium inter notitiam prius existentem et ipsam memoriam. Memoratur enim nunc aliquis quae prius audivit vel vidit vel qualitercumque passus fuit, non autem nunc memoratur quod nunc passus est."9

The act of reception cannot properly be called a function of sense memory, mainly because it is of the present. This act may

---

7Ibid.
8Ibid., 4, n. 353.
9Ibid., 4, n. 354.
be ascribed to those powers which know the present as present, and these are the external senses and the two internal receptive senses, the common sense and the \textit{vis aestimativa}.\textsuperscript{10} All these deal with objects which are actually stimulating the faculties at the present time. The act of receiving properly belongs to them. Memory, however, is of the past. Its act is to preserve that which has been received rather than to receive. Sense memory preserves the insensate intentions which have been received by the estimative sense.

The reception of original impressions, then, is not considered by St. Thomas as a function of memory. Even though it is basic and is presupposed in the proper acts of sense memory, yet it is assigned to other faculties, not to memory. With these remarks on the act of reception, the presentation of St. Thomas' doctrine on the proper functions of sense memory may finally be started; and, as was mentioned before, they will be taken in the sequence in which they appear in the actual process of remembering—first, the act of retention, then that of recall, and finally, the act of recognition.

Time and again St. Thomas calls memory a \textit{thesaurus intentionum}. The Latin word \textit{thesaurus} means a place where anything (money, for instance) is laid up or kept. Dictionaries translate it as a repository, a store-room, or a treasure house. \textit{Thesaurus intentionum}, when used to describe an interior sense, may be taken as

\textsuperscript{10} St. T., I., 78, l. c.
a figurative description of that sense in terms of its function of retaining. In St. Thomas both imagination and sense memory are referred to as *thesaurus*—imagination retains in its treasury sensible forms, memory retains insensate intentions.

There are in St. Thomas a number of expressions in which mention is made of the retaining function of memory. For example: "Memorari nil aliud est quam bene conservare semel accepta;"\(^{11}\) "De ratione memoriae est quod sit thesaurus vel locus conservativus specierum;"\(^{12}\) "Anima non memoratur prius quam apud se aliquid retinet;"\(^{13}\) "Vis autem memorativa retinet."\(^{14}\)

When we speak of the act of retaining we generally refer to that period in the process of remembering which is put between the original reception of the species and its actual recall. During this time a vestige of the first impression is kept in memory in a subconscious state. It stays there until it is brought back to the surface of consciousness, in order to be recognized as an item of past experience.

What does St. Thomas say about this period? How does he explain the act of retaining?

Aquinas takes up the question in the third lecture of his

---

\(^{11}\) *In De Mem. et Rem.*, 1, n. 302.

\(^{12}\) *S.T.*, I, 79, 7 c.

\(^{13}\) *De Ver.*, 10, 2, ob. 5.

\(^{14}\) *In De Mem. et Rem.*, 2, n. 321.
commentary on Aristotle's De Memoria et Reminiscentia. It is true that what he expresses here is his interpretation of Aristotle. In order to know his own doctrine on the matter, it will be necessary to back up these comments with references to his original works. This will be done as extensively as the available evidence will permit. Generally speaking, the doctrine in the commentary does not differ significantly from the doctrine found in the original works.

St. Thomas begins the third lecture by saying that a certain impressed affection remains in memory after the species have been originally received by the senses. He says:

_Dicit [Aristoteles] ergo primo, manifestum esse quod oportet intelligere aliquam talem passionem a sensu esse factam in anima, et in organo corporis animati, cuivis quidem animae memoriam dicens esse quendam quasi habitum, quae quidem passio est quasi quaedam pictura, quia scilicet sensibile imprimit suam similitudinem in sensu, et huius similitudo remanet in phantasia etiam sensibili abeunt e. Et ideo adiungit quod motus qui fit a sensibili in sensum, imprimit in phantasia quasi quaedam figuram sensibilem, quae manet sensibilibi abeunt e, ad modum quod qui sigillant cum annulis imprimit figuram quaedam in cera, quae remanet etiam sigillo vel annulo remoto._15

From this passage several ideas should be singled out for further elucidation and discussion: the impression is not made, as St. Thomas says, on the soul alone, but also on the body; hence the question of the bodily organ arises. Moreover, the impression is preserved in sense memory in the manner of a _habitus_; hence the problem of sense memory as a _habitus_. Finally, this impression

---

15 Ibid., 3, n. 328.
is said to be like a picture which resembles the object from which it has been obtained; hence a further problem of the preservation of an impression in the form of a picture. This last idea leads St. Thomas to point out the distinction between the functions of sense memory and of imagination.

In the paragraphs immediately following, St. Thomas concentrates on the problem of the bodily organ or the coniunctum on which the impression is made.

The impression, because it belongs to sense, is not made on the soul alone, but on the coniunctum or composite of soul and body: "Dicit [Philosophus] autem, in anima et in parte corporis: quia cum huiusmodi passio pertineat ad partem sensitivam, quae est actus organici corporis, huiusmodi passio non pertinet ad solam animam, sed ad coniunctum."\(^{16}\) That the body plays a part in retaining the species can be seen from the fact that various bodily dispositions are responsible for the defects of memory. Sick and drunk persons have weak memories. Why? Because they are "in multo motu."\(^{17}\) It is clear that an impression cannot be retained in a rapidly flowing substance. So, if the body is in great motion, it also retains poorly: "[P]ropter huiusmodi causas corpus hominis est in quodam fluxu, et ideo non potest retinere impressionem quae fit ex motu rei sensibilis, sicut continget

\(^{16}\)Ibid., 3, n. 329.

\(^{17}\)Ibid., 3, n. 330.
si aliquis motus vel etiam sigillum imprimeretur in aquam fluentem. Statim enim propter fluxum deperiret figura."

The same effect on memory is had also when the motion is found in the soul. If the soul happens to be in the state of flux, as when it is moved by anger or concupiscence, memory is affected in the same way as it is by the motion in the body.\(^{19}\)

What does St. Thomas have to say about the organ of sense memory? In the Summa he says explicitly that species are preserved in an animated bodily organ: "[S]pecies enim conservantur non in parte animae sensitiva tantum, sed magis in conjuncto; cum vis memorativa sit actus organi cuiusdam."\(^{20}\) And again in the De Veritate: "Quantumlibet enim aliquis scientiam in habitu habeat, laeso tamen organo imaginativae virtutis vel memorativae, in actum exire non potest."\(^{21}\) And in another place in the De Veritate: "[C]um necessarium sit humiditatem præcipue in cerebro abundare in pueris, in quo vis imaginativa et aestimativa et memorativa et sensus communis organa sua habent. . . ."\(^{22}\) Sense memory and all the other interior senses have their organs in the brain.

What is the significance of the bodily organ for the function

\(^{18}\)Ibid.

\(^{19}\)Ibid.

\(^{20}\)S.T., I, 79, 6 ad 1.

\(^{21}\)De Ver., 10, 2 ob. 7.

\(^{22}\)Ibid., 18, 8 a.
of sense memory?

First of all, it is certain that the bodily organ does not exclude the ability to retain forms. The bodily organ has the power to retain species, for even the nonliving beings have the capacity to hold, at least for a time, the forms impressed on them. This is true a fortiori with living beings, and especially with cognitive powers, as St. Thomas insists in the *Summa*.23

But, if this association with matter does not keep sense memory from retaining species, it has something to do in determining the nature of its functions. At least, it imposes some of the characteristics of matter.

St. Thomas says that the bodily organ of sense memory is in the brain. But the brain, for St. Thomas, is some kind of watery substance. In the *De Veritate* he says: "[I]maginativae virtutis organum, et memorativae et cogitativae, est in ipso cerebro, quod est locus summæ humitatis in corpore humano."24 The degree of moisture in the brain varies with individuals.25 Some have more water, others less. The quality of the body, i.e., whether the body is soft or hard, whether in motion or at rest, determines the capability to receive and retain the impressions. A hard body receives the impressions with difficulty, but it retains them well,

23 *S.T.*, I, 79, 6 c.
24 *De Ver.*, 18, 8, ad 5.
25 In *De Mem. et Rem.*, 3, n. 334.
while a body which is soft receives easily but retains badly.

Now, since the organ of sense memory is a substance with varying degrees of water in it, it is clear that the more water it contains, the less retentive it is, and conversely. And so St. Thomas says in the De Veritate that the reason why the young, generally speaking, do not have good memories, is that their brain contains a great amount of water: "[P]ropter abundantiam humiditatis quae est in pueris, magis impediantur actus harum virium [imaginativae, memorativae et cogitativae virtutis] quam sensuum externorum." The fluctuating state of young people's bodies accounts for their ability to receive impressions easily and also for their disability to retain them well. Too much moisture in the brain, then, has a negative effect on memory. The same effect is had also when the substance of the brain is hard and unyielding, as, for instance, when man's body becomes rigid because of great fear, or because of natural hardness to receive stimuli.27


27Ibid., 3, n. 331.
These, in general, are the ways in which St. Thomas speaks of the bodily organ of sense memory and of the part it plays in the act of retaining the species.\(^\text{28}\) As regards the act of retaining, two basic problems still remain to be solved, namely, the meaning of what St. Thomas calls "habitualis quaedam conservatio phantasmatis,"\(^\text{29}\) and the distinction of sense memory from imagination in terms of the act of retaining.

Sense memory is sometimes called by St. Thomas a \textit{habitus} or a \textit{quasi-habitus} or a power which has a habit, as when he says, for instance: "[I]n ipsis interioribus viribus sensitivis apprehensivis [possunt] poni aliqui habitus, secundum quos homo fit bene memorativus vel cogitativus vel imaginativus."\(^\text{30}\) The word

\(^\text{28}\) St. Thomas' theory on the bodily organ of sense memory, even though it may at first sound a bit naive and scientifically far outmoded, nevertheless, in its basic notions is not contrary to the findings of modern investigations. This is not the place to compare St. Thomas with the modern theories on memory. However, it may be noted in passing that St. Thomas' idea of sense memory, and more in particular, the role and place of its bodily organ, is quite in accord with what the present day scientists and philosophers have to say about it. To quote Father Robert Brennan on the point: "From the findings of science, it is easy to see how memory depends on the brain. Even without the benefit of the vast programs of research that are being pursued today, St. Thomas was well aware of the basic relation of memory processes to the cortex. Thus, seven centuries ago he pointed out that lesions of cortical substance may have a decided effect on both imagination and memory and actually prevent the recall of previous knowledge." Robert Edward Brennan, O.P., \textit{General Psychology}, revised ed. (New York, 1952), p. 195.

\(^\text{29}\) \textit{In De Mem. et Rem.}, 3, n. 349.

\(^\text{30}\) \textit{S.T.}, I-II, 50, 3 ad 3.
habitus, as used here, means a quality of a power by which it is disposed to act in a certain way, and thus has a different meaning than the word habitualis when this latter is used to define the nature of retaining. Since at this point the discussion centers on the nature of retaining, it will be out of place to indulge in an explanation of sense memory as having a habit or a disposition to act. This will be discussed later (in the last chapter of the thesis). Here, the meaning of the term habitualis when referring to the act of preserving species, must be investigated.

