

Logos Reconstructed: On the Ideal of Adam’s Originally Perfect Language and Recovering its Semiotic Realism

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Abstract:

Umberto Eco in *The Search for the Perfect Language* explores the ‘dream of a perfect language’ that has sought to recapitulate the lost perfection of Adam’s original language. Humanity is seen as forgetful of the preternatural knowledge once contained in a transparent language that perfectly identified essences. Eco’s historical narrative of this pursuit, labeled “a series of failures,” is examined first. Then, Leibniz’s Adamicism is explored, which asserts that a language can be Adamic if it mirrors the natural and non-arbitrary qualities of Adam’s language. Cross-culturally, Sanskrit realism and Plato’s natural-name thesis support this, emphasizing the connection between words and meanings. Following this, the criteria for linguistic perfection ($\Diamond P$) are established, relying on five necessary assumptions (A) concerning ontology, epistemology, accessibility, translatability, and intersubjectivity. This paper defends reconstructing an ideal language without seeking to return to the forever lost mother tongue. Instead, it assesses the potential for our current system-of-signs to regain semiotic realism and represent reality accurately. A thought experiment justifies returning to semiotic realism, examining the potential of revealing the hidden phenomenology of *logos* – the universal reason underlying all languages. Conclusively, this project rejects empirical nominalism and explores accessing the preternatural knowledge of necessary and immutable ideas, lost after the fall and Babel’s catastrophe.

Keywords: adamic language, semiotic realism, logos, perfect language, linguistic naturalism, universals, essences, phenomenological method

1. Introduction

In the book of Genesis, humankind was divinely fashioned in the likeness of God, and imbued with the gift of speech.¹ This noteworthy occurrence can be postulated as the primal point of origin for the concept of a ‘universal language’. Within the Judeo-Christian tradition, the notion of an Adamic

language holds deep significance, representing Adam's pristine cognitive state and perfect knowledge before the fall.² In the earlier chapters of Genesis, divine speech catalyzed the creation of the world, endowing entities with their ontological status. Analogously, Adam's bestowed faculty of articulate speech enabled him to ascribe meaningful names to objects naturally and non-arbitrarily, grounded in the divine *logos*.³

Eco (1997) in his book *The Search for the Perfect Language*, highlights the vision of the beginning perfection where Adam as a nomothete starts to name things in a way that is 'etymologically right' as he named things '*nominibus suis*' (by their own names), and this linguistic apprenticeship was facilitated by Adam's gift of 'interior illumination' that allowed him to perceive natural essences of things, give them appropriate names, and communicate with God (pp. 7-8).⁴ However, this divine spark was dimmed at the fall and further distorted by the catastrophe of Babel. While the elusive "language of our origins" may have been irretrievably lost, the essential principles that endowed it with perfection could yet be rediscovered. The thesis of this paper revolves around the potential of reconstructing the universal rationality (*logos*) that still phenomenologically underpins the structure of all languages. This paper presents a thought experiment that compels us to persist in our quest. I invite readers to suspend disbelief and momentarily set aside skepticism to engage with an intriguing mental exercise.

This paper follows in two parts. Part 1 provides a historical overview of the pursuit of a perfect language, with a specific focus on the development of philosophical languages in 17th-century Britain. Thereupon, various Realist theories of language are examined to establish the criteria necessary for the possibility of linguistic perfection ($\Diamond P$), that this search presupposes, and to show that this is not just limited to a Biblical perspective. The realization of the paper's thesis hinges upon the fulfillment of five assumptions and the viability of the paper's argument is substantiated through the satisfaction of these prerequisites in the thought experiment proposed in part 2. Conclusively I highlight that this dream is still alive and worthy of being diligently pursued, as the fruits of this labor could allow us to access the preternatural knowledge of necessary and immutable ideas that were Biblically regarded as lost. We can still aim to perfect language despite Eco's declaration that the search has been a failure (1997, p. 19). Yet, why should one still pursue this goal, notwithstanding Eco? Possibly because of its interesting side-effects such as the possibility of recovering the universal reason of *logos*. Aquinas (1845) in *Catena Aurea* quotes Augustine, who asserts that this reason is inwardly present.

The Greek word "logos" signifies both Word and Reason...Words by their daily use, sound, and passage have become common things. But there is a word which remaineth inward, in the very man himself; distinct from the sound which proceedeth out of the mouth. There is a word, which is truly and spiritually that which you understand by the sound Wherefore the word which sounds externally is a sign of the word which lies hidden within, to which the name of the word more truly appertains (p. 1).

The recovery of this universal reason would allow sensible words to express necessary, immutable ideas (non-sensible form), thereby achieving linguistic perfection. This paper's thesis rejects the use-theory of language (nominalism) and proposes a return to semiotic realism.⁵

2. Language and the Possibility of Perfection: A Historic Evaluation

In his book, Eco (1997) explored the enduring 'dream of a perfect language', a vision that has persisted for nearly 2000 years. This dream aimed to recapture the essence of lost perfection inherent in Adam's original language spoken in Eden. However, Eco elucidates that returning to this "language of our origins" is ultimately untenable (p. 5).

2.1. Constructing Universal Languages via Philosophical Analysis in 17th-Century Britain

The construction of a universal language appears as the logical progression in this quest, one that no longer return to a lost mother tongue.⁶ Eco (1997) highlights that the first attempt, found in 17th-century Britain, was a means of advancing mankind and reducing “redundancies, anomalies, equivocation, and ambiguities” (p. 210). This tradition aimed to conduct a form of 'linguistic therapy' that challenged older forms of mystical speculation regarding a holy or primordial language. This formulation of scientific/philosophical language marked the initial emergence of skeptical-analytical thought, which was later employed by positivists to refute metaphysics through linguistic analysis (p. 221). These artificial languages aimed to establish a meta-language composed of primitive notions distinct from natural languages.⁷ The scientific linguistics of this era reduced the set of possible linguistic contents to ‘molecular aggregates’ of atomic primitives (p. 222) and these primitives wouldn’t be Platonic ideas (p. 239).

These early enlightenment philosophers (e.g., Hobbes, Bacon, Locke and Port Royal Logicians) differed from the Adamicist perspective by emphasizing the arbitrariness of signification, wherein words get their meaning purely by association, being no longer divinely and immutably bound to the concepts they named (Rompaey, 2015, p. 355). Wilkins (1668) in his *Essay* rejected the possibility of a non-arbitrary connection between words and our mental concepts and any kind of natural order to our ideas (pp. 20, 21, 184 & 288). He tried to construct a language founded on real characters based on empirical criteria to collect notions held by all rational beings (if all agree about X, it would be considered a real character) (Eco, 1997, pp. 238-239).⁸ Similarly, Bacon in *Novum Organum* highlights that signs are *ad placitum* (i.e., arbitrary and conventional) (p. 213). Locke in particular had set the standard for European empiricism that emphasized this arbitrariness by purporting a nominalist stance.⁹ Locke (1970) in his *Essay* quotes:

Since sounds are voluntary and indifferent signs of ideas, a man may use whatever word he pleases, to signify his own ideas to himself: and there will be no imperfection in them if he constantly uses the same word for the same idea (III, IX).

Language thus no longer relied on inner or infused ideas but rather our own industry, as Wilkins (1668) describes them to be acquired intellectual habits (pp. 204-205). Even though these projects tackle imperfections of ambiguity and mutability in language, these operate with an act of *impositio nominum* holding the conventional expression in a fixed state (Eco, 1997, p. 220).

