ABBREVIATIONS


273
Abbreviations


VS De Venatione Sapientiae (Nicolai de Cusa Opera Omnia, Vol. XII, edited by Raymond Klibansky and Hans G. Senger; published in the same volume with De Apice Theoriae by Felix Meiner Verlag, 1982).

The abbreviations for the books of the Bible are the standard ones.
praenotanda

1. In the English translation strokes are used in place of brackets in order to conduct to readability. Words and phrases thus “bracketed” are supplied by the translator to fill out the meaning implied by the Latin text.

2. In the Interpretive Study commas and periods are occasionally placed outside of quotation marks in order to emphasize that they are not included in what is being cited or mentioned.

3. In the Notes to the Interpretive Study longer Latin passages that stand by themselves are not italicized.

4. All translations are mine, unless otherwise indicated. Many of these translations are taken verbatim from my previous works; sometimes, however, italics are added or various emendations made. E.g., most translations of Anselm are taken from Anselm of Canterbury: Volumes I-III (New York: The Edwin Mellen Press, 1974-76). These volumes contain, in translation, Anselm’s complete treatises, and they are more literal and more accurate than the earlier Harper and Row Torchbooks Truth, Freedom, and Evil and Trinity, Incarnation, and Redemption, which should no longer be regarded.

5. The present bibliography is supplementary to the bibliographies contained in my previous works A Concise Introduction to the Philosophy of Nicholas of Cusa and Nicholas of Cusa on Learned Ignorance: A Translation and an Appraisal of De Docta Ignorantia. Accordingly, not all the entries in the present bibliography are directly relevant to the present topics and themes; and some entries that are directly relevant occur in the earlier bibliographies. Moreover, practical considerations necessitated keeping short the number of entries under “Select Related Works.” See also the bibliography in my Nicholas of Cusa’s De Pace Fidei and Cribriatio Alkorani.

6. All references to Nicholas of Cusa’s works are to the Latin texts—specifically to the following texts in the following editions (unless explicitly indicated otherwise):

   A. Heidelberg Academy edition of the Opera Omnia Cusana: De Concordantia Catholica; Sermones; De Coniecturis; De Deo Abscondito; De Quaerendo Deum; De Filiatione Dei; De Dato Patris Luminum; Coniectura de Ultimis Diebus; De Genesi; Apologia Doctae Ignorantiae; Idiota (1983 edition) de Sapientia, de Mente, de Staticis Experimentis; De Pace Fidei; De Li Non Aliud (Banning reprint); De Venatione Sapientiae; Compendium; De Apice Theoriae.

   B. Texts authorized by the Heidelberg Academy and published in the Latin-German editions of Felix Meiner Verlag’s Philosophische Bibliothek: De Docta Ignorantia, De Beryllo, De Possesi (Minnesota reprint).


The references given for some of these treatises indicate book and chapter, for others margin number and line, and for still others page and line. Readers should have no difficulty determining which is which when they consult the particular Latin text. E.g., "DI II, 6 (125:19-20)" indicates *De Docta Ignorantia*, Book II, Chap. 6, margin number 125, lines 19-20. And "Ap. 8:14-16" indicates *Apologia Docta Ignorantiae*, p. 8, lines 14-16.
NOTES TO THE PREFACE

1. For a brief explanation of the meaning of the term "dialectical" see n. 264 of the Notes to the Interpretive Study.

2. In n. 334 of the present study I seek also to correct certain misjudgments about Anselm of Canterbury. As a supplement to that note see the articles by me that are listed in the bibliography. Also see my Anselm of Canterbury: Volume Four: Hermeneutical and Textual Problems in the Complete Treatises of St. Anselm (New York: The Edwin Mellen Press, 1976). In these works I modify various points that were made in my earlier Companion to the Study of St. Anselm (1972).

NOTES TO THE INTERPRETIVE STUDY

1. The former Austrian city of Brixen is today the Italian city of Bressanone.


3. Vansteenberge, Autour, pp. 126 and 129. (In Letter 11 Nicholas accepts the counsel of Bernard, Prior at Tegernsee; and in Letter 14 he indicates that he is counting on the arrival of the Tegernsee delegation that visited the nunnery at Sonnenberg.)

4. Ibid., p. 122 (Letter 9).

5. Ibid., p. 110 (Letter 3, from Caspar to Nicholas, Sept. 22, 1452): "Est autem hec quaestio utrum anima devota sine intellectus cognitione, vel etiam sine cogitatione previa vel concomitante, solo affectu seu per mentis apicem quam vocant synderesim Deum attingere possit, et in ipsum immediate moveri aut ferri."

6. Hereafter Pseudo-Dionysius will be referred to without the prefix "Pseudo." Nicholas, like his contemporaries, believed that the author of De Caeselis Hierarchia, De Nominibus Divinis, De Mystica Theologia, etc., was Dionysius the Areopagite, converted in Athens by St. Paul (Acts 17:34). In fact, however, these works did not appear until the beginning of the sixth century and are the product
Notes to the Interpretive Study

of an unknown writer who assumed Dionysius's name.


9. John Gerson (1363-1429) became Chancellor of the University of Paris in 1395.

10. “Theologia mistica est extensio animi in Deum per amoris desiderium.”

    “Theologia mistica est motio anagogica, hoc est sursum ductiva in Deum, per amorem fervidum et purum.”

    “Theologia mistica est cognitio experimentalis habita de Deo per amoris unitivi complexum.”

    “Theologia mistica est sapientia, id est sapida notitia habita de Deo, dum ei supremus apex affective potentiae rationalis per amorem conjungitur et unitur.”

    “Mistica theologia est cognitio experimentalis habita de Deo per coniunctionem affectus spiritualis cum eodem . . . .”

11. The foregoing quotations are translated from Gerson’s 28th consideration in his *De Mystica Theologia*. *Tractatus Primus Speculativus*, edited by André Combes [in his *Joannis Carlerii de Gerson de Mystica Theologia*] (Lucani, Italy: Thesaurus Mundi, 1958), p. 72. According to Combes [*Essai sur la critique de Ruysbroeck par Gerson* (Paris: J. Vrin, Vol. I, 1945), p. 566] the *Tractatus Primus Speculativus* dates from 1402-1403 and formed Gerson’s lectures during that academic year. The *Tractatus Secundus Practicus* was finished in 1407. Both parts were published in 1408 as a complete work. Combes’ publication of 1958 also includes Gerson’s *Annotatio doctorum aliquorum qui de contemplatione locuti sunt* (1402-1403) and his *Elucidatio Scolastica Theologiae Mysticae* (1424). The entire volume will be referred to hereafter as “Combes”. And the following abbreviations will be used: “Mys. Theol. Spec.,” “Mys. Theol. Prac.,” and “Elucidatio Scolastica.”


17. Gerson, *ibid.*, 29th and 30th considerations (Combes, pp. 74 and 77).
25. Gerson, *ibid.*, 28th consideration (Combes, p. 70): “Cognitio Dei per theologiam misticam melius acquiritur per penitentem affectum, quam per investi-gantem intellectum . . . . ” N.B.: Gerson uses the term “intellectus” in several senses. Sometimes, as in the present instance, it refers to the intellectual generally, in contrast to the affectional; at these times it is not being distinguished from *ratio*, or reason. At other times, however, it is contrasted with, and distinguished from, *ratio*—which is regarded as inferior to *intellectus*; at these times it is often called “intelligentia simplex” and is described as “the cognitive power of soul which receives immediately from God a natural light in which and through which—when we grasp terms—first principles are known to be true and altogether certain” [*Mys. Theol. Spec.*, 10th consideration (Combes, p. 26)]. By contrast, *ratio* is “the cognitive power of soul which deduces conclusions from premises, which derives the nonperceived from the perceived, and which abstracts quiddities—without needing any bodily organ for its own operation” [*ibid.*, 11th consideration (Combes, p. 29)]. Finally, the expressions “intelligentia simplex” and “intelligentia pura” should not be confused. Gerson uses the former to indicate a faculty—or, perhaps better, an operation—of the rational soul. By contrast, he uses the latter to indicate a state of mind that is free of all images and concepts of whatever is other than God; *intelligentia pura* is not *spiritus* but belongs to *spiritus*. The expression “intelligentia simplex” occurs, e.g., in *Mys. Theol. Spec.*, 10th consideration (Combes, p. 26). The expression “pura intelligentia” occurs in *Mys. Theol. Prac.*, 12th consideration (Combes, p. 208); cf. *Mys. Theol. Spec.*, 25th consideration (Combes, p. 65, next to last line); this expression also occurs in *Super Magnificat*, 7th tractate (Glorieux, Vol. 8, p. 316, line 4; cf. the expression “intelligentiae depuratio” on p. 315, lines 5-6 from bottom).
Notes to the Interpretive Study

27. E.g., the experience is said to be nonspeculative, joyous, ecstatic, uniting, transforming, fulfilling. It is an experience of that which is ineffable and indescribable, except symbolically.


29. Gerson, Mys. Theol. Spec., 41st consideration (Combes, p. 105). Gerson also uses the expression "theologia mystica" in several other less common senses, as when he writes: "in anima contemplativa amor et mistica theologa aut oratio perfecta, aut idem sunt aut se invicem presupponant" [ibid., 43rd consideration (Combes, pp. 116-117)].

30. Gerson, ibid., 41st consideration (Combes, p. 105). See ibid. (Combes, p. 107) for the expression "spiritualis transformatio.


35. Super Magnificat, 7th tractate (Glorieux, Vol. 8, p. 316): "Experimentalis Dei perceptionem intelligentiae purae praecedentem non requirit nec sequentem." Gerson also calls this form of perception, or notitia, "theologia mystica." N.B. the Latin quotation in n. 26 above.

36. André Combes judges that Gerson radically changed his mind about theologa mystica—that after Oct. 1, 1425 he moved closer to Dionysius. Thus, maintains Combes, Gerson abandoned some of his views expressed in De Mystica Theologia in favor of the views put forth in Super Magnificat and elsewhere. In particular, he is purported to have rejected his earlier view that mystical theology has to do with the operation of an affective faculty. At the same time, continues
Notes to the Interpretive Study


I myself do not deem this change on Gerson’s part to be radical in the way that Combes supposes: “Il serait impossible de concevoir rupture plus profonde, discontinuité plus radicale, contradiction plus consciente et plus formelle. Tout ce qu’a vécu et enseigné, en ce qui touche à l’essence de la théologie mystique, le Gerson de 1402 à 1425, le Gerson de 1425 à 1429 le condamne et le renie” (Combes, ibid., Vol. II, p. 671). Yet, even in Super Magnificat, 7th tractate (Glorieux, Vol. 8, p. 302) Gerson is still saying such things as: “Certissimum quidem est quod amor omnis cognitionem praesupponit aut unam aut alteram. Habemus ecce tria principaliter in descriptione devotionis. Primo, quod est elevatio mentis in Deum; secundo, quod haec elevatio fit per pium et humilem affectum; tertio, quod hujusmodi affectus debet esse fide, spe et caritate subnixus seu formatus.” Moreover, in Mys. Theol., as much as in Super Magnificat, Gerson emphasizes the via purae intelligentiae of Dionysius. [See Mys. Theol. Spec., 36th-39th considerations (Combes, pp. 95-102) and Mys. Theol. Prac., 12th consideration (Combes, pp. 208-216). Also note Mys. Theol. Spec., 25th consideration (Combes, pp. 64-65).]


37. Gerson, Super Magnificat, 7th tractate (Glorieux, Vol. 8, p. 307): “Est igitur commune studium omnium qui de theologia mystica, quae consistit in unione, locuti sunt, inducere ad tria quae requiruntur et sufficiunt, videlicet desiderium divini objecti, remotio impedimenti, imploratio divini beneplaciti. Primum fit insinuando pulchritudinem et valorum; secundum fit aperiendo defectum nostrum et languorem; tertium fit per orationis vehementiam et ardorem. Haec autem tria complectitur ipsa devotioni quae est elevatio mentis in Deum sicut in objectum proprium; et hoc per pium et humilem affectum, in quo semper est Deo beneplacitum.”

38. Gerson, ibid. (Glorieux, Vol. 8, p. 309): “Experimentalis perceptio Dei facialis et immediata non habetur hic in via, de lege communi; sed expectaturs pro praemio in gloria consummata.—Conceditur haec ab omnibus, nec oportet probationibus immorari; immo sic concessa est haec propositio ut in errorem aliqui prolapsi sint dicentes quod nec in patria Deus immediate videbitur, sed in theophanis quibusdam contemperantibus inaccessibilis lucem Dei imbecilli menti.”

39. “Via abnegationis” is another name for the via negativa. Both via negativa and via superexcellentia (or via supereminentia) belong to the via purae intel-
Notes to the Interpretive Study

gentiae, according to Gerson. In contrast to the via purae intelligentiae is the via devotionis, which has its own kind of via abnegationis; viz., the denial-of-the-world referred to by St. Paul as “being crucified with Christ” (Gal. 2:20). However, just as Scripture speaks of our “understanding by faith” (Heb. 11:3) and Anselm speaks of “faith’s certainty” (Monologion 64), so too does Gerson [Mys. Theol. Spec., 30th consideration (Combes, p. 78, line 3)]. Accordingly, Gerson sometimes regards the via devotionis as a form of cognoscere (e.g., Super Magnificat, Glorieux, Vol. 8, p. 315, last paragraph). Both the via devotionis and the via purae intelligentiae belong to theologia mystica (i.e., the via purae intelligentiae does not belong to theologia speculativa seu scolastica, which, says Gerson, can never effect mystical union) [Anagogicum de Verbo et Hymno Gloriae 1.8.a (Glorieux, Vol. 8, p. 543, lines 1-2)].


41. Gerson, Super Magnificat, 7th tractate (Glorieux, Vol. 8, p. 319): “... quando mens ab omnibus alius recedens postea etiam seipsam dimittens. Hoc quomodo fieri possit, pluries ostensum est, etiam naturalibus industriis, maxime praecipsumd fide summi Dei.”

42. Gerson, ibid. (Glorieux, Vol. 8, pp. 310-311): “Primo deseritur operatio sensitiva, quia non oportet de vegetativa deseratur; secundo operatio intelletiva, secundum omne ens et non ens; et hoc plane accipiendum est de ente vel non ente creato vel creadili, non de ente primo et puro. Tertio deseritur mens ipsa; non utique quin maneat essentialiter in se, alioquin esset et non esset, nisi velimum insaniire cum Almarico et similibus haereticis dicentibus mentem contemplativi vel beati perdere suum esse in proprio suo genere et redire in illud esse ideale quod habuit essentialiter in arte divina. Et hoc prorsus esset mentem annihilari, aut nihil omnino posset annihilare Deus. Et hoc aliqui volunt; sed male, quia similiter ipsa creare non posset. Quid est igitur mentem seipsam deserere? Hoc est ipsam in actu primo suo essentiali manentem, aut seipsam tunc vacare et in silentio summum esse ...” Cf. Mys. Theol. Spec., 36th-39th considerations (especially Combes, p. 102, first two lines).


45. Gerson, Mys. Theol. Spec., 36th consideration (Combes, p. 97). This ecstatic experience is granted by grace. It is not achieved by human efforts alone. Super Magnificat, 7th tractate (Glorieux, Vol. 8, p. 319): “Sed quod sequitur prorsus est supernaturale, prorsus gratuitum, ad quod nec natura sufficit nec attingit industria ...”
53. Gerson, *Super Magnificat*, 7th tractate (Glorieux, Vol. 8, pp. 312-313): “Experimentalis Dei perceptio non fit per solam abnegationem. Ratio: quia pura negatio nihil ponit . . . Quia quidquid affirmativo de Deo dicimus, includit negationem aliquam et e converso negatio relinquuit affirmationem, non quidem ad idem et secundum idem et pro eodem; alioquin esset contradictio manifesta; sed accipiantur affirmatio et negatio respectu diversorum quia negatur a Deo quidquid est imperfectis in creatura, sicut omnis creatura est imperfecta, quantumcumque perfecta sit in su genere; et ponitur per superexcellentiam affirmatio de Deo. Proprie dicit saepe Dionysius quod Deus non est ens sed superens, superbonus, superdominus et similia.” Also note the entire succeeding paragraph (on p. 313 of Glorieux).
54. Gerson, *Mys. Theol. Spec.*, 36th consideration (Combes, p. 96): “Porro extasim dicimus speciem quamdam raptus, que fit appropriatius in superiori portione anime rationalis, qua spiritus vel mens vel intelligentia nominatur, dum mens sita in su actu suspensa est quod potestie inferiores cessant ab actibus, sic quod nec ratio nec ymaginatio nec sensus exterieures, ymmo quandoque nec potestie naturales nutritive augmentative et motive possit exire in suas proprias operations.” Also note *ibid.*, 39th consideration (Combes, p. 101): “Raptus mentis supra potentias inferiores fit per affectionis scintillam menti cognatam vel appropriatam, que amor extaticus vel excessus mentis nominatur.”
Notes to the Interpretive Study


59. Gerson, *ibid.*, 28th consideration (Combes, p. 70): “Cognitio Dei per theologiam mysticam melius acquiritur per penitentem affectum, quam per investigatorem intellectum, ipsa quoque ceteris paribus eligibilior est et perfectior quam theologia symbolica vel propria<de>qua est contemplatio, sicut dilectio perfectior est cognitione, et voluntas intellectu, et caritas fide.”


62. Gerson, *Mys. Theol. Spec.*, 30th consideration (Combes, pp. 77-78): “Sed quoniam plerumque venit, etiam in brutis, ut ibi sit maius affectio uti parum est cognitionis, sequitur quod ad comparandam huius theologiam mysticam non est magna scientia opus, presertim acquisita. Nam cognitio ex fide quod Deus est totus desiderabilis, totus amabilis, affectiva portio, si purgata, <si illuminata>, si disposita, si exercitata sit, cur non in illum totaliter desiderabilem et totum amabilem, sine plurimo librorum studio, tota et una rapitur?”

63. Gerson, *Super Magnificat* (Glorieux, Vol. 8, p. 307): “Superest ostendere quod doctrinalis traditio theologiam mysticam non se extendit ad theologiam scolasticam, nec ab eadem diversa est vel seclusa, immo nec a vera philosophia.”

64. I.e., Pseudo-Dionysius. See n. 6 above.


66. See Vansteenberghe, *Autour*, pp. 189-201. In Codex Latinus Monacensis 19114, Vansteenberghe tells us, this treatise has as title simply “Tractatus cuiusdam Carthusiensi de Mystica Theologia.”


70. Vincent of Aggsbach, *ibid.* (Vansteenberghe, *Autour*, p. 193). In the exposition above I have reconstructed the order of Vincent’s objections.


79. When Vincent here (Vansteenberghe, *Autour*, p. 198) mentions Gerson's *De 12 Industriis*, he is referring to *Mys. Theol. Prac.* In the present instance he is citing the 12th consideration (Combes, p. 211).
92. Vincent here draws upon Hugh of Balma's distinction between *via purgativa*, *via illuminativa*, and *via unitiva*.
94. Nicholas of Cusa, Letters 4 and 5 in Vansteenberghe's *Autour*, pp. 111-117 (especially 112 and 115).
95. See Nicholas, Letter 5 (Vansteenberghe, *Autour*, p. 114). Nicholas declares that Dionysius, in his treatise on mystical theology, was of this same opinion. Cf. Dionysius's *De Mystica Theologia*, Chap. 1, Sec. 2 (*Dionysiaca*, op. cit., Vol. 1, pp. 571-572).
96. II Cor. 11:14. Vansteenberghe, *Autour*, p. 115. Regarding the point made in the text marked by the present note, Nicholas and Gerson are in disagreement.
"Nichil enim incognitum amatur." Also note Letter 16 from Nicholas to Bernard of Waging (Autour, pp. 134-135): "Qui attendit Deum esse obiectum anime rationalis, et tam intellectus quam voluntatis, ille ad coincidencias se convertit, et dicit: Deus qui est superbonum et superverum, vis boni et veri, non attingitur uti est, nisi supra omne id quod intelligentur pariter et amatur, quamvis dum nos ad ipsum accedimus non possimus nisi querendo accedere. Quere autem sine intelligere et amare non est. Amamus bonum et querimus quid sit quod amamus, et tamen, ut ait Augustinus, neque quereremus si penitus ignoraremus quia et inventum ignorantemus. Amor igitur boni sine omni boni notitia non est; et notitia sine amore non est."

98. Letter 4, Sept. 22, 1452 (Vansteenberghe, Autour, pp. 111-113). Also see the sermon excerpt ("Suscepimus deus misericordiam tuam") at the bottom of fol. 91' and the top of 92' in Vol. II of the Paris edition of Nicholas's works.