In his In De Memoria et Reminiscentia St. Thomas says: "[M]emoria est habitus, idest habitualis quaedam conservatio phantasmatis." And again: "Memoriam autem [Philosophus] nominat habitum partis huius [sensitivae], quia memoria est in parte sensitiva: et in ea quae in memoria conservamus, quandoque non actu apprehendimus, sed quasi habitualiter tenemus."32

The last quotation gives a clue as to the meaning of the technical term habitualis. St. Thomas says here: "non actu apprehendimus, sed quasi habitualiter tenemus." This indicates that Aquinas is thinking of the function of conserving the species in terms of act and potency. He opposes the word habitualiter to the word actu. What does this mean? St. Thomas never explains this fully in connection with sense memory. But he does explain it

31 In De Mem. et Rem., 3, n. 349.
32 Ibid., 3, n. 329.
when he deals with the act of conserving in the intellectual memory. Even though St. Thomas' theory on intellectual memory is different from that on sense, nevertheless, there is some analogy between them; and, as regards the act of retaining, the doctrine on intellectual memory may throw considerable light on the act of retaining in sense memory.

St. Thomas explains the conservation of the intellectual species in the Summa in an article on intellectual memory. There he says: "[S]pecies intelligibilis aliquando est in intellectu in potentia tantum: et tunc dicitur intellectus esse in potentia. Aliquando autem secundum ultimam completionem actus: et tunc intelligit actu. Aliquando medio modo se habet inter potentiam et actum: et tunc dicitur esse intellectus in habitu. Et secundum hunc modum intellectus conservat species, etiam quando actu non intelligit." When intelligible species are only potentially present to the intellect, the intellect is said to be wholly in potency. At other times the species are completely actuating the intellect; then it is simply in act. But the intelligible species may be present in a condition midway between pure potency and complete act; then the possible intellect is said to be in habitu. It is in this habitual condition, between potency and act, that the intellect keeps acquired intelligible species when they are not being used in actual understanding.

33S.T., I, 79, 6 ad 3.
St. Thomas may have a similar explanation in mind for the retention of sensible species in sense memory. Sense memory, after it has received the impressions, is not in pure potency any more. It retains some determination of the original impression. But this determination is not present to consciousness at all times. It does not actuate the potency completely, and so the power cannot be said to be completely in act. Since it is not completely in act, and since it is not in pure potency either, it must be in the mid-state between act and potency. This state is called a habitus. Thus sense memory assumes the character of a habit, i.e., of a state midway between complete actuality and pure potency.

And the words, then, quoted above: "non actu apprehendimus, sed quasi habitualiter tenamus," can be taken to mean this mid-state between act and potency.

In other places St. Thomas uses similar expressions. Speaking of how the past is apprehended, he says: "Cum aliquis autem habet scientiam habitualsem et potentiam sensitivam sine actibus vel operationibus eorum, tunc dicitur memorari praeteritorum actuum."34 Discussing the difference between reception and retention on the sense level, St. Thomas says that in sense powers "aliud est recipere impressionem, quod facit sentire in actu, et aliud retinere, quando etiam res actu non sentiuntur."35

---

34 In De Mem. et Rem., 1, n. 307.
35 Ibid., 2, n. 316.
Now, a still further problem concerning the act of retaining must be solved. It is the problem of conserving the phantasm in the sense memory in the form of an image.

St. Thomas deals with this point in the second half of the third lecture in his commentary on the De Memoria et Reminiscentia. There he makes the famous distinction between the two aspects of the phantasm: the phantasm in itself and the phantasm as a representation of something previously seen or experienced. By means of this distinction Aquinas distinguishes between sense memory and imagination.

The basic reason for distinguishing these two powers is, of course, the difference of their formal objects. This has been discussed in the second chapter of this thesis. Now, the question comes up again. On account of the close similarity of function (for both sense memory and imagination are the powers which retain), there arises a problem of whether or not the act of retaining is the same for both imagination and sense memory. The question, then, is: Are there two different functions of conserving the sensible species, each corresponding to the two interior senses which retain, or only one? It must be noted that this question is not put in this way by St. Thomas himself. It has been formulated thus, having in mind the difficulties that some of the interpreters of St. Thomas have run into when dealing with the notion of retaining. The opinions of these men will be presented later. Now the arguments of St. Thomas as they appear in the third
lecture of the *In De Memoria et Reminiscentia* will be given.

The question that St. Thomas (commenting on Aristotle) is putting to himself here is how an absent thing can be remembered if what is known in sense memory is the present impression.\(^{36}\) Having presented some objections, he proceeds to answer the original question. He gives an example of a painting considered under two different aspects, namely, a painting taken as a painting, and the same painting taken as an image of what it represents. He says:

\[
\text{[P]otest assignari quomodo contingat et accidat hoc quod dic-tum est, scilicet quod aliquis sentiat passionem praesentem et memoretur rem absentem. Et inducit [Philosophus] exam-plum de animali quod pingitur in tabula, quod quidem et est animal pictum et est imago animalis veri. Et, cum idem sub-lecto sit cui convenient haec ambo, differunt tamen haec duo rations; et ideo alia est consideratio eius inquantum est animal pictum, et alia inquantum est imago animalis veri; ita etiam et phantasma quod est in nobis potest accipi vel prout est aliquod in se, vel prout est phantasma alterius.}\(^{37}\)
\]

A painting considered as a likeness differs from the same painting considered in itself, i.e., without the reference to the likeness of the thing which it represents. On the basis of this example St. Thomas goes on to distinguish between the mnemonic image and the image of the imagination. He says: "Et secundum se quidem est quoddam speculatum, circa quod speculatur intellectus vel phan-tasia quantum pertinet ad partem sensitivam. Secundum vero quod est phantasma alterius quod prius sensimus vel intelleximus, sic

\[^{36}\text{Ibid.}, 3, \text{n. 335.}\]

\[^{37}\text{Ibid.}, 3, \text{n. 340.}\]
consideratur ut imago in aliud ducens et principium memorandi." 38

The phantasm considered in itself pertains to the imagination, but the same phantasm considered as a representation pertains to sense memory. The mnemonic image points to a thing which we have seen or understood in the past. Thus, in knowing a phantasm as a representation of previous experience, even though it is present to us, we can know in it absent things.

But this does not seem to be the basic problem under consideration. St. Thomas concentrates here rather on the difference between imagination and sense memory. The three paragraphs which follow are devoted to this problem, parts of which can be reproduced here:

Et ideo, cum anima memoretur secundum modum phantasmatis, si anima convertatur ad ipsum secundum se, sic videtur animae adesse vel aliquid intelligibile quod intellectus in phantasmate inspicit vel simpliciter phantasma quod vis imaginativa apprehendit. Si vero anima convertat se ad phantasma inquantum est phantasma alterius, et consideret ipsum tamquam imaginem eius quod prius sensimus vel intelleximus, ut dictum est circa picturam... haec iam est alia passio huius considerationis, quia videlicet iam hoc ad memoriam pertinet.

Sic igitur manifestum est quod quando anima convertit se ad phantasma, prout est quaedam forma reservata in parte sensitiva, sic est actus imaginationis sive phantasiae, vel etiam intellectus considerantis circa hoc universale. Si autem anima convertatur ad ipsum inquantum est imago eius quod prius audivimus aut intelleximus, hoc pertinet ad actum memorandi. Et quia esse imaginem significat intentionemquamdam circa formam, ideo convenienter Avicenna dicit quod memoria respicit intentionem, imaginatio vero formam per

38 Ibid.
sensum apprehensam. 39

Sense memory is distinguished from imagination not only by reason of the different aspects of the phantasm under which these two powers consider the phantasm, but also by reason of the different acts by which they attain those aspects. When the soul turns to the phantasm as to a form preserved in the sensitive soul, then this act is that of the imagination. When the soul turns to the phantasm as to a representation of some previous experience, then it is the act of the sense memory.

It is not clear from these passages that the acts referred to are the acts of retaining. Rather, the words convertatur and convertat se indicate that St. Thomas is thinking here of the function of recognition or at least of recall. However, in the last paragraph of the third lecture it is stated that this distinction pertains also to the act of retaining. St. Thomas says: "Memoria est habitus, idest habitualis quaedam conservatio phantasmatis, non quidem secundum seipsum (hoc enim pertinet ad virtutem imaginativam), sed inquantum phantasma est imago alicuius prius sensati." 40 Memory preserves the phantasm in a manner which is called by St. Thomas habitual, i.e., midway between complete actuality and pure potency. But this preservation is not that of imagination. Imagination retains the phantasm inasmuch as it is a phantasm;

39 Ibid., 3, nn. 341-3.

40 Ibid., 3, n. 349.
memory, inasmuch as it is a representation of our own previous experience. So, the act of retaining of sense memory is different from that of the imagination. This difference is based ultimately on the difference of objects: sense memory retains the phantasm as an image, while the imagination retains it merely as a phantasm.

It seems that St. Thomas makes it quite clear here that both sense memory and imagination are powers which retain. Nevertheless, this point has been called into question by writers on Thomistic psychology. Hence, before concluding this chapter, it will be useful to reproduce the opinions of some of these men.

In his recent book, The Philosophy of Human Nature, Father G. P. Klubertanz, S.J., put forth his opinion that the retention of past estimations is sufficiently explained by the retention of an impressed species through the function of imagination. He argues from the fact that the memorative power does not have an immanent image. Father Klubertanz says:

In the concluding discussion of the imagination, we argued that the act of the imagination involves an immanent object, really distinct as term from the operation which produces it; this immanent object is called the image. Can a similar argument be used to show that the memorative power also has an immanent object (namely, the concrete relation of good and evil)? Now, the argument that the image is an immanent object has two parts: (a) an appeal to the direct immediate experience of the image; (b) an argument that in the cases of absent or nonexistent sensibles (for example, the hippogryph) there must be something which we imagine. In the case of the memorative power, it does not seem that an immanent object is experienced. The retention of past estimations is sufficiently explained by the retention of an impressed species. In those cases where we remember the estimations about absent objects, the object known is perhaps the image of the imagination. A difficulty against an immanent object in the memorative power is this, that it is
very hard to see how concrete relation (that is, good or evil) can be expressed without its terms—and the terms are evidently in the imagination. Because of the obscurity of this problem, we will leave it unsolved.41

Father Klubertanz thinks that since there is no immanent object in the memorative power, and since this object is retained in the imagination, the power to retain would seem to belong properly to the imagination. But, as Father Klubertanz says at the end of the passage, this is an obscure problem, and therefore he prefers to leave it unsolved.

Father Robert E. Brennan, O.P., in his article "The Thomistic Concept of Imagination," propounds an interpretation of St. Thomas which is quite in opposition to that of Father Klubertanz. Father Brennan seems to think that there are images both for imagination and for memory: "[S]ince the knowledge of estimative power is the primary principle of memory, then the images of memory re-present the insensate intentions of sensible objects. The phantasms of imagination, on the other hand, are always sensate in nature."42

Even though the memorial power can extend to the temporal identification of the phantasms of imagination, Father Brennan thinks that, if memory did not perform its own specific function of recording the biological situations in which the animal finds itself, then it could not be distinguished as a separate power.

---

Imagination, working in conjunction with the estimative sense, would be sufficient to meet the demands of animal life.\textsuperscript{43}

So, in Father Brennan's opinion, there \textit{is} a recording of the biological situations (in other words, of the insensate intentions) as there is also a separate power which performs this recording through its own specific function.