It is difficult but necessary to correspond language with the true nature of our reality to ensure that words signify real ontological entities, and not just any made-up category imposed by humans. Therefore, this emphasis on arbitrariness and conventionality contributes to the failure of these projects. These theories were empirically nominalist, and their aim was to map the order/patterns of human signification instead of trying to uncover any kind of divine order, whereas this paper’s return to semiotic realism emphasizes the contrary. Eco claims that “once it had been perceived that linguistic change is continuous... it became obvious that any thought of reviving the idea of philosophic language was destined to fail” (p. 292). Eco therefore concluded that this search was “a series of failures” (p. 19). Katz (1982) similarly acknowledged that “the idea of using such a logically perfect artificial language to avoid ‘logical mistakes’ is both badly justified and a disaster in implementation” (p. 166).

2.2 Cross-Cultural Realism in Theories of Language

The subsequent realist theories are scrutinized and thereafter the criteria necessary for the possibility of achieving linguistic perfection ($\Diamond P$) is established to ultimately using a thought experiment, advocate for the importance of semiotic realism in fulfilling the criteria, contending that the attempts made in the 17th Century overlooked the crucial objective of reclaiming this aspect of Adam's original language.

2.2.1. Adam's Semiotic Realism and Non-Arbitrary Name-Giving

Our speech today is contingent and arbitrary (i.e., there is a reducible gap between the representation and what is represented) because an innate faculty that allowed humans to correctly name things was lost. The significance of a prelapsarian linguistic structure is found in Dante's discussion of the innate faculty of *forma locutionis*. He asserted that there exists a fundamental and determined form of language, which was the linguistic form that Adam used. However, this language became corrupted and fragmented, leading to the loss of the inherent connection between words and their meanings.¹⁰ Despite this, he believed that it was possible to recover this prelapsarian connection. He saw this restoration as a spiritual and intellectual quest, where language becomes a tool for attaining knowledge of the divine order. Eco (1997) describes the concept of *forma locutionis* in Dante's *De Vulgari* as "neither the Hebrew language nor the general faculty of language, but a gift of God to Adam that was lost after Babel" (p. 43). This linguistic matrix also corresponds with the Avicennist and Augustinian concept of the 'active intellect' (p. 48). Therefore, we can acknowledge how it is still possible for language to serve as a transparent representational medium and naturally name things if we seek to uncover this universal matrix.

The reconstruction of a language of nature necessitates its innateness and universal nature, with syntactic and semantic features not arising from human invention or deliberate activity, but rather from divine or natural origin.¹¹ Leibniz (1949) in *New Essays* suggested that even though the original language of Adam cannot be recovered, contemporary languages can still be Adamic if they were natural and non-arbitrary (p. 281). This emphasized a semiosis that binds words divinely and immutably to the phenomena they name. Therefore, linguistic meaning emerges as a process of uncovering innate ideas, containing necessary truths. From the Adamicist standpoint, language operates as a system of representation, underscoring that innate ideas cannot be invented or concocted but must instead be discovered.¹² He claimed that we have an inner light that contains the eternal word of God (i.e., all archetypes of things) within our inner substance/mind (pp. 410-411). This first *entelechy* that is a primitive active force, is still present within us (p. 196).¹³ This basic structure and order of ideas is common to all intelligent beings including angels, men and even God (pp. 276, 397).¹⁴ These ideas contain a law-like property, making them non-arbitrary representations. This departure from conventionalism towards necessity exemplifies both historical reality and a transcendental ideal.

The Adamicist perspective foregrounds that imperfection is tied to corruption and fallenness (Leonard, 1990). Adam's semiotic knowledge was a realist understanding of essences and this secret reason is inscribed within the universe and in language. I endorse the Adamicist focus on linguistic naturalism and realism, substantiating it with a cross-cultural analysis of Plato's natural-name thesis in the *Cratylus* and the robust realism in Sanskrit philosophies.

2.2.2. The Linguistic Naturalism of Plato's *Cratylus*

According to Eco (1997), the *Cratylus* makes the same enquiry into the naturalness and correctness that the Genesis reader might be concerned with, i.e., whether a nomothete, names things according to nature (*physis*) or human convention (*nomos*) (p. 11). In Plato's (1992) dialogue, Hermogenes is told

that his name is not his real name (p. 383b) as it does not reflect his true essence or identity; he then asks if things have a fixed essence, exploring whether names are arbitrary conventions (p. 386). Hermogenes argues for Protagorean truth-relativism, asserting that a thing's name is what people call it, with no fixed independent essence beyond our relative perceptions (p. 385e). This differs from Cratylus' position that "a thing's name isn't whatever people agree to call it...but there is a natural correctness (*orthotēs*) of names, which is the same for everyone" (p. 383a-b). A name is correct only if its *nominatum* is a real thing and the name is naturally suited. Socrates contests Hermogenes' view that names are mere conventional labels, asserting they should reflect the true nature of what they represent. He argues actions align with the inherent nature of things, not subjective beliefs, illustrating the possibility of naming things accurately or falsely. Thus, naming is not entirely arbitrary (pp. 387, 390e). However, Cratylus' naturalism makes the following claims to conclude that there is no way to speak falsely, because only a correct name can refer to the object it aims to refer to:

P1: A linguistic item can only become a name if it has been named correctly, and so all names are correct names (p. 429b).

P2: If a name is an incorrect name, it cannot possibly refer to its object (p. 429d).¹⁵

C: One can never 'speak' falsely (p. 429d).

Cratylus' naturalist position is firmly set in the belief that there can be no name that is incorrect, for then it would not be a name at all. Socrates questioned this by saying that etymologies can be incorrect, and there's no way to trust that the original name-makers had done so infallibly.¹⁶ Cratylus contends that naming cannot be an imperfect imitation of the object, while Socrates suggests that imitation can vary in quality.

Socrates disputes Cratylus' notion of inherent correctness, asserting that the link between words and meanings is not fixed but shaped by human convention, subject to interpretation and change. Since naming involves a delicate process with a presumed 'correct and accurate way,' Cratylus believes in divine origin, ensuring names are inherently correct. Conclusively, Socrates ends up claiming that due to fallibility, names should not be the method of enquiry into the knowledge and truth of reality. Socrates' position on naming can be observed as follows:

1. Convention does to some extent contribute to a name being correct.
2. We should instead enquire directly into reality because names can be defective.
3. Names are not as significant as Cratylus' claims for knowing about reality.
4. The ontological entities constituting 'reality' are immutable and not in flux.

Socrates embraces a nuanced conventionalist stance, permitting correct names by convention, albeit without natural correctness (p. 435c). He rejects Hermogenes' stronger conventionalism that denies any standard of correctness. In contrast, Cratylus maintains that names have an intrinsic, unchanging connection with their referents.

2.2.3. *Consciousness and the Knowledge of Universals in Sanskrit Philosophy*

The Nyāya theory of universals is characterized by its robust realism, defining universals as eternal entities that exist in multiple individual particulars. Kaṇāda (1923) in *Vaisesika Sutra* points out that there are dissimilarities and similarities between things, and similarities are what allow us to cognize a universal (Sutra I.ii.3-4). This common feature is called *sāmānya/jāti* (class nature or X-ness).¹⁷ The universal and particular; interrelate, but the universal has a separate ontological status.¹⁸ The universal also has a nature of producing an identity-based cognition, which is present in human minds. The

Nyāya Sūtra defines what a universal is; based on this identity cognition: The genus is that whose nature is to produce the same conception.¹⁹ The Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika theory heavily emphasizes that universals are necessary both epistemically for what our knowledge is of, and ontologically for explaining what constitutes ‘reality’.²⁰