100. Gerson, Elucidatio Scolastica, 11th consideration (Combes, p. 231): "Sed aliunde deducitur consideratio presens, notando quod omnis apprehensio vel motio intellectualis, sive de Deo sive de aliis, dici potest cognitio, ymmo et visio per illum modum loquendi quo utimur de sensibus exterioribus, ubi omnis sensatio visio nominatur . . . ."

During the penultimate stage of mystical ascent, just prior to the possible experience of union, the soul entertains the concept of God as Inconceivable Infinity, according to Nicholas's version of theologia mystica. This conception Nicholas considers to be a "cognitive" element. But during the experience-of-union itself there is, Nicholas professes, a further cognitive element: viz., the soul's knowledge that it is united with God (whose nature remains, however, unknowable and—positively—inconceivable to it). Mystical experience is never regarded by Nicholas as evidence either establishing or confirming the existence of God. For the degree of belief requisite to mystical experience is supposedly so great and so commitment-filled that the idea of regarding the subsequent experience as evidential is totally foreign to him. Similarly, he nowhere aims to set forth criteria for distinguishing veridical from nonveridical experience of God. Nor, for that matter, do any of the major mystics—whether speculative or nonspeculative—propose "adequate" criteria. Regarding St. Teresa, for example, see George Mavrodès' important article "Real v. Deceptive Mystical Experiences," pp. 235-258 of Mysticism and Philosophical Analysis, edited by Steven Katz (London: Sheldon Press, 1978).

In DI, Nicholas was not yet deeply influenced by Dionysius's views on mystical theology. This fact is evidenced by DI III, 11, where a believer's mystical ascent unto God is characterized in less radical terms than it is in Ap., in DVD, in the correspondence with the Tegernsee monks, and in DP. Ap. 12 indicates that at the time of writing DI, Nicholas had just become familiar with Dionysius's writings. Also testifying to such familiarity is Sermon 20 ("Nomen eius Jesus"), delivered on Jan. 1, 1439.


103. That is, the copying was finished on this date.


106. DVD 10 (41:9).


110. I.e., "I see." Note NA 23 (104:12-13). DVD 1 (6:6); 5 (18:3); 8 (33:1).

111. NA 23 (104:15-17).

112. II Chron. 16:9 (King James version).

113. Ps. 138:7-10 (Douay version).


115. Note the *incipit*, for DVD, in Codex Latinus Monacensis 14213 and in the Paris edition (1514).

116. Cf. DP 41:19-20: "For, assuredly, God is not able to be conceived unless all that is able to be conceived is actually conceived."

117. Faith, teaches Nicholas, is a prerequisite to enrapturing love: "Non est amor Dei qui rapiat in Deum amantem, nisi credatur Christo qui revelavit ea que apud patrem vidit . . . ." Letter 4, Nicholas to Caspar (Vansteenberghe, *Autour*, p. 112).

118. Ps. 27:4 (King James version).


120. See the references to *pulchritudo* in *Dionysiac*, op. cit., Vol. I (1937) and Vol. II (1950). Note especially Dionysius's *De Mystica Theologia*, Chap. 1, Sec. 1.

121. DVD 6 (21:10-13).

122. DVD 6 (21:16-17).

123. See n. 116 above. Also note the crucial opening passage in DVD 13 (52-53). See DI 1, 26 (88:16-20) and *Cribratio Alkoran* II, I (p. 463 of Vol. II of P.
Notes to the Interpretive Study

Wilpert's reissue of the Strasburg edition), where Nicholas says that God is knowable only to Himself. It follows that He is conceivable to Himself.

125. *DVD* 6 (22:1).
127. *DVD* 6 (22:20-22). The italics that are added here are not present in the translation facing the Latin text, in Part II of the present work.

128. Gerson, *Super Magnificat*, 7th tractate (Glorieux, Vol. 8, p. 312). Gerson appears to endorse the example. In effect, Nicholas himself endorses it in *DI* III, 11 but not in his later accounts of mystical theology. See n. 101 above and n. 521 below.

129. Gerson, *loc. cit.*: “Constat quod oculus satagens inspicere solem, non intuebitur nisi caliginem, quamvis inde suscipiat obliquam solis irradiationem. Ali- quin non videret oculus illam caliginem, radiatione hujusmodi non extante.”


131. Cf. *DVD* 1 (7:1-3): "But God, insofar as He is true Uncontracted Sight, is not sight that is less than the intellect can conceive abstract sight to be; rather, He is incomparably more perfect Sight." Also note *DVD* 12 (51:8-9): "You are not creator but are infinitely more than creator." Finally, see *DI* I, 18 (54:10-12). The *via superexcellentiae* is, for Nicholas, an extension of the *via negativa*, since terms such as "supersubstantial" and "supergood" are regarded as *negations*.

132. *DP* 74.

134. Nonetheless, Nicholas maintains that "by *negation* we pursue the truer way, since He whom we seek is incomprehensible and infinite" (DP 66:2-4). Cf. *De Beryllio* 11 (12:13-16): "Recte igitur ... Plato omnia de ipso principio negat. Sic et Dionysius noster negativam praefert theologiam affirmativae." *De Filiatione Dei* 6 (84:12-15): "Nec verius hic dicit, qui ait deum omnia esse, quam ille, qui ait ipsum nihil esse aut non esse, cum sciat deum super omnem affirmationem et negationem ineffabilem ... ."


136. Note *Cribratio Alkoran* II, 1 (p. 463 of Vol. II of Wilpert's reissue of the Strasburg edition): "Illud autem pricipium [i.e., deus] potest considerari sine respectu ad principiata, ut non plus sit principium quam non principium ea consideratione est penitus infinitum et interminum, incomprehensibile et ineffabile, tunc certe cum excedat omnem sensum et omnem intellectum et omne nomen et omne nominabile, nec diciur unus nec trinus nec bonus nec sapiens nec pater nec
filius nec spiritussanctus, et ita de omnibus que dici aut cogitari possunt, ut dyonis-
sius ariopagita hoc astrastr, quoniam omnia talia nomina excellit et antecessit in
infinitum, sic manet absconditus ab oculis omnium sapientum, et nulli creature sed
sibi tantum cognitus, et hoc tantum de ipso cognoscimus quod ipse est ipsa infinitas
excedens omnem creatum intellectum infinite, eo modo cum de ipso nihil propri-
dici et affirmari possit quod non excedat, in silentio tantum admiramus et con-
templamus et colimus . . . .

137. Erigena [De Divisione Naturae IV.7 (PL 122:71)] denies that God has a
nature: not even God knows what He is, because there is no quiddity in God. Nicholas
does not subscribe to Erigena’s doctrine. Instead, he maintains that God defines
Himself and all things [NA I (5:6-9); also Prop. 12], and that God is
known only to Himself [DI I, 26 (88:19-20). Cribratio Alkoran II, 1. DP 30:2-3].
So when he states that what God is is incomprehensible (Sermon I, “Fides autem
catholica,” Sec. 32, Opera Omnia XVI, p. 70), he means that it is incomprehensible
to finite minds, not that it is incomprehensible to God. Nicholas speaks of God as
the Divine Nature [VS 21 (62:5)]. Moreover, in VS 29 (87:25-26), he also speaks of
Him as the Divine Essence: “Divina enim essentia cum sit incognita, consequens
est nullam rerum essentiam cognitione posse comprehendi.” The Divine Essence,
which is the Essence of all essences, is nonetheless not essence in any sense ana-
logous to what is meant in speaking of finite essences. “Essence of all essences” is
thus a symbolic expression that signifies God’s superessentiality [Dionysius, De
Mystica Theologia, Chap. 1, Sec. 3 (Dionysiaca, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 573); cf. NA 14
(71:7); 10 (39); 8 (27)].

Even Meister Eckhart spoke of God as having a nature; “Hätte Sankt Peter
Gott unmittelbar in seiner Natur geschaut, wie er es späterhin tat und wie Sankt
Paulus, als er in den dritten Himmel verzückt ward . . . .” [German Sermon 28
Deutsche Predigten und Traktate, edited and translated into high German by Josef
Quint (Munich: C. Hanser, 1955)]. In a contemporary vein, see Alvin Plantinga’s

138. DVD 12 (51:4-6).

139. DVD 13 (52:3-5).

140. DVD 13 (54:11-14). Cf. the reasoning in DP 3: “When in seeing what is
perceptible I understand that it exists from a higher power (since it is finite, and a
finite thing cannot exist from itself; for how could what is finite have set its own
limit?), then I can only regard as invisible and eternal this Power from which it
exists.”


142. DVD 13 (54:7-10). Nicholas uses “end” in a twofold sense: God is delimit-
tor of all finite beings and God is, ultimately, the goal of every intellect’s desire.
Cf. DVD 16 (72-73).

143. DI II, 11 (157:23-26).

144. Cf. the dialogue N.A., where Nicholas attempts to understand how God,
as Not-other, is the definition of all things.

145. DVD 13 (58:11).
146. We can imagine what it might be like to transcend our own limited perspective or what it would be like to behold a thing from several perspectives at once. But we cannot imagine what it would be like to behold a thing from all possible perspectives at once and with all possible “instruments” (e.g., through the eye of a bee, an owl, a dog, etc.). Nicholas’s point is that there is no comparative relationship between the several imaginable perspectives and the infinity of perspectives. Strictly speaking, according to Nicholas, God’s infinity of perspective is identical with His transcendence of all perspective.


149. *DP* 75:5-6. Also note *DP* 31:11-12. *DVD* 24 (108:18; 109:14). Cf. *DVD* 19 (86:12-13). Note *DVD* 21 (94:9-11): “You, Jesus, are the Revelation of the Father. For the Father is invisible to all men; He is visible only to You, His Son, and, subsequent to You, to one who will merit to see Him through You and by Your revelation.”


152. *DP* 34:8-10: “Purity of heart is the preparation which is necessarily required of the believer who wills to see God.”


154. *DVD* 19 (86:11-12). Cf. *DVD* 25 (113:10-11): “You enrapture me, in order that I may transcend myself and foresee the glorious place to which You invite me.” This rapture is purported to accompany *speculation* and *discernment*. It is not the rapture of mystical *experience*, of mystical *union*—a rapture which comes when one actually transcends himself. Note Gerson’s distinction between kinds of rapture [*Mys. Theol. Spec.*, 37th-39th considerations (Combes, pp. 99-102)]. And see Sec. 7.1 of Part I of the present work.

155. Douay version.


157. *De Filiatione Dei* 3 (62:3).


162. Regarding the identity of Truth itself with the Word, see *DVD* 22 (99:15); *De Filiatione Dei* 3 (67:13-14); *DP* 75:10. Also note *De Filiatione Dei* 3
Notes to the Interpretive Study

(65:2-5), where “altissima resplendentia . . . dei gloriosi” refers to Christ.

163. That De Filiatione Dei deals with the eschatological state is clear from many considerations. Note, for example, 2 (61:20-21): “Tali quadam licet remotissima similitudine gaudium est filiis dei absque intermissione . . . .” Similarly, the mastery (magisterium) that Nicholas discusses in 2 (56-61) can be eternally possessed (cf. 60:3-4) only in the future state.

164. De Filiatione Dei 3 (62:4-8): “Arbitror te satis intellexisse veritatem in alio non nisi aliter posse comprehendi. Sed cum illi modi theophanici sint intelectuales, tune deus etsi non uti ipse est attingitur, intuebitur tamen sine omni aestigmatique phantasmate in puritate spiritus intellectualis, et haec ipsi intellectui clara est atque facialis visio.” That Nicholas distinguishes Christ, who is Truth itself, from God as He is in Himself is evident from the following passage in De Filiatione Dei 3 (63:5-9): “Veritas ipsa non est deus ut in se triumphat, sed est modus quidem dei, quo intellectui in aeterna vita communicabilis exsistit. Nam deus in se triumphans nec est intelligibilis aut scibilis, nec est veritas nec vita, nec est, sed omne intelligibile antecedit ut unum simplicissimum principium” (punctuation slightly modified by me).

166. De Filiatione Dei 3 (65-67).
167. Col. 3:11.
168. De Filiatione Dei 3 (69:21-22); cf. 3 (69:5).
169. Ibid., 3 (69:1-5). See n. 173 below.
170. Ibid., 3 (70:6).
171. Ibid., 3 (71:5-6). N.B.: Nicholas distinguishes intellect (intellectus) from reason (ratio). Accordingly, rational considerations and intellectual considerations are not the same thing.
172. Ibid., 6 (86:5-9).
173. Ibid., 6 (87). Note that Nicholas is appropriating for his own purposes the Aristotelian doctrine that the intellect must become like an object if it is to know it.
174. DP 38:6-15. Also note DVD 7 (26:5).
175. DI III, 11 (252:11-14). In DI Nicholas concentrates his discussion more upon the pilgrim's pathway. In De Filiatione Dei he concentrates more upon the future state. Nicholas seems to allow that even on this earthly pathway there is the possibility of attaining, through mystical theology, a vision of the risen Christ—a vision which would illuminate the pilgrim's intellectual darkness (cf. DP 75). But such a vision is generally reserved for the heavenly state. When Nicholas says that in the heavenly state God will be seen as He is, he means that the believer will see God as He is in Christ, not as He is in Himself. And when he states that Christ, or Truth, will be seen as He is, He means that Christ, who is God, will be seen by the human intellect apart from sensible images and sensible symbols, though the essence of His deity will, necessarily, remain hidden. Cf. n. 164 above. By contrast, Aquinas teaches that in the next life the believer's intellect will behold (but not comprehend) the essence of God (Summa Theologiae Ia.12.1).

These distinctions help elucidate an apparent contradiction. For in a sermon
delivered in 1431 (Sermon 4, "Fides autem catholica," Sec. 32, p. 70 of Opera Omnia XVI) we find: "Hold fast to the following: that in the earthly state we can know that God is; in the heavenly state we can know Him as He is; but neither here nor there can we ever know what He is, because He is incomprehensible." By contrast, we find in De Filiatione Dei 3 (62:6): "... although God is not attained as He is ..." Also cf. Sermon 32, "In nomine Jesu," Sec. 1, lines 7-16, on p. 52 of Opera Omnia XVII, with Sermon 29, "Acceptatis," Sec. 11, lines 22-24, on p. 59 of Opera Omnia XVII.

Complementum Theologicum 2 (Paris edition, 2nd half of Vol. II, fol. 93) states: "The mind sees only the existence, not the essence, of Truth itself, through which Truth it sees itself and all other things." According to De Filiatione Dei 3 (63:5-8) Truth is not God as He is in Himself but is an intelligible mode of God. In apprehending Christ as God, the believer does not thereby either know or conceive God as He is in Himself. The believer's face-to-face vision of God—a vision that Nicholas calls immediate—is the nonsensory, intellectual vision of God-in-Christ: "In this rapture ... the believer sees Christ in his own self apart from a symbolism" (DP 39:10-11).
allem, dass Eckharts lateinische Schriften keineswegs zu den primären Quellen Cusanischen Denkens gehören. Ihre Benutzung lässt sich mit Sicherheit erst seit der Mitte der vierziger Jahre nachweisen; insbesondere üben sie erst in den fünfziger Jahren einen tiefergehenden Einfluss auf die Predigten des Cusanus aus."


197. Nicholas goes as far as to say that in the state of sonship the intellect is so Christlike that it is both God and all things insofar as it has become perfect [*De Filiatione Dei* 2 (58:6-12)]. Moreover, he adds that in this state God is present in the intellect as the intellect [*De Filiatione Dei* 6 (86:6-9)]. Both of these declarations echo Meister Eckhart.

198. *DVD* 7 (25).


202. This point is not defeated by a citing of Nicholas's *Cribratio Alkoran* II, 10 (Vol. II, p. 471 of the reissue of the Strasburg edition by P. Wilpert): "Adhuc attende non ita dicimus esse plures humanitates sicut plures homines, sic non est idem humanitas et homo, sed idem est deitas et deus propter simplicissimam essentiam divinam. Unde sicut non sunt plures deitates, ita nec plures deus 

203. I have modified slightly the punctuation of the text as found in the Heidelberg Academy's critical edition.


205. *DVD* 10 (42:1-5). At *DVD* 41:10-11 Nicholas writes: "If they [i.e., creatures] were not to see You, who see [them], they would not receive being from You."

207. Nicholas’s example has too often been misinterpreted as indicating that in created objects the human intellect can apprehend God as God. Because the example occurs in De Visione Dei, it has been construed as a constitutive part of his speculative mystical theology rather than of his nonmystical speculative theology. Ernst Hoffmann (p. 1044 of his “Gottesschau bei Meister Eckehart und Nikolaus von Cues,” cited in the bibliography) understands the example to teach at least three points: (1) that the one who speculates can see, in the tree, God as tree; (2) that in the tree, which is an image of the Exemplar, the Exemplar as Exemplar can be seen; (3) that the tree derives from God in accordance with a Spinozistic-like logical necessity. Yet, contrary to Hoffmann’s interpretation, none of these points are present in, or elicitable from, DVD 7. Hoffmann also misconstrues Eckhart’s conception of God and creation when he interprets Eckhart as meaning: “Gott der Schöpfer und das, was er geschaffen hat, sind so untrennbar von einander, dass es im Grunde dasselbe ist, ob Gott der Schöpfer des Geschaffenen oder ob das Geschaffene der Schöpfer Gottes heisst. Der christlich-dogmatische Radikalschnitt zwischen Creator und Creatura wird aufgehoben” (ibid., p. 1035). Cf. Nicholas of Cusa, Ap. 25.

208. DVD 19 (86:8-11).

209. Similarly, Nicholas conveys the impression that the person of Jesus is distinct from the person of God the Son, when he writes: “The Father attracts Your humanity, O Jesus, through His Son . . . .” DVD 21 (94:3).


212. DVD 23 (100:4-5).

213. Or, if the indefinite article is excluded, the sentence will sound as if Nicholas meant that human nature as such was deified and that Jesus is unindiv- uated Man. See Emma Salter’s translation as signaled by n. 296 below. Cf. n. 463 below, regarding Hans Blumenberg’s corresponding mistake.


216. DVD 19 (86).

217. DVD 19 (86:16-23).

218. Cf. DVD 19 (87) with 20 (89).

219. DVD 23 (100:15-18): “O most sweet Jesus, You cannot be said, either, to
be the uniting medium between the divine nature and the human nature, since between the two natures there cannot be posited a middle nature that participates in both. For the divine nature cannot be participated in, because it is completely and absolutely most simple."

220. DVD 20 (90:1-3).

221. DVD 20 (90:4-6). At DVD 22 (96:12) Nicholas repeats his claim that Jesus qua a perfect man knew everything knowable. But at 20 (91:5-7) he qualifies this assertion: Jesus knew everything that can be known by men. At 20 (91:11-12) he makes the same qualification with regard to Jesus's understanding.

222. DVD 21 (94:3-7).

223. DVD 21 (93:9-11). In another sense, God's Spirit is not lacking to any spirit, says Nicholas, because it is the Spirit of spirits [DVD 25 (111:1-2)].

224. Cf. DI III, 8 (228:23-26): “Therefore, all shall arise through Christ, but not all shall arise as Christ and in Christ through union; rather, only those who are Christ's through faith, hope, and love [shall so arise].”

225. DVD 20 (89:6-8).


228. See n. 130 above.

229. DI I, 11 (30:14-17).

230. The Maximal Image is God the Son, i.e., the Word of God, who is called in Scripture “the image of the invisible God” (Col. 1:15). Cf. DVD 25 (112:3-4 and 7-9). Regarding the finitude of Jesus' humanity, note DI III, 3 (202:11-12), where this humanity is spoken of as created.

231. DVD 20 (89:11-16).

232. Regarding this incoherence, see the reference cited in n. 215 above.

We know that Nicholas uses “absolutus” in many different senses. (Cf. p. 103 of my Nicholas of Cusa's Metaphysic of Contraction.) Sometimes that which he labels as absolute is understood by him to be only qualifiedly absolute, whereas at other times he means unqualifiedly absolute. In De Genesi 4 (173:7), for example, the expression “absoluta quiditas” does not refer to God, even though in Ap. 33:21-22 it does refer to Him. With this complexity of terminology in mind, we might want to construe “humanitas plurimum absoluta” to mean, in DI III, 7, humanity insofar as it is uncontracted to any individual of the species. But even on this construal Nicholas's argument in DI III, 7 remains incoherent. For given this construal, humanitas plurimum absoluta would not be Jesus's humanity, and thus Jesus's humanity would not be as a medium between what is purely absolute and what is purely contracted. But suppose Nicholas had said: 'In Christ humanity is both contracted and fully absolute. It is contracted insofar as it is Christ's humanity; and it is fully absolute humanity insofar as it is uncontracted to any individual of the species. Therefore, in Christ humanity is as a medium between the purely absolute and the purely contracted.' Even putting this most charitable of all interpretations upon the passage in DI III, 7 (125), we still cannot free Nicholas's thought from an incoherence. For since in Christ the humanity, or human nature, in question is always subsumed in the divinity, or divine nature,
Notes to the Interpretive Study

either it is Christ's human nature or it is not. It cannot at once be both human nature that is Christ's and human nature that is no one's (though it could at once be both Christ's human nature and, qua in God, God—i.e., qua in God, not be human nature at all). And so, it cannot be as a medium between the purely absolute and the purely contracted.