One more opinion can be presented.

Mr. Rudolf Allers in his essay on "Intellectual Cognition," published in \textit{Essays in Thomism}, has some remarks on the problem. Discussing the capacity of the internal senses to retain and recall, he compares the modern usage of the words "memory" and "imagination" with the terminology of St. Thomas, and says:

Reproducing some kind of image, however, is the adequate performance of the internal senses and especially of the sense called 'imagination.' To be reproduced after an interval of time, the image has to be conserved from the moment of perceptive awareness until the moment when it is called back. The capacity of retention and eventual recall is called 'memory' in modern psychology. St. Thomas, however, credits what he calls imagination with both retention and reproduction. Memory, to him, is also one of the internal senses; but its function is limited to adding the formality of pastness to the image, that is, to endowing the image with a peculiar character by which it is recognized as reproduction. This different use of the two terms 'imagination' and 'memory' has caused some misunderstanding between modern empirical and Thomist psychologists, and should be carefully noted.\textsuperscript{44}

\textsuperscript{43}\textit{Ibid.}

The point to be noted here is that the function of sense memory (in the Thomist sense) is limited to adding the formality of pastness to the image. The retention and even the recall is the function of the imagination.

In the light of these conflicting interpretations of St. Thomas, one thing becomes clear: the distinction between the functions of sense memory and imagination is a knotty question which hardly admits an absolutely clear-cut solution. And a remark as that made by John of St. Thomas, namely "quod memoria sit conservativa, nullus dubitat, alias non esset memoria, si non conservaret species," sounds a bit unreal. A more realistic approach perhaps, but a rather pessimistic one, is that taken by Father Klubertanz, who feels that the solution is well nigh impossible.

Faced with such admissions, it would be presumptuous to pretend to give a definite solution to the problem. However, one can always try to pick the one which is more probable.

From what St. Thomas says in the third lecture of his commentary on the De Memoria et Reminiscentia, it would seem that he assigns to each power, i.e., sense memory and imagination, a different act of retention. This is explicitly stated in the last paragraph where he says: "[M]emoria est habitus, id est habitualis quaedam conservatio phantasmatis, non quidem secundum seipsum (hoc

45Joannes a S. Thoma, Cursus Philosophicus Thomisticus, P. IV, q. 8, a. 2; p. 255.
enim pertinet ad virtutem imaginativam), sed inquantum phantasma est imago alicuius prius sensati."\(^{46}\) The imagination retains the phantasm inasmuch as it is a phantasm, i.e., the sensible forms. Sense memory retains the phantasm inasmuch as it is a representation of something previously experienced. It seems that according to St. Thomas there is only one immanent image or phantasm conserved in internal sensation.\(^{47}\) Since imagination and sense memory are concerned with one and the same phantasm, it can be said that the retention of the totality of the phantasm, i.e., with all its aspects, is accomplished through the function of both sense memory and imagination. However, there are various aspects under which the phantasm is conserved. These are the sensible forms and

\(^{46}\) In De Mem. et Rem., 3, n. 349.

Concerning the unicity of the phantasm Father G. Klubertanz, S.J., has the following footnote in his work, The Philosophy of Human Nature: "Many Thomists, following John of St. Thomas, Cursus Philosophicus Thomisticus, Part IV, q. 8, a. 4, maintain that imagination, estimative power and memorative power each produce an immanent object. . . . As far as St. Thomas is concerned, it would seem that he thinks there is only one image or phantasm with which all three of the powers are concerned, each in its own way; cf. St. Thomas, Comm. in libros Ethicorum, Bk. 6, lect. 7 (ed. Pirotta, nos. 1214-15), Lect. 9 (nos. 1247-9); Bk. 2, lect. 11 (no. 381)." The Philosophy of Human Nature, pp. 139-40.

The unicity of the phantasm is hinted at in the commentary on the De Memoria et Reminiscentia, where St. Thomas says: "Et inducit exemplum de animali quod pingitur in tabula, quod quidem est animal pictum et est imago animalis veri. Et, cum idem subjecto sit cui conveniunt haec ambo, differunt tamen haec duo ratione; et ideo alia est consideratio eius inquantum est animal pictum, et alia inquantum est imago animalis veri; ita etiam et phantasma quod est in nobis potest accipi vel prout est aliquod in se, vel prout est phantasma alterius." In De Mem. et Rem., 3, n. 340.
the insensate intentions. On account of the difference of these two formalities, St. Thomas postulates different powers to apprehend and conserve them. For the conservation of sensible forms St. Thomas postulates imagination: "Ad harum [sensibilium] autem formarum retentionem aut conservationem ordinatur phantasia sive imaginatio, quae idem sunt: est enim phantasia sive imaginatio quasi thesaurus quidam formarum per sensum acceptarum."\(^{48}\) For the conservation of insensate intentions St. Thomas posits the memorative power: "Ad conservandum autem eas [intentiones quae per sensum non accipiuntur] vis memorativa, quae est thesaurus quidam huiusmodi intentionum."\(^{49}\) Thus it may be concluded that according to St. Thomas there are two different acts of retention: the retention of sensible forms through the function of imagination and the retention of insensate intentions through the function of the memorative power.

As has been seen in this chapter, the proper functions of sense memory are retention, recall, and recognition. So far the function of retaining has been examined. According to St. Thomas, sense memory is a power which retains insensate intentions. Since this power functions in association with a bodily organ, its acts are affected by material conditions and even possess certain material characteristics, as the dependence of the quality of re-

\(^{48}\)S.T., I, 78, 4 c.

\(^{49}\)Ibid.
tention upon the quality of the substance of the brain. The function of retention is explained further by St. Thomas in terms of act and potency as being a habitus, a mid-state between complete act and pure potency. Finally, it appears that according to St. Thomas the retention in sense memory is distinct from the retention in the imagination. Some further clarification of retention can be expected from St. Thomas' explanation of the two remaining functions of sense memory.

Now the nature of recall must be considered.
CHAPTER V

THE FUNCTIONS OF SENSE MEMORY: RECALL

The thesauric function of sense memory would be useless if it were not ordered to a higher act—the recall of the preserved species to the field of consciousness. And so St. Thomas says: "[R]e­quiritur quod ea quae prius fuerunt apprehensa per sensus et interius conservata, iterum ad actualem considerationem revocen­tur." ¹

Following Aristotle, St. Thomas distinguishes two kinds of restoration processes: the first is simple recall, wherein things are brought back to consciousness spontaneously without the aid of any device. This is common to both man and animal. The second is a rationally controlled process called reminiscence or recollection, wherein past events are recalled with the help and guidance of reason. Recollection is a strictly human achievement. On this point St. Thomas says in the Summa: "Ex parte autem memorativae, non solum habet [homo] memoriam, sicut cetera animalia, in subita recordatione praeteritorum; sed etiam reminiscentiam, quasi syl­logistice inquiringo praeteritorum memoriam, secundum individuales

¹Q. D. de An., 13 c.
intentiones." Man has both memory, which is an immediate recollection of the past, and reminiscence, which is that recollection by which man seeks syllogistically for the recall of the past by the application of individual intentions. The word subito perhaps means "immediately" rather than "suddenly," for the act of simple recall presents the lost object to memory without the help of the medium, i.e., the syllogistic guidance of reason, while reminiscence searches for the forgotten objects through the intervention and under the direction of reason.

Perhaps the majority of memory responses, even in man, involve nothing more than the rather automatic recall.

It must be admitted that St. Thomas does not say very much about this recall. While he devoted to reminiscence five lectures in his commentary on Aristotle's De Memoria et Reminiscentia, he has only a few scanty remarks on simple recall. Besides the one just quoted from the Summa he has a few more elsewhere. Thus, for instance, in his De Anima St. Thomas says: "[R]ememorativa virtus in aliis quidem animalibus absque inquisitione suam operationem habet, in hominibus autem cum inquisitione et studio; unde in hominibus non solum est memoria, sed reminiscencia." Speaking in the eighth lecture of the In De Memoria et Reminiscentia of the deliberate search for past experiences in man, he says that there is

2S.T., I, 78, 4 c.
3Q.D. de An., 13 c.
a parallel operation in animals which functions as a certain natural instinct: "[D]eliberatio autem solis hominibus competit; cetera vero animalia non ex deliberatione, sed ex quodam naturali instinctu operantur." ¹⁴

Beyond such oversimplified descriptions of the spontaneous recall, St. Thomas does not oblige us with any lengthy treatment of the nature of this function. However, he has something to say about it in his treatment on reminiscence. The ideas on simple recall can, perhaps, be best pointed out in the presentation of the doctrine on reminiscence. Hence, the matter found in the five last lectures of the In De Memoria et Reminiscendia can be immediately taken up for discussion. The ideas on simple recall will be pointed out as they come up there.

As has been noted already, reminiscence consists in the rationally directed recall of past memories. Only man is able to "reminisce" or recollect in this sense. This is a capacity which, in a way, transcends the purely sensory functions of human organism, involving, as it does, the intellectual faculties of man.

What is reminiscence?

In answering this question, Aristotle, and St. Thomas after him, show first what reminiscence is not. They distinguish it from other types of knowledge which have a certain similarity to it. These are the acquisition of new knowledge and the repeated

¹⁴In De Mem. et Rem., 8, n. 399.
recovery of the same memories. Reminiscence is neither of these:

"[R]eminscentia neque est resumptio memoriae, ita quod nihil aliud sit reminisci quam iterato memorari; neque iterum reminiscencia est prima acceptio aliquius cognoscibilis, puta quae fit per sensum vel per intellectum."5 That the acquisition of new knowledge is not reminiscence is clear enough; for, as has been pointed out in the beginning of Chapter IV, the reception of original impressions does not pertain to the realm of memory. Memory presupposes a lapse of time, and therefore, the moment of the original experience and the moment of the memory of this experience are never identical.6 If reminiscence is a type of recall of past experiences, it is not the same as the acquisition of new knowledge. Neither is it a repeated recovery of memories. To recollect is not, as the Latin text says, iterato memorari. In order to recover memories, one does not necessarily need the direction of reason. This can be done, and often is done, by means of simple recall. Reminiscence is something else.

In a paragraph of the fourth lecture St. Thomas explains the positive side of reminiscence in the following way:

[R]eminscentia est resumptio primeae acceptionis. . . . Sic ut enim memorari refertur ad prius factam notitiam, ita et reminisci. Et tunc est reminisci, scilicet cum aliquo modo resumimus priorem apprehensionem, non autem ita quod reminiscencia sit aliquid eorum quae dicta sunt, vel sensus, vel

5Ibid., 4, n. 351.
6Ibid., 4, nn. 353-4.
memoria, vel phantasia, vel scientia; sed per reminiscentiam accidit memorari, quia reminiscentia est quidam motus ad memorandum. Et sic memoria sequitur reminiscentiam, sicut terminus motum.

