

be that in *Compendium 1*, Nicholas means that there is no *exact* knowledge of mode-of-being, no cognitive *copying* of it, so to speak. Accordingly, in *Compendium 2* he concedes that we do have nonexact knowledge of mode-of-being: “For since no sign designates the mode-of-being as fully as it can be designated: if we are to arrive at knowledge in the best way in which this can be done, then we must do so by means of a variety of signs, in order that from them knowledge can better be had ...” (3:4-8). Epistemologically speaking, Nicholas is not a direct realist but is a critical representative realist. He affirms (1) that the human mind knows of the *existence* of material objects, (2) that it knows many things about these objects, while knowing nothing *precisely* about them, and (3) that although the mind does not know the objects as they are *in themselves*, it does know the *objects themselves* through their mental representations.

See n. 8 below.

6. *De Quaerendo Deum 2* (35).

7. *De Dato Patris Luminum 2* (100).

8. See n. 5 above. Nicholas does not deny that we have knowledge of objects in the so-called external world. He denies only that we have perfect knowledge of them—such knowledge being possible for God alone. Similarly, he does not deny that signs designate a thing’s mode of being; rather, he denies that signs designate it fully, i.e., precisely. Note my critique of Pauline Watts’s interpretation of Cusa—on pp. 211-215 of my *Philosophical Criticism: Essays and Reviews* (1994).

9. Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, opening sentence.

10. Nowhere in the *Compendium*—not even in Chap. 8 with its illustration of the mapmaker—does Nicholas even tacitly endorse a nominalistic theory of signs. See pp. 73-78 (including the notes) of my *Nicholas of Cusa’s Dialectical Mysticism* (2nd ed., 1988). Cf., above, n. 177 of Notes to the Introduction.

11. All signs are *primarily* signs at the perceptual level. In Chap. 4 Nicholas speaks of signs in the imagination; these he calls “signs of the signs that are in the senses” (9:5-6). In Chap. 8 (at 23:18-19) he mentions intellectual signs.

12. Nicholas uses the appellative “natural signs” when speaking of perceptual forms—i.e., of perceptual images—inasmuch as these images, or forms, point to the objects of which they are images. (See Chap. 4, end of section 8.) But he also uses the same appellative when speaking of physical features whose presence is an indicator of physical or emotional states. (For example, in some contexts a red face is a sign of embarrassment, just as in other contexts it is a sign of anger.)

13. *De Genesi 2* (159: last lines) and 4 (172:6-7). Augustine, *Opus Imperfectum contra Julianum* 6.31 (PL 45:1585).

14. Genesis 2:19-20.

15. “... these two arts”: viz., the art of using oral speech and the art of writing.

16. See Chap. 2 (section 5).

17. See n. 12 above.

18. See n. 11 above.

19. Nicholas everywhere emphasizes the reproductive character of imagination. Even in *DM 2*, where he points out that our notion of spoon is not the notion of anything that is found in nature, he also states that this notion is made from reason’s “harmonizing and differentiating of perceptible objects” (65:2-3). In the case of an arti-