The four criticisms of Nicholas's Christology made by Jacques Doyon are indefensible. (See his "La christologie de Nicolas de Cues," cited in the bibliography.) Doyon begins by impugning what he takes to be one of the key points in Nicholas's Christology: viz., its alleged espousal of exaggerated realism. In particular, Doyon alludes to Nicholas's "Platonistic thesis regarding the requirement of a maximum in a species and regarding the participation of all the individuals in this maximum, which is not an abstract idea but a very real individual that hypostatizes the species—a thesis which has been called 'exaggerated realism'" (pp. 185-186). Doyon should explain carefully just what doctrine exaggerated realists propound; then he should state accurately what Nicholas's position on this issue is; and, finally, he should indicate what exactly is objectionable in Nicholas's view. To dismiss a view simply on the basis of assigning it the vague label "exaggerated realism" is unacceptable. Now, Nicholas's doctrine of universals in Book III of DI should be interpreted in the light of his explicit statements in DI II, 6 (126)—statements which show that, in general, he is a moderate realist. Nicholas obviously regards the case of Jesus as an exception. But even with respect to this exception he holds that the maximum individual exists above the species as the essence of all the perfection that is possible within the species, so that it is actually all this perfection [DI III, 2 (190-191)]. Thus, this maximum individual which is the fullness-of-perfection of the species is the final goal of the species. Now, Nicholas maintains that species and genera exist actually only in individuals [DI III, 3 (184:5-6); see also III, 5 (208:5-7)]. So in every existing substance a genus and a species are actually present—in the sense that these individual things have individuated natures that belong to one and the same species and, therefore, to one and the same genus. Yet, no one of these individuated natures is the species to which it belongs. In Christ, the maximum individual, there is present the entire perfection of the species to which Christ belongs and to which, at the same time, He is transcendent. Thus, although human nature is present in Christ, Christ's human nature is numerically distinct from the human natures of other members of the human species [DI III, 3 (199:1-3): "Now, humanity is present only contractedly in this or that. Therefore, it would not be possible that more than one true human being could ascend to union with Maximality."

III, 7 (225:1-4): "Assist your smallness of intellect and your ignorance by Christ's example about the grain of wheat. In this example the numerical distinctness of the grain is destroyed, while the specific essence remains intact; by this means nature raises up many grains." III, 8 (227:12-16): "But there is only one indivisible humanity and specific essence of all human beings. Through it all individual human beings are numerically distinct human beings, so that Christ and all human beings have the same humanity, though the numerical distinctness of the individuals remains unconfused." III, 8 (228:1-5 and 12-13): "And although there is a single humanity of all human beings, there are
Notes to the Interpretive Study

various individuating principles which contract it to this or that person—so that in Jesus Christ there were only the most perfect and powerful principles and those nearest to the essence of the humanity that was united with the divinity . . . . Christ is the one through whom, according to the nature of His humanity, our human nature has contracted immortality . . . ”. Accordingly, although all human beings are one in species, it would be incorrect to ascribe to Nicholas the doctrine that human nature is hypostatized in Christ, if “hypostatized” has a meaning that is at odds with the position of moderate realism. For according to Nicholas, Jesus assumed a contracted human nature, not an uncontracted human nature [DI III, 3 (202:6-17)]. In DI he goes on to add the qualification that Jesus’s human nature is as a medium between what is purely contracted and what is purely absolute, so that Jesus’s human nature is “the universal contraction of all things” (loc. cit.), not just of human beings. This is the point at which the incoherence of his position—which is not a variant of exaggerated realism—begins. [The doctrine of exaggerated realism, not defined by Doyon, is usually regarded as entailing that there is one universal human nature, which is wholly identical with the species, or essence, and which, though present in each human being, is numerically one in them all. (The same point applies, mutatis mutandis, with respect to the other species besides the human species.) But Nicholas holds that Jesus’s human nature—of which, necessarily, his rational soul and his body are components—is distinct from the human natures of other men. Cf. DVD 23 (101:1-10 and 102:14-16)—with which DI III, 3 (302:14-17) is not at odds. In the Apologia Nicholas rightly repudiates Wenck’s accusation that he “universalizes.” Doyon, whether willingly or unwittingly, aligns himself with Wenck.]

In his second criticism Doyon states: “The other thesis—that of the coincidence of opposites in the absolute because the maxima can no longer exclude one another—seems clear when one takes the mathematical examples which Nicholas favors. But it becomes debatable if one generalizes it. Reason is something other than a maximal sensibility, and the most intelligent blind man would remain deprived of sight” (Doyon, p. 186). Here Doyon misconstrues the doctrine of coincidentia oppositorum. According to Nicholas the doctrine does not apply to contracted things—no one of which is absolutely maximal—but applies only to Absolute Maximality itself. (But note the qualification expressed in n. 19 of the Notes to Book Three, in my Nicholas of Cusa on Learned Ignorance.) Absolutely maximal sensibility would no longer be sensibility; for in God, who is Absolute Maximality, everything is God. Opposites coincide only in God, says Nicholas. And a blind man—be he ever so intelligent—is not God.

Thirdly, Doyon misconceives the structure of Nicholas’s reasoning in DI III: “in the logic of the [Cusan] system, ‘it is necessary’ that Jesus be born of a virgin mother, that He die amid sufferings, that He be resurrected, that He be the Universal Judge and the Mediator-of-salvation of all. This ‘it is necessary’ dispenses with the need to investigate by means of positive proofs whether the facts of the matter have been such. Or if the facts are of interest to us, it is uniquely as ‘a posteriori’ confirmation of an ‘a priori’ argument” (Doyon, p. 186). Doyon detects here a danger: viz., “that of giving, within the faith, greater importance to syste-
matic thought and to human logic than to tradition and to the Word of God"—the
danger of "an insensitivity to history" (loc. cit.). Yet, in DI III Nicholas allows
adequate room for historical factors. Indeed, his hypothetical line of reasoning ("If
a maximum which is contracted to a species could be posited as actually existing,
then . . . ") is only complete when it takes account of the historical evidence ("On
the basis of what Jesus, who was a man, divinely and suprahumanly wrought and
and on the basis of other things which He, who is found to be true in all respects,
affirmed about Himself—[things to which] those who lived with Him bore witness
with their own blood and with an unalterable steadfastness that was formerly
attested to by countless infallible considerations—we justifiably assert that . . . ").
To elaborate upon these historical considerations is not a part of Nicholas's pur-
pose in DI III, any more than it was a part of Anselm of Canterbury's purpose to
present such an elaboration in the Cur Deus Homo. Like Anselm, Nicholas
regards these considerations as important; but unlike Anselm he does not consider
his line of reasoning to prove the truth of "whatever is contained in the Old and in
the New Testament" (Cur Deus Homo II, 22). Nor does he adhere to the method
of proof rationibus necessariis.

Fourthly, in alluding to works other than DI Doyon complains: "It is this
infinite wisdom itself, possessed by Jesus, which serves as Nicholas's usual argu-
ment for establishing the divinity of Christ. Because Christ is Infinite Wisdom, He
is both the equal of God and the Son of God. This Neoplatonic Christology has
the obvious disadvantage of neglecting almost completely Jesus the prophet and
public man who—in the name of a kingdom of justice and love, and in the tradi-
tion of the prophets of Israel—takes the side of the poor, the weak, and the explo-
ted" (Doyon, pp. 186-187). In fact, however, Nicholas does not attempt to estab-
lish the divinity of Christ by arguing from Jesus's infinite wisdom. Indeed, within
Nicholas's system, Jesus's wisdom is deemed to be infinite because Jesus is deemed
to be divine, so that there can be no question of arguing from the infinity of the
wisdom to the deity and sonship of Christ. [Cf. the selection from the sermon "Qui
manducat hunc panem" in Vol. II of the Paris edition of Nicholas's works—in
particular, all the lines on fol. 108' that precede the new paragraph. Even in De
Sapientia I Jesus is not proven to be divine by appeal to the infinity of His wis-
dom; instead, God's Infinite Wisdom is simply asserted to be the Son. Finally,
there is no such proof in De Pace Fidei either.] Moreover, Nicholas does not
neglect Jesus's mission as prophet and as defender of the poor. (See "Qui mandu-
cat . . . ", ibid., fol. 106'-110'.) But the place to look for his concern is not in De
Concordantia, De Docta Ignorantia, De Pace Fidei, or De Visione Dei but in the
sermons, which Doyon, in his article, roundly ignores.

233. DVD 23 (101:1-2).

234. Just as Nicholas does not claim to understand how Jesus can be one
person with two natures, so he does not claim to understand how from Absolute
Perfection there could originate a world of mere contingent perfection (DI II, 2) or
how the Maximum can enfold and unfold all things (DI II, 3)—and so on. Yet, on
the basis of the diverse considerations that he offers, he supposes himself to under-
stand that these doctrines are true. Unlike Kierkegaard he does not expatiate upon
the theme of paradox. He is content to affirm that the Incarnation is a mystery, super omnem intellectum. His use of paradoxical expression does not center upon the mystery of trinity, creation, and incarnation. Yet, the kinds of paradoxical utterances that he employs are such that when translated into nonparadoxical discourse, the mysteries remain mysteries (i.e., remain paradoxes in Kierkegaard’s sense). For example, when a statement such as “God is all in all and nothing in nothing” is translated into an equivalent nonparadoxical expression or set of expressions, the mystery of how God can be both transcendent and immanent will remain. N.B. DVD 21 (92:4-7).


237. DVD 6 (20:4-10).

238. DVD 15 (67:7-13).


240. Cf. DI 1, 24 (77:1-7).


244. This point has sometimes been misunderstood. See the critique of Walter Schulz in Chapter One of my Nicholas of Cusa’s Metaphysic of Contraction (Minneapolis: The Arthur J. Banning Press, 1983).

245. DVD 15 (70:1-2).

246. DVD 6 (20:14-19).

247. DVD 13 (58:11).

248. DVD 4 (12:1).

249. DVD 25 (113:10).

250. DVD 23 (104:8).

251. DVD 9 (37).

252. DVD 12 (50).

253. DVD 12 (50:15-16).

254. DVD 13 (57:11-12).

255. DVD 17 (77:15).

256. DVD 17 (80:19).

257. E.g., DVD 9 (39:8).

258. De Deo Abscondito 15. Indeed, God is not even being, insofar as being is conceivable by us and is contrasted with not-being. De Deo Abscondito 11:1-5. DP 74:1-2.

259. Nicholas is here defending his preceding assertion: “Suppose we say that God is sun. If, as is correct, we construe this [statement] as [a statement] about a sun which is actually all it is able to be, then we see clearly that this sun is not at all like the sensible sun.”

260. Sometimes Nicholas says that contradictories coincide in God (Letter to
Cardinal Julian, at the end of DI 111) and sometimes he says that God is beyond the coincidence of contradictories [DVD 13 (54:14-15)]. These expressions are meant to be interchangeable. Note DP 74, which states both that in God opposites coincide and that God is above duality and otherness. Similarly in DVD 10 (43-44) Nicholas remarks both that all temporal succession coincides in one and the same now of eternity, in which God conceives, and that God exists beyond now and then. Note p. 219 of Kurt Flasch's Die Metaphysik des Einen bei Nikolaus von Kues. Problemgeschichtliche Stellung und systematische Bedeutung (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1973).

261. By contrast, mathematical objects are such that they can be conceived of as they are in themselves, for they can be conceived of in accordance with their respective definitions (DP 63:10-12).

262. DVD 12 (50:5-9). The translation above adds italics to the translation that appears later in Part II.

263. DVD 7 (26:13-14).

264. The word "dialectic" has many different uses. Socratic dialectic proceeds by asking questions and eliciting answers, toward the end of arriving at definitions of ethical terms. Since Socrates often trapped the Sophists into answering his questions in such way that, in answering, they contradicted the very thesis they had begun by propounding, dialectic became associated with the notion of contradiction. This association became accentuated by Plato's reasoning in the Parmenides, where a series of inconsistent conclusions are "demonstrated" to be true (e.g., that if the One is existent then it is a plurality and that if it is existent then it is not a plurality). In Topics I, 11 Aristotle construes the subject-matter of a dialectical problem as something (1) about which most people have no special opinion one way or the other, or else (2) about which they have an opinion that is at odds with the opinion of the wise, or else (3) about which, though there are opinions, there is no general agreement of opinion within either class (i.e., the class of polloi and the class of sophoi). By way of example he offers the puzzle about whether or not the universe is eternal. In the eighteenth century this very puzzle is one that Kant deals with in the section of his Critique of Pure Reason called "Transcendental Dialectic." He regards as dialectical reasoning any reasoning that infers, by "valid" logical deductions, two inconsistent conclusions—elicting one of them from a given assumption and the other from the contradictory of the given assumption. On the one hand, for example, he postulates that the world is without a beginning in time; and herefrom he deduces an impossibility, thereby warranting the conclusion that the world has a beginning in time. On the other hand, he postulates that the world has a beginning in time, and herefrom he deduces an impossibility, thereby warranting the conclusion that the world is without a beginning in time. Hegelian dialectic builds upon the notion of contradictoriness by regarding the triad of thesis-antithesis-synthesis in such way that the antithesis is the negation of the thesis and that the synthesis (which is the negation of a negation) somehow resolves the contradiction, thereby becoming a new thesis that generates a new antithesis, and so on. With Kierkegaard, dialectical reasoning emphasizes conceptual theses and antitheses for which, purportedly, there can be no resolution. For
example, even when the believer receives "eternal life," he does not thereby become
timeless; time and eternity are irreducible to each other—though, paradoxically,
the eternal can be present in time. Whereas Kierkegaard stresses the irreducibility
of certain conceptual opposites, Hegel stresses the dynamic impulses generated by
the opposition. Thus, Kierkegaard emphasizes the incomprehensibility of the
Incarnation, whereas Hegel emphasizes the manifestation of the Infinite through
the finitude of the historical Jesus.

N.B.: There are, of course, other senses of "dialectic" that have nothing special
to do with the notion of opposition. E.g., sometimes the word is used merely to
indicate various rules for the art of arguing or simply to indicate the branch of
learning that deals with disputing well. This last sense is the one operative in Augustine's (?) De Dialectica: "Dialectica est bene disputandi scientia."

265. See n. 234 above.

266. Kierkegaard's anti-Hegelianism should not be mistaken for anti-specula-
tiveness in an unqualified sense. Likewise Nicholas's dialectic must not be confused
with his doctrine of coincidentia oppositorum in deo. The latter teaches that, e.g.,
necessity and impossibility coincide in God [see DVD 9 (39) and n. 260 above],
who is, absolutely speaking, without modal differentiation. However, Nicholas rea-
sons dialectically when he speaks of God by means of opposing metaphors, as
when he calls God both his Exemplar and his image.

267. DVD 2 (8:14-15).
268. DVD 9 (35:13).
269. DVD 9 (36:4).
270. DVD 13 (58:9-10).
271. DVD 13 (55:1).
272. DVD 21 (93:1-4).
273. Although Ms. Metz 355 was destroyed in Sept. 1944 as a result of
World War II, the Heidelberg Academy possesses a photocopy of the portion that
had contained DVD and other of Cusa's texts. Since the scribe for this portion of
Metz 355 used Munich 18570, there was no special need, in the preparation of the
present edition of DVD, to consult this photocopy. (See R. Klibansky's note on p.
XIX of Vol. VII of Nicolai de Cusa Opera Omnia.) Using a photocopy or a
microfilm is a pis-aller that is not without risk when uncheckable against the
original.

274. In some instances a redactor might be the original scribe himself, using a
different pen or a different texture of ink.

275. Giovanni Santinello considers C² to be Nicholas himself: "Le correzioni
autografe del Cusano su C, da noi segnate con la sigla C², sono avvenute in due
momenti successivi. Il microfilm del manoscritto non permette di distinguere dal
colore dell'inchiostro tali due momenti." See p. 50, Vol. II of his edition of Cusa's
Scritti filosofici (Bologne: Zanichelli, 1980).

276. Some mss. indicate in their incipit that the Prologus begins in 1:1 with
"Pandam nunc . . . . "

277. Cf. R. Klibansky's appraisal of the text of DI contained in Codex Cusa-
nus 218—an appraisal that is found on pp. 222-225 in the appendix to Vol. III of

278. According to its *explicit* it was copied on Nov. 8, 1453 at Brixen. It was not, however, the copy that was sent to Abbot Caspar at Tegernsee. For as we know from the Abbot's letter [Letter 8 in Vansteenberghen, *Autour, op. cit.*, p. 119], the copy received by him referred to the brothers as "*devoti*"—a word not found in the *incipit* of the text in *G* but found only in *E*, which was not copied until 1461, so that it too was not the copy received by the Abbot.

279. Certain relationships are, however, obvious. Codex *O* depends upon *M*; and *P* depends upon *O*. Codex *N* follows a ms. that depends upon *E*. Codices *C* and *V* are cognates, *V* perhaps having been copied from a lost ms. that resulted from *C*—as Santinello judges. And *p* depends upon the Strasbourg edition (1488), which depends upon *C*.


281. Other examples can be taken from other mss. For example, at 72:6 *G* has "*in mirabilis*" in place of "*innumerabilis*". In the variant readings for the present edition of the Latin text even simple errors of orthography are recorded. Accordingly, "*igitus*" is noted for *S* at 35:1, even though the copyist obviously intended to write "*igitur*"; similarly, "*fue*" is recorded for *I* at 96:9, even though "*sue*" was obviously intended.


283. The Basel edition itself is based upon the Paris edition (1514).

284. The reference "47:15-16" and all such subsequent references to *DVD* are to the margin and line numbers in the Latin text contained in Part II of this present work.

285. Another example occurs at *DVD* 15 (66:9-11), where the Basel and the Paris editions omit two sentences: "Posse esse materiae prima non est posse absolutum; ideo non potest cum actu absoluto converti. Quare materia prima non est actu quod esse potest, sicut tu deus."

286. On p. 17 Salter has "With Thee, to behold is to give life; 'tis unceasingly to impart . . . ." The word "only" is missing.

287. The editor of the Paris edition makes this decision for the reader by deviating from Codex Latinus Cusanus 219 in the following way: instead of "*quando non nisi omnis conatus meus est . . . .*" the Paris editor has "*quando omnis conatus meus non est nisi . . . .*" This reading is then repeated by the Basel editor. Salter has simply taken liberties here with the Basel text. These liberties do not result from a text-critical decision on her part but from a lack of precision in rendering the Basel text.

288. See n. 89 on p. 196 of J. Hopkins, *Nicholas of Cusa on Learned Ignorance, op. cit.*

289. "There cannot, then, be an infinite number of forms in act, for actual infinity is unity" (p. 71 of Salter's translation).
Notes to the Interpretive Study


291. Salter, p. 82. Basel text: “Non igitur est trium numenale distinctio, quia illa est essentialis . . . .”

292. Salter’s translation fails to take account of the crucial word “igitur”.

293. Salter, p. 97. Basel text: “Ostendis mihi lux indeficiens, maximam unionem, qua natura humana in Iesu, est tuae naturae divinae unita, non esse quovis modo, infinitae unioni similem.”

294. DVD 23 (100:15-17).


298. “So” here sounds as if it were a term of inference equivalent to “therefore”; in fact, however, Nicholas’s Latin word “ita” is here a term of comparison.

299. Salter, p. 100.


301. Salter, pp. 113-114.

302. In other contexts other inaccuracies on Salter’s part could be readily indicated: e.g., (1) the incorrect translation of (Basel) “ . . . ut prius sit animalis homo, quam spiritualis” [DVD 24 (106:10-11)] by the words “ . . . as if man were animal before he is spiritual” (Salter, p. 121); (2) the incorrect references to St. Austin instead of, correctly, to St. Augustine (Salter, pp. 115-116); the mistranslation of “discurrit” as “runneth hither and thither” rather than as “makes inferences” (DVD 22; Salter pp. 110-111).