Vel secundum aliam litteram, reminiscentia sequitur memoria, quia sicut inquisitio rationis est via ad aliquid cognoscendum, et tamen ex aliquo procedit, ita reminiscentia est via ad aliquid memorandum, et tamen ex aliquo memorato procedit, ut infra patebit.7

Reminiscence, then, is the recovery of original knowledge (not the acquisition of it) which was there but had disappeared because it was forgotten. It is the way to lost memories, the effort to recapture them. But although reminiscence leads to remembering, it is not the same as remembering. This latter does not necessarily imply the former, but the former (reminiscence) always implies the latter (remembering); for memory follows upon the successful act of recollecting. St. Thomas says that reminiscence is the recovery of the original knowledge. In this it does not differ from memory, for the object of memory is also the recovery of the original knowledge: "Sicut enim memorari refertur ad prius factam notitiam, ita et reminisci."8 The objects of reminiscence and of memory, then, are the same.

But the assertion that reminiscence is the recovery of the original knowledge requires qualification. Not every such recovery is reminiscence. For instance, a person may learn or discover the same thing twice. Reminiscence is not this. It is true that both

7Ibid., 4, nn. 356-7.
8Ibid.
he who recollects and he who relearns recover the knowledge they have lost. But recollecting differs from relearning because, as St. Thomas says: 
"[I]lle qui reminiscitur recuperat eam [notitiam quam amisit] sub ratione memoriae, in ordine scilicet ad id quod prius fuit cognitum; ille autem, qui iterato addiscit, recuperat eam absolute, non quasi alicuius prius cogniti."9 Recollecting is not a mere relearning, because recollecting is the way to knowledge which belongs to the realm of memory, that is to say, it takes its origin from the species preserved in memory, while relearning may have nothing to do with memory, as it can take a completely fresh start.10 Recollecting and relearning are different kinds of knowledge because they proceed from different principles.11

The fact that the principle of reminiscence is an object preserved in memory, gives another insight into the nature of reminiscence. It has been said previously that the term of reminiscence is the same as that of memory. Now it is pointed out in St. Thomas' commentary that the principle of reminiscence is also memory. It is the species preserved in memory that sets the acts of reminiscence in motion. The process of recapturing the lost memories starts from other memories which are not lost.

9Ibid., 6, n. 372.
10Ibid., 6, n. 373.
11Ibid., 6, n. 372.
Hence, reminiscence, in so far as it has to do with knowledge, belongs to that category of cognition which is proper to memory. It begins with memory and it ends with memory. It is a part of the memorative process.

The idea of the principle of reminiscence brings up the question of the cause of reminiscence. It has been said that reminiscence finds the stimulus to motion from the species preserved in the store-house of memory. How does this species set reminiscence in motion?

St. Thomas insists that only he recollects properly who is able to move from the starting point to the finish by his own efforts. If he cannot do this of himself (as when he has totally forgotten) but is in need of external assistance, he is not said to be recollecting, but relearning or merely learning for the first time.12 External assistance is discarded as the motive power of the acts of reminiscence. The beginning of movement has to come from within.

What is there within man that brings about the functioning of reminiscence?

According to St. Thomas, the cause of reminiscence is the order or connection of movements which has been established in the soul when the first impressions were received. St. Thomas says: "Causa autem reminiscendi est ordo motuum, qui relinquuntur in

12 Ibid., 6, n. 375.
anima ex prima impressione eius, quod primo apprehendimus."\textsuperscript{13}

Then St. Thomas describes the nature of this order. He says that it is a native inclination of the soul to reproduce the representations in the order and relationship of their original occurrence: 

"[R]eminiscentiae contingunt per hoc quod unus motus natus est post alium nobis occurrere."\textsuperscript{14} And this happens in two ways:

Uno modo, quando secundus motus consequitur post primum motum ex necessitate, sicut ad apprehensionem hominis sequitur apprehensio animalis ex necessitate: et sic manifestum est, quod quando anima movetur primo motu, movebitur etiam secundo. Alio vero modo contingit, quia secundus motus sequitur post primum non ex necessitate, sed ex consuetudine, quia scilicet aliquis consuevit post hoc cogitare vel dicere vel facere, et tunc secundus motus sequitur post primum non semper, sed ut ad multum, idest ut in pluribus, sicut etiam effectus naturales ut in pluribus ex suis causis sequuntur, non semper.\textsuperscript{15}

The order of movements can be necessary, or it can be customary. In the type which is necessary, two or more movements are so connected with each other that, if one is recalled, the other will be invariably recalled also. When one remembers "man," he also remembers "animal." In the customary type, the connection is established by an impress of custom, as when, for instance, a certain experience has become a custom by repetition.

Reminiscence is not a random or accidental affair. It advances according to the established pattern which exists between

\textsuperscript{13}Ibid., 5, n. 359.
\textsuperscript{14}Ibid., 5, n. 360.
\textsuperscript{15}Ibid.
the images. What is this pattern? According to St. Thomas it can be either the succession of time or the succession of the objects known. When recollecting proceeds along a time series of events, it may do so, for example, by beginning with those events which are most recent and gradually retrogressing to experiences that are more remote. When recollecting proceeds along the line of the objects known, it can do so according to the three laws of association: first, the law of similarity, which says that like suggest like. Thus, when we think of Socrates, for example, it is easy to think of Plato, since both were outstanding Greek philosophers. Next, the law of contrast, which states that like has a tendency to suggest unlike. As for instance, the mention of Hector's name may bring back the memory of Achilles, since one was the enemy of the other. Thirdly, the law of proximity, which says that remembering one thing brings back to memory all those things which are near to it or connected with it. The memory of a father can cause the memory of the son. The connection in this case can be that of association, of space, or of time.

This, in general, is the pattern according to which reminiscence brings back into consciousness the lost parts of our memory. The laws of association are certain links which connect various

16 Ibid., 5, n. 363.
17 Ibid.
18 Ibid., 5, n. 364.
experiences into one whole. When a part of a previous experience is remembered, it tends to recall the remaining parts. This has some practical implications for those who want to improve their memories. The topic of how to train one's memory, however, will be taken up in the last chapter of the thesis.

Concerning the cause of reminiscence, it may be further asked whether the order of movements which has been established in the soul with the first impression operates of itself, or is there something else which sets it in motion? St. Thomas considers this question in the fifth lecture of the *In De Memoria et Reminiscentia*. He says that this order may operate of itself, even casually, but that this is not properly reminiscence. Reminiscence proper is that which receives the impulse to act from the intellectual powers. On this St. Thomas says:

Est autem considerandum ulterius, quod quandoque pervenit ad motum posterioriorem ex aliquo priori secundum praedictum modum ab his qui quaerunt invenire motum consequentem perditum, et hoc proprie est reminisci; quando scilicet aliquis ex intentione inquirit aliquius rei memoriam. Contingit autem quandoque quod etiam illi qui non quaerunt memorari, propterea quod sic procedentes ex priori motu in posterioriorem, ut dictum est, deveniunt in memoriam alius rei, cum ille motus rei oblitae fiat in anima post alium, et hoc quidem erat praeter intentionem 'sed ut secundum multa,' idest in pluribus, factis alius motibus quales diximus, sic ille similius vel contrariis vel propinquis, inurgebat ille motus qui occurrit; sed hoc abusive dicitur reminisci. Est autem casualiter memorari secundum similitudinem quamquam reminiscetiae.19

19Ibid., 5, n. 366; the sentence "Contingit autem..." seems to be defective. A verb is missing either for illi or for propterea quod.
Reminiscence proper supposes some sort of intellectual activity. If the recall occurs unintentionally, it is "abusively" called reminiscence.

The distinction between proper and improper reminiscence is, perhaps, the distinction between the simple recall and the recall which bears the name of reminiscence. Although St. Thomas does not say so explicitly, yet, when he refers to that type of reminiscence which is casual or nonintentional, he seems to be talking about the same recall of which he makes mention in the Summa as the subita recordatio praeteritorum, and in The Disputed Question De Anima as the recall which is accomplished absque intentione. As is clear from the quotation, the "abusive" or improper reminiscence (or the simple recall), just as the reminiscence proper, is the return of objects to awareness by reason of the relation between the images. But in the simple recall this comes about automatically, without a conscious effort, while in reminiscence it is achieved consciously, with the help of reason and will. Thus the main difference between the simple recall and reminiscence seems to be the absence or the presence of intellectual guidance in the search for forgotten objects. The first is common to both men and animals, the second is proper only to men.

The faculty exercising the function of reminiscence comes to

20S.T., I, 78, 4 c.

21Q.D. de An., 13 c.
the very threshold of intellectual activity. It searches for the lost objects of memory by means of syllogistic reasoning. Nevertheless, reminiscence as such does not enter the sphere of intellectual operation strictly speaking. Its activity is confined to particular representations, and the universality required for intellectual knowledge is completely lacking. In the Summa St. Thomas says that reminiscence is a search for forgotten events according to individual intentions.

Besides, in the eighth lecture of the In De Memoria et Reminiscentia St. Thomas shows that reminiscence is not an intellectual activity by proving that it operates in a bodily organ. That reminiscence is a searching for an image in a corporeal substance is demonstrated by the fact that when a person is unable to remember, he experiences the feeling of unrest. This restlessness may persist against his will, as it frequently happens in persons of melancholic temperament. This is a sign that reminiscence operates in a bodily organ, for only the passions of the body cannot be stopped at will. St. Thomas concludes that reminiscence is an activity of sense: "Sic ergo patet quod reminiscentia est corporalis passio, nec est actus partis intellectivae sed sensitivae, quae etiam in homine est nobilior et virtuosior quam in

\[22\text{In De Mem. et Rem., 8, n. 399.}\]
\[23\text{S.T., I, 78, 4 c.}\]
aliis animalibus propter coniunctionem ad intellectum." Reminiscence is properly a sense power. In man it is elevated by reason of its association with intellect. But this association is external, for it consists only in guiding or helping. Reminiscence proper belongs to sense, since, as has been said, it involves movement from one particular image to another.

So far several notes of the nature of reminiscence have appeared. Reminiscence is the process or the way to actual remembering; its principle is the various species preserved in memory and the order among these species; its object is the same as that of remembering; and finally reminiscence, even though it functions in connection with reason, nevertheless it properly belongs to sense.

Two more questions remain to be considered in this chapter: the distinction of the act of recall in sense memory and imagination, and the question whether or not reminiscence is a faculty distinct from the faculty of sense memory.

With regard to the problem of the distinction of the act of recall in sense memory and imagination, first it may be inquired whether recall properly belongs to the powers which retain or to those which apprehend.

A brief discussion of this question is found in John of St. Thomas. Commenting on the passage in the Disputed Question De

24 In De Mem. et Rem., 8, n. 408.
Anima cited in the beginning of this chapter and more particularly on the words: "[Q]equiritur quod ea quae prius fuerunt apprehensa per sensus et interius conservata, iterum ad actualem considerationem revocentur," John of St. Thomas says that "maxime pertinet ad memoriam ipsa excitatio, qua aliquid revocatur seu incipit habere actualem considerationem." Why does excitation belong to memory? Can, perhaps, the recall be caused by some other power, which is distinct from memory, for instance, the apprehensive powers? John of St. Thomas answers that the excitation must be performed by the retaining faculty, because the species which cause the recall are in the power which retains them, and not in the power which apprehends them. To quote John of St. Thomas:

\[\text{Nec potest dici, quod excitatio fit non in ipsa potentia conservante speciem, sed in potentia apprehendente, quae est distincta ab ea, quae conservat speciem. Nam contra est, quia ipsa excitatio non fit nisi utendo specie. Ergo si in potentia apprehendente non datur species, sed in conservante, non poterit ipsa apprehendens excitari, nisi prius per aliquem motum talis determinata species transferatur a potentia conservante ad apprehendentem. Quomodo autem potest transmitti illa species a potentia conservante, si non cognoscit aut discernit quaeam species transmittenda sit ad talem excitationem?}\]

Since the species must be used to bring about the excitation, recall must take place in the power which has the species in its

\[25\text{Q.D. de An., } 13\text{ c.}\]
\[26\text{Cursus Philosophicus Thomisticus, P. IV, q. 8, a. 2; p. 256.}\]
\[27\text{Ibid.}\]
possession. The apprehensive powers do not store species; therefore recall is not their proper function. Recall properly belongs to the powers which retain and these in the sense psychology of St. Thomas are memory and imagination.

