



THE PERFECT ANIMATE BEING is one possessing sense and intellect. This being should be thought of as a cosmographer who has a city with five gates, which are the five senses. Through these gates messengers enter from all over the world, announcing the disposition of the entire world in the following order: those who bring news of the world's light and color enter through the gate of sight; those who bring news of sound and voice, through the gate of hearing; those who bring news of odors, by the gate of smell; those who bring news of flavors, through the gate of taste; and those who bring news of heat, cold, and other tangible things, through the gate of touch. The cosmographer should sit and note down all things that are related to him, in order to have a description of the entire perceptible world represented in his own city. But if any gate of his city always remains closed—the gate of vision, for example—then there will be a defect in the description of the world because the messengers of the visible did not gain entrance. The description would not make mention of the sun, the stars, light, colors, or the forms of men, animals, trees, cities, and the greater part of the world's beauties. And the same holds true for the other gates. The cosmographer therefore tries as hard as he can to keep all the gates open, to listen constantly for the reports of new messengers, and to bring his description ever closer to the truth.

Finally, when he has made a complete representation of the perceptible world in his own city, he compiles it into a well-ordered and proportionally measured map lest it be lost. He then turns to it, sends away the messengers, shuts the gates, and transfers his inner understanding to the creator of the world, who is none of those things that he understood and recorded from the messengers, but rather the maker and the cause of all of them. He considers that the creator was prior to the entire world, just as he himself was prior to the map. And from the relationship of the map to the true world, he beholds in himself, in so far as he is a cosmographer, the creator of the world.