306. Blumenberg, p. 483. Also note p. 540 (“For precisely in the implications of this concept of freedom, the Cusan’s acute concern regarding the disintegration of the Middle Ages becomes tangible”), p. 541 (“the Cusan’s conservative effort”), and n. 77 on p. 659 (“The authentic sense of the text is more ‘conservative,’ . . . .”)


308. See the critique of Rombach in my Nicholas of Cusa’s Metaphysic of Contraction, op. cit., Chap. 3.

309. See n. 305 above.

Notes to the Interpretive Study


311. In accordance with correct English grammar the words “much disputed” should be hyphenated when they modify a noun.

312. “Et sic concipis mundum, quo nulla quantitas maior, in puncto, quo nihil minus, contineri, et centrum atque circumferentiam eius non posse videri.”

313. DI II, 1 (96:1-8; 97:13-17). See the references in n. 35 on p. 200 of my translation Nicholas of Cusa on Learned Ignorance, op. cit.

314. There are also certain infelicities—as, for example, the following three: “the stars shine in order not to give light to man or to other beings but rather to fulfill their own nature”, p. 516 (instead of “the stars shine not in order to . . . ”).

In line 3 of n. 59 on p. 657 “infinita” is misprinted as “infinitia”, and in line 7 of n. 69 on p. 658 “erat” is misprinted as “erate”—though in each case the German edition has the correct spelling.

315. “Diese Art der Transzendenz ist also ein innergeschichtlicher Vorbehalt, ist eschatologisch aufhebbar und damit nicht ‘substantiell’” (German edition, p. 38). A less opaque translation would be “This sort of transcendence is thus a restricting condition within history . . . .”

316. “An dieser Stelle stößt sich ein platonisierender Exemplarismus mit dem der Souveränität der Gottheit vermeintlich geschuldeten Absolutismus des Willens . . . .” (German edition, p. 76). A more accurate translation would render “geschuldet” more freely: “In this passage, a Platonizing exemplarism conflicts with the absolutism-of-will that presumably belongs to the sovereignty of the Divinity . . . .”

317. The corresponding German text reads: “Gerade weil und wenn Gott solcher Selbstbezogenheit hingegeben war, musste sein Werk in höchstem Masse jedem Wesen das Seine geben” (German edition, p. 72). The English phrase “Precisely because and if it was the case that . . . .” is linguistically and conceptually bizarre. A better rendering would be “Precisely if it was the case—and it was—that . . . .” Better still would be, simpliciter: “Precisely because God . . . .” Moreover, “indulged . . . in behavior” has, as applied to deity, a pejorative resonance that is not present in the German; and God’s creating is not a behaving. Finally, “His work had in the highest degree to give to each being what belonged to it” reads as if “in the highest degree” modified “had”: God was in the highest degree obliged to give. But, actually, “in the highest degree” goes with “to give”: God had to give in the highest degree. In last analysis, then, the entire German sentence would be more accurately and intelligibly rendered into English as: “Precisely because God was given to such self-relatedness, His work had to bestow upon each being—and to do so in the highest degree—that which was proper to each.”

318. This passage is translated on p. 533 of the English edition.

319. The Paris edition—which is, presumably, the one used by Blumenberg—has: “Necessitares enim libertatem, cum tu non possis esse meus nisi et ego sim meipius; et quia hoc posuisti in libertate mea, non me necessitas sed expectas ut ego eligam meipius esse.” (Vol. I, folio 102v; I have modernized the punctuation.) In line 2 of n. 112 on p. 175 Blumenberg mistakenly has “respondens” instead of
"respondes".

320. Similarly, n. 28 on p. 654 of the English edition corrects n. 49 on p. 168 of the German edition. But nowhere does Wallace, the English translator, ever state that improvements have been undertaken in his edition.


322. All subsequent references à propos of Blumenberg will be to the English translation unless otherwise indicated.


325. Blumenberg, p. 523.

326. Blumenberg, p. 489.

327. Proslogion 15 must be read in connection with Proslogion 14, Monologion 65-66, and Reply to Gaunilo 8.


329. Blumenberg, p. 100.


331. Blumenberg, pp. 488-489.


334. Another striking example of a miscast comparison between Anselm and Nicholas of Cusa is Donald F. Duclow's "Anselm's Proslogion and Nicholas of Cusa's Wall of Paradise," the Downside Review, 100 (January 1982), 22-30. Duclow's principal point is, passez-moi l'expression, puerile: "The analogy between Cusanus and Anselm is now complete: Anselm's argument parallels Cusanus's wall of paradise in overcoming finite distinctions, and in insisting on the limit of thinking and on divine infinity. Cusanus's threefold pattern of finite, limit and infinite thus expresses the implicit structure of the Proslogion" (p. 26). To be sure, there are certain similarities between Anselm's Proslogion and Nicholas's DVD. Indeed, some of these similarities Duclow himself disregards; and, on the other hand, certain features which he regards as differences are really similarities. For example, he disregards the following consideration: in DVD (Chap. 17) Nicholas makes a point of affirming that God can be seen perfectly only as triune; similarly, in the Proslogion (Chap. 23), as also in the Monologion, Anselm includes triunity among the points that he is aiming to elucidate. On the other hand, Duclow attempts to mark a difference between Anselm's and Nicholas's view of human sinfulness as it relates to the vision of God: "Concerning the via negativa and divine transcendence, Cusanus claims that the divine nature is essentially hidden and unknowable. For Anselm, however, it is not only the excessive brilliance of God's light that renders
Notes to the Interpretive Study

it inaccessible, but also and primarily man’s fallen state which has weakened our vision of God . . .” (p. 26, final italics mine). But this comparison between Anselm and Nicholas is partly miscast—a fact that is easily recognizable once Duclow’s word “primarily” is deleted, a word whose presence is not justified on the basis of Proslogion 14-17, the section educed by Duclow as documentation. For Nicholas himself maintains that man’s vision of God is weakened because of the human condition of sin. In DVD 21 (93) Nicholas indicates the need to “put off the old man of presumption and put on the new man of humility” if one is to partake of the food of life within the Paradise of delights. And he adds: “To see God the Father and You who are Jesus, His Son, is to be present in Paradise and in everlasting glory. For if any man is situated outside of Paradise, he cannot have such a vision, since neither God the Father nor You, Jesus, dwell outside of Paradise.” The one who is situated outside of Paradise is the sinner who strays from God [DVD 5 (16:7)]; the one who has put off the old man and put on the new is the repentant and obedient believer. “If I hearken unto Your Word, which does not cease to speak within me and which continually shines forth in my reason, I shall be my own—free and not a servant of sin—and You will be mine and will grant me to see Your Face and then I shall be saved” [DVD 7 (28:5-8)]. Indeed, according to Nicholas, one must merit to see the Father in the Son [DVD 21 (94:10-11)], and one’s approach unto God’s light is proportional to the degree of one’s faith [DVD 24 (108-109)].

Yet, even though there are similarities between Anselm’s Proslogion and certain of Nicholas’s works such as DVD, and even though these similarities are in certain respects stronger than Duclow recognizes, the end result is that the differences vastly outweigh the similarities and that the essential structure of the Proslogion is not significantly illuminable by appeal to Nicholas’s metaphor of the wall of absurdity. There are many reasons for this inilluminability, but perhaps the configuration of three overlapping reasons will suffice: (1) In the Proslogion, just as in Monologion 28, 31, and 34, Anselm subscribes to a doctrine of degrees of being and degrees of proportionality between created things and the Supreme Being. Accordingly, he calls God “the highest of all things” (Proslogion 5 and 14), “that which alone is greater than all others” (Reply to Gaunilo 6) and is “whatever it is better to be than not to be” (Proslogion 5). It follows that there is some remote but real analogy between divine goodness and human goodness, even if the difference between God and creatures is so great that creatures, by comparison with God, do not exist in the proper sense of “existing” (Proslogion 22). By contrast, in DVD 23 (100) and elsewhere Nicholas subscribes to the doctrine of nulla proportio finiti ad infinitum. (2) The structure of the Proslogion involves a series of interconnecting reductio ad absurdum arguments; by contrast, the structure of DVD is wholly different. (3) In the Proslogion and elsewhere Anselm does not propound a doctrine of coincidentia oppositorum in the sense that Nicholas does in DVD; for Nicholas’s view, but not Anselm’s, is to be interpreted as meaning that God is undifferentiated being itself. Thus, according to Anselm, for example, but not according to Nicholas, the three persons of the Trinity are numerically three. (Cf. Anselm’s De Incarnatione Verbi 2 and 9 with Nicholas’s Ap. 24:1-9, De Pace Fidei
Moreover, Anselm could never be rightly envisioned as agreeing with Nicholas's statement: "God as Creator is three and one; as infinite, however, He is neither three nor one . . . " [De Pace Fidei 7 (21)]. Anselm considers God a being—to be sure, a supreme being, an infinite being, a being greater than can be comprehended. By contrast, Nicholas regards God as beyond being, insofar as being is conceivable by us or significant to us, i.e., insofar as being is differentiated from not-being [De Deo Abscondito 11:1-5. Ap. 9. DP 74:1-2. NA 2 (7:12-17)]. Yet, if God is not a (nonfinite) being, it is difficult to discern in what sense Nicholas could consistently ascribe to Him a (nonfinite) nature. (See n. 137 above.) In last analysis, then, Infinite Being, according to Nicholas, is not a being; and Infinite Nature is not a nature. God is Quiddity, not a quiddity. His "having" quiddity is His being Quiddity. (The major problem that faces Nicholas's doctrine of God is what sense can be made out of such claims.) Many of Nicholas's points are already germinally present in Anselm—as when Anselm says, at the end of Monologion 65, that even the word "being" ("essentia") cannot express God's unique loftiness. But Anselm does not draw from his germinal ideas consequences as unqualifiedly radical as Nicholas's.

These foregoing three differences between Anselm and Nicholas can be summarized in the following sentence: the wall of absurdity is, for Nicholas, an absolute cognitive barrier separating the finite from the Infinite, not only in this era but also in the eschatological age; for Anselm, however, there is no wall of absurdity, since there is no absolute cognitive barrier. Monologion 66 and 31 indicate that the likeness that exists between the human mind and the Divine Mind is a real likeness, whereas for Nicholas it is only a symbolic likeness. The "whereas" statement holds true even for DVD 25 (111:14-15), DI II, 2 (104:9), and De Mente 3 (73:2-11). N.B. Ap. 24:19-22: "All the [symbolic] likenesses proposed by the saints (including the most divine Dionysius) are altogether disproportional [to God], and to all who do not have learned ignorance (i.e., a knowledge of the fact that [the likenesses] are altogether disproportional), [the likenesses] are useless rather than useful." Now, the Monologion's doctrine of greater and lesser approximative likenesses is not abandoned in the Proslogion but rather is presupposed. Duclov, we have seen, cites Proslogion 14-17 (on his p. 26); but he should also have cited Proslogion 18, where Anselm's dialectical meditation moves to the opposite polarity when he prays: "Cleanse, heal, focus, illumine the eye of my mind so that it may behold You. Let my soul muster all its strength and with all its understanding stretch forth once more unto You, O Lord. What are You, what are You, O Lord? What shall my heart understand You to be? Certainly You are life, wisdom, truth, goodness, blessedness, eternity—You are every true good. These are many things; and my limited understanding cannot in a single view behold so many at once in order to delight in all at once. How then, O Lord, are You all these things?" In both Monologion 65 and Proslogion 17 Anselm alludes to God's ineffability; and in both Monologion 66 and Proslogion 14 he indicates that we do not know God as He is in Himself. And, yet, these assertions do not prevent him from consistently maintaining, in accordance with his dialectical style, that God can be truly, though obliquely, conceived and known by us. Our understanding of God's nature
is limited, says Anselm in *Proslogion* 18; and yet, it is a limited understanding. This is the kind of understanding for which Anselm prays at the outset of the *Proslogion*: “Lord, I do not attempt to comprehend Your sublimity, because my intellect is not at all equal to such a task. But I yearn to understand some measure of Your truth, which my heart believes and loves.” Duclow claims that, on Anselm’s view, the expressions “something than which nothing greater can be thought” and “that than which a greater cannot be thought” “lack the determinacy of a positive concept; they rather indicate the boundary of all finite conceptions and contingent being…” (p. 25). But Duclow should point out that for Anselm these expressions, together with certain other premises, are taken to imply that God is omnipotent, just, living, omnipresent, truthful, etc., and that these entailed concepts, as Anselm applies them to God, do not lack all positive determinacy. Even in the *Monologion* (Chap. 49) Anselm wrote: “Quam enim absurde negetur summus spiritus se amare, sicut sui memor est et se intelligit, cum et mens rationalis se et illum amare posse convincatur, ex eo quia sui et illius memor esse et se et illum intelligere potest?”. “For would it not be very absurd to deny that the Supreme Spirit loves itself as well as remembering and understanding itself—since even a rational [human] mind, from the fact that it can remember and understand both itself and this Spirit, is proved to be able to love both itself and this Spirit?” Anselm could never be rightly imagined to assert what Nicholas asserts in DVD 6: “As regards whoever sets out to see Your Face: as long as he conceives of something, he is far removed from Your Face.”

Other parts of Duclow’s article are equally undiscerning. On pp. 24 and 28 he speaks of Anselm’s “one single argument” in the *Proslogion*; and in n. 9 he refers to Gillian Evans’ *Anselm and Talking about God* for further elucidation. To translate “unum argumentum” as “one single argument” would not be wrong, provided the rendering were understood in the sense of “one single argument-form” or “one single line of reasoning.” But by appealing to Evans’ book, Duclow shows that he does not understand the phrase in this correct manner. [See p. 390 of my review of Evans’ book in *The New Scholasticism*, 55 (Summer 1981), 387-396.] Furthermore, Duclow does not realize (see his p. 27) that Gaunilo’s expression “aliquid omnibus maius” is a shorthand for ‘aliquid omnibus maius quae cogitari possunt.’ (See the beginning and the end of *On Behalf of the Fool* 4. Also note pp. 98-100 of my *Anselm of Canterbury: Volume Four: Hermeneutical and Textual Problems in the Complete Treatises of St. Anselm.* And he should call attention to the following contrast: that whereas Anselm uses “aliquid quo nihil maius cogitari potest” to formulate an admittedly imperfect positive conception of God, Gaunilo denies that the formula is at all useful in conceiving of God secundum rem.

On p. 27 Duclow displays a further unclarity when he writes: “But if we consider the argument of chapters II-IV [of the *Proslogion*] in relation to the entire *Proslogion* and to Cusanus, we may acknowledge its validity. For then *Proslogion* II-IV marks but one phase of a meditation which discloses a previously hidden presence, and the argument’s truth hinges upon the success of this disclosure. The *Proslogion*’s devotional character, its boundary language, and Anselm’s doctrine of truth support this interpretation. Throughout the *Proslogion* Anselm seeks a pro-
gressive disclosure of God's concealed presence . . . ." Here Duclow professes that
the argument of Proslogion 2-4 is valid because it is a phase of a meditation which
(successfully) discloses God's hidden presence—a disclosing upon which the argu-
ment's truth "hinges." Now, Duclow is confused about the notion of validity. For
the argument's validity depends not upon the argument's successful disclosure but
upon its logical form. (Of course, its logical form must be related to truth in such
way that any interpretation that makes the premises true will not also make the
conclusion false.) Moreover, what is the meaning of the phrase "the argument's
truth"? Does it mean the truth of the argument's conclusion? the truth of its pre-
mises? the truth of both premises and conclusion? But an argument might have
false premises and a false conclusion and still be valid. Furthermore, the Proslo-
gion's devotional character has nothing to do with the argument's validity.

Also objectionable is Duclow's statement that Anselm's Proslogion is a collo-
quy (p. 23). For a colloquy is a conversation; and a conversation is, minimally, a
two-directional exchange. But in the Proslogion Anselm does not converse with God.
Rather, throughout the text, he addresses God in prayer: "tu, domine deus meus
. . . ." So when in the preface he terms his work an alloquium, he means alloquium
in the sense of an address, not in the sense of a colloquium.

Even when Anselm of Canterbury is not being compared with Nicholas of
Cusa, his ideas are frequently expounded in fundamentally objectionable ways.
Two recent and noteworthy instances hereof are Richard Campbell's article
"Anselm's Background Metaphysics" [Scottish Journal of Theology, 33 (August
55-109 and 240-252 of her book The Mirror of Language: A Study in the Medi-
eval Theory of Knowledge [Lincoln, Nebraska: University of Nebraska Press, 1983
(revised edition; first edition published by Yale University Press, 1968)]. Camp-
bell's article is beset by incoherence of exposition. For example, on p. 320 we are
told that according to the perplexity expressed in De Veritate 2 by the Student "a
proposition has the proper function (acceptit) of signifying to be what is and what
is not . . . ." And on p. 321 we are told that Anselm deals with the perplexity by
maintaining that "the proper function of a proposition, its correct end, is to signify
what is." (That is, Anselm, through the Teacher, denies one of the conjuncts
allegedly expressed by the Student: viz., that a proposition has the proper function
of signifying to be what is. . . .) Now, with respect to the relevant speech by the
Student and the subsequent response of the Teacher there is no Latin expression
that can rightly be translated as "proper function." What the Student says is, in
part: "Sed doce me quid respondere possim, si quis dicat quia, etiam cum oratio
significat esse quod non est, significat quod debet. Pariter namque acceptit signifi-
care esse, et quod est et quod non est": "But teach me how to reply, if someone
should maintain that even when a statement signifies that what-is-not is, it signifies
what it ought to. For the statement has received the capability of signifying both
what is is and that what-is-not is." Campbell, in his attribution to the Student,
apparently takes the Latin phrase "acceptit significare" to indicate having the
proper function of signifying. But not only is this construal linguistically inaccu-
rate, so that Campbell has made a mistake, but it also renders his exposition inconsistent. For although Campbell (wrongly) adheres to this construal in the case of the Student's speech, he (rightly) does not do so in the case of the Teacher's speech—as when the Teacher says: “Alia igitur est rectitudo et veritas enuntiati-
nis, quia significat ad quod significandum facta est; alia vero, quia significat quod accepit significare.” At the same time, Campbell shows no awareness either of this linguistic discrepancy or of the leap that is introduced into the Student’s speech by representing his initial perplexity as perplexity about proper function.

A second incoherence of exposition occurs on the very next set of pages. For on p. 322 Campbell writes: “The curious thing about language is that, whereas in general any sentence may be either true or false, the point (the ad quod, as Anselm calls it) of language-use is truth.” This assertion is wrong, because it is not the case that “in general any sentence may be either true or false.” The sentence “Please close the door,” as well as thousands of sentences like it, is neither true nor false and cannot become either true or false while remaining the same sentence. Here Campbell has simply blundered and has pushed the blunder off on Anselm. Yet, on p. 323 Campbell asserts inconsistently, but this time correctly: “Some well-formed sentences neither affirm nor deny anything, for example, a prayer. Since such sentences are neither true nor false, Anselm, following Boethius, will not call them propositions.” But there is really a further inconsistency here. For having now admitted, vis-à-vis Anselm, that prayers are sentences but not propositions, Campbell will have to withdraw his ascription to Anselm of the view that “the point (the ad quod, as Anselm calls it) of language-use is truth.” Indeed, there is for Anselm no such thing as the point of language-use. Anselm sees that one point of language-use is truth, another point is not. When Anselm prays “Pater noster, qui es in caelis: sanctificetur nomen tuum. Adveniat regnum tuum. Fiat voluntas tua, sicut in caelo, et in terra. Panem nostrum supersubstantialem da nobis hodie. Et dimitte nobis debita nostra, sicut et nos dimittimus debitoribus nostris. Et ne nos inducas in tentationem. Sed libera nos a malo. Amen” there is not a single true sentence in the entire prayer!