This realist position claims that this eternal universal is present in non-eternal particulars is explained using the concept of inherence (*samavāya*).²¹ Therefore, the epistemology of the Nyāya theory is tied to metaphysics in producing a mereological framework wherein the universal (whole) and the particulars (parts) are equally real and distinct. The whole is greater than (and irreducible to) the sum of its (reducible) parts (Jones, 2010). There is also an epistemic motivation for a realist belief in universals because it is causally significant. Causal laws (*sāmānyakāranatā*) are identified when we acknowledge that the universal (*jāti*) is the cause of a particular effect (Chakrabarti, 2019). However, there is the problem of justifying an inductive leap (the problem of induction) we make from our observations to infer causality (p. 6).²² Chakrabarti (2019) describes that this empiricist problem of induction according to the Nyāya perspective can be solved by accounting for universals (p. 6). These universals are the indispensable condition for causal connection; and for Udayāna this causal relation is necessary and uniform. Therefore, causality is not found within the particulars as such, but is instead due to the universal.²³ Udayāna believes that a real universal is essential and natural, and not based on accidental common characteristics found between particulars. He quotes “Causality is regulated by universals, so is effect-hood. It is a natural universal if there is no obstruction [in establishing it]; it is a conditional [nominal] universal when we have to establish it through effort [construction?]” (Chadha, 2014, p. 289).²⁴

Dravid (1972) says that “the distinct cognition of universals according to Nyāya must be due to its distinct character which must also be the basis of the distinct name given to it.” (p. 18). Thus, this theory of universals is also a philosophical investigation into language. In exploring the semantic features of this framework, we recognize that universals are important for naming and categorization of particulars to avoid promiscuous reference (*anavasthāna*) so that we successfully denote specific kinds of particulars and not just any set of particulars (Rasmussen, 2008, p. 244).²⁵ According to Nyāya theorists, universal categories are real (*astitva*), knowable (*jñeya*, *prameya*) and nameable (*abhidheya*) (Shaw, 1978, p. 259).²⁶ Perrett (1999) claims that “Not only are all existents knowable and nameable, but anything knowable and nameable exists.” (p. 401). Knowability is also not only possible for God but also for humans (pp. 402-403). Conceivability is major a part of knowability, and cognition and awareness (*jñāna*) play an important role in how we generate knowledge via language (pp. 404-405). Jayanta believed that all cognition is permeated by language and asserted: “‘Naming’ is better characterized by the knowledge of the object caused by audible matter” (Gautama et al., 2017, Sutra 1.1.7-8; Graheli, 2022, p. 68). According to Nyāya, cognition is a state of awareness within the knowing subject (the self) and always involves specific qualities or determinations. Therefore, kind qualified (*viśeṣaṇa*) cognition allows us to cognize of something as having characteristics²⁷

The Buddhist reductionist view denies the existence of universals (nominalism) (Siderits, 1997). Dharmakīrti and Dignāga heavily conflicted with Nyāyika realism; believing that nothing is eternal and proposing a doctrine of momentariness (*kṣaṇika*). For them, names have no real ontological status, as universality implies unreality (Kumar, 1997, p. 9). These names are regarded as mere conceptual constructions (*vilkapa*) indicating that particulars differ but there is no common class nature (*jāti*) they belong to (pp. 7-8). Therefore, this view is mereologically nihilistic (Jones, 2010, p. 97).

Let us now go one step beyond and look at the Pratyabhijñā (“recognition”) school to understand the role of consciousness. Pratyabhijñā authors claimed the world to be a unitary manifestation of Śiva, who was also associated with the universal ‘self’ containing the highest level of consciousness allowing us to recognize the presence of the divine in all (Graheli, 2022, p. 136). The Śaivas need to establish conclusively the existence of a self, i.e., a permanent composition of one’s

psychology allowing one to cognize and act (a permanent knower) (pp. 137-138). The reflexive awareness of a knowing subject signifies the underlying self or consciousness (*vimarśa*) and this is identified with the supreme form of Godhead (pp. 139-142). Therefore, they argue that consciousness requires language, and reflexive awareness is its essential nature. Abhinavagupta highlights this reflexive awareness, where consciousness is marked by self-savoring (*camatkāra*) through inner speech:

Furthermore, reflexive awareness's essential nature is 'languageing' (*śabdāna*) consisting in inner speech. This languageing is independent from any linguistic convention and is an uninterrupted spontaneous savouring ... Since speech denotes and conveys all things through reflexive awareness, consciousness is said to be the 'word' (p. 139).²⁸

3. Recovering the Logos of Language: A Thought Experiment

3.1. Establishing the Criteria Necessary for the Possibility of Perfection ($\Diamond P$)

Building on the historical exposition, we can now establish criteria necessary for linguistic perfection and outline the potential path to reconstruct an erstwhile lost state. This section delineates the assumptions (A) necessary for the logical possibility of perfection ($\Diamond P$), and their satisfaction is a sufficient condition for $\Diamond P$.

$\rightarrow \Box (A \Leftrightarrow \Diamond P)$.

- I. **Necessary condition:** $\Box \forall x (\Diamond Px \leftrightarrow Ax) \vdash \exists x (\Diamond Px) \rightarrow \Box \exists x (Ax)$. To have the logical possibility of a perfect language ($\Diamond P$), it is necessary that all assumptions are satisfied (A).
- II. **Sufficient condition:** $\Box \forall x (\Diamond Px \leftrightarrow Ax) \vdash \exists x (Ax) \rightarrow \Box \exists x (\Diamond Px)$. If all assumptions are fulfilled, it is sufficient to conclude that there is a logical $\Diamond P$ (it guarantees it).

Table 1. illustrates the assumptions and explores consequences of their non-fulfillment.

Assumptions = (A)	Consequences of non-fulfillment: $(\neg A) \rightarrow (\neg \Diamond P)$
A1: ONTOLOGICAL ASSUMPTION <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The ontological assumption emphasizes the significance of universal essences (realism of abstract objects) and categories of reality. It asserts that the world must exist independently of the mind, and that names must refer to real essences in the world—essences that are both necessary and immutable, possessing proper ontological status. This underscores the importance of ontological realism, suggesting that there must exist a "reality" of ontological entities constituting the kingdom of ideas for us to grasp linguistically.²⁹ Another aspect of the ontological assumption is the existence of 'other minds'—minds that perceive the same reality. In other words, the 	<p>If metaphysical skepticism (also known as external world skepticism) is adopted—a position that questions the possibility of having knowledge or justified beliefs about the external world—there is no possibility of perfection ($\neg \Diamond P$). This skepticism casts doubt on the existence of an external world independent of our minds.³¹</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Metaphysics is primarily concerned with identifying the fundamental ontological categories to which all entities, whether actual or possible, belong. Without positing the existence of universal essences, there can be no perfection in language. If the assumption is not satisfied, it implies the assertion that 'there is no such thing as 'reality' consisting of real ontological entities.' If so, then what exactly is being named?³² If names aim to infallibly represent reality, and