Now, the question arises: is the recall of sense memory distinct from the recall of imagination?

It seems that according to St. Thomas they are distinct. Speaking in the third lecture of the In De Memoria et Reminiscencia of the different formalities under which imagination and sense memory attain their objects, St. Thomas uses the word convertit se [anima] which suggests the idea of recall. And there are two such recalls or "turnings" of the soul: "[Q]uando anima convertit se ad phantasma, prout est quaedam forma reservata in parte sensitiva, sic est actus imaginationis sive phantasiae... Si autem anima convertatur ad ipsum inquantum est imago eius quod prius audivimus aut intelleximus, hoc pertinet ad actum memorandi."28 When the soul turns to the phantasm under the aspect of its being a representation of sensible forms, then this turning is an act of imagination. But when it turns into the phantasm under the aspect of its being a representation of our previous experience, then it is an act of sense memory. The difference of acts is ultimately explained by the difference of formal objects, which for imagination is a sensible form as absent, and for sense memory an insensate

28 In De Mem. et Rem., 3, n. 343.
Does St. Thomas ever speak of reminiscence as a separate power distinct from sense memory?

In the *Summa*, I, 78, 4 ob. 5, he considers the possibility of positing reminiscence as a separate power. He says:

**Praeterea, actus cogitativae, qui est conferre et componere et dividere, et actus reminiscitivae, qui est quodam syllogismo uti ad inquirendum, non minus distant ab actu aestimativae et memorativae, quam actus aestimativae ab actu phantasiae. Debet ergo vel cogitativa et reminiscencia poni aliae vires praeter aestimativam et memorativam; vel aestimativa et memorativa non debent poni aliae vires praeter phantasiam.**

Reminiscence, because of the guidance received from the intellect, is so different from other internal senses, that it seems to be reasonable to have it as a separate power distinct from other internal senses. St. Thomas answers the objection in the following way: "Ad quintum dicendum quod illam eminentiam habet cogitativa et memorativa in homine, non per id quod est proprium sensitivae partis; sed per aliquam affinitatem et propinquitatem ad rationem universalem, secundum quandam refluuentiam. Et ideo non sunt aliae vires, sed eadem, perfectiores quam sint in aliis animalibus." 29

The cogitative sense and reminiscence are the powers in man with a certain excellence which the brutes lack. But as far as they are powers of sense, they do not differ from the estimative and the memorative faculties in man. Hence, they are not new powers added to the soul of man, but are elevated on account of the more

---

29 *S.T.*, I, 78, ad 5.
perfect informing principle which is the rational soul, which, through its rational power, can use them in a rational way.

John of St. Thomas has this to say on the point:

Sequitur tertio cogitativam et reminiscientiam in homine non distinguui ab aestimativa et memoria, sed esse ipsamet potentias cum quadam perfectione participata ex coniunctione ad rationem, secundum quam discurrere possunt circa sua obiecta singularia, quod quidem pertinet ad diversum modum operandi, non ad diversam potentiam, quae solum ex diversa immaterialitate objecit diversificatur per se. Unde eadem potentia intellectus procedit et sine discursu in actibus primorum principiorum, et cum discursu in aliiis sine variatione potentiae, et appetitus sensitivus in nobis participat aliquid libertatis, ut docet D. Thomas in l. 2. q. 74. art. 3, et tamen non est alia potentia specie diversa ab appetitu sensitivo non habente talem libertatem.30

The parallel powers—the cogitative and the estimative sense, and reminiscence and memory—are not distinct potencies, for potencies are diversified according to the differences in their formal objects. Mere difference of operations does not diversify the powers. Thus, for example, we have various types of intellectual operation, and yet only one intellect.

Both sense memory and reminiscence have the same formal objects. In this they are not distinct. What is different in them is their manner of operating. Pure sense memory attains its object without the aid of reason, while reminiscence attains it with the guidance of syllogistic inference. But this guidance is not essential to memory as such. It is accidental. And therefore the difference between them is in the accidental order. As sense

30Cursus Philosophicus Thomisticus, P. IV, q. 8, a. 2; p. 257.
powers reminiscence and sense memory do not differ, and hence St. Thomas concludes: "Et ideo non sunt aliae vires, sed eadem, perfectiores quam sint in aliiis animalibus."31

However, the name "reminiscence" is sometimes used to denote the power of sense memory in man, just as the cogitative is used to denote the estimative in man.

Cajetan, commenting on St. Thomas explains this thus: "Convenientia est in actione sensuum respectu sensibilium: et eius ratio est similiter immutari ab eis. —Differentia est in actione respectu intentionum: et quoad apprehensivam, quia cetera instin­tu, homo collatione apprehendit; et quoad retentivam, quia cetera subita recordatione, homo inquisitivo discursu. Unde et nominibus etiam differunt, dum illorum aestimativa in nobis est cogitativa, et memorativa est reminiscencia."32 The cogitative and the memorative powers in man are different from the corresponding powers in animals by reason of their association with the intellect. Hence, we are justified in calling them by different names. Thus, the memorative power in man may be called reminiscence, just as the estimative in man is called the cogitative. In this sense reminiscence is a faculty, not a mere function of a faculty. But this, of course, does not mean that reminiscence is a new memora-

31S.T., I, 78, 4, ad 5.

tive potency which is distinct from the sense memory in man. It is just a different name for the same thing. There is only one memorative power in man which is the sense memory and which sometimes is called reminiscence.

More properly, however, reminiscence means the act of recall, rather than the potency. It is one of the functions of the memorative power proper to man. This can be seen from the definitions St. Thomas gives of reminiscence, as, for instance, in the commentary on the De Memoria et Reminiscentia: "[R]eminiscentia nil est aliud quam inquisitio aliquius quod a memoria excidit"; and again: "[R]eminiscentia est resumptio primae acceptionis." Reminiscence is the act by which we recall forgotten things.

The function of recall—either the discursive recall, which is reminiscence, or the nondiscursive, which is the simple recall—is necessary to memory, because without it the mere retention of species would be useless. However, recall is not the act of memory. It is only the way to a still higher act, which is the actual remembering or recognition: "[R]eminiscentia est via ad aliquid memorandum." The act of recall is the function of sense memory which, having proceeded from the species retained in memory, culminates in the act of recognition. The final step

33 In De Mem. et Rem., 5, n. 362.
34 Ibid., 4, n. 356.
35 Ibid., 4, n. 357.
in the memorative process is recognition. This completes the movement of memory, for here the sentient being recognizes the past as past. The next chapter will be devoted to the presentation of what St. Thomas understands by recognition.
THE FUNCTIONS OF SENSE MEMORY: RECOGNITION

The ability to recognize is the most distinctive feature of sense memory. From experience we know that animals can recognize objects and events which have occurred in their past; for instance, dogs recognize their masters. Such recognition involves first of all the retention of the images of the past experience; secondly, the actual recall of these images; and thirdly, a concrete knowledge of the image as of a past experience. The bare retention and recall does not formally constitute an act of memory although they are necessary steps in the process. It is rather the awareness that the recalled experience is a part of one's own past which differentiates memory from the other internal senses and gives it its excellence and worth. "[M]emoria distinguitur per hoc quod est praeteritorum inquantum praeterita sunt," says St. Thomas in the commentary on Aristotle's De Sensu et Sensato.¹

Through the function of recognition sense memory has the power to know that a certain object or event has been met in the past. In the Summa St. Thomas says: "[M]emoria est vis apprehen-

¹In De Sensu et Sensato, 1, n. 9.
siva praeteriti";² and again: "Memoria igitur est cognoscitiva alicuius sub determinato tempore."³ In the De Veritate: "[M]emoria secundum communem usum loquentium accipitur pro notitia praeteritorum."⁴ The ability of sense memory to put the image in its proper historical setting is the object of inquiry of the present chapter.

One of St. Thomas' key statements on how recognition takes place is found at the end of the seventh lecture of the In De Memoria et Reminiscentia. There St. Thomas says: "[Q]uando in anima simul occurrit motus rei memorandae et temporis praeteriti, tunct est memoriae actus."⁵ One actually remembers only when two conditions are fulfilled simultaneously: first, the movement of the object of memory into consciousness, which is the identification of the object as our own experience; and second, the corresponding movement of the time in which the object has been apprehended, which is the "dating" or the placing of the object in past time. If one of these conditions is not verified, the act of remembering does not take place. On this St. Thomas says:

Si vero aliquis putet ita se habere, et non ita fiat in memoria, quia vel deest motus rei, vel motus temporis, non est memoratum. Nihil enim prohibit quod in memore insit menda-

²S.T., III, 85, 4 ad 3.
³Ibid., I, 79, 6, ob. 2.
⁴De Ver., 10, 2 a (init.).
⁵In De Mem. et Rem., 7, n. 396.
One may be mistaken and think that he remembers when he really does not. This happens on account of the fact that either one or the other of two conditions is not fulfilled. If one knows the object without knowing the time, or if he knows the time without knowing the object, in either case he does not place an act of real remembering. In order to have recognition he must combine the two elements into one act.

Identification of the object of memory as our own experience and placing of this object in its proper past time are two ideas which seem to be basic in St. Thomas' doctrine on recognition. Both of them, however, need further explanation and textual development. The present chapter, then, will be divided into two parts, corresponding to the two ideas to be explained: first, the identification of the object, then the placing of it in the past time.

The identification of the object as our own experience takes place, according to St. Thomas, in the act in which the soul turns to the phantasm under the aspect of an image. This image is not the pure image of the imagination, but the recognized image of

---

6Ibid.
memory. And so St. Thomas says in the paragraph quoted above: "[H]oc est memorari, phantasmati intendere alicuius rei prout est imago prius apprehensi."7 The same idea is repeated in other similar expressions. To quote a few of them: "Si autem anima convertatur ad ipsum, inquantum est imago eius quod prius audivimus aut intelleximus, hoc pertinet ad actum memorandi;"8 "Secundum vero quod est phantasma alterius quod prius sensimus vel intelleximus, sic consideratur ut imago in aliud ducens et principium memorandi."9

As the distinction between the phantasm as an image and the phantasm as a sensible form has been explained before, there is no need to go into it here. At this place, however, another point should be brought out. Attention must be called to the fact that, whenever St. Thomas speaks of the phantasm as an image of our experience, he always adds some phrase which indicates the part played by the knowing subject in the identification of the phantasm as an image of our own experience. The words to note are "imago prius apprehensi," "quod prius audivimus aut intelleximus." In the first lecture of the In De Memoria et Reminiscetia St. Thomas brings out the involvement of self even more clearly. He says: "Semper enim cum anima memoratur, pronunciat se vel prius

7Ibid.
8Ibid., 3, n. 343.
9Ibid., 3, n. 340.
The two ideas, namely, the image of our experience, and the knowledge that this image is, or that it has been, our experience, are always connected together. In this St. Thomas shows that the knowledge of self is essential in the identification of an object as our own experience.