A third incoherence of exposition begins on p. 325, where Campbell concludes: “It emerges from all this that for Anselm truth, that is, correctness, is something which is done.” But at the top of the next page (i.e., p. 326) Campbell implies that Anselm held the view that truth is something to be done. Once again, Campbell shows no awareness either of the discrepancy or of its importance. Does Anselm, according to Campbell, think that truth is something which is done or that it is something which is to be done? And does “which is to be done” mean “which is supposed to be done” or “which is able to be done” or something else? Campbell will have to clarify his point. And when he does so, he will have to restrict his unqualified claim. For in De Veritate 10 Anselm alludes to the truth that is in the existence (existentia) of things, just as in De Veritate 7 he speaks of the truth that is in the being (essentia) of all that exists. So there is truth in a stone, because the stone has the nature that God gave it: it is a true stone. But as the stone lies there on the ground it is not doing anything, in the proper sense of “doing.” That is, its truth of being is not a doing, in the proper sense of “doing.”
Notes to the Interpretive Study

(See Anselm of Canterbury: Volume Two, p. 6.) Anselm makes plain that any verb can replace the verb “to do,” so that in a less than proper sense the verbs “sitting,” “lying,” “enduring,” etc., signify a doing. (Cf. Proslogion 7.) But Campbell, in his sweeping claim that for Anselm “truth, that is, correctness, is something which is done,” does not distinguish between proper and improper uses of language, proper and improper senses of “which is done.” Accordingly, he oversimplifies, in a way that Anselm does not. In last analysis, it is not the case that truth, according to Anselm, is tout simplement something which is done. That there is truth in the being, or existence, of things may involve a doing—a creating—on God's part. But it is not the case that this truth is a doing. (When in De Veritate 12 Anselm speaks of a stone as acting by nature, he has in mind situations such as a stone's hitting a window and breaking it. Whoever threw the stone acted on the stone; and in accordance with its nature the stone acted on the window.)

A fourth incoherence of exposition occurs on p. 333, where Campbell alludes to a passage in De Grammatico 17 (erroneously identified by him as De Grammatico 8): “Since sounds (voces) do not signify unless they signify things, in order to say what the words signify, it is necessary to say what the things are.” Now, this translation, which is an intrinsic part of Campbell's exposition, contains a misleading inconsistency of rendering. For Campbell translates the first occurrence of “voces” as “sounds” and puts the Latin word in parentheses; but the second occurrence he translates as “words,” without putting “voces” in parentheses. Campbell's translation misleads because it suggests that Anselm is making a distinction between sounds and words in the context at hand—whereas, in reality, “voces” means words in both instances. Furthermore, in place of “it is necessary” Campbell should have “it was necessary” (necesse fuit); and the phrase “in order to say” is not the most suitable translation of “dicendo” in the sentence in which it occurs. (See my translation of De Grammatico in Anselm of Canterbury: Volume Two.)

A fifth incoherence of exposition is the following: Campbell expounds the correspondence theory of truth as if it were necessarily coupled with a “post-Cartesian” theory of representation. On Anselm’s view, he tells us, “words re-present things, not in the sense in which post-Cartesian philosophers understood representation as the occurrence of some mental or linguistic entity which stood as some surrogate for a thing, but in the sense that words point the mind towards the reality they signify, thus enabling the mind to think the things themselves, to have them in intellectu” (p. 334). Although this much of Campbell's interpretation of Anselm is close enough to being correct, it does not entail that Anselm repudiates a correspondence theory of truth. Campbell understands (post-Cartesian) correspondence theories to teach that a proposition expresses a “relation amongst ideas which might or might not correspond to what is the case” (p. 332)—i.e., to teach that words signify ideas or meanings rather than things (p. 333). But Campbell seems never to realize that according to Anselm words signify things by means of their meanings (sensus). Thus, in Reply to Gaunilo 7, Anselm concedes that the Fool might not at all think the meaning of “God” (“. . . deum, cuius sensum nullo modo cogitat”), hereby implying that realities can be thought through thinking
meanings. In *Monologion* 10 Anselm maintains that one way in which someone can “speak of” a man is by silently thinking [the meaning of] the name “man”—that is, by thinking the name “man” insofar as it is significative. And in *Monologion* 65 Anselm is even plainer, when discussing God’s ineffability: “Nam quaecumque nomina de illa natura dici posse videntur: non tam mihi eam ostendunt per proprietatem, quam per aliquam innunt similitudinem. Etenim cum earundem vocum significaciones cogito, familiarius concipio mente quod in rebus factis conspicio, quam id quod omnem humanum intellectum transcendere intelligo. Nam valde minus aliquid, immo longe aliud in mente mea sua significacione consti-
tuunt, quam sit illud ad quod intelligendum per hanc tenuem significationem mens ipsa mea conatur proficere”: “For whatever words seem to be predicative of this Nature do not so much reveal it to me in its reality as hint at it through a likeness. For when I think the significations of these words, I more readily conceive of what I observe in created things than of that [Being] which I understand to transcend all human understanding. By their respective significations these words form in my mind something much less than—indeed, something vastly other than—that toward which my mind, by means of these inadequate significations, tries to advance in order to understand.” Likewise, in *De Grammatico* 4 Anselm alludes to the meanings of words: “The common term of a syllogism must be common not so much in verbal form as in meaning. For just as no conclusion follows if it is common in verbal form but not in meaning, so no harm is done if it is common in meaning but not in verbal form. Indeed, the meaning—rather than the words—determines a syllogism.” (See my brief discussion in *Anselm of Canterbury: Volume Four*, pp. 9-11.) Campbell ignores these passages, thereby overlooking the fact that, for Anselm, the mind thinks meanings and things—thinking the latter by means of the former. Words, through their meanings, signify things. These meanings are mental words, or concepts. For this reason, I can signify a man, or mentally speak of a man, by means of conceiving his universal being, viz., rational, mortal animal (*Monologion* 10). (In *Monologion* 10 each of the three kinds of speaking is significative, not just the first kind. Anselm states explicitly that natural words signify.) But even forgetting about Anselm for a moment, why should all correspondence theorists of truth be saddled by Campbell with the view that words refer exclusively to ideas (or meanings) and that these ideas (or meanings) are what correspond to things or states of affairs? Campbell owes us a more penetrating exposition both of Anselm’s position and of the basic issues.

In the end, Campbell not only ignores important Anselmian texts, he even expounds certain texts in ways which distort their meanings. Thus, on p. 333 he quotes a passage from *Monologion* 10—a quotation that begins (according to Campbell’s translation) with the words “Without absurdity words can be said to be truer the more they are like the things of which they are words and the more expressly they signify them.” Campbell then proceeds to expound this passage, in the light of *Monologion* 32 and 33, by talking about how for Anselm “words are likenesses of things”: “The view that words are likenesses of things sounds rather bizarre, although it might call to a modern reader’s mind Wittgenstein’s picture
theory of language in his *Tractatus*" (p. 334). With respect to *Monologion* 32 Campbell earlier (p. 333) introduced the following direct quotation (in translation): “Every word is a word of something . . . [sic 3 dots instead of 4.] Of what has not been, and is not, and will not be there can be no word.” Taking all of the immediately foregoing data together creates the strong impression that Campbell thinks Anselm is talking about words in the usual sense of “words.” Indeed, recourse to this usual sense is what leads Campbell to suggest that Anselm’s view might sound bizarre to some readers. But, in truth, Campbell has given a distorted translation of the passage in *Monologion* 10; and he misinterprets Anselm’s point in *Monologion* 32. In *Monologion* 10 Anselm does not state: “Without absurdity words can be said to be truer the more they are like the things of which they are words . . . .” The subject of the verb “possunt” (Schmitt text, Vol. I, p. 25, line 15) is not “verba” but “haec verba,” i.e., “verba naturalia.” So Anselm is maintaining that natural words—i.e., images, concepts, and definitions of things—can without absurdity be said to be truer the more they are like that for which they are words. The image that I form of a man when I think of him, says Anselm, is a word (verbum) for him. In *Monologion* 10 Anselm distinguishes three different kinds of words. The first kind of word is word in the usual sense of spoken (or written) word. But it is of the third kind of word, viz., natural words, that he says: they can be called truer the more they are like the things for which they are words. That is, some images are truer images than others, some concepts are more precise concepts than others, some definitions are more adequate definitions than others—as judged against the reality with which they are correlated. In *Monologion* 10 Anselm allows for such possibilities as onomatopoetic words. But he is not making the absurd claim that Campbell misrepresents him as making: viz., that ordinary spoken and written words are likenesses of things. Instead, his central assertion is that mental likenesses are natural words for things. How could the vocalization of “dog” be like a dog? Such a view would not only sound rather bizarre, as Campbell says; it would simply be bizarre. And it would have nothing to do with Wittgenstein’s *Tractatus*, either. (To repeat, onomatopoetic words such as the French word “glouglou” in the expression “le glouglou du vin”—or even the simple English word “hiss”—would, when vocalized, be similar to that of which they are words. Such instances are tacitly allowed for by Anselm, when he gives his example about sounds which serve as names for themselves—in particular, the vowel “a.”) Similarly, Campbell misrepresents the quotation from *Monologion* 32. For there too Anselm is not referring to spoken and written words when he says (my translation): “Every word [or image] is a word [or image] of some thing . . . . There can be no word [or image] of that which neither was, is, nor will be.” Anselm is talking about “words by which an object is thus mentally spoken”—i.e., about thoughts which “depict” what they are thoughts of. (Cf. the second sentence of *Monologion* 31.) Hence, what he means by “Every word is a word of some thing” is: Every mental image is the image of some thing. And when he declares, “There can be no word of that which neither was, is, nor will be,” he is not suggesting the absurd theory that our language can have no words for nonexistent things such as unicorns. Rather, he is stating that an image is not rightly said to be the image of some thing unless
that thing at some time exists. (See Anselm of Canterbury: Volume One, p. 150, n. 71, from which the foregoing sentences are taken verbatim.) Anselm does not require—in the Monologion, the Proslogion, De Veritate, or anywhere else—that there be some existing (past, present, or future) referent for a spoken or a written word in order for this word to be significative of that thing. This point is already evident in Reply to Gaunilo 8, where Anselm takes the expression "[id] quo maius cogitari nequat" to be significative of a good which is without beginning and without end, etc., whether or not such a good is believed to exist. (Moreover, he is aware of the fact that if it does not exist, then it has never existed in the past and will never exist in the future.) Once again, then, we come across a central passage that Campbell altogether ignores.

However, Campbell's errors run even deeper, thereby doing violence to the core of the Monologion's reasoning. For on p. 335 he interpretively infers: "So, if things are what they are only through the Divine Word, and depend upon nothing else than the utterance of a word or separate words, they are, as it were, a kind of language." Campbell also speaks of "the inner expressions of the Creator." Tragically, Campbell has neglected to take account of Monologion 30: "Why, then, should I continue to doubt what I earlier left in doubt, viz., whether this Expression is many words or only one? For if [the Expression of the Supreme Nature] is so consubstantial with it that there is one Spirit rather than two, then surely just as the Supreme Nature is supremely simple, so too is this Expression. Therefore, it is not many words but is one word, through which all things have been made." Even the chapter title of Monologion 33 tells us much the same thing: "The Supreme Spirit speaks both itself and its creation by means of one word." Moreover, since Anselm goes on to identify this Word with God the Son, he could not possibly, qua orthodox Christian and qua Prior of the Benedictine Abbey of Bec, have concluded that there are two or more words in the Supreme Nature or that created things are, as it were, God's "language." Moreover, according to Monologion 63 the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit speak themselves and one another by one and the same word.

Just as Campbell totally misses a point that lies at the core of the Monologion, so he totally misses a point that is central to De Veritate: viz., that Anselm subscribes to a version of the correspondence theory of truth, that Anselm is of the Student's opinion when the Student says: a statement is true "when what it states, whether affirmatively or negatively, is the case. I mean what it states even when it denies that what-is-not is; for even then it expresses what is the case (quamadmodum res est)." A few speeches later Anselm repeats the gist of this view by putting it once again into the mouth of the Student, thereby exhibiting that it is still operative in the dialogue: "All I know is that when the statement signifies that what is is, then it is true and truth is in it." Accordingly, still a few more speeches later the Teacher himself can infer: "Therefore, when it [i.e., a statement] signifies that what is is, its signification is true." And he can add: "This conclusion [viz., that a statement's truth is its rightness] also applies when the statement signifies that what-is-not is not." Moreover, in De Veritate 3, where the topic is the parallel topic of the truth of thought, Anselm shows that he has not abandoned the view
that a true statement, in the customary sense of "true statement," is one which signifies that what is is (or that what-is-not is not). For now the Student says: "In accordance with the reasoning evidenced in the case of statements, the truth of thought is best called its rightness, or correctness. For to the end that we might think that what is is and that what-is-not is not, we have been given the capability of thinking that something is or is not. Thus, whoever thinks that what is is thinks what he ought to; and so his thinking is correct. Accordingly, if our thought is correct and true simply because we think that what is is, or that what-is-not is not, then the truth of thought is simply its rightness, or correctness." And the Teacher's endorsement of this verdict is unambiguous: "Your thinking is correct."

The task for an interpreter of De Veritate is not the task of deciding whether or not Anselm, with respect to factual propositions, subscribes to the correspondence theory of truth; for unquestionably he does. The task is that of determining and explicating just what Anselm's own version of correspondence was. In last analysis, then, Campbell has misunderstood Anselm's "background metaphysics," even as earlier [From Belief to Understanding] he misunderstood the notion of vere esse in Anselm's Proslogion argument for God's existence.

Marcia Colish's chapter on Anselm ("Anselm: The Definition of the Word") is an irredeemable failure. Let us focus upon the treatises that are so roundly misinterpreted by her.

(1) De Grammatico. According to Colish (p. 76) the main question dealt with in this dialogue is "whether a grammarian is a substance or a quality." This construal shows that all of Desmond P. Henry's perceptive and pathbreaking labor on this dialogue has made no impact upon Colish. Though she cites Henry's books, the contents thereof have not gotten through to her. For one of the things most strongly denounced by Henry is the foregoing construal. Indeed, on p. 90 of his The De Grammatico of St. Anselm he writes: "Only a crass disregard of the elucidatory method of the dialogue can have led critics like Maurice to assume that Anselm was unconscious of the ambiguities and incongruities, both explicit and implicit, lurking in that opening question as to whether grammaticus is a substance or a quality—a question which becomes even more unintelligible than it is intended to be if, with Maurice, one insists on translating 'grammaticus' as 'a grammarian,' and so makes the problem read, 'Is a grammarian a substance or a quality?'" Henry goes to great lengths to explain why this translation is objectionable, why it obscures and distorts the problem of the dialogue. But Colish seems to have taken neither the dialogue nor Henry's study of it seriously. Thus, she proceeds from bad to worse, when on p. 77 she informs us: "This grammarian, according to Anselm, is a quality . . . ." Now, such a statement expresses precisely the kind of nonsense that Henry takes pains to show not to be Anselm's and not to enter into the argumentation of the dialogue. So already, right at the outset, Colish has miscast Anselm's reasoning so badly that she has rendered it nonsensical. In much the same nonsensical tone, she remarks (p. 76): "But it is equally true [according to Anselm] that grammarians are chronologically and logically derived from the human race, since it is necessary to be a man before one can be a gram-
marian, and *grammaticus* is a species of the genus *homo.* Now, a grammarian, who is an individual man, is not logically derivable from the human race; nor does Anselm make such a claim. Moreover, even if we granted that *grammaticus* is included in the genus *homo*, it would not follow herefrom that a grammarian is logically derivable from the human race. And furthermore, even if we assumed that "grammarians are . . . logically derived from the human race" were a sensible utterance, Colish's reason for believing it to be a true utterance, (viz., "since . . . *grammaticus* is a species of the genus *homo*") would not be a good reason. For inasmuch as not every *homo* is *grammaticus*, *grammaticus* is not logically derivable from *homo*. Finally, Colish's supporting remark is also mistaken: "Sensing that the discipulus will have difficulty understanding this logical relationship, [!] the magister has recourse to a grammatical example in order to clarify it. The genus *homo*, and the species *grammaticus*, he points out, are related in logic the way that the adjective *hodiernum*, and the adverb *hodie* are related in grammar" (p. 76). But what Anselm teaches in *De Grammatico* 13 is that just as "*hodiernum*" does not signify *hodie*, so "*grammaticus*" does not signify *homo*. Hence, his point is that *homo* and "*grammaticus*" are related in the way that *hodie* and "*hodiernum*" are related—i.e., Colish has reversed the correct order of comparison. Moreover, in accordance with standard philosophical convention she should use quotation marks to indicate when she is mentioning a word; and she should drop her misplaced distinction here between *related in logic* and *related in grammar*, because no such distinction is operative. Anselm is simply pointing out two parallel *grammatical* (i.e., semantical) considerations.

The following cryptic statement (p. 77) is neither documentable from, nor explicable by reference to, *De Grammatico* 18—the text cited by Colish: "Substance is to accident as a word which can either stand alone or be modified is to a word which is grammatically dependent on the word it modifies." Here Colish fails to provide any clarification whatsoever. Some words—e.g., "*grammaticus*"—can both stand alone and modify. But it is not clear in what respect something which is a substance could be an accident. Vis-à-vis a cognate issue Colish writes: "For Anselm, thus, grammatical relationships are prior to, and more comprehensible than, logical and chronological relationships" (p. 77). But what kind of priority is Colish talking about? Are grammatical relationships chronologically prior to logical relationships? What sense would this make? On the other hand, grammatical relationships cannot be logically prior to logical relationships, since logical priority is a logical relationship. And who would be foolish enough to say that grammatical relationships are grammatically prior to logical relationships?

"Now words, Anselm states, *represent* things" (Colish, p. 77, my italics). However, what Anselm says—e.g., in *De Grammatico* 17—is that "*voces non significant nisi res*": "words signify only things." But the notion of signifying and the notion of representing are not identical notions, so that usually "*significare*" should not be translated as "to represent." And where it is thus translated, some accompanying justification needs to be given by the translator. In *De Grammatico* 14 the Student indicates ("*Nempe nomen equi . . . significat mihi equi substantiam per se, et non per alid*") that "*equus*" significat *equum*. Now, although the word "horse"
signifies (a) horse, it would not ordinarily be said to represent (a) horse. So it behooves a translator and an interpreter to exercise caution with regard to understanding what Anselm means by “significare.” In Colish’s exposition and interpretation, however, caution is thrown to the wind, as the saying goes. Accordingly, on p. 69 Colish jumps from citing the definitions of noun given by Donatus, Priscian, Remigius of Auxerre, and Alcuin to concluding: “The grammarians, in short, assert that a noun defines a thing both substantially and accidentally, both generically and specifically. They lump these two types of designation together, without providing any insights into what changes nominal signification undergoes, if any, when it moves from the one to the other” (my italics). That is, she moves from the definitions of noun given by the grammarians to the summarizing assertion that, according to these grammarians, nouns define. But this inference is a non sequitur. And fast upon its heels comes the misequating of two ways in which a noun defines with two types of designation. And thereafter comes the unmediated switch to the topic of signification. Colish seems not to realize that a noun (e.g., the noun “man”) does not define anything, though its meaning may be defined or though “man” may be used in a definition. Similarly, she seems unaware of any possible distinction between designation and signification. In the end, then, she gives us only a garbled account of Anselm’s line of reasoning, and of the interrelationship between grammar and logic, in the dialogue De Grammatico.

(2) Philosophical Fragments. Colish’s discussion of these fragments [Ein neues unvollendetes Werk des hl. Anselm von Canterbury] is much too brief, given their direct bearing upon her overall theme. And yet, even this brief discussion is far too imprecise. For example, on p. 78, lines 5-9, she needs to make clear that Anselm is not speaking of cause and effect in the usual sense in such passages as Philosophical Fragments 27:26 (wrongly cited by Colish as 27:6): “If we say ‘A man is an animal,’ man is a cause of there being, and being said to be, an animal. I do not mean that man is a cause of the existence of animal; rather, I mean that man is a cause of man’s being, and being said to be, an animal.” That is, Colish creates the impression that Anselm regards all causation as a logical relationship. For what she says is (p. 78): “Anselm’s taste for explaining logical relationships in terms of grammatical relationships is also visible in the De potestate et impotentia [i.e., in the Philosophical Fragments], particularly with respect to causality. He compares causes to effects by analogizing them to nouns and predicate nominals.” But in the passage from the Fragments Anselm is not explaining logical relationships in terms of grammatical relationships; on the contrary, he is explaining grammatical relationships in terms of such logical considerations as the following: “the part here follows from the whole, because it is necessary that the part be where the whole is.” And in doing so, he nowhere adopts the position that all causal relations are logical relations.