<p>external world exists not only for our own private mind but also for others.³⁰ Without other subjects, there is no 'objective reality' accessible to everyone. The composite interaction with the world and with others forms part of the expressive 'unity' of language. Therefore, only a reality that can be shared by others is a reality capable of being fully captured linguistically.</p>	<p>there is no truth about the fundamental structure of 'reality' to grasp, then there can be no infallible representation, and subsequently, there is no possibility of perfection ($\neg\Diamond P$). Without correspondence to reality, this assumption cannot be fulfilled. This assumption is therefore fundamental, and all other assumptions are grounded on this.</p>
<p>A2: EPISTEMIC ASSUMPTION</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This epistemological assumption, also known as the knowability assumption, revolves around assuming the existence of faculties of knowledge that can grasp the world without altering it, i.e., represent it faithfully.³³ • There must be knowable truths about the meaning of linguistic expressions. As it is important that epistemologically justified or rational beliefs are possible (Kt), concerning the truth of reality (t), for any possibility of linguistic perfection ($\Diamond P$). • A2 prioritizes the epistemological inquiry into our ability to acquire knowledge about reality, rather than its ontological status. This assumption is that if, 't' (the truth of reality) then Kt (this truth is knowable) is necessary for the possibility of linguistic perfection ($\Diamond P$). • $\forall t (t \rightarrow \Diamond Kt)$: The Knowability Principle³⁴ • Subsequently, $\Diamond Kt \rightarrow \Diamond P$. The possibility of knowing truth is necessary for perfection. 	<p>There is an epistemological problem concerning our access to the external world. Epistemological skepticism raises doubts about our ability to have any knowledge or justified beliefs about anything, including both the external world and our internal mental states.³⁵ For a perfect language to be possible, reality must be knowable and language a reliable instrument of knowledge.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If the necessary truths are unknowable, or if linguistic meaning doesn't or cannot reflect the knowable truth ($\neg Kt$) corresponding to the real metaphysical structure of reality (t), then there would be no possibility of linguistic perfection. • $\neg\Diamond Kt \rightarrow \neg\Diamond P$. • This consequence that puts together the lack of fulfillment of the epistemological and linguistic assumptions, notices that language is deemed to lack the capacity for knowledge construction since the human mind cannot reach/know reality, and thus cannot faithfully represent it linguistically.³⁶
<p>A3: ACCESSIBILITY ASSUMPTION</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This assumption is that necessary truths are in principle accessible to us and that our minds are intrinsically capable of discovering and recognizing these necessary essences. • It is important that knowable truths (Kt) are accessible via thought and language. Here, we not only perceiving the object as it appears to us but also its true essence, which is knowable to us. This assumption therefore also intersects the knowability assumption. It may be possible for there to be a knowable truth that is inaccessible to us due to some hinderance. • It is crucial that our consciousness is embedded with the cognitive faculty that would allow us to access them.³⁷ If these can't 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If there is a knowable reality that remains unknown to us because our capacity to access this is limited or sealed, then there will be no possibility of a perfect language ($\neg\Diamond P$). This assumption extends from the knowability assumption, since, if a knowable reality is not able to be known (accessed) by us, then $\neg\Diamond P$. • If we are unable to access the essences of things (i.e., the impossibility of cognizing necessary truths), there will be no possibility of reaching linguistic perfection. For our representations in language to correspond with the universal truth, we must be able to perceive and access these essences and discriminate between accidental and necessary properties. • Complete access is necessary, as partial access would imply approximate truth, and

<p>be clearly accessed, then vagueness and ambiguity follow.</p>	<p>knowledge is not approximately but precisely true.³⁸</p>
<p>A4: TRANSLATABILITY ASSUMPTION</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This assumption emphasizes that knowledge can not only be known or accessed, but also expressed into language. And language can represent and communicate the knowable truths infallibly, i.e., there is a correct way of representation/correct translation scheme. • It is important that language is a transparent representational medium that can communicate universal knowledge. What meaning means, is namely the disclosure of being, where actual truth is disclosed, and is disclosed to someone (Durfee, 1976, pp. 150-154). This emphasizes the principle of effability (Eco, 1997, p. 23) and the fundamental communicability of truths. • Fodor's <i>Language of Thought</i> hypothesis challenges the notion that the relationship between the signifier and the signified is entirely arbitrary, emphasizing instead that, cognitive factors play a role in establishing the connection (Cf. Saussure et al. 1966).³⁹ If language faithfully translates reality, then $\Diamond P$. 	<p>If there is no 'fact of the matter' about the translation of these universal essences into language, and there are conflicting specifications of meaning (due to convention or arbitrary classification of the signified), then there is no possibility of linguistic perfection ($\neg\Diamond P$).⁴⁰</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If there is no translation scheme that is the right one (i.e., representation can be done in any way, without needing to correspond with the essences of reality), then language is incapable of perfection, as an arbitrary translation scheme would not make the effability of universal truths possible. This meaning-skepticism is tied to rule-following. • If there's an indeterminacy of translation (Bar-On, 1990, pp. 209-210),⁴¹ then meaning specifications do not represent the discovery of necessary/immutable truths but rather are fabrications (p. 210). This implies- there are no necessary truths about meaning/rule-following. • If linguistic meaning is not tied to universal meaning (i.e., there is arbitrary translation) then there is no possibility of perfection ($\neg\Diamond P$).
<p>A5: INTERSUBJECTIVITY ASSUMPTION</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This assumption focuses on how knowledge can be shared with other subjects through language, since communication is the goal of language. • It is important to assume that there are "other minds" that perceive the same reality and that linguistic categories are the same for all (intersubjectively accessible.) • The points above can lead to objectivity if grounded in a subject-independent reality. However, this grounding is beyond the possibility of proof for knowers. Therefore, an alternative approach for objectivity is Husserl's intersubjectivity. This concept that enables the perception of an objective reality, and linguistic representation (Hermberg, 2007, p. 79) since truths stand in relation to other subjects in a common lifeworld (pp. 73-78).⁴² • To escape the conundrum of solipsism (where truth is detached from other subjects) and the impracticality of a private language (see 	<p>Language is not simply a private tool for expressing individual experiences; rather, it is a system of communication that relies on shared understanding. If meaning is entirely private and cannot be shared by others, then naturally there would be no possibility of perfection because communication would be impossible. However, since intersubjectivity is eidetically constituted, there's an importance of transcendental knowing.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If universal 'kingdom of ideas' is not intersubjectively accessible, (i.e., there is logical or metaphysical privacy of inner experience), then $\neg\Diamond P$. Without accounting for an apodictically evident universal reason common to all (albeit concealed), there is $\neg\Diamond P$. • Anti-mentalism and semantic externalism underlie a skeptical challenge, examining the inaccessible references to inner representations. Wittgenstein (1968) quotes "An 'inner process' stands in need of an outward criteria" (p. 580) in proposing his use-theory. Suspicions against the inner and the mental (anti-mentalism), do not acknowledge

<p>Wittgenstein, 1968, pp. 256-315), it's essential to posit a shared humanity with universally accessible linguistic categories common to all (transcendentally available to all).</p> <p><i>Transcendental Subjectivity</i>: The social world of intersubjectivity seems to be a sum of individual perspectives (subjectivities) as there is a transcendental condition of our 'being' as conscious; with reflexive awareness. Therefore, solipsism can be tackled with the concept of "transcendental subjectivity as intersubjectivity".⁴³ The transcendental accessibility of universal categories via consciousness allows for intersubjective correspondence.⁴⁴ Intersubjectivity is linked to the subject/transcendental-knower's ability to grasp/communicate real meaning.⁴⁵</p>	<p>innate abilities of reasoning; rejecting the possibility of <i>a priori</i> transcendent knowledge.⁴⁶ This skepticism proposes the need for conventional criteria. However, these assigned meanings may not correspond with the real ontological essences.⁴⁷ Therefore, intersubjectivity must be grounded in an objective reality (A1 intersects this). Without transcendental knowability of the truth of reality, the notion of conventional intersubjectivity becomes tenuous.⁴⁸</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All transcendental subjects' access of universal forms is mind-framed, indicating the significance of a Language of Thought.⁴⁹ It is thus important to establish communicability of inner experience and privileged access to thought.⁵⁰ If we are unable to establish this communicability of inner experience and privileged access to thought, then there is no possibility for perfection ($\neg\Diamond P$).
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This table presents a set of five necessary and sufficient conditions for the logical possibility of perfection in language ($\Diamond P$) — though not necessarily for the achievement of linguistic perfection (P) itself, where these assumptions would be necessary for a perfect language (P) but not sufficient to guarantee it. For linguistic perfection (P), this is not a biconditional.

$$* \quad \Box \forall x (Px \rightarrow Ax) \vdash \exists x (Px) \rightarrow \Box \exists x (Ax).$$