In order to identify an object or an event as a part of the subject's own past, he must have some advertence to himself. He must know that he is the subject who has experienced that object or event previously and who now recalls it to consciousness. There can be no recognition of the past without a concrete knowledge that the subject himself formerly existed, that he was then the same individual as he is now.

It is evident that the fullness of the knowledge of the ego is possible only to the intellect, which has the power of proper reflection. The animal, however, has some knowledge of its own ego, too, but only improperly. In the doctrine of St. Thomas this function is performed by the common sense. St. Thomas admits that the sentient beings have an improper reflection, which, as contrasted with the intellect's complete return to itself, has only incomplete return; i.e., it knows the sensible objects, and knows that it knows but does not know its own essence.11

---

10 Ibid., 1, n. 307; italics added.
11 De Ver., 1, 9 c.
the subjective unifying function of the common sense even the animal has some knowledge of its own ego.

Father Edmund Ryan in his dissertation entitled *The Role of the 'Sensus Communis' in the Psychology of St. Thomas Aquinas* explains briefly St. Thomas' theory on the unifying power of the common sense. Parts of this explanation can be recounted here. In the chapter called "A Synthesis of St. Thomas' Position on the 'Sensus Communis'," he says:

From the proper object of the sensus communis, there flows a twofold unification exemplified in the proper operations of the common sense: a) the awareness of the actions of the external senses and through this b) the perception of the acts of the proper sensibles of the five external senses.

In the theory of St. Thomas, the common sense possesses a knowledge of the sensations of the external senses; it effects a discrimination of these sensations; it achieves a synthesis of the sensations...

The first unification brought about by the common sense is subjective—the concrete and implicit perception of the subject himself which occurs concomitantly with the perception of the object. The first purpose of the common sense is to give to the individual consciousness of the acts of his external senses. For this reason the sensus communis is called sensitive consciousness or the intimate sense. Through the sensus communis I am aware that I am seeing and that I am hearing and that this is one and the same sensing subject. Since the act of one external sense is different from the acts of the other external senses, to be attributed to the same 'I' they must be united. It is the common sense which recognizes these acts of the external senses as my operations; it recognizes these as acts of the same subject. Thus the common sense is aware of the operations of the external senses and discriminates among them, attributing certain modifications to certain peripheral organs... It should be clearly understood, however, that the common sense does not reach the permanent subject abstractly or explicitly; that is, as distinct from the sensations. Consequently, the common sense is primarily concerned in a concrete and sentient way with the acts of the external senses which are the
basis for the awareness of the subject's own existence and unity.12

The unity of self on the sense plane is known, in the theory of St. Thomas, through the function of the common sense. The animals do not have an abstract knowledge of their own ego as do men. But they have a concrete awareness that the sensations which they are having are theirs. It is they who feel this pain or experience this pleasure or see this object. The unifying sense thus accounts, even in animals, for the permanence of the ego, the knowledge of which is essential for the identification of present perception as having been experienced at sometime in the past.

But now a still further question has to be asked. How does the identification of the recalled phantasm with previous experience take place in the knowing subject? According to St. Thomas, as has been pointed out, the identification of the object of memory is the recognition of the phantasm as an image of our previous experience.

There are three ways in which a man can identify his own experience in the phantasm. Two of them are false, one is true. In the third lecture of the In De Memoria et Reminiscentia St. Thomas describes three types of remembering; the first is had when we doubt whether we remember; the second, when we really and properly

remember; and the third, when we think that we remember but really do not.

The reason why we sometimes doubt about our memory is the fact that we are not sure whether the recalled image really refers to our actual experience. St. Thomas says: "Aliquando enim quamvis in nobis sint motus phantasmatum qui sunt facti ab eo quod sensimus, qui scilicet relinquuntur ex prima immutatioine sensus proprii a sensibili, tamen nescimus si accidat hoc motus esse in nobis secundum hoc quod prius sensimus aliquid. Et ideo dubitamus utrum memoremur vel non." Even though the phantasm is truly representative of our actual experience, yet, if we do not know it as such, the identification of the image does not take place. For real identification two conditions have to be fulfilled: the phantasm must be a representation of our own experience and it must be known by us as such a representation.

In the third kind of remembering (which is also false), it happens the other way around. Here in turning to the phantasm which does not refer to our past, we think that it does refer to it. This happens because we mistake the image of imagination to be an image of memory, and hence we have a false identification.

To remember properly, and therefore to have a true identification of the phantasm, one has both to experience an image of the

---

13 In De Mem. et Rem., 3, n. 345.
14 Ibid., 3, n. 347.
real past and to know that it is an image of the real past. St. Thomas describes it in the following way: "Secundo vero contingit aliquando quod hoc intelligit et reminiscitur, quia prius audivimus aut vidimus aliquid cuius phantasma tune nobis occurrit, quod est proprie memorari: et hoc contingit quando ille qui speculatur phantasma movetur quidem ab ipso praesenti phantasmate, sed considerat ipsum inquantum est imago alterius, quod prius sensit vel intellexit." He who remembers truly knows in the phantasm the image of his previous experience. This identification of the phantasm takes place in the act by which the soul turns to it and knows it as a representation of a definite experience, not merely experiences in general, of its own past. Thus, the phantasm, even though it is present, nevertheless in virtue of its being an image of previous experience, represents the real past of the knowing subject.

This, it would seem, is St. Thomas' idea of how the so-called motus rei or the identification of the object of memory is to be explained.

But the identification of the object is only a part of the process of recognition. After the image has been identified as one's own experience, it must—in order to be fully recognized—be situated in its proper historical time. This is the other part of the act of recognition which has been called by St. Thomas

15Ibid., 3, n. 346.
motus temporis, or the movement of the soul to know the time in which the object occurred to us in the past.

St. Thomas expresses himself on the question of the motus temporis in various ways. Relevant statements can be found in the commentaries as well as in original works. Unfortunately, most of these statements are only fragmentary. They give the theory in small portions, never pretending to present it in any comprehensive fashion. Consequently, the understanding of St. Thomas' mind in this matter is rather difficult. In the following pages an attempt will be made to collect the more important passages in one place, to unify them, and in doing so to give an interpretation of St. Thomas' thought. Where the evidence will be lacking, it will be necessary to conjecture what that thought would be.

That sense memory implies some knowledge of time is clear from the fact that memory is a power which apprehends the past. Hence, in the Summa St. Thomas says: "[M]emoria praeteritorum est. Sed praeteritum dicitur secundum aliquod determinatum tempus. Memoria igitur est cognoscitiva alicuius sub determinato tempore."\(^{16}\) If memory is able to know the past, it must be able in some way to sense time.

Time is defined by St. Thomas as "numerus motus secundum prius et posterius."\(^{17}\) In its concept time involves notions of

\(^{16}\)S.T., I, 79, 6, ob. 2.

\(^{17}\)Ibid., I, 10, 1 c.
number, motion, and relation between ordered parts. To know these notions and these relations as such, one needs the operation of the intellect, for only the intellect can apprehend relations as such. Since sense memory is not an intellectual power, it does not know time abstractly, i.e., understanding the nature of number, of succession, etc. However, it can know it concretely.

Commenting on Aristotle’s De Memoria et Reminiscentia St. Thomas shows that magnitude, motion, and time are known by the faculties of sense. In the second lecture he says:

[N]ecessse est quod eadem parte animae cognoscitur magnitudo et motus, qua etiam cognoscitur tempus...

Magnitudo autem cognoscitur sensu: est enim unum de sensilibus communibus. Similiter autem et motus, prae­cipue localis, cognoscitur, inquantum cognoscitur distantia magnitudinis. Tempus autem cognoscitur, inquantum cognos­citur prius et posterius in motu: unde et etiam sensu per­cipi possunt. Dupliciter autem aliquid sensu percipitur. Uno quidem modo per ipsam immutationem sensus a sensibili; et sic cognoscuntur tam sensibilia propria quam etiam com­munia a sensibibus propriis et a sensu commune. Alio modo cognoscitur aliquid quodam secundario motu, qui relinquitur ex prima imutatione sensus a sensibili. Qui quidem motus remanet etiam quandoque post absentiam sensibilium, et per­tinet ad phantasmam, ut habitum est in libro de Anima. Phan­tasia autem, secundum quod apparat per huius immutationem secundarium, est passio sensus communis: sequitur enim totam immutationem sensus, quae incipit a sensibilibus propriis, et terminatur ad sensum communem. Unde manifestum est quod praedicta tria, scilicet magnitudo, motus et tempus, secundum quod sunt in phantasmate, comprehenduntur et cognoscuntur per sensum communem.\(^{18}\)

The important points made here are these: magnitude and motion are known by sense powers (not the intellect); time is apprehended by sense, too; it is known inasmuch as succession in motion can be

\(^{18}\) In De Mem. et Rem., 2, nn. 318-19.
known; sense can perceive in two ways—by the actual impression of the sensible upon the sense potencies, and by the species which remain in the sense powers after the sensible objects have been removed; the sensible forms are retained in the phantasy, which is an affection (a modification) of the sensus communis; magnitude, motion, and time are retained in the phantasm and are known by the common sense.

How does sense memory come in here? St. Thomas brings it in in the next paragraph. Here he distinguishes between the intellectual and sense memory. But he also points out how memory apprehends time. First of all, it knows time in the phantasm: "Sensibilia enim postquam praetereunt, a sensu non percipiuntur, nisi sicut in phantasmate";\(^{19}\) secondly, it apprehends it according to a determined distance which is measured from the previous impression to the present moment: "[A]d memoriam autem pertinet apprehensio temporis secundum determinationem quamdam, secundum scilicet distantiam in praesenti nunc."\(^{20}\)

A somewhat more detailed exposition of the knowledge of time is found in the seventh lecture of the In De Memoria et Reminiscencia. Here St. Thomas shows how the various magnitudes, including the temporal distances, are perceived.

It must be presupposed, he says in the seventh lecture, that

\(^{19}\) Ibid., 2, n. 320.

\(^{20}\) Ibid.
there is something in us by which we distinguish between greater and lesser periods of time. 21 How do we do it? It is reasonable to think, says St. Thomas, that we distinguish the various distances of time in the same way in which we discriminate spatial magnitudes: "Et hoc rationabile est esse circa tempus, sicut et circa magnitudines corporales: magnas quidem, quantum ad quantitatem corporum viscerum, et procul, quantum ad quantitatem distantiae localis, cui proportionatur quantitas temporis, quae accipitur secundum distantiam a praesenti nunc." 22 This knowledge of sizes and distances is not a product of our thought reaching out to them, but is a psychic process by which we know external objects through their species left in the soul: "Non ergo cognoscit anima magnitudinem ei se coextendendo, sed per hoc, quod quidam motus a re sensibili resolitus in anima, est proportionalis magnitudini exteriori. Sunt enim in anima quaedam formae et motus similes rebus, per quas res cognoscit." 23 Magnitudes have their representations in the intentional order, and hence can be known by means of these representations.