A few lines later, on p. 78, Colish makes another direct attribution to Anselm: “In the case of efficient causality Anselm’s illustrative example is drawn from metaphorical signification. The efficient cause, although it is not the effect, can still be affirmed of it, just as the foot, although it is not the eye, is, figuratively speaking, the eye of a blind man.” But with his illustration Anselm is elucidating not some
mode of efficient causation but a mode of the verb “to be” (“esse”), which, he says, imitates the verb “facere” (“to do” or “to cause”). That is, he is illustrating a grammatical point, and he does so by appealing to an empirical linguistic consideration, which is misread by Colish. For Anselm does not make the odd statement that “the foot . . . is, figuratively speaking, the eye of a blind man.” Rather, he remarks: “Someone is said to be a foot for the lame and an eye for the blind—not because he is what he is said to be [viz., a foot, an eye], but because he is something else which serves the lame man in place of a foot and serves the blind man in place of an eye.” And a little later, when illustrating the verb “to have” (“habere”), he notes: “Someone bereft of eyes is said to have eyes—not because he really has eyes but because he has someone else who does for him what eyes do. And he who does not have feet is said to have feet simply because he has something else which serves him in place of feet.”

Colish does not know the following a priori truth: viz., that what is logically paradoxical is likewise, by definition, logically absurd and, a fortiori, logically implausible. Consequently, she unjustifiably imputes to Anselm an inconsistent admission: “Anselm admits that this conclusion [viz., that what does not exist is both necessarily nonexistent and necessarily existent] is absurd even though it is logically plausible” (p. 77). This is a misstatement of the outset of the Philosophical Fragments, where the Student finds this paradoxical conclusion (along with two others) to be “very absurd”; yet, he admits to not knowing how to fault the reasoning by which the logically paradoxical conclusion was reached: “But all these [results] are very absurd. For ‘It is impossible to be’ and ‘It is impossible not to be’ are never true [of something] at the same time; nor are, ‘It is necessary to be’ and ‘It is necessary not to be’ . . . . Hence, if these [pairs of statements] are inconsistent, then the premise from which they follow is also inconsistent: viz., ‘What does not in any respect exist both cannot exist and cannot not exist, since it has no ability.’ But I cannot at all discern that this premise is false.” So the Student never claims that the conclusion is both (logically) absurd and logically plausible. And he knows that something is wrong with the premise (because otherwise the conclusion would not be logically absurd, i.e., inconsistent), even though he does not know exactly what is wrong and therefore asks the Teacher for guidance.

Still other imprecisions occur on p. 77. For in interpreting Anselm, Colish speaks of God as serving truth and as serving justice. But this mode of discourse misconstrues Anselm’s phrases “servat veritatem” and “[non] violentia iustus est.” According to Anselm, God keeps to the truth and is just [not] because of compulsion. God does not serve truth and does not serve justice, as if each were something set independently over against Him. Finally, when Colish writes “so far as God is concerned, necessity and impossibility signify perfections . . . .” she needs quotation marks around the mentioned words “necessity” and “impossibility.” Moreover, the Student does not puzzle over whether these words signify perfections; rather, he puzzles over whether they signify an insuperable strength, which is a perfection.

(3) De Veritate. In interpreting this dialogue, Colish writes: “There is, according to Anselm, an intrinsic, natural truth in speech, a veritas enuntiationis, in
virtue of the fact that a statement signifies truly what its speaker means. The natural significative function pertains to all statements, whether or not they are factually accurate. If they are in fact accurate in addition to expressing the intention of their speakers, they are accidentally true. It is this latter type of truth that Anselm dignifies with the name ‘rectitude.’ Statements that are intrinsically erroneous may yet be naturally true, but only statements which signify that what is, is, and that what is not, is not, possess both truth and rectitude. Rectitude, the correct relation of the sign to the thing it signifies, is the real criterion of its epistemological validity. This being the case, it is clear that the hearer can perceive the rectitude of a sign only if he knows both the sign and the object it signifies” (p. 79). This interpretive exposition shows how far Colish is from understanding Anselm’s *De Veritate*. In the first place, the natural truth of a statement is not said by Anselm to depend upon speaker-meaning, and statements are not said by him to be naturally true because they express the intention of the respective statement-utterer. Rather, for Anselm, a statement has a natural truth by virtue of its having an established meaning within a language (e.g., Hebrew, Greek, Latin) and because of signifying in accordance with its given nature (*De Veritate* 5): “That truth of a statement which . . . cannot be separated from it must be classified as natural. For just as when fire heats it does the truth because it has received [the power to heat] from Him from whom it has its being, so also the statement ‘It is day’ does the truth when it signifies that it is day (whether it is daytime or not) since it has received the nature to do this.” Anselm is, then, not making a claim about subjective speaker-meaning; instead, he is dealing with signification insofar as it is regarded as belonging naturally to a statement. The natural truth of a statement has to do with whether the statement has a meaning within the language to which it belongs; it does not concern what I mean by the statement. Colish’s further interpretation, “Statements that are intrinsically erroneous may yet be naturally true . . . ,” is confused. For on Anselm’s view a statement’s intrinsic truth is its natural truth, as Colish herself affirms in the opening sentence of the passage presently under discussion. Accordingly, no statement can be both intrinsically erroneous and naturally true. Thirdly, Colish egregiously misinterprets *De Veritate* 2 when she claims that “only statements which signify that what is, is, and that what is not, is not, possess both truth and rectitude.” For in *De Veritate* 2 nothing is clearer than the following: “Admittedly, we are not accustomed to call the statement true when it signifies that what-is-not is; nevertheless it has a truth and a correctness [rectitudo] because it does what it ought.” Finally, here (p. 79) and elsewhere (p. 101) Colish switches from talking about the rectitude of a statement to talking about the rectitude of a sign. This switch leads to her interpretive claim that “the hearer can perceive the rectitude of a sign only if he knows both the sign and the object it signifies” (my italics). This claim is misleading because it obscures the fact that, according to Anselm, not all “signs” signify objects, whether actually existing or only possibly existing. Thus, in *De Casu Diaboli* 11 Anselm maintains: “Therefore, in this way, ‘evil’ and ‘nothing’ signify something; and what is signified is something not according to fact but according to a form of speaking. For ‘nothing’ signifies only not-something, or the absence of things which are something. And evil is only
not-good, or the absence of good where good either ought to be or is advantageous
to be. But that which is only the absence of what is something is surely not some-
thing. Therefore, evil truly is nothing, and nothing is not something. And yet, in a
certain sense, evil and nothing are something because we speak about them as if
they were something, when we say ‘Nothing caused it’ or ‘Evil caused it’ . . . . .”
Colish does later (p. 96) discuss Anselm’s treatment of nihil in Monologion 8;
however, she does not proceed to relate it to the more elaborate treatment in De
Causa Diaboli. Nevertheless, even her limited exposition of Monologion 8 should
have brought to her attention the misleading character of her “only if” statement
above.

Colish is imprecise when she ascribes to Anselm the view that “discourse, and
by extension other kinds of signification, would have no rectitude unless its objects
existed . . . .” (p. 80). Presumably, she means “at some time existed.” And presumably
she intends for the reader to supply the prefacesing words “in general.” For we
have no reason to believe that Anselm would deny the truth and the correctness of
the statement “Unicorns do not exist” (“existence” here meaning, as on Colish’s p.
80, existence in reality). Other imprecisions abound. On pp. 79 and 80 Colish
speaks, on Anselm’s behalf, of the “truth of the essences of things.” Yet, in De
Veritate 7 Anselm speaks singularly of truth “in omnium quae sunt essentia.” And
in De Veritate 9 and 10 he substitutes “in rerum existentia” for “in rerum essen-
tia.” Accordingly, it would be more precise to construe “in rerum existentia” as “in
the being of things” than as “in the essences of things”—more precise to speak of
the truth which is in the being of all things than to speak of the truth of the
essences of things. However, even more imprecise is Colish’s substitution of the
expression (mutatis mutandis) “truth of fact” (p. 81, line 3) for the expression
“truth of essence.” And on p. 80 even Anselm’s notions of truth and of justice are
stated by Colish imprecisely: “For Anselm, thus, truth is rectitude perceived with
the reason; justice is rectitude sought consciously by the will and expressed in right
action for the sake of, and by means of, justice itself.” Yet, Anselm affirms that
truth is rightness, or rectitude, perceptible only to the mind (De Veritate 11). And
justice, he says in De Veritate 12, is “uprightness (rectitudo)-of-will kept for its
own sake.” In the case of the notion of truth, Colish’s omission of the word “only”
and her choice of “perceived” instead of “perceivable” are of momentous import.
Equally grave is her apparent implication that justice is (always?) expressed in right
action and her mistaken phrase “for the sake of . . . justice itself” instead of “for
the sake of . . . uprightness itself.” With regard to a different issue, what sense can
be made of the following sentence on p. 92?: “That equipollency is a sure path to
the rectitude on which truth depends is underlined in the De veritate, where the
discipulus at the beginning of the dialogue insists that the magister demonstrate his
conclusions with a ‘definition of truth,’ as he had in the Monologion.” How can
anyone demonstrate his conclusions with a definition of truth? For a definition
does not demonstrate (i.e., prove) anything. Nor does the Student make any such
odd request of the Teacher in De Veritate 1.

(4) Epistolae de Incarnatione Verbi Prior Recensio. We have already seen
that Colish does not understand De Grammatico. Her incomprehension of Episto-
Notes to the Interpretive Study

lae de Incarnate Verbi Prior Recensio follows suit: "When it comes to the actual content of Roscellinus’s teachings, Anselm presents an objection derived bodily from the eleventh-century grammar with which, as we have seen, he was so deeply concerned. In fact, his argument is quite reminiscent of the De grammatico. He holds Roscellinus to be in error because his attribution of the names ‘Father,’ ‘Son,’ and ‘Holy Spirit’ to the Persons of the Trinity, as Anselm understands them, is grammatically inaccurate. In Roscellinus’s mouth, he states, these names are *flatus vocis*, because they are applied to God in the way that such terms as ‘white,’ ‘just,’ ‘king,’ and ‘grammarian’ are applied to an individual man" (p. 84). However, neither in *Epistolae de Incarnatione Verbi Prior Recensio* 2 nor 4 nor 11—the citation given by Colish—nor anywhere else does Anselm allege that in Roscelin’s mouth the names ‘Father,’ ‘Son,’ and “Holy Spirit” are *flatus vocis*. Moreover, in making the comparison between “Father,” “Son,” “Holy Spirit” and the terms “white,” “just” and “grammaticus,” Anselm is not alluding to the opinion of Roscelin but rather to the opinion of a Frankish friend of his, who, reportedly, claimed to have heard this comparison being used by Anselm himself. Furthermore, “certain dialecticians”—among whom Anselm does not explicitly place Roscelin—are said by Anselm to consider [the names of] universal substances to be mere vocal sounds [*flatus vocis*]. But, of course, the words “Father,” “Son,” and “Holy Spirit” signify relations, not universal substances, so that it does not follow that they are among the words considered by these dialecticians to be *flatus vocis*. Moreover, qua signifying relations, they are not like the terms “white,” “just,” and “grammaticus,” which properly signify qualities. Colish owes us an unmuddled account of *Epistolae de Incarnatione Verbi Prior Recensio*. Symptomatic of her textual misapprehension is her muddled translation of the following portion of Section 4 of the Prior Recensio: “Deo protegente numqam de hac fide disputabo quomodo non sit; deo dante semper credendo, amando, vivendo de illa disputabo quomodo sit.” These words she renders as “By no means does God protect me if I dispute against the faith on how he does not exist. Through God’s continual grace I believe, I love, I live for the disputation on how he does exist” (p. 85), instead of as (something like) “God safeguarding, I will never, with respect to this faith, discuss the [alleged] reasons why it is not true. God granting, I will—while ever believing, loving, and living [this faith]—discuss, with respect to it, the reasons why it is true.” A smoother but equally acceptable rendering would be: “God safeguarding, I will never enter into dispute about the [alleged] reasons why this faith is not true. God granting, I will—while ever believing, loving, and living [this faith]—enter into dispute about the reasons why it is true.” (Likewise erroneous is her translation, on pp. 91-92, of a portion of Epistola 77, “Ea enim ipsa sic beatus AUGUSTINUS in libro De trinitate suis magnis disputationibus probat, ut eadem quasi mea breviori ratione inveniens eius confusis auctoritate dicere.” as “For since this is how blessed Augustine proved his great disputations in his book De trinitate, I may argue in the same way, finding, as it were, my brief arguments in his sure authority.”)

(5) *Cur Deus Homo.* In n. 78 on p. 245 Colish indicates that “all Anselm quotations in English, unless otherwise indicated, will be taken from this translation”
Notes to the Interpretive Study

Yet, in a way that belies her scholarly credentials as an historian, Colish amends many of these Anselm quotations without always giving an indication thereof. At no place is this practice more unpardonable than on p. 83 (where she silently alters the translation “You prove the necessity of God’s becoming a man...” to “You prove the necessity of God’s becoming man...”) and p. 87 (where she unacknowledgedly changes “For what reason and on the basis of what necessity did God become a man?” to “For what reason and on the basis of what necessity did God become man?”). Moreover, vis-à-vis the latter translation she once writes “that” for “which,” writes “elegance” instead of “the elegance,” and excises a series of eight words without using ellipsis marks. (Other tampered-with quotations, unacknowledged as such, occur on pp. 85, 91, and 92. Furthermore, Colish should refer readers to the revised translations of Monologion 1-5, found in Appendix I of Anselm of Canterbury: Volume Four; and she herself should quote from this revision—something she fails to do at the top of p. 96.) No doubt Colish prefers, for the title “Cur Deus Homo,” the translation “Why God Became Man.” But this preference does not justify her imputation of this translation to me, the translator. Nor does it excuse her failure to state her reasons for her preference and to show in exactly what respects the translator’s reasons in support of the translation “Why God Became a Man” (i.e., “Why God Became a Human Being”) are unacceptable. (These reasons are presented in the notes to the translation, and they are discussed at greater length in Volume Four. N.B.: the title on the cover of the paperback edition entitled “Why God Became Man” was placed there by the Editor of The Edwin Mellen Press without my advance knowledge or consent.) All translations of extended medieval philosophical and theological texts are destined to need revisions of one kind or another. Indeed, all translators are to some extent dependent upon others to find and to make whatever emendations and corrections seem necessary. But no translator should brook the misrepresentation that results from the unacknowledged and undefended substantive altering of a translation that is imputed to him. Especially he should not do so when the alteration produces a substantial error.

Turning to another topic, we see that much of Colish’s discussion of rationes necessariae (i.e., compelling reasons, compelling considerations, necessary reasons, rational necessity) is misguided. In particular, there is no attempt to distinguish between, or else to call into question the alleged distinction between, rationes necessariae and rationes congruentes. In general, no serious analysis is ever given of the many different kinds of reasoning that Anselm includes under the label “rationes necessariae.” On p. 83 Colish writes: “According to Anselm, an argument may be considered to have been proved by necessary reasons when it states that things are the way they really are, without invoking the support of a higher authority.” But how can an argument be proved by merely stating that things are the way they really are? On the same page Colish remarks: “All kinds of statements may be verified by means of necessary reasons...” Apparently, their major practical limitation as epistemological tools seems to be the fact that they are usually grammatical in structure.” But how can Colish speak generally of verification by necessary reasons if necessary reasons are usually grammatical? Elsewhere (viz., p. 88) we
are told that "according to Anselm, necessary reasons have several epistemological advantages. Like all signs possessing rectitude, they are accurate representations of their objects, so far as they go; and they are more useful than authoritative statements, which are not decisive for the nonbeliever." But in what sense are necessary reasons signs? And in virtue of what are they said to represent? (Would anyone ordinarily say that "compelling" considerations are signs or that they represent?) On p. 83 Colish says, inconsistently, not that rationes necessariae are signs, but that they are "a mode of explaining the rectitude that exists between a sign and the object it signifies.") Moreover, Colish makes it sound as if necessary reasons differed from authoritative statements in that they are decisive for the nonbeliever. However, on the very next page (viz., p. 89) she conveys exactly the opposite impression when she tells us that "the most they [i.e., necessary reasons] can do for a nonbeliever is to show him that Christian beliefs are not entirely incoherent." And this conveyed impression is also at odds with Boso's conclusion in the Cur Deus Homo: "All the statements you make seem to me to be reasonable and to be statements which cannot at all be contradicted. And I recognize that whatever is contained in the Old and in the New Testament has been proved by the solution of the single problem which we have set forth. For you prove the necessity of God's becoming a man, and you do so in such way that even if the few things you have introduced from our books are removed (e.g., what you mentioned about the three persons of God and about Adam), you would satisfy not only the Jews but also the pagans by reason alone."

(6) Monologion. "Just as a man has interior locutiones mentis before expressing himself in externally perceptible signs," claims Colish on behalf of Anselm, "... so the Creator has locutiones about the universe before he reifies it externally" (p. 97). But as we learned in the foregoing examination of Richard Campbell, such a claim is flatly and pivotally wrong, so that Colish's overall interpretation of the Monologion's trinitarianism collapses. Her extended misinterpretation of Monologion 1-4 has equally disastrous consequences. To begin with, she wrongly views Monologion 1-4 as constituting a single proof (pp. 95-96: "By the time Anselm has reached the end of chapter 4, which terminates the proof of God's existence in the Monologion ... "). Then she misleadingly claims that Anselm assumes at the outset that the various goods which men desire have a single cause (p. 96). Anselm himself, however, does not assume this conclusion; rather, he attempts to infer it. And so, he commences deliberately: "Although the good things whose very great variety we perceive by the body's senses and distinguish by the mind's reason are so numerous, are we to believe that there is one thing through which all good things are good, or are we to believe that different goods are good through different things?" Obviously, there are difficulties with Anselm's subsequent inferential reasoning. Yet, the reasoning should not mistakenly be termed an assumption. How logically confused Colish is is evident from her statement that "Anselm has more or less inferred the proof that a Supreme Being exists" (p. 96). Now, in a proof the conclusion is inferable from the premises; but what is it to infer a proof? And does Anselm do it? Elsewhere Colish remarks that Anselm "establishes the proof of God's existence" (p. 95), when she should say that he purportedly estab-
lishes God's existence, not the proof thereof. Colish sees Anselm as inferring, from the assertion that all men naturally desire the things which they judge to be good, that all men should want to know the ultimate cause of the goods which they desire (p. 95, my italics). However, Anselm makes no such inference that includes (the Latin equivalent of) the deontic operator "should." According to Colish, Anselm's proof "is based on a theory of participation and proportionality" and is, in part, "reminiscent of Platonic idealism" (p. 95). She begs the question against F. S. Schmitt by interpreting the Monologion's "per alium" terminology to be tantamount to the language of participation. [She should refer the reader to F. S. Schmitt's provocative discussion in his article "Anselm und der (Neu-)Platonismus."] In addition to begging an important question Colish, in effect, travesties Anselm's reasoning, at the outset of the Monologion, when she expounds it along the following lines: "The first shift in definition is the almost imperceptible conversion of this supreme good into a being. Next, since this being is indubitably very good, and since all other goods exist through it and in relation to it, it must therefore be self-existent, assuming the absurdity of infinite regress. As self-existent, it is not merely very good, but supremely good" (p. 95, my italics). At times, in dealing with the Monologion, Colish makes undisciplined overstatements, as when she writes: "Anselm insists that his intention as a theologian is purely utilitarian. He formulates his speculations, he says, with an eye to their practicality" (p. 93, my italics). At times, she incautiously ascribes to Anselm that which she does not recognize to be unintelligible: "Anselm holds that nonrelative expressions, such as infinitive statements, may be properly and truly applied to the Creator, so long as the characteristics which these statements attribute to him are better than they are not" (p. 98, my italics).

Colish also misconstrues Anselm's argument regarding truth. For à propos of Monologion 18 she remarks: "truth must be eternal in order for any statement about eternity to be true" (p. 98). Anselm's argument, however, does not have recourse to statements about eternity. Other sections of the Monologion are likewise badly misrepresented. "It is even more difficult," writes Colish, "for man to grasp precisely how the Creator and his Word can be two and yet one, although, he [i.e., Anselm] thinks, the terms 'Father' and 'Son' have a high degree of rectitude" (p. 99). Yet, Anselm does not say that the terms "Father" and "Son" have rectitude; he says that they are suitable, or fitting (Monologion 42). "Anselm," notes Colish on p. 99, "attempts to provide some consolation by elaborating some of the positive features of human nature, on the basis of his definition of the human mind as the best speculum of the Trinity." Contrary to this verdict, however, Anselm does not define the human mind as the best mirror of the Trinity; rather, through reflective meditation, he arrives at this conclusion.

(7) Proslogion and Debate with Gaunilo. Colish's treatment of these three works is riddled with as many errors and imprecisions as is her treatment of the Monologion. On p. 90, for example, we find the claim that "nowhere in Anselm's work does he refer to the Monologion and Proslogion as proofs of God's existence." But this claim does not hold true of the Proslogion. For in the preface thereto Anselm indicates that he was looking for a single consideration which
“would suffice by itself to demonstrate that God truly exists . . . .” Moreover, in
Reply to Gaunilo 10 he recapitulates: “I have now showed, I believe, that in the
aforementioned work I proved—not by inconclusive reasoning but by quite com-
pelling reasoning—that something than which a greater cannot be thought exists in
reality.”