3.1.1. Potential Approaches in Striving for a Perfect Language

We have observed the futility of attempting to achieve a perfect language by retracing the origins to Adam's language. Furthermore, the endeavor to construct a logically perfect artificial meta-language is similarly destined to fail, as exemplified by the deficiencies witnessed in the 17th-century endeavors to establish a universal language. Within this framework, the truth or falsehood of a statement ϕ is not objectively determined; instead, it is contingent upon conventional agreement. Consequently, the assessment of ϕ 's status becomes a matter of practicality, devoid of any absolute notions of right or wrong, thereby eroding the concept of universal or necessary truths (Lutz, 2011, p. 8). Here, conventionality was not only accepted as an inevitable state, but deliberately used as a tool for inventing systems to correct the faults of natural languages.⁴⁹ Katz (1982) emphasizes that it is crucial to recognize that logical mistakes arise from the users of natural languages, rather than inherent flaws within the language itself (p. 164).⁵⁰ Creating a new natural language that assigns names to entities naturally and non-arbitrarily is a possible approach. However, it is fundamentally unfeasible due to the transformation of language from natural to artificial during its creation. Arbitrary impositions may not align with a natural system as observed in Adam's language, where he had divine illumination to perceive the true essence of things. Adam served as a perfect rule-follower (not a rule-settler) in naming entities naturally. Since we lack the exceptional capacity to assign new word meanings in a non-arbitrary manner, our focus should be on discovering pre-existing word meanings that reflect the natural order.

Hence, among the available choices, my thesis highlights the approach of recovering the universal reason in our languages as the most viable and promising method for achieving favorable outcomes in our pursuit. By aligning natural languages with the Adamicist criteria through the rediscovery of *logos*, we can reclaim elements of lost perfection. Completely dismissing natural languages for language perfection is unwarranted, as rediscovering the universal reason within them seems most suitable. While linguistic fallibility arises from incorrect linguistic usage, language itself possesses the inherent potential to infallibly represent reality when guided by reason. In the forthcoming thought-experiment, I present compelling evidence for conventionalist approach proving inadequate for meeting the criteria specified in Table 1.

3.2. Justification: An Ideal Speakers Experiment

The most promising approach in the pursuit of achieving linguistic perfection lies in the endeavor to uncover the universal reason (*logos*) underlying all languages. This assertion is not solely based on the lack of plausibility of alternative approaches. The present scholarly work posits that this method is the sole avenue worth pursuing within the context of this project, as it holds the potential to meet the assumptions outlined in Table 1. In the following thought experiment, I critically examine two distinct methods employed by Ideal Speakers in two possible worlds, with the aim of demonstrating that the only method capable of the possibility of perfection ($\Diamond P$).

Ideal Speakers Experiment: *Let us imagine the following case concerning Ideal Speakers in two Possible worlds, each embodying distinct linguistic approaches in seeking linguistic perfection. The objective of this is to assess the extent to which these align with the assumptions outlined in Table 1, thereby shedding light on the efficacy of each approach.*⁵¹

1. In W_1 Ideal Speaker Caleb resides in a world that once possessed a perfect language but lost it due to a historical event. This prelapsarian structure was characterized by its inherent naturalness and non-arbitrariness, with names being correct only when aligned with the natural order. Speaker C relies on transcendental reasoning for knowledge. He firmly believes in the necessity of names to adhere to natural correctness, rejecting arbitrary or conventional meaning. Speaker C perceives the prelapsarian language structure as the ideal state and aims to rediscover this by illuminating innate ideas. His adherence to rule-following is intertwined with the natural or transcendental order, that is in principle accessible to other minds.
2. In W_2 Ideal Speaker Timothy exists in a world that does not subscribe to the idea of a prelapsarian language structure. He believes that the correctness of names relies on conventional rule-following, emphasizing the attainment of linguistic perfection through established conventions, rather than seeking to recover a lost ideal. He views language as a malleable tool that can be shaped to address contemporary challenges and aspirations. Rather than relying on transcendental reason, Speaker T focuses on collective participation and agreement to establish linguistic norms and rules (assertibility condition).

Additionally, let's assume that both W_1 and W_2 have ideal epistemic conditions, meaning that neither method is constrained by epistemic difficulty. Consequently, failure would result from a fundamental flaw in their methods, rendering them inherently incapable of perfection ($\neg\Diamond P$).

3.2.1. Running the Experiment on Assumptions

Both speakers' express confidence in their methods capable of achieving linguistic perfection ($\Diamond P$). However, if assumptions aren't met, it contradicts their initial claim of method validity, rendering the pursuit of perfection untenable due to a *reductio ad absurdum*.

The Case of Ideal Speaker Caleb in Possible World 1:

Ideal Speaker Caleb effectively fulfills the Ontological Assumption (A1) by recognizing the need for language to align with the metaphysical structure of reality. Emphasizing the natural and transcendental order implies an ontological framework with essential truths that can be faithfully represented. Acknowledging this alone meets the assumption, highlighting metaphysical realism. Transcendental reason is accessible to all minds, not just the Speaker's, suggesting universally discoverable essences exist. Anyone accurately grasping them will share the same infallible comprehension as others that accurately understand reality.⁵²

In meeting Epistemological Assumption (A2), Speaker C seeks knowledge of reality via transcendental reasoning, acknowledging potential limitations in accessing this. Despite potential constraints, the ontological truth is deemed knowable *in principle* and actively pursued. Speaker C's stance reflects epistemological optimism, surpassing mere knowability to embrace the possibility of justified beliefs aligning with reality.⁵³ The Accessibility Assumption (A3), intersects with A2, acknowledging the possibility of knowledge while emphasizing the importance of accessibility it via cognitive faculties. Caleb meets A3 by relying on transcendental reasoning to access knowledge about universals. As an Ideal Speaker, the attainment of "inner evidence" serves as proof of innate ideas and their illumination in the speaker's mind.⁵⁴ If Caleb couldn't access essences due to inept faculties, it wouldn't satisfy A3. However, assuming Caleb is an Ideal Speaker with intact transcendent knowing, implies accessibility to conceive of essences infallibly. This inherent accessibility to necessary and unchangeable ideas satisfies A3, even if Caleb doesn't actively use this faculty, as he still possesses the potential to do so *in principle*.⁵⁵

The Translatability Assumption (A4) is satisfied as rule-following aligns with a natural and transcendental order. Caleb's use of a non-arbitrary translation scheme rejects meaning-skepticism, indicating linguistic signification is based on referential correctness. Satisfying A4 requires recognizing non-arbitrary meaning specifications, opposing reference inscrutability. There's a correct and determinate way to determine applicable predicates for accurate signification, aligning with reality. Even if Caleb doesn't explicitly articulate essences, his approach allows for the possible expression of them. Caleb's rule-following may lack assertibility conditions due to innate reasoning, making his translation scheme seem idiosyncratic. However, Fodor (1990) criticizes the view that meaning lacks normativity (Cf. Kripke, 1984, p. 37) and proposes the *Language of Thought hypothesis* (LoT) that justifies the possibility of non-arbitrary signification/rule-following (Fodor, 2010).⁵⁶

The Inter-Subjectivity Assumption (A5) might in principle be fulfilled by Caleb, but this approach could face scrutiny if there is a lack of consensus, since his eidetically constituted "inner evidence" has no "outer criteria" of justification.⁵⁷ However, these essential structures are not necessarily supposed to be identical to what most of the intersubjective community claims them to be, in order to make them intersubjectively valid.⁵⁸ To transcend the challenge of solipsism and establish the intersubjective validity of innate reasoning and mental representations, we must move beyond the notion of "atomic consciousness," which isolates consciousness within the individual, and recognize the interconnectedness of transcendental consciousness.⁵⁹ Husserl (2001) emphasizes that transcendental consciousness' objects are not facts but essences, that are the essential structures of transcendental subjectivity are not based on the anarchy of personal whim. He claims, "Every singular

perception with the same essence would justify “the same” statement proper to it in a precisely similar way, no matter where and for whom” (Husserl, 2008, p. 343). Therefore, Caleb would meet this assumption due to the intersubjective validity of transcendence, even if other subjects disagree, because the objective world is grounded in this transcendence, whereby Husserl’s (1960) transcendental intersubjectivity is the “absolute foundation of being [*Seinsboden*], from which signification and validation of everything that exists objectively originates” (p. 8).