After this St. Thomas asks a question: "Cum anima per similitudinem magnitudinis quam habet magnitudinem cognoscat, in quo

21 Ibid., 7, n. 387.
22 Ibid.
23 Ibid., 7, n. 388.
differt illud quo cognoscit maiorem et minorem magnitudinem? 24

And he answers:

[A]nima vel per similem figuram sive formam intelliget minora, idest minorem quantitatem, sicut et per formam similem cognoscit maiorem magnitudinem. Formae enim et motus interiores proportionaliter correspondent magnitudinibus exterioribus, et forte ita est de magnitudinibus sive distantiis locorum et temporum, sicut de speciebus rerum. Unde, sicut in ipso cognoscente sunt diversae similitudines et motus proportionaliter respondentes diversis speciebus rerum, puta equo et bovi, ita etiam et diversis quantitatibus. 25

The point here, it would seem, is that temporal distances, and even the differences between greater and lesser distances, are known in the same way as the magnitudes of bodies, i.e., through the forms which are impressed on the soul by those magnitudes. Through the forms and motions which remain in the soul we know not merely the various sizes of external things, but perhaps (1) also the magnitudes of spatial and temporal distances.

Cajetan commenting on the passage of the Summa in which St. Thomas deals with the virtue of hope, says that brutes do not have hope because they cannot perceive future time. Sense powers know time only by impression, and impression can be had of past time, not of the future. He says:

Et quoniam non aliter percipitur tempus a parte sensitiva nisi per immutacionem, ideo futurum repugnat perceptioni sensitivae. Cum enim tempus sit numerus motus secundum prius et posterius, non aliter percipitur sensu tempus, nisi per-

24 Ibid., 7, n. 389.
25 Ibid., 7, n. 390.
Cajetan concludes that sense powers perceive only that time which leaves an impression on the soul. This cannot be future, but only past. In this quotation Cajetan brings out a point which has to be considered next. He says that the temporal distance which animals perceive is successive. The succession consists in going from one impression to another.

From the definition of time as given by St. Thomas, it is clear that succession according to sequence is essential to the notion of time, and hence in order to know time, one has to know the succession in motion. On this point St. Thomas says in the Summa: "Cum enim in quolibet motu sit successio, et una pars post alteram, ex hoc quod numeramus prius et posterius in motu, apprehendimus tempus." Therefore, if sense memory is to know time, it must be aware of some kind of succession extending to the past, and must be able somehow to number the succeeding parts.

St. Thomas often speaks of the memory's awareness which extends its gaze from the "now" to the time when the remembered object has been first received. Thus, he says in the De Veritate:

26 In S.T., I-II, 40, 3; V, 267-8.
27S.T., I, 10, 1 c.
"Memoria secundum propriam sui accessionem respiciat ad id quod est praeteritum respectu huius nunc"; and again: "Philosophus loquitur de memoria quae est praeteriti, prout est relatum ad hoc nunc, inquantum est hoc." Memory, then, knows the past as it related to the present or the "now." It is aware of a certain extension which spans the temporal distance from past experience to the present moment. How is the soul aware of this extension?

In the commentary on Aristotle's *Physics* St. Thomas explains this:

Contingit enim quandoque quod percipimus fluxum temporis, quamvis nullum motum particularlem sensibilem sentiamus; ut-pote si simus in tenebris, et sic visu non sentimus motum alicuius corporis exterioris, et, si nos non patiamur aliquam alterationem in corporibus nostris ab aliquo exteriori agente, nullum motum corporis sentiemos; et tamen si fiat alicuius motus in anima nostra, puta secundum successionem cogitationum et imaginationum, subito videtur nobis quod fiat aliquod tempus. Et sic percipiendo quemcumque motum percipimus tempus; et similiter e contra cum percipimus tempus simul percipimus motum.

Time is perceived with any motion. And when we do not sense external movement but are aware of our interior acts, we feel the successive motion of these acts, and hence we are able to know time. The succession, then, is had in the sequence of the acts which are placed by the cognitive being. Human beings, of course,

---

28 *De Ver.*, 10, 2 c.
know this sequence in a more perfect way than do animals. Nevertheless, animals too are conscious of their own sensations. Inasmuch as they know the succession of these sensations, they know a concrete successive motion. And to be aware of such motion, as Cajetan well observes, is to know time.

One final question remains to be answered: how is the past known as past?

St. Thomas does not hesitate to affirm that sense memory knows the past as past. Thus in the De Veritate he says: "[M]emoria secundum communem usum loquentium accipitur pro notitia praeteritorum. Cognoscere autem praeteritum ut praeteritum, est eius cuius est cognoscere praesens ut praesens, vel nunc ut nunc; hoc autem est sensus."\(^3^1\)

How the past as past is known, St. Thomas never explains fully. The closest that he comes to an explanation of this problem is, perhaps, the question in the Summa in which he inquires whether the intellectual memory can know past as past. Here he says something on sense memory also:

\^[P]raeteritio potest ad duo referri: scilicet ad objectum quod cognoscitur; et ad cognitionis actum. Quae quidem duo simul coniunguntur in parte sensitiva, quae est apprehensiva alicuius per hoc quod immutatur a praeasenti sensibili: unde simul animal memoratur se prius sensisse in praeterito et se sensisse quoddam praeteritum sensibile. —Sed quantum ad partem intellectivam pertinet, praeteritio accidit, et non per se convenit, ex parte objecti intellectus. Intelligit enim intellectus hominem, inquantum est homo: homini autem,
In quantum est homo, accidit vel in praesenti vel in prae-
terito vel in future esse. Ex parte vero actus, praeteritio
per se accipi potest etiam in intellectu, sicut in sensu.
Quia intelligere animae nostrae est quidam particularis actus,
in huc vel in illo tempore existens, secundum quod dicitur
homo intelligere nunc vel heri vel cras.\textsuperscript{32}

In sense memory the conditions of pastness may be referred to two
things: the objects already experienced and also the acts by which
those objects were apprehended. The intellectual memory knows the
past only in its acts. This is so because the condition of the
past applies only to those things which can exist in a definite
period of time. The object of the intellect is not restricted
to a fixed time because it is universal, while the act, since it
is individual, exists in a definite time, and therefore can refer
to the past.

In the body of the same article St. Thomas says: "Si vero de
ratione memoriae sit quod eius objectum sit praeteritum, ut praes-
teritum; memoria in parte intellectiva non erit, sed sensitiva tan-
tum, quae est apprehensiva particularium. Praeteritum enim, ut
praeteritum, cum significat esse sub determinato tempore, ad con-
ditionem particularis pertinet."\textsuperscript{33} Individuals can pertain to
the past because they exist in a definite period of time.

But the question still remains. We know that individual acts
and individual objects can be in the past, and that they are known

\textsuperscript{32}\textsuperscript{T._II, I, 79, 6 ad 2.}

\textsuperscript{33}\textsuperscript{Ibid., I, 79, 6 a.}
as past; but we also would like to know how they are known as past.

As far as it can be ascertained, St. Thomas does not consider this question explicitly in his works. However, he does speak of it implicitly, when he explains in the first lecture of the In De Memoria et Reminiscentia that memory is not of the present but of the past. He says: "Ostendit [Philosophus] quod memoria non est praesentis; sed hoc dicit pertinere ad sensum, per quem neque futurum, neque factum, id est praeteritum, cognoscimus, sed tanti­tummodo praesens."\(^{34}\) And he proves this from the common manner of speaking:

Et hoc probat ex communi usu loquentium. Cum enim aliquid praeessentialiter adest, puta cum aliquis praeessentialiter videt album, nullus diceret se memorari album: sicut nullus dicit se memorari illud, quod per intellectum actu consideratur, cum actu considerat et intelligit: sed cum communiter homines vident album, nominant sentire; et considerare aliquid actu, nominat solummodo scire. Cum aliquis autem habet scientiam habitualem et potentiam sensitivam sine actibus vel operationibus eorum, tunc dicitur memorari praeteritorum actuum. . . . Semper enim cum anima memoratur, pronuncliat se vel prius audivisse aliquid, vel sensisse, vel intellexisse.\(^{35}\)

When we see a white object, we do not say that we remember it; we say that we see it. In order to identify something as past, one must be conscious that he does not sense those things in the present. How is this accomplished? It may be supposed that a sen-

---

\(^{34}\) In De Mem. et Rem., I, n. 306.

\(^{35}\) Ibid., I, n. 307.
tient being distinguishes between the present and the past by exercising different powers. It knows the present by its common sense. Common sense is the power by which one knows one's own sensing and the unity of one's experience in the present. When this power is at work we know that we are sensing something present, as when we see something white. But when we sense an object without the operation of the common sense, we know that what we experience is not the present. The relationship with the operation of common sense establishes the apprehension of the present. When this relationship is lacking, we know that we are aware of something past or at least of something absent. This is, perhaps, what St. Thomas has in mind when he says in *De Veritate*: "[M]emoria secundum propriam sui acceptionem respiciat ad id quod est praeteritum respectu huius nunc"; and again: "Philosophus loquitur de memoria quae est praeteriti, prout est relatum ad hoc nunc, inquantum est hoc."

But this, one might say, gives only a general and indefinite notion of the past. I remember that this happened to me sometime in the past, but I do not know exactly when. From experience we know, however, that we can remember with greater precision than this vague recollection. On this St. Thomas says:

---

36 *S.T.*, I, 78, 4 c.
37 *De Ver.*, 10, 2 c.
Quandoque enim aliquis recordatur tempus non quidem sub certa mensura, puta quod tertia die fecerit aliquid, sed quod aliquando fecit. Quandoque autem recordatur sub mensura temporis praeteriti, quamvis non sub certa mensura. Consueverunt enim homines dicere quod recordantur quidem alicuius rei ut praeteritae, sed nesciunt quando fuerit, quia nesciunt temporis metrum, ídem, mensuram: et hoc contingit propter debilem impressionem, sicut contingit in his quae videntur a remotis, quae indeterminata cognoscunt.39

The conditions of memory are fulfilled if pastness is known indeterminately. But for a perfect recognition one must be able to place the object in the past accurately: for instance, this happened to me three days ago. How is this accurate placing of the object of memory in the past to be explained?

Since the textual evidence is lacking, the answer must be attempted by conjecturing.

In the passage last quoted St. Thomas says that the reason why we do not remember the date of the remembered objects is that we do not know the measure of time in which these objects occurred. If we knew the measure of time, for instance, three or four days back, we could place the remembered object in its proper historical time, and hence we would have an act of perfect recognition.

The explanation of how the measure of time is known should be based, it would seem, on at least three fundamental ideas: the concrete awareness of self, the knowledge of the succession of past acts, and the ability on the part of the subject to distinguish between the acts which have been placed earlier from

39In De Mem. et Rem., 7, n. 397.
those which have been placed later in the sequence.

In the theory of St. Thomas, as has been explained before, animals have awareness of self through the knowledge of their own acts and known objects. This gives them a concrete knowledge of their own permanent ego. But this ego in itself is not enough to enable them to know the past. They must be able to focus their attention on the various manifestations of this ego, i.e., on the individual acts which reveal to them their conscious self. St. Thomas says in the *Summa* that a sentient being knows its past acts and the objects apprehended in the past.⁴⁰ These objects and these acts form a sequence of experience of which Cajetan speaks in his commentary on the *Summa*, in the passage which has been quoted earlier. Explaining how sense powers know time, he says: "[N]on aliter perclpitur sensu tempus, nisi percipiendo quandam distantiam successivam ab illa mutatione usque ad illam: et sic, depicii in parte sensitiva hac et illa mutatione, percipitur tempus."⁴¹ Sense powers perceive the sequence of their acts and known objects in such a way that they know one sensation to have followed another. This gives them the knowledge of successive motion which is necessary for the knowledge of time.