At the beginning of Proslogion 2 Anselm prays: “Lord, Giver of understand-
ing to faith, grant me to understand—to the degree You deem best—that You
exist, as we believe, and that You are what we believe [You to be].” But Colish
construes Anselm’s Latin to mean that God is what we believe Him to be and as
we believe Him to be (p. 100)—thereby misconstruing the role of “sicut” in “quia
es sicut credimus . . . .” Similarly, the expression “aliquid quo maius nihil cogitari
potest” is wrongly translated as “that than which nothing greater can be conceived”
(p. 100). At various times these words are called by Colish the “name of God,” a
“formula” (p. 100), a name that is “a self-evident definition,” a name that is “an
accurate designation of God,” “a sign” (p. 101). How the words can be all these
things—e.g., both a name and a definition—is never explained (“From Anselm’s
point of view, the beauty of the name lies in the fact that it is a self-evident defini-
tion; it virtually proves itself” (pp. 100-101)). Colish goes on to allege that “the
name proves the existence of the being which it defines” (p. 101), so that, appar-
ently, according to her, it is not only a name and a definition but also a proof. So,
then, Colish has made two quite different claims: viz., that the name or definition
virtually proves itself and that the name proves the existence of the being it
defines. Previously she asserted that “by putting the definition in the negative,
Anselm gains the advantage of being able to develop the first stage of his argument
without having to prove that God is a being . . . .” (p. 100). So we are being told by
Colish that although the name proves the existence of the being it defines, the first
stage of Anselm’s argument is developed without his having to prove that God is a
being! Confusion increases when she maintains: “It is not Anselm, but the fool,
who makes an unwarranted leap from thought to being. What Anselm does, on
the other hand, is to move from being to thought in the formulation of a name of
God that does not contradict the nature of God as he is” (p. 101). So even though
Colish has told us that the name of God proves the existence of the being which it
defines, she now tells us that Anselm moves from being to thought in formulating
this name, which does not contradict the nature of God as He is. Thus defying all
logic, Colish’s reasoning somehow culminates in the conclusion that Anselm, in
the first chapters of the Proslogion, has “established the rectitude of the definition
of God as aliquid quo maius nihil cogitari potest” (p. 101). In the jumbled process
of reaching this (erroneous) point she has managed to contend that “according to
Anselm, the reason why the fool is wrong is that he fails to make this distinction
between esse in solo intellectu and esse et in intellectu et in re” (p. 101). Hereby she
confirms her own utter failure to comprehend Anselm’s reasoning in Proslogion 2.
For not only does Anselm not charge the Fool with failing to make this distinction,
but also his entire approach is based upon the conviction that the Fool is not
so foolish as to fail to make it.

Colish’s misapprehension of Gaunilo is likewise total—as is her misrepresen-
Notes to the Interpretive Study

tion of Anselm's responses. On p. 104 she singles out “four major objections” (p. 103) raised by Gaunilo on behalf of the Fool. “Gaunilo,” she says, “finds it impossible to follow Anselm's distinction between esse in solo intellectu and esse et in intellectu et in re. They are both in the mind; and if we begin with the mind, he asks, what grounds have we for claiming that the latter is extramentally real while the former is not?” (p. 104). Now, this alleged objection is a case of pure invention on Colish's part. Gaunilo's text makes clear that the Fool does not find it impossible to follow Anselm's distinction; and there is nothing in the text that corresponds to the remainder of the alleged objection. Colish is also mistaken in her representation of Anselm's response: “Taking up next the difficulty found by Gaunilo in the distinction between esse in solo intellectu and esse et in intellectu et in re, he [viz., Anselm] points out that the intellect and reality cannot be thought of as locations where God may be found sometimes but not always” (p. 105). But Anselm does not say that once a given intellect has conceived of God, God remains continually in that intellect, even when it is no longer conceiving of Him; nor does he say that that intellect cannot stop conceiving of God.

Gaunilo's second objection, according to Colish, is that if the distinction between esse in solo intellectu and esse et in intellectu et in re “were so obvious as Anselm makes it, there would be no fools” (p. 104). However, what Gaunilo says is that if a nature than which a greater cannot be thought could not, when spoken of or heard of, be thought not to exist, then “why was your entire argument enjoined against one who doubts or denies that there is any such nature as this?” Anselm's response, says Colish among other things, maintains that “words are intrinsically meaningful, in one way or another” and that “statements, even if defective, resemble the things they signify, and they therefore provide some positive knowledge about them” (p. 105). However, Anselm does not say, unqualifiedly, that spoken and written words are intrinsically meaningful, in one way or another. Nor does he teach that statements resemble the things they signify.

Gaunilo's third objection, affirms Colish, states that “the name ['God'] is meaningless unless one knows what it signifies. Even if we assume that the name of God is in intellectu, this does not prove the existence of God in re . . . ” (p. 104). Yet, Gaunilo does not make the vacuous (?) assertion that the name “God” is meaningless unless one (someone?) knows what it means; rather, he maintains that one simply does not know what is signified by the word “God” (the implication being that “God” is not a name). Colish needs to analyze Gaunilo's distinction between “cogitare secundum vocem” and “cogitare secundum rem.” Then, perhaps, she will see that Gaunilo does not say “if we assume that the name of God is in intellectu . . . .” Rather, he says “if that which cannot even be properly conceived [i.e., the thing, not the word] must nonetheless be said to be in the understanding, then . . . . “ To this alleged third objection, supported by Gaunilo's appeal to the counterexample about a perfect island, Anselm is alleged to respond by pointing out that all islands (a) are created things and (b) are contingent and (c) come into being and (d) pass away and (e) can be conceived not to exist (p. 105). None of these five responses, however, can be found in Anselm's Reply. Perhaps instead of inventing responses to put into Anselm's mouth, Colish might want simply to
claim that the logic of Anselm's reasoning commits him to such responses, while admitting that he does not actually make any of them. But if so, she would have to revise her list of points a-e. For Anselm's logic does not necessarily commit him to invoking the view that all islands are created things which pass away.

Gaunilo's fourth objection, notes Colish, "argues that it is possible to conceive hypothetically of the nonexistence of God, just as it is possible to conceive of the nonexistence of the self or of anything else" (p. 104). But Gaunilo does not argue that it is possible to conceive of the nonexistence of the self or of anything else. Rather, he indicates perplexity ("I do not know whether, during the time when I know most certainly that I exist, I can think that I do not exist"), and by way of argument he poses an ingenious dilemma ("If I can, why [can I] not [think not to exist] whatever else I know as certainly [as I know my own existence]? On the other hand, if I cannot [think that I do not exist], then this [property of not being able to be thought not to exist] will no longer be uniquely God's"). According to Colish, Anselm responds by maintaining that "the self and all other beings that are not God are contingent . . . and thus eminently conceivable as nonexistent" (p. 105). However, Colish's representation of Anselm misses the point. For Anselm does not say that because all things other than God are contingent they can be conceived not to exist. Indeed, if he were to have said something close to this, then he would have said it the other way around: viz., that because all things other than that-than-which-a-greater-cannot-be-thought can be thought not to exist, they are contingent. But instead of saying this, he distinguishes two different senses of "to think" ("cogitare") and indicates that in one sense a thing (other than God) can be thought not to exist, even while it is known to exist, but that in another sense it cannot then be thought not to exist.

Colish's distortion of Anselm's debate with Gaunilo is not limited to the foregoing objections and responses. For she also views Gaunilo as having recast Anselm's formula ("aliquid quo maius nihil cogitari potest") into a hypothetical syllogism (p. 104). But how such a recasting would be possible once again defies all logic. Furthermore, she regards Anselm as making "the trechant observation that Gaunilo has misquoted him by understanding him to say that if something exists in the mind it therefore exists in reality" (p. 105). Here again Colish fails to be precise. For Anselm does not reproach Gaunilo for imputing to him the view "if something . . . , it therefore . . . ." Instead, he reproaches him for imputing the view "if that which is greater than all others . . . , it . . . ." This difference is critical—something Colish fails to realize. Colish likewise says of Anselm: "He also slices through Gaunilo's query of how, from a purely formal perspective, one would differentiate esse in solo intellectu from esse et in intellectu et in re. It is an irrelevant question, he says, that 'is not my concern'" (p. 105). But in Reply to Gaunilo 6 Anselm is not talking about Gaunilo's alleged query regarding the foregoing distinction. He is talking about Gaunilo's notion of understanding, and he (wrongly) charges Gaunilo with contradicting himself. This contradiction, he says, "is not my concern; you attend to it." So he does not dismiss the matter as irrelevant; he dismisses it as incoherent. Colish also purports to find, in Reply to Gaunilo 1, Anselm observing that "no fool . . . could have constructed objections as
good as Gaunilo’s” (p. 104). But here again she is inventing.

In the publisher’s blurb on p. i—a blurb approved by Colish and incorporated by the editor directly into the volume—we read the simplistic claim that “Augustine stressed rhetoric, Anselm shifted to grammar (including grammatical proofs of God’s existence), and Thomas Aquinas stressed dialectic.” Since we are presently focusing attention exclusively upon Anselm, let us merely remind ourselves that in Anselm’s corpus of works there are no grammatical proofs of God’s existence. Indeed, only a judgment as wrongheaded as the judgment that the *Monologion* or the *Proslogion* contains a grammatical proof of God’s existence could lend credence to the oversimplified differentiation that is made between Augustine, Anselm, and Aquinas. On p. 92 Colish tones down her judgment slightly: “The specific kind of necessary reasons which Anselm employs in the *Monologion*, *Proslogion*, and *Contra Gaunilonem* tend [sic] to be grammatical in nature.” But even as thus stated, the claim is tendentiously exaggerated—as are the following cognate claims: (1) “the verbal medium in which Anselm himself thinks and works is grammar” (p. 58); (2) “Anselm’s major epistemological concern is the theological problem of speaking about God” (p. 59); (3) “where [sic] Augustine sees the task of theology as the eloquent expression of the Word, Anselm sees it as the conscientious and faithful definition of the Word” (p. 59); (4) “Anselm’s primary mode of thought is grammar” (p. 63); (5) “Anselm’s whole approach to this problem [of the persons of the Trinity] is verbal rather than logical” (p. 84). But we have already seen how Colish’s tendentious approach distorts not only Anselm’s debate with Gaunilo but also the structure of Anselm’s *Proslogion*, the structure of his *Monologion*, his actual criticisms of Roscelin in *De Incarnatione Verbi* (Prior Recensio), his doctrine of signification in *De Grammatico*, his notions of truth, rectitude, and justice in *De Veritate*, his notion of *rationes necessariae* in the *Cur Deus Homo*, and the relation between grammar and logic in the *Philosophical Fragments*.

Also noteworthy is Colish’s misrepresentation of Anselm’s solution—in *Proslogion* 7—to his perplexity regarding God’s omnipotence: “How, he asks, can we say that God is omnipotent when there are some things, namely evil things, which he cannot do? Are his inabilities in this respect a real curtailment of his power? Anselm answers that God’s inability to do evil is in no way qualifies his omnipotence, because not to be able to do evil is better than to be able to do evil, and is consequently true of God” (p. 102). Here Colish’s representation of the supporting reason (“because not to be able to do evil is better than to be able to do evil”) is wrong. For Anselm’s answer is not in terms of an inability’s being better than a corresponding ability. Rather, he explains that God’s “inability” to do evil is improperly called an inability. For it is a power, not a powerlessness. “Therefore, Lord God, You are more truly omnipotent because none of Your abilities are really inabilities and because nothing has any power over You.” With respect to *Proslogion* 9-11 Colish travesties Anselm’s reasoning when she expounds: “His [i.e., God’s] compassion extends to all, even to the wicked, because it operates in
accordance with God’s nature rather than being proportioned to our own just
deserts. This idea may seem difficult for men to understand, says Anselm, but it is
true, because the reverse would be impious. In any case, he points out, justice can
be redefined as the will of God, which effectively takes care of the problem” (p.
102). Once again Colish misrepresents a supporting reason (“it is true, because the
reverse would be impious”). And nowhere does Anselm redefine justice as the will
of God.

With regard to secondary literature Colish erroneously speaks of Immanuel
Kant’s “reading of the Proslogion proof as an ontological argument” (p. 56). Her
statement is objectionable because Kant, in his Critique of Pure Reason, had in
mind Descartes’ and Leibniz’s versions of a priori proofs for God’s existence. Col-
ish’s brief treatment of Charles Hartshorne, on p. 62, is totally inadequate, since it
fails to mention Hartshorne’s distinction between actuality and existence—a dis-
tinction that is central to Hartshorne’s attempt to clarify “Anselm’s discovery.”
And there should be some mention of William Rowe’s significant article “The
Ontological Argument and Question-Begging” (1976).

Finally, Colish should be more cautious in her claim (p. 106) about the
number of extant manuscripts of the Monologion and the Proslogion. She does not
entertain the possibility that new manuscripts have been located (as in fact has
occurred) since the publication of F. S. Schmitt’s critical edition in 1938.

(8) Concluding Observations. Ironically, Colish belongs to the group of
interpreters who regard what Anselm says as simple and as easily comprehensible
(p. 63)—so unaware is she of her own extensive incomprehension. Moreover, given
her theme, it is surprising that she takes no account of Helmut Kohlenberger’s
Similitudo et Ratio. Überlegungen zur Methode bei Anselm von Canterbury
(1972). As for philosophical terminology, she alludes to tautology, denotation, log-
ical untenability, question-begging, logical necessity, a priori thought, new onto-
logical idealism, Hegelianism in its modern Italianate form, Whiteheadian meta-
physics, static absolutes (p. 62). And yet, in the name of what is “fully self-evident
to the historian” (p. xvi) she presumes to make a virtue of having “expressly
avoided using philosophical and literary terms with the technical meanings and
connotations that contemporary thought attributes to them” (p. xv). In the end,
much of her distortion of Anselm’s views is directly attributable to her impover-
ished understanding both of the contemporary and of the Anselmian notions of
word, name, definition, proof, designation, signification, representation, rational
necessity, logical priority, necessary truth, logical demonstration, rational consis-
tency. Her shortcomings in philosophy are combined with a lack of facility in
textual interpretation (as epitomized by the inability to portray accurately the
debate between Anselm and Gaunilo), a defective historical sense (as evidenced by
the inventing of views to put into Anselm’s mouth and by the substantive, rather
than merely heuristic, utilization of the oversimplified organizing categories rhetorical-
grammatical-dialectical), a disrespect for scholarly procedure (as betrayed by the
unacknowledged alteration of translations and, in the case of Monologion 1-5, by
neglect in calling attention to the more accurate of two different renderings by the
same translator), and, finally, a superficiality in surveying the relevant secondary
Notes to the Interpretive Study

literature (as manifested, on the one hand, by the repetition of egregious errors that were long ago exposed as such in the very literature cited by her in her bibliography—e.g., the errors regarding "grammaticus" and regarding "locutio spiritus summi"—and, on the other hand, by an oversight of some of the most important literature in the field). The final result, sad to say, is an interpretation of Anselm that must be altogether discounted.

[The following are additional corrigenda for Colish's Chapter Two: (1) Change the reference in n. 79 to '27.26'. (2) Change the reference in n. 98 to 'Proselogion 23'. (3) Re n. 162: there is no Proselogion 27. (4) Change the reference in n. 164 to 'Monologion 65'. (5) In line 3 on p. 59 and in line 11 on p. 103 change 'where' and 'Where' to 'whereas' and 'Whereas' respectively. (6) In lines 14-15 on p. 83 change 'seems to be' to 'is'. (7) In line 16 on p. 95 change 'as if . . . is' to 'as if . . . were'. (8) In line 16 on p. 102 change 'God, which' to 'God—something which'. (9) In line 7 on p. 104 et passim change 'so . . . as' to 'as . . . as'.]

Were the present footnote not already too long, it could easily have included a detailed discussion of Gregory Schufreider's article "Reunderstanding Anselm's Argument," The New Scholasticism, (Summer 1983), 384-409. For the many confusions in this article also need to be patiently untangled. Perhaps such a discussion will be possible in the notes to my new translation of the Monologion and the Proselogion—a translation that is currently in preparation.

337. Blumenberg, p. 495 (italics mine).
338. Note Anselm's own claims in De Incarnatione Verbi 6 [Anselm of Canterbury: Volume Three, edited and translated by J. Hopkins and H. Richardson (New York: The Edwin Mellen Press, 1976), p. 23]: "... the Monologion and the Proselogion (which I wrote especially in order [to show] that what we hold by faith regarding the divine nature and its persons—excluding the topic of incarnation—can be proven by compelling reasons apart from [appeal to] the authority of Scripture . . . ." Also note Cur Deus Homo II, 22 (ibid., p. 137), Boso speaking: "For You prove the necessity of God's becoming a man, and you do so in such way that even if the few things you have introduced from our books are removed (e.g., what you mentioned about the three persons of God and about Adam), you would satisfy not only the Jews but also the pagans by reason alone."

341. DI II, 8 (140:7-8); II, 9 (148:8; 150:9-10); II, 13 (177:9-10); III, 1 (182:5-6). DVI 6 (19:10-11); 13 (57:12-13). N. B.: The phrase "secundum contractioriorem," as it appears on p. 14, lines 19-20 of Hoffmann and Klubansky's edition of the sermon "Dies Sanctificatus" (SHAW, 1929), is mistaken. According to Rudolf Haubst the correct reading is "secundum contractum modum."
342. Cf. DI III, 1 (183:10 - 184:3) and n. 341 above.
343. DI III, 1 (182:5-6). Here the Latin word "immersibile" means "not able
Notes to the Interpretive Study

341

to be commingled (with).” (See my list of corrections in the appendix to Nicholas of Cusa’s Metaphysic of Contraction, op. cit.)

344. See my discussion of this point on pp. 18-25 of Nicholas of Cusa on Learned Ignorance, op. cit. Also note Chap. 2 of Nicholas of Cusa’s Metaphysic of Contraction, op. cit.


346. At other times, as in the first full paragraph on p. 508, Blumenberg seems rightly to grasp Nicholas’s view. In repeating Nicholas’s statement that the world is neither finite nor infinite, he should add that it can likewise be called both finite and infinite, depending upon the respects.

347. The German edition reads (p. 89): “Wille ist der Weltaspekt des Unendlichen . . .”


349. Cf. DI II, 1 (96) and III, 1 (183:3-9; 187) with DVD 15 (65:21-22).


355. DI II, 9 (149:8-10).

356. DI II, 3 (108:4-11). This same idea is repeated in De Mente 6 (94:9-10).

357. DI III, 3 (201:10): “. . . sicut ipse est maximus, ita et opus eius . . .”

358. Cf. De Ludo Globi 1 (Paris edition, Vol. I, fol. 154’): “For the world was not so perfectly created that in creating it God created everything that He was able to create, even though the world was created as perfect as it was able to be created. Accordingly, God was able to create a more perfect and more circular world and likewise a less perfect and less circular world, even though the world was created as perfect as it was able to be.”

359. See n. 313 above.

360. My italics.

361. Blumenberg, p. 520 (italics mine).

362. Cf. DI II, 13 (180:2-6), where created things are depicted as saying: “Of ourselves [we are] nothing, and of our own ability we cannot tell you anything other than nothing. For we do not even know ourselves; rather, God alone—through whose understanding we are that which He wills, commands, and knows in us—[has knowledge of us].” Also note DI II, 4 (116:9-13): “just as in a craftsman’s design the whole (e.g., a house) is prior to a part (e.g., a wall), so because all things sprang into existence from God’s design, we say that first there appeared the universe and thereafter all things . . . .”
363. Even the word "emanation," as Nicholas uses it in DI [e.g., at II, 4 (116:3)], does not have a meaning opposed to "creatio ex nihilo." That the universe is said to emanate from God does not mean that it is not freely created by God.

Blumenberg, on p. 531, ascribes a related inconsistency to Nicholas with respect to the doctrine of creation. This ascription is also unjustifiable, and it arises from Blumenberg's misunderstanding of Nicholas's teachings on complicatio and explicatio. See also Cribratio Alkorani II, 2 (90:8-11) and I, 20 (83:18-19).