Given Caleb’s ability to satisfy all assumptions in this possible world, he has the potential to perfect language. Thus, we can conclude that if $\Box\forall x (\Diamond Px \leftrightarrow Ax)$, and there exists C (Caleb) satisfying these assumptions: $\exists c(Ac)$, then C would necessarily have the possibility of perfection: $\Box\exists c(\Diamond Pc)$. However, envisioning Caleb’s transition from W_1 to W_2 raises the possibility of failure. In W_2 , there was never a connection between language, thought and reality, where there is no guarantee of meaning’s universality. Caleb’s focus on a prelapsarian structure in W_1 grounds assumptions. Yet, in W_2 , this intrinsic connection remains uncertain. This suggests the importance of a beginningless connection between words and their meanings, and its potential recovery.

The Case of Ideal Speaker Timothy in Possible World 2:

The primary challenge for Timothy is grounding language metaphysically. Fulfilling the Ontological Assumption (A1) is difficult due to the denial of correspondence to an objective reality. The absence of a natural, non-arbitrary language, and focus on conventionalism emphasizing behaviorally conditioned rule-following hinders fulfillment of A1. Wittgenstein’s (1968) conventionalism with *language games* rejects the existence of universal essences, applicable to all speakers. Failure of language to recognize a universal reality comprehensible and namable by all, prevents correspondence with the referent, leading to the non-fulfillment of A1.

The Epistemological Assumption (A2) will also fail, even if we had real ontological categories. This is because epistemological scrutability of truth is required, and conventionalism implies a form of epistemological relativism.⁶⁰ It’s focus is not on comprehending universal truths but rather on what is conventionally *known*. Additionally, the uncertainty of conventional knowledge arises from it lacking epistemic validity without grounding in the natural order. Considering this, Socrates’s assertion of conventionally correct names is questioned, as it lacks emphasis on the knowability of universal essences, relying instead on human invention.⁶¹ This deviate from the notion that language can accurately represent the truth about the external world. Instead, meaning becomes subject to the ever-evolving conventions and agreements of a particular community.⁶² Furthermore, Speaker T’s conventionalism dismisses the idea of an innate faculty capable of understanding universal essences and deems access to such essences insignificant. In linguistic conventionalism, necessities are explained by rules adopted through linguistic conventions, not any underlying reason or principle, posing a contingency problem where truth is not determined by meaning alone.⁶³ Even if there was accidental correspondence with true meaning, Speaker T’s method (conventional) lacks the principles for accessing knowledge and rule-governing forms that could enable proper perception of reality and access to necessary and immutable ideas. Therefore, the Accessibility Assumption (A3) lacks fulfillment.

The Translatability Assumption (A4) has the issue of reference and meaning indeterminacy, which presents a challenge to the fulfillment of this assumption, which assumes the existence of a single correct translation scheme. Even if the conditions for assertibility are met, there is a constraint of objectivity where language does not directly translate objective truth. As a result, the meaning conveyed and grasped in language may be a constructivist meaning rather than a reflection of ontological truth. This would also lack exactness and precision in categorization, leading to equivocal meanings. The concept of categorical indeterminacy is exemplified in Wittgenstein’s notion of a

language game, where no single feature is common to all language games. Additionally, Wittgenstein's (1968) anti-essentialist stance introduces the idea of "family resemblance," suggesting that the connections between various uses of language are based on overlapping similarities rather than strict essentialist categories. This further adds to the challenges of establishing a definitive and universally valid translation scheme via conventionalism.

Lastly, the fulfillment of the Intersubjectivity Assumption (A5) may initially seem feasible. Wittgenstein's (1968) communitarian view highlights the role of social agreement and collective practices in determining meaning. According to this, the word meanings are derived from their use. However, this view disregards the possibility of a transcendent, objective reality that language seeks to represent. Additionally, it overlooks the transcendental condition of human consciousness and intentionality – essential aspects of language and meaning.⁶⁴ Without acknowledging this transcendental condition the conventionalist view undermines the ability to recognize true or false speech. In essence, widespread agreement within a community doesn't guarantee the correctness or reliability of the shared understanding. Timothy's conventionalism, while initially seeming to fulfill the intersubjectivity assumption, ultimately falls short of meeting the transcendental condition required for accurate understanding of universal truths at an intersubjective level. Chomsky's (2005, 1986) argument against the communitarian view supports this.

In conclusion, Timothy is unable to meet the assumptions due to the limitations of conventionalism. Even if he were placed in W_1 where the connection between language, thought, and reality is preserved, he would still fail. Consequently, we can deduce that since it is universally required ($\forall x$) that if Timothy were to fail in satisfying these assumptions $\exists t(\neg At)$, then Timothy necessarily lacks the possibility of achieving perfection: $\Box \exists t(\neg \Diamond Pt)$. There is a contradiction between Timothy's claim that his method can lead to perfection ($\Diamond P$) and the fact that he does not satisfy the assumptions ($\neg At$). Notably, Timothy's assertion of perfecting language through his approach leads to a logical absurdity (*reducto ad absurdum*), demonstrating that: $\neg \Diamond Pt$.

3.2.2. *Rebirth of the Logos: A Phenomenological Discovery of Essences*

I have thus far established that approaching the project of perfecting language using a conventionalist approach will lead to inevitable failures. Since Caleb has the possibility of perfection ($\Diamond P$), his method has fundamental merits. This begs the question of what would possibly allow Caleb to move from $\Diamond P$ (possibility of perfection) toward P (obtained perfection). In this section, I propose that the phenomenological method could recover the universal *logos*, allowing us to potentially obtain this perfection (P). However, this step is only useful if the assumptions are first satisfied. We have acknowledged that the possibility of perfection heavily relies on the existence of ontological entities (universals), and therefore our aim must be to first come to know these fundamental essences of reality before any semiotic correspondence is established. Thus, how would one get to these universals? Either through naïve realism (object-dependence of perceptual experience) or through transcendental subjectivity (phenomenalism) as in Kant, but with a noumenon that is accessible via the phenomenology of the phenomenon (Husserl).

Husserl's (1973) phenomenological method offers a pathway that guides us from the perceived world of nature (natural attitude) towards the underlying "essences" (phenomenological reduction) that form the foundation of reality. These essences, accessible via categorial intuition, require us to temporarily set aside empirical aspects and focus solely on the intrinsic form, a process referred to as *bracketing* (Staiti, 2021). By employing transcendental reduction, attention shifts from the natural world to the realm of transcendental consciousness. The result of this reduction is the recognition of the transcendental ego, which is crucial for constructing meaning and constituting reality. Dahlberg (2006) highlights that essences reside in the interconnected realm that links us with the world and other

subjects and objects. Merleau-Ponty (2018) emphasizes that phenomenology is the study of essences. Husserl (1980) distinguishes between fact and *eidos* (*Wesen*), viewing phenomenology as sui generis a return to the original immutability of essences. He describes the *eidos* as a general essence, apprehended in its purity, presenting itself immediately and intuitively as the vision of the idea. According to him, if we accept this intentional account of perception, we can recognize the falseness of naïve realism and avoid postulating private sense data. The following method is described as a potential way for Caleb to look for essences and definitions for a perfect language.