If animals can distinguish one individual act from another, and if they know these acts in a sequence, it seems that they

---
⁴⁰ *S.T.*, I, 79, 6 ad 2.
⁴¹ *In S.T.*, I-II, 40, 3.
should be able to distinguish an act experienced earlier in the sequence from that experienced later, so that they can know the time in which this particular act was placed by reference to other acts which are prior or posterior to it. The general point of reference is the present moment: "[M]emoria...est praeteriti, prout est relatum ad hoc nunc."\(^4\)\(^2\) Having the general point of reference and being able to distinguish the prior acts in the sequence from the posterior, the sentient being can place a remembered object accurately in its proper past time, thus putting it in a definite period of its conscious existence. In this way it can know a past object as past and can "date" it more or less accurately in its past experience.

When one identifies a recalled object as belonging to his own experience and when he places it in its proper historical setting, he can be said to have exercised an act of recognition proper to sense memory. With the recognition of an object as an experience of one's own past, one truly remembers and thus completes the process of sense memory.

\(^{4}\)\(^2\)De Ver., 10, 2 ad 2.
CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSION

Toward the end of his life St. Thomas confessed that he never forgot anything that he studied. No doubt, his memory was a prodigy of retention. It has been said that one or two readings were enough for him to fix even lengthy material. Of course, much of this was a gift of nature. But one's native endowment can still be trained, so that it can attain even better results. St. Thomas has set four rules for the cultivation of good memory. They are so simple and natural that one may easily overlook them. But they have great practical significance. A short commentary on them will supplement the theory expounded in this thesis; and since the rules are based on some of the theoretical points, they will provide an occasion to summarize St. Thomas' doctrine on sense memory and thus be a fitting conclusion to the present study.

The four rules for the cultivation of a good memory are found in the Summa, II-II, 49, 1 ad 2. St. Thomas begins this passage by saying that memory, even though it is a natural power of man,

---

nevertheless it can be perfected by art and practice. He says:

"Memoria non solum a natura proficiscitur, sed etiam habet plurimum artis et industriae." And then he proceeds to give the four rules, which are: (1) to search for good illustrations, (2) to set in order the things to be memorized, (3) to be eager to learn, and (4) frequently to reflect on that which one wishes to remember.

The first rule reads as follows:

[Primum est ut eorum quae vult homo memorari quasdam similitudines assumat convenientes, nec tamen omni consuetas: quia ea quae sunt inconscueta magis miramur, et sic in eis animus magis et vehementius detinetur; ex quo fit quod eorum quae in puentera vidimus magis memoremur. Ideo autem necessaria est huiusmodi similitudinum vel imaginum adinventio, quia intentiones simplices et spirituales facilius ex anima elabuntur nisi quibusdam similitudinibus corporalibus quasi alligentur: quia humana cognitio potentior est circa sensibilitia. Unde et memorativa ponitur in parte sensitiva.]

[\textsuperscript{2}S.T., II-II, 49, 1 ad 2.]


The fourth rule in this list is left out in the Summa. It is replaced there by the rule which speaks of the need of illustrations. The set in the Summa seems to be preferable to that in the commentary, because the fourth rule in the commentary which prescribes that one is to begin remembering from a principle, seems to be included in that which tells us to set things in order. If we recollect according to order, it would seem that we begin with an object which is the principle of the order, and then proceed to recall other objects related to that principle.]

[\textsuperscript{4}S.T., II-II, 49, 1 ad 2.]
Sensible illustrations and novel representations improve the retentive power of memory, because sense impressions do not slip away from us as easily as do objects of thought. We seem to have a greater hold on corporeal objects than on purely intellectual ideas. Hence, to insure lasting retention, one has to tie down the intelligible species to sensible things by means of apt images and illustrations. The uncommon here is better than the common, since examples with some freshness make a deeper impression.

The fact that we are able to remember sensible objects easier than nonsensible ones shows that memory is primarily a power of sense. "Unde et memorativa ponitur in parte sensitiva," says St. Thomas. This brings to mind all the points that have been discussed in this thesis on memory as a faculty of internal sense. According to St. Thomas, memory proper is in the sensitive part of the soul. It is an internal sense whose proper object is the intentions of the estimative sense as absent. In the theory of St. Thomas, sense memory is really distinct from the common sense, imagination, and the estimative power. The distinction between these powers has been discussed in the second chapter of the thesis. As a sense power, memory functions in the bodily organ which is located in the brain. The retentive quality of memory depends on the various dispositions of the organ, as for instance on the amount of water it contains. That memory is a power mixed with matter can be proved also from the fact that it knows the past as past. There is no limitation to past, present, or future with the
object of the intellect, since it is above the dimensions of space and time. Sense memory, like the rest of the senses, is concerned with the here-and-now aspects of things. The notion of pastness is associated with material conditions, such as magnitude, distance, and time. Hence, the knowledge of the past properly belongs to the sensitive part of the soul, and consequently memory proper is a sense power, not an intellectual one.

The second rule for training of memory bids us to set in order those things which we want to remember. St. Thomas says: "Secundo, oportet ut homo ea quae memoriter vult tenere sua consideratione ordinate disponat, ut ex uno memorato facile ad aliud procedatur."5

This rule is a practical application of what St. Thomas has said on the process of recall. The preserved images are linked together in our memory according to a certain pattern: like is linked with like, the unlike with its opposite, etc. These patterns are referred to as the laws of association. They are the natural ways to recall forgotten objects with ease and efficiency. Hence, if we want to acquire a certain ease in recollection, we have to set in order things that we want to remember. This order establishes logical connections between images, thus enabling reason to guide our efforts to recapture the past.

The third rule prescribes earnestness in receiving the im-

5S.T., II-II, 49, 1 ad 2.
expressions: "Tertio, oportet ut homo sollicitudinem apponat et affectum adhibet ad ea quae vult memorari: quia quo aliquid magis fuerit impressum animo, eo minus elabitur."⁶ Eagerness or a real will to learn has the advantage of making the mind well disposed to receive impressions. And the more deeply an object is impressed on our memory, the less liable it is to slip away. The result is a more perfect retention, and, in general, a better memory.

Although the reception of species is not considered by St. Thomas as a proper function of memory, nevertheless, it is presupposed in the operations of this internal sense. The proper functions of memory are retention, recall, and recognition. Recognition is the last step in the memorative process in which the image is identified as one's own experience and is known as having occurred in the past. The act of reception is the basis for these functions of sense memory, for without the original reception of the species there could be no retention, nor recall, nor recognition. Moreover, the quality of reception determines to a large extent the quality of the proper functions of memory, especially that of retention, as is suggested in the third rule for the cultivation of a good memory.

Finally, in the fourth rule we are bidden to reflect often on what we are trying to master: "Quarto, oportet quod ea frequenter meditemur quae volumus memorari. Unde Philosophus dicit, in libro

⁶Ibid.
Frequent reflection preserves memory because it establishes custom, and custom is, as it were, a second nature. The habits of memory are developed by many acts: 

"Ex frequenti actu memorandi habitus memorabilium confirmatur," as St. Thomas says in the commentary on the De Memoria et Reminiscencia.

Memory as a habit has been explained in Chapter IV, on the act of retention. There the word "habit" was used to mean the midstate between actuality and pure potency. Here this word has a different meaning. Those who have the ability to remember well are said to have a habit of good memory. Sense memory as a habit in this sense means a capacity or disposition to act well.

Habits, in the theory of St. Thomas, are primarily in the rational part of the soul. The sense powers cannot have habits, because in themselves and independently of reason they are determined in their action by a sort of natural instinct. They lack that capacity for development which is needed for the growth of

---

7 Ibid.; references to Aristotle are De Mem. et Rem., 1, 451 a, 12-13 and Ibid., 2, 452 a, 27-28.
8 In De Mem. et Rem., 3, n. 348.
9 S.T., I-II, 50, 1 c.
a habit. 10

Sense powers in man, however, have habits inasmuch as they are controlled by reason. 11 In this sense, sense memory is a habit. St. Thomas says on this point: "[I]n ipsis interioribus viribus sensitivis apprehensivis possint poni aliqui habitus, secundum quos homo fit bene memorativus vel cogitativus vel imaginativus; . . . quia etiam istae vires moventur ad operandum ex imperio rationis." 12 And again:

[I]n viribus sensitivis apprehensivis interius, ponuntur aliqui habitus. Quod patet ex hoc praecipue quod Philosophus dicit, in libro de Memoria, quod in memorando unum post aliud, operatur consuetudo, quae est quasi quaedam natura: nihil autem est aliud habitus consuetudinalis quam habitudo acquisita per consuetudinem, quae est in modum naturae. . . . In homine tamen id quod ex consuetudine acquiritur in memoria, et in aliis viribus sensitivis apprehensivis, non est habitus per se; sed aliquid annexum habitibus intellectivae partis. 13

Sense memory is not a habit properly so called, but something annexed to the habits of the intellective faculty. By remembering one thing after another, we become used to it, and thus form a habit of recollecting easily and efficiently.

The rules for improving the memory having been considered and a brief summary of the main ideas of the thesis having been pre-

10 Ibid., I-II, 50, 3 c.
11 Ibid.
12 Ibid., I-II, 50, 3 ad 3.
13 Ibid., I-II, 56, 5 c; reference to Aristotle is to his De Mem. et Rem., 2, 452 a, 29-30.
sented, the study of St. Thomas' teaching on sense memory may be brought to a conclusion.

The purpose of the thesis was to present St. Thomas' doctrine on sense memory. As can be seen from the titles of the chapters (sense memory as an internal sense, the object of sense memory, the functions of sense memory), only the fundamental ideas on the topic have been considered. In order to get a comprehensive view of St. Thomas' thought on this internal sense, one should study related topics as well, such as, sense memory and mental life, its importance for the building up of experience, the part it plays in forming universals, its relation to the moral life, especially with the virtue of prudence, the problem of forgetfulness, etc. The questions that have been discussed in the present study can and perhaps should be reconsidered again, particularly those which could be solved here only with probability, as the distinction between the functions of sense memory and those of imagination, and the knowledge of the past as past. There is still much left to be done, both on the interpretation of St. Thomas and in the exploration of memory itself.
BIBLIOGRAPHY

I. PRIMARY SOURCES


II. SECONDARY SOURCES

A. BOOKS


——. Thomistic Psychology. 2nd ed. New York, 1942.


B. ARTICLES


Lefebvre, R. R., S.J. *Psychologia Speculativa*. Notes used for the course in sense psychology at West Baden College, 1955-56.


APPROVAL SHEET

The thesis submitted by Algimantas J. Kezys, S.J., has been read and approved by three members of the Department of Philosophy.

The final copies have been examined by the director of the thesis and the signature which appears below verifies the fact that any necessary changes have been incorporated, and that the thesis is now given final approval with reference to content, form, and mechanical accuracy.

The thesis is therefore accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts.

June 11, 1957
Date

Signature of Adviser