364. Italics mine.

365. DI III, 1 (185:14-19). Blumenberg himself recognizes (p. 544) that Nicholas subscribes to this kind of hierarchy.


367. DI III, 3 (197-198). Cf. the mention of higher and lower species and genera in DI III, 1 (185-186) and of higher and lower forms in DI II, 12 (174).

368. Cf. DI II, 6 (124).

369. DI II, 12 (170:3-7).

370. DI II, 10 (153:6-13).

371. DI II, 11 (156:5-6): "Of all things there is none which is not one from possibility, actuality, and uniting motion."

372. DI II, 8 (138), together with the title of II, 8. N. B.: Although Nicholas endorses this section of Chap. 8, he does not endorse everything that is earlier stated in this chapter. Also note the reference to matter in DI I, 22 (68:13).


374. DI II, 12 (171:15-18): "Thus, [we surmise], these intellectual solar natures are mostly in a state of actuality and scarcely in a state of potentiality; but the terrestrial [natures] are mostly in potentiality and scarcely in actuality; lunar [natures] fluctuate between [solar and terrestrial natures]." In DVD 24 (107:1-6) Nicholas indicates that in human beings the sensible spirit is brought to actuality by the influence of the heavens.

375. DI II, 13 (178:12-13).

376. DI II, 12 (173:1-3). Cf. the concluding sentence in n. 374 above.

377. DI II, 12 (162:15-17). Cf. II, 11 (157:23-26). In the text above, the formula in single quotation marks is a paraphrase of Nicholas's words.

378. The phrase "in order not to" should be corrected to "not in order to".

379. Here Wallace's translation should be corrected by replacing "its light" either with "it" or with "light". Moreover, the punctuation in this sentence should be corrected.

380. DI II, 12 (166:10-12).

381. Nicholas calls the earth and the other planets stars.

382. DI II, 12 (168:11-12).

383. DI II, 13 (175:8-8).


385. DI II, 13 (177:12-13).

386. DI II, 13 (179:9).

387. DI II, 12 (170:4).

388. My translation. Blumenberg, German edition, p. 79: "Wenn Gott die Zusammenfaltung von allem—also auch des Gegensätzlichen—sei, bleibe nichts,
was sich seiner Vorsehung entziehen könne. Diese Universalität könne weder vermehrt noch vermindert werden, auch wenn sie anderes vorgesehen hätte, als sie tatsächlich vorgesehen hat oder vorsehen wird, und obwohl sie vieles vorgesehen hat, was sie nicht vorzusehen brauchte." Cf. English edition, p. 522. N.B.: "Vorsehung“ must be taken primarily in the sense of Vorhersehen. Otherwise, Blumenberg has erroneously rendered Nicholas’s word "providentia" in Nicholas’s context.


390. "... obwohl sie vieles vorgesehen hat, was sie nicht vorzusehen brauchte.”

391. DI I, 22 (68:2-3). The proper subject of the Latin clause is God, not (à la Blumenberg) universality.

392. DI II, 13 (176:7-9): “And when Eternal Wisdom ordained the elements, He used an inexpressible proportion, so that He foreknew to what extent each element should precede the other . . .”


394. This is my translation, but it retains much of Wallace’s phrasing, while correcting other parts thereof. Blumenberg, German edition, pp. 35-36. English edition, pp. 484-485.

395. N. B. Anselm’s Monologion 15-17, Augustine’s De Trinitate 5.8.9 (PL 42:917), and Dionysius’s De Mystica Theologia, Chap. 4 (Dionysiaca, Vol. I, p. 595). Each of these passages teach explicitly that there is no quality in God.


398. See Nicholas of Cusa, Compendium 8. This illustration is discussed by Blumenberg on his p. 536.


400. In Compendium 10 (34:17-18) Nicholas indicates that his conception of truth is “adaequatio rei ad intellectum aut aequatio rei et intellectus.”


402. Blumenberg, p. 485. By “nominalism” Blumenberg seems to be referring, at least in part, to the view that (1) empirical concepts of the human mind are not merely abstracted from images initially furnished by the senses and reproduced by the imagination and (2) that therefore these concepts are not merely descriptive universal constructs but are reworked and partially transformed reconstructions, so that their correspondence to reality comes more into question. However, Blumenberg nowhere makes clear just what he understands nominalism to be. For various other meanings see (1) Heiko Oberman, “Some Notes on the Theology of Nominalism. With Attention to its Relation to the Renaissance,” Harvard Theological Review, 53 (1960), 47-76. (2) Frederick Copleston, A History of Philosophy (Westminster, Maryland: The Newman Press, Vol. II (1950), pp. 136-155, and Vol. III (1953), pp. 49-61. (3) William J. Courtenay, “Nominalism and Late Medieval
Religion," pp. 26-59 of *The Pursuit of Holiness in Late Medieval and Renaissance Religion*, edited by Charles Trinkhaus and Heiko Oberman (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1974). It is crucially important to distinguish philosophical nominalism (e.g., in the sense of Copleston) from theological nominalism (e.g., in the sense of Oberman). For if a nominalist were primarily someone who subscribed to the doctrine that there is no comparative relation between the finite and the infinite, then Nicholas would have to be labelled a nominalist. But most philosophers, even in Europe, do not adhere to this construal of "nominalism."


405. Ap. 11:23-24. Cf. *DI II*, 3 (111:14-15): "In all things He is that which they are, just as in an image the reality itself (veritas) is present."

406. Ap. 11:15. Precise truth, says Nicholas, is inapprehensible by us [*DI I*, 2 (8:9-10)].


409. Ap. 26:8-10: "The form of the image is a formed form, and whatever truth [the image] has, it has it only from [that] form which is its truth and exemplar. . . ." Ap. 11:20-23: "Just as the being of an image does not at all have any perfection from itself, so its every perfection is from that of which it is an image; for the exemplar is the measure and the form (ratio) of the image." *DI I*, 11 (30:13-17): "Although every image seems to be like its exemplar, nevertheless except for the Maximal Image (which is, in oneness of nature, the very thing which its Exemplar is) no image is so similar or equal to its exemplar that it cannot be infinitely more similar and equal." [This statement implies that images of real objects are likenesses, in some degree, of the respective real object they image.] *DI II*, 6 (126:12-16): "Now, with respect to the things understood: the intellect's understanding follows, through a likeness, being and living and the intelligibility of nature. Therefore, universals, which it makes from comparison, are a likeness of the universals contracted in things." *DI I*, 1 (2:7-14): "[All things] have an innate sense of judgment which serves the purpose of knowing. [They have this] in order that their desire not be in vain but be able to attain rest in that [respective] object which is desired by the propensity of each thing's own nature. But if perchance affairs turn out otherwise, this [outcome] must happen by accident—as when sickness misleads taste or an opinion misleads reason. Wherefore, we say that a sound, free intellect knows to be true that which is apprehended by its affectionate embrace. (The intellect insatiably desires to attain unto the true through scrutinizing all things by means of its innate faculty of inference.)" Ap. 11:27-28: "... this infinite Being which in all comprehensible things is present as in a mirror and in a symbolism. . . ." [This clause implies that some things—including, in the context, empirical objects—are comprehensible, i.e., knowable.]

410. Ap. 11:24-26 and 11:28 - 12:1: "If anyone sees that the very great variety
of things is an image of the one God, then when he leaves behind all the variety of all the images, he proceeds incomprehensibly to the Incomprehensible . . . . He sees clearly that this Form, of which every creature is an image, is not comprehensible on the basis of any created thing:"  
412. See n. 101 above.  
414. Regarding the *Compendium* Rudolf Haubst is certainly right: "Dabei denkt Nikolaus auch keineswegs etwa nominalistisch. Er ist ja gerade davon überzeugt, dass sich uns die Dinge in den je entsprechenden Zeichen—und letztlich Gott und seine Schöpferideen in den Dingen—nicht adäquat, aber doch 'wahrheitsgemäss (vere) repräsentieren'" (p. 160 of "Wort und Leitidee der 'repraesentatio' bei Nikolaus v. Kues," cited in the bibliography). Similarly, Helmut Meinhardt's general conclusion on p. 192 of his "Nikolaus von Kues und der Nominalismus" (cited in the bibliography) is correct: "Ich sehe keinen besonderen nominalistischen Einbruch, auch nicht im Compendium"—though his exposition of *De Mente* a few pages earlier needs to be stated more precisely.  
417. Douay version.  
419. This metaphor is used in *DVD* 16 (71).  
422. Deut. 4:29: "And when thou shalt seek there the Lord thy God, thou shalt find him: yet so, if thou seek him with all thy heart, and all the affliction of thy soul" (Douay version).  
424. This statement and the immediately succeeding ones are drawn from *DI* III 11.  
426. See Sec. 2.2 above.  
427. N.B. the different senses of "videre deum" that I have discussed above. Blumenberg makes no effort at all to distinguish different senses of "visio" on
behalf of Nicholas.

428. See Blumenberg, p. 654, n. 27. The reference is to *Excitationes* IX (in particular, to Vol. II, fol. 167v of the Paris edition of Nicholas’s works). Blumenberg, elides a portion of this quotation; in the absence of this portion Nicholas’s point will not be fully intelligible to the reader.

429. Blumenberg, p. 501. I have added the German words. See the German edition, p. 55.


432. See *DI* III, 12 (259), and cf. the *Letter to Cardinal Julian* (*DI* III (263-264)). Also see *DVD* 16 (74:1-7): “I, an insignificant human being, would not be content with You my God if I knew You to be comprehensible . . . . Therefore, it is not the case that that which the intellect understands is that which fully satisfies the intellect, i.e., is the intellect’s end. On the other hand, that which the intellect does not at all understand cannot fully satisfy it, either. Rather, [it is fully satisfied] only [by] that which it understands by not understanding.” Cf. *DVD* 16 (71:7-15).


436. *DVD* 5 (15:5-9). Cf. *DVD* 8 (30:11-12): “You do not, for all that, altogether desert us.” Note *DVD* 5 (16:10-12): “Hence, wherever any man goes Your mercy follows him for as long as he is alive, just as Your gaze, too, does not desert anyone.” *DVD* 5 (15:11-12): “Notwithstanding, You still do not turn altogether away from me, but Your mercy follows me . . . .”


440. *DVD* 5 (15:9). Also note the expression “pietatis oculo” at 15:1. Cf. *DVD* 8 (30:13-14): “And You are always ready to look upon us with Your earlier paternal eye (paterno oculo) if we turn back and turn unto You.”

441. *DVD* 8 (33:1-4): “To all who examine it, my God, how admirable is Your sight, which is theos! How beautiful and lovable is it to all who love You! How terrifying it is to all who forsake You, O Lord my God!”


443. Note Blumenberg’s actual words (German edition, p. 98): “Vielheit und Individualitat der Betrachter sind der Identitat des Bildes nicht entgegen, sondern die ihm angemessene, seine geheimnisvolle Potentialitat erst entfaltende Partnerschaft.”


446. See the correct version of the argument in the translation in Part II of the present work.


448. Another example of a wild interpretation is the following: "This disintegration [of the Middle Ages] had led at first to the position of nominalism, which had deprived human freedom of any significance over against God's absolute demand for justification . . . ." Blumenberg, p. 540. My italics.

449. DVD 25 (111:5-6).
450. Cf. DI III, 6 (217).
451. DVD 7 (28:1-8).


456. DI II, 1 (97).
457. DI III, 3 (201:10).

458. Blumenberg follows Raymond Klibansky in mistakenly believing that "Dies Sanctificatus" was preached on Christmas Day, 1439 (and therefore prior to the completion of DI). N. B.: Nicholas also has several other, later, sermons entitled "Dies Sanctificatus." These sermons should not be confused.


460. My translation, from the Latin.
461. DI III, 4 (203).
462. Cf. DI III, 3 (199:12-17).

463. But even in his later section on Bruno, Blumenberg continues to misrepresent Nicholas's Christology. On p. 593 we read: "The great symmetry of man becoming God and God becoming man, which the Cusan had set up against the conflict that was breaking out between the medieval consciousness of God and the new consciousness of self, had been destroyed by the third element of the system . . . ." Nowhere, however, does Nicholas maintain that man becomes God. In the Incarnation the Word of God assumed a human nature. But Nicholas states
unequivocally that this human nature does not pass over into the divine nature, does not become identical to the divine nature [\textit{DI III}, 2 (194)]. And even when he says “Verbum enim dei es humanatum, et homo es deificatus”[\textit{DVD} 23 (100:4-5)], the word “\textit{deificatus}” indicates not that the human nature has become God but rather that it has become Godlike. [Note the use of “\textit{deificatio}” in \textit{De Filiatione Dei}. Cf. the use in \textit{Cribratio Alkoran} (Vol. II of the Strasburg edition, reissued by P. Wilpert), Alius Prologus (14:10-11).]

464. Blumenberg, p. 547. In the present context Blumenberg’s verb “\textit{geneitigt habe}” would be better translated as “required” than as “compelled”.


467. \textit{DI III}, 4 (205:10-17): “In that species which is actually supreme within the genus \textit{animal}, viz., the human species, the senses give rise to an animal such that it is so animal that it is also intellect. For a man is his own intellect. In the intellect the perceptual contractedness is somehow subsumed in \textit{(suppostatur)} the intellectual nature, which exists as a certain divine, separate, abstract being, while the perceptual remains temporal and corruptible in accordance with its own nature.” \textit{DI III}, 6 (215:4-9): “There is no doubt that a human being consists of senses, intellect, and reason (which is in between and which connects the other two) . . . . The intellect is not temporal and mundane but is free of time and of the world. The senses are temporally subject to the motions of the world.” \textit{DI III}, 10 (240:1-2): “The intellectual nature, which is beyond time and is not subject to temporal corruption, . . . .” N. B. \textit{VS} 32.

468. Cf. I Cor. 15:52-53.


470. \textit{DI III}, 8 (228:20-26). Cf. \textit{DI III}, 10 (239:12-13), which speaks of “the securing of the respective end (viz., glorification with regard to the translation of the sons of God and damnation with regard to the exclusion of the unconverted) . . . .”

471. Cf. \textit{De Filiatione Dei} 2 (56:1-3). When Nicholas says that each thing is perfect in the way it can be [\textit{DI III}, 1 (189:1-3)], he is referring to its status in the present order of creation, without thereby excluding the possibility of its having a different degree of perfection in the world to come. Moreover, he does not exclude its having been rendered, as a result of the Fall, less perfect than it otherwise would have been. Qua \textit{created} thing, it is, in a given degree, a perfect individual thing of its kind; and its kind is, in a given degree, a perfect specimen of its genus; and the genus is, in a given degree, a perfect contraction of the universe; and the universe
exists in the best way in which the condition of its nature allows.

472. Note the phrase "intellectual and eternal desires" ["intellectuales et aeterni affectus"] at DI III, 6 (217:3-4).
473. DI III, 10 (241:15-16).
474. DI III, 6 (218:11-15): "But Christ the Lord willed to mortify completely—and in mortifying to purge—by means of His own human body all the sins of human nature which draw us toward earthly things . . . ."
475. DI III, 6 (218:19-20).
477. DI III, 6 (220:1-5).
478. DI III, 6 (219:10-12).
479. DI III, 6 (219:1-2).
480. Similarly, in "Dies Sanctificatus" (SHA W, 1929, p. 36) he writes: " . . . quisque Christo adherens et unitus non in alio, sed in sua humanitate, que est et Christi, satisfecit debito, iustificatur, vivificatur, quia ipsa sua humanitas, que est una in eo et Christo, Deo Verbo unita est."
481. These accounts are supplementary to each other, as is evident from DI III, 7 (221:6-11): "How could what is mortal have put on immortality otherwise than by being stripped of mortality? How would it be free of mortality except by having paid the debt of death? Therefore, Truth itself says that those who do not understand that Christ had to die and in this way enter into glory are foolish and of slow mind."
483. Blumenberg, pp. 483 and 469.
484. Blumenberg, p. 540.
490. Blumenberg, German edition, p. 34. My translation: "Our hermeneutical task here, as always, consists in the following: to relate statements, doctrines and dogmas, speculations and postulates as answers to questions whose projection onto the background of what is documented [viz., the documented statements, doctrines, etc.] constitutes our understanding." Cf. English edition, p. 483.
492. Blumenberg, p. 526: "I will not make what I believe would have to be a futile attempt at a unitary interpretation of the Cusan's theory of knowledge. Here in particular the inner consistency of his philosophical accomplishment is doubtful." But not only does Blumenberg make no attempt to give a unitary account of Nicholas's theory of knowledge, he also makes no attempt to give any detailed account of it, even one that points out the alleged strands of inconsistency. Note Helmut Meinhardt's correct opinion: "Gegen Blumenberg bin ich sehr wohl der
Meinung, dass sich die kusanische Erkenntnislehre einheitlich interpretieren lässt . . . " [p. 193 of "Nikolaus von Kues und der Nominalismus" (cited in the bibliography)]. N. B.: It is difficult to reconcile Blumenberg's judgment that Nicholas's epistemology contains an inner inconsistency (an inconsistency so grave that no unitary account of Nicholas's epistemology is worth attempting) with Blumenberg's other claim that the unity of Nicholas's thought can be understood only on the basis of a concern to preserve the medieval world. Given Blumenberg's judgment, should he not have claimed that the disunity of Nicholas's thought can be understood only on the basis of a concern to preserve the medieval world?

493. Blumenberg never specifies exactly what questions he is projecting back. This failure further undermines his attempt to give an account of his own hermeneutic.


495. Blumenberg himself, on p. 356, does cite this passage. But he makes little of it.

496. Letter to Cardinal Julian [DI III (264:4-5)].


498. Ap. 36:8-9. Many of these philosophers belong to the "Aristotelian sect," which Nicholas says "now prevails" (Ap. 6:7). In the quotation above, from Ap. 36, Nicholas views the philosopher in much the same way as he does in the Idiota dialogues.

499. By contrast, he does make a concerted effort to maintain unitas ecclesiae.

500. Ap. 34:15-21: "What was written in Learned Ignorance about Jesus was written in accordance with Holy Scripture and in a manner which befits the goal that Christ increase in us. For in its own way Learned Ignorance endeavors to lead us to those [teachings] about Christ which were left to us by John the Evangelist, Paul the Apostle, Hierotheus, Dionysius, Pope Leo, Ambrose in his letters to Herennius, Fulgentius, and the other loftiest holy intellects . . . ."


503. DVD 18 (82-83).

504. DVD 17 (80:7-8 and 17-20).

505. DVD, prologue (1:7-8).

506. DVD 16 (74:3-4).

507. DVD 25 (113:9-14).


509. DVD 21 (92:15 - 93:1). Also note DVD 17 (80:1-2): "O Lord, by means of a likeness I have expressed a kind of foretasting of Your nature."

510. DVD 21 (92:18-19).


512. DP 15.


514. NA 5 (17).


517. Letter 5, Nicholas to the abbot and monks of Tegernsee (Vansteenberghe, *Autour*, p. 115, lines 3–4). In *Ap.* 31 Nicholas makes the following reply vis-à-vis Wenck: “‘Htw astounding that he writes such puerile foolishness!—especially when he construes learned ignorance as a life of detachment [*abstracta vita*].’” The words “*abstracta vita*” are used by Nicholas in place of Wenck’s “*abgescheiden leben*”. Nicholas is protesting against reducing the notion of learned ignorance to the notion of detachment. He is not denying that detachment is an essential part of mystical theology.


519. *DVD* 16 (71:3–4).

520. *DVD* 16 (71:7–12).

521. *DVD* 6 (22:16–22). When the mystical theologian reaches the “end to the ascent of all cognitive power” (*DP* 15:3), he has entered into total darkness, having transcended all that is sensory, imaginative, rational, and intellectual.


525. Letter 8, Caspar to Nicholas (Vansteenberghe, *Autour*, p. 120, lines 9–10).


527. That is, faith formed (or in-formed) by love. *DI* III, 11 (248:9–10 and 250:13–14).

528. *Complementum Theologicum* XI (Paris edition, Vol. II, 2nd Part, fol. 98): “Una enim substantia non est magis substantia quam alia, quia non est quantitas substantia. Hinc substantia non recipit magis nec minus, sicut quantitas. Tamen ob hoc etiam non omnes substantiae sunt aequales. Una enim est perfectior alia” (punctuation modified by me). Also note *DI* III, 1 (189:4–6): “In each species—e.g., the human species—we find that at a given time some individuals are more perfect and more excellent than others in certain respects.”

529. *DI* II, 12 (169:8–12). Human nature, says Nicholas [*DI* III, 3 (198:2–4)], “enfolds intellectual and sensible nature and encloses all things within itself . . . .”

530. *DI* II, 13 (177:12–13).

531. Augustine, *Confessions* 10.27.38.