Eidetic reduction: The method of phenomenological reduction allows us to temporarily set aside questions about the existence of an object and instead focus on identifying the essential and unchanging characteristics that define the essence of a particular phenomenon. Eidetic reduction involves engaging in imaginative variation (*phantasmata*), where the researcher mentally explores different possible variations and modifications of the phenomenon while preserving its essential nature. Through this imaginative exploration, the researcher gains intuitive insight into the essence and grasps its essential characteristics. According to Husserl, the essential or necessary aspects of a concept (*eidos*) become intuitively evident through this process. It is important to emphasize that eidetic variation is not mere speculation, as it substantiates its theoretical claims through genuine categorical intuition. This categorical intuition also plays a key role in Kant's claim that there are 'synthetic a priori judgments', like causality (Husserl, 1980). Husserl (1980) also maintains that "intuitive seizing upon, essences, implies not the slightest positing of any individual factual existence; pure eidetic truths contain not the slightest assertion about matters of fact" (p. 11).⁶⁵

Husserl's mentalist focus corresponds with Fodor's (2010) *Language of Thought* (LoT) hypothesis, that argued: mental representations have a linguistic structure, which also shows how there could be another way in which an ideal language is conceivable. The argument for LoT can be summarized with the claim that individuals have the capacity to generate countless distinct thoughts. However, due to their limited nature, humans are unable to have an unlimited number of distinct elemental mental representations. Therefore, they require a mechanism that enables them to create an infinite array of thoughts by combining innate primitives. These views (Kant, Husserl, and Fodor) indicate that we could develop a language that offers the best possible approximation of the representational structure of the human mind.

Language is 'reason', and there is a possibility of recovering the universal transcendental reason using the phenomenological method, which would allow us access the of knowledge of necessary and immutable essences, that were concealed after the fall and the catastrophe of Babel. Heidegger (1962) presents the concept of *logos* as a prelinguistic mode of perception that serves as a preliminary understanding of the world. *Logos*, in this context, is the underlying framework through which we make sense of our experiences and find expression through communication. Heidegger's account highlights the process by which our prior understanding (*logos*) is shaped into language. According to him, the primary function of *logos* is *apophansis*, which refers to the act of showing or uncovering entities. In other words, *logos* allows us to reveal and understand the things in the world. It is through this process of *apophansis* that we can articulate our experiences and make them intelligible to ourselves and others. This universality of *logos* is therefore a central normative science.⁶⁶ Through the illumination of innate ideas in our intellect via this method, we could endeavor to unearth the underlying ideas guided by the light of reason. Leibniz and Dante stress a primal active force housing essential truths and archetypes, indicating the persistence of a prelapsarian linguistic structure in our phenomenological experience. The foundational properties for constructing mental representations are derived from the mind's inherent causal capacities. This method holds the potential of perfecting language once assumptions are satisfied.

4. Conclusion

In conclusion, this paper advocates adopting semiotic realism as a theoretical framework for achieving linguistic perfection. It highlights limitations in empirical analysis, conventionalism, and nominalism, stressing the importance of maintaining aspirations for linguistic perfection. Through a thought experiment, the proposed method aims to rediscover universal principles underlying all natural languages, provided the assumptions outlined in Table 1 are fulfilled. The paper questions the tenability of “conventionally correct” naming, emphasizing the significance of transcendental subjectivity and reason, particularly via the phenomenological method. It underscores the fundamental role of mental representations in language and their correspondence with reality, supporting the pursuit of linguistic perfection despite its utopian nature. By emphasizing cross-culturally realist theories corresponding with the Adamicist perspective, this paper shows that the quest for perfection transcends biblical or religious perspectives. Ultimately, this pursuit is deemed significant and should not be abandoned.

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Notes

¹ Gen 1:27, 2:19 (NIV).

² Leonard (1990) emphasized that God endowed Adam and Eve with the rational ability to formulate an accurate language and that Satan is the perverter of language (p. 12). The disappearance of the congruity between name and object (in the prelapsarian structure) is tied to the corruption and fallenness in human nature.

³ Milton (2012) asserts that for Adam to give names in such an extempore way, he couldn't have done so without great intelligence (p. 324). Adam therefore had to know the essences prior to naming.

⁴ Augustine (2012) establishes the groundwork for this sort of divine illumination that emphasizes how God plays an active role in human cognition.

⁵ The British empirical tradition and the rise of logical positivism led to the use-theory where words no longer gain their meaning through some intrinsic connection to what they signify, but conventional use.

⁶ A proto language implies that there was only one ancestral mother tongue that was spoken in the garden and all other languages succeed this single tongue, which supernaturally changed at Babel (Gen 11:1-9)

⁷ This left little possibility or desirability of finding an ideal language that would represent universal essences. Katz (1982) quotes "Natural languages are naturally developed organs like the eye, a conceptual notation is an artificially developed instrument like the microscope...the defects of a natural language are defects of a natural organ." (p. 162). Frege also believed that natural languages ought to be replaced by an artificial language (p. 166).

⁸ According to Wilkins (1668) there are no similarities in forms of language (usage) and the forms of what it represents. This ideal of Wilkins and Ward was central to Royal society's anti-adamicism, which showed up in Locke's essay.

⁹ Locke (1970) claimed that language is conventional, not natural, and a nominal essence may result from naming, but no real essences exist (III & IV). Unlike Leibniz, he argued against innate knowledge (*tabula rasa*) (II.II).

¹⁰ Dante believed that this can be restored (Eco, 1977, pp. 34-35). Goodman (1616) similarly held the belief that the fall corrupted our reason, thus we no longer have a natural/non-arbitrary language (p. 391, 302). Despite believing this to be an impossible ideal, still acknowledged our longing to return to this impossible ideal (p. 295).

