

On Symbolic Reference

According to Thomas Aquinas, "just as the sensing of proper sensibles is always true, so the intellect is always true in knowing what a thing is. . . . By accident, however, falsity can occur in this knowledge of quiddities, if the intellect falsely joins and separates" (*De veritate*, 1: 12).

This would seem to be a remarkable formal parallel to Whitehead's doctrine, that perception in either of the pure modes—presentational immediacy or causal efficacy—is infallible, although error can arise in the reference between them. But, clearly, it is *only* a formal parallel, since the *material* meanings involved are different.

Consider also Thomas's statement: "sense always produces a true judgment in the intellect with respect to its own conditions, but not always with respect to the conditions of things" (*De veritate*, 1: 11).