- ¹¹ Leibniz (1949) argued that “it is not within our discretion to put our ideas together as we see fit” (p. 294). With a similar claim by Webster (1654, p. 32), the so-called Webster-Ward debate was sparked.
- ¹² Webster (1654) quotes “the language of nature infused into him in his Creation, and so innate and implanted in him, and not inventive or acquisitive, but merely dative from the father of light” (p. 29).
- ¹³ For further exploration of Leibniz’s Adamicism, see Losonsky’s (1992) paper.
- ¹⁴ See Kulstad’s (1977) on the structure we share with God, and how they are expressions of God’s ideas.
- ¹⁵ Cratylus says that Hermogenes’ name is not given incorrectly but isn’t given at all. He says, “People take it to have been given to him, but it is the name of someone else, namely, the one who also has the nature” (Plato, 1992, p. 429c).
- ¹⁶ See Barney (2016) and Trivigno (2012) for more on the topic of correctness of names and etymologies.
- ¹⁷ *sāmānya* is the sameness/identity relation that helps recognize the *jāti* (natural class essence/genus). The two concepts are closely tied to the framework of universals. For the discussion on how *jāti* is based on see Dravid’s book (1972), *The Problem of Universals in Indian Philosophy*.
- ¹⁸ *samavāya* (‘inherence’) explains this; the particular changes while the universal is intact (Dravid, 1972, p. 19).
- ¹⁹ *tsamānaprasavātmikā jātiḥ* (Gautama et al., 2017, Sutra 2.2.71).
- ²⁰ Kumar (1997, p. 95) explains this further, as according to Nyāya theorists, a denial of the reality of universals is subsequently a denial of all knowledge—nominalists and conceptualists reject universals.
- ²¹ *samavāya* is also an eternal independent category that exists for this interrelationship (non-separable), and this is different from *samyoga* (conjunction) which is a temporary, separable, and non-eternal relationship of things (Kumar, 1997, pp. 5-6).
- ²² See Perrett’s (1984) discussion on the solution to the problem of induction for a deeper exploration.
- ²³ Chakrabarti (2019) notes that causal efficiency (*karaṇatva*) exists in a thing due to its class nature (*jāti*) (p. 6).
- ²⁴ Matilal (1975) further discusses this theory of causation.
- ²⁵ This X-ness of a thing is a qualifier (*viśeṣaṇa*) (Sharma, 2013, p. 467).
- ²⁶ Nyāya theorists call an existent thing *jñeya* (knowable), this implies that a thing is a potential object of knowledge, and this potential is derived from a mind-independent reality (Sharma, 2013, p. 488). Even though we could potentially ‘know’ things without names (which was what Socrates suggested), the fact that all knowledge is nameable implies that knowledge of universals is translatable into language.
- ²⁷ Sharma (2013) says in Nyāya philosophy, knowledge is referred to as a “true or veridical cognition” (*pramā*), which is a type of understanding (*jñāna*) (pp. 465-468). Unlike Kant, there is no unknowable thing-in-itself.
- ²⁸ The proper syntactical arrangement of mental states is necessary for the coherent organization of cognition.
- ²⁹ Metaphysical realism emphasizes that reality is independent of how humans acknowledge or understand it. Realism posits that there is a link between the mind and the world and that representations are reliable, due to the ‘*correspondence truth thesis*’ that representations correspond with actual states of affairs (Devitt, 1997).
- ³⁰ This assumption is primary, and other assumptions follow from this foundational assumption.
- ³¹ Gamertsfelde (1933) and Bar-On (1990) discuss how metaphysical skeptics (e.g., the positivists attack on metaphysics) believe: due to the subjective nature of our perceptions and the possibility of deception, we cannot have certainty about the existence or nature of an external world beyond our minds.
- ³² The Nyāya assertion of what a particular name is a universal. Antirealism contends against the existence of a metaphysical structure independent of our conceptions, which are socially constructed interpretations.
- ³³ *Correspondence theory* is a realist theory, wherein language is capable of faithfully representing reality (Chang 2022, pp. 68-118). Reality is ‘mind-framed’, not ‘mind-controlled’; words refer to pre-figured realities that our minds grasp (p. 71).
- ³⁴ The knowability principle (KP): $\forall p (p \rightarrow \Diamond Kp)$ or $\phi \rightarrow \Diamond K\phi$ is formalized here with “t” (denoting “truth”). Nyāya theorists emphasize that all truths are knowable and nameable (*astitvaṃ jñeyatvaṃ abhidheyatvaṃ*) (Perrett, 1999, p. 401). Furthermore, Fitch’s “knowability paradox” collapses the distinction between truth and knowledge (claiming all that is knowable is known: $\forall p (p \rightarrow \Diamond Kp) \vdash \forall p (p \rightarrow Kp)$), and this is challenged to preserve the knowability principle, in Fuhrmann’s (2014) paper that emphasizes that the existence of *perfect potential knowledge structures* doesn’t imply omniscience (\therefore preserving knowability: $\Diamond Kp$) (pp. 1641-1646). KP: $\phi \rightarrow \Diamond K\phi$ is specified on (p. 1629).
- ³⁵ Fumerton (1995), and Buckwalter and Turri (2019) discuss how epistemological skeptics argue that there are inherent limitations to acquiring knowledge, e.g., the problem of induction, reliability of our cognitive faculties, or the possibility of radical skepticism, etc. and question the possibility of obtaining justified knowledge.
- ³⁶ Epistemological skepticism challenges knowledge limits, while metaphysical skepticism questions reality. Buckwalter and Turri (2019) claims “these representations closely approximate the truth, but they are not strictly true” (p. 94). However, A2 and A3 emphasize that imprecise knowledge is not knowledge, only precise knowledge is.
- ³⁷ Knowability does not look at cognitive limitations, as it emphasizes logical possibility. However, the accessibility assumption focuses on the cognitive limitations or faculties involved in accessing knowable truth (Kt).
- ³⁸ Truth is a condition of knowledge (factivity principle) (Chase and Rush, 2016, p. 900).
- ³⁹ Danesi (2022) further discusses this view of language as an arbitrary system of signs in Saussure’s work.
- ⁴⁰ Bar-On (1990) suggests that there are no objective facts about meaning (p. 210).

⁴¹ Note that this indeterminacy is about translation between languages, however it highlights a general meaning skepticism (which is an epistemic doubt that seeps into the possibility of translating knowledge into language).

⁴² Russell and Reynolds (2011, p. 1) explore the existence of other minds and how intersubjectivity depends upon transcendental justification. The cognitive capacities of for accessing universal reason leads to the capacity for transcendental access to essences (pp. 1-2). Even though not every subject would perceive them, they are intersubjectively accessible, rationally communicable and objective. E.g., Kantian judgments are generated by our cognitive faculties (innate capacities of reason). These are mental-act structures/types that enable us to recognize conceptual correctness or rule consistency (Vollet, 2023, p. 88). Therefore, judgments have truth-apt semantic contents that correspond to reality. Language plays an essential role in establishing intersubjectivity, as the medium through which individuals understand the lifeworld (Vargas, 2020, p. 418).

⁴³ Jones (2000) explores this transcendental understanding of subjectivity as intersubjectivity (pp. 213-214). Husserl (1960) 'self-sphere' is where determinations are given to our "being", and the constitution of the transcendental ego constitutes an objective world (p. 1). Communication depends on intentionality (Petrescu, 2013, pp. 18-20).

⁴⁴ Preserving subjectivity need not be confused with solipsism. Husserl believes existence of transcendental subjects is a principle for distinguishing between solipsistic and inter-subjective phenomenology (Hutcheson, 1979, p. 169). Gasche (2004) mentions, transcendental phenomenology seeks to exhibit free universal idealities in subjectivity as essential forms, establishing phenomenology as the realization of the Greek idea of a universal science" (pp. 93-94).

⁴⁵ Fasching (2012) explores subjectivity qua consciousness, where opposition to objectivism dissolves (pp. 125-139).

⁴⁶ This skepticism also challenges the semantic adequacy of the introspection principle. Either there is no inward mental life or that one can't know about it (Wittgenstein's privacy argument), and if there is, it cannot be known by introspection. For Wittgenstein (1968) reflexivity is useless, as there is no determinacy to it (p. 258). Meixner (2014) says that Wittgenstein had a dogmatic anti-Cartesianism that is epistemic-ontological revulsion (p. 60).

⁴⁷ Merleau-Ponty's interpretation of phenomenology is a plural we-consciousness (emphasizing Husserl's "transcendental intersubjectivity"), recognizes universal meaning is crucial for knowledge (Zhang, 2021, pp. 128-135)

⁴⁸ Zahavi's (2001) book examines the transcendental relevance of intersubjectivity.

⁴⁹ This focus on conventionality stemmed as a reaction to the Logosmystic tradition where all languages were based on innateness and naturalism, belonging to the *logos*. In the absence of genuine universals, language was constrained to using word tokens that could be empirically verified, rather than word types that would represent universals. In this perspective, nominalism was extended to encompass not only physical objects but also words and their meanings.

⁵⁰ Ignorance leads to referential failure (Katz, 1982, p. 165).

⁵¹ They are Ideal Speakers because each speaker tries to speak ideally in a manner that they think would lead to perfection. Their methods would not face epistemic difficulty since both worlds have ideal epistemic conditions.

⁵² Intersubjective validity of transcendence, and grounding in objective reality is highlighted by Husserl (1960, p. 8).

⁵³ Since you can't know untruth (factivity principle), what is knowable must be a universal or necessary truth.

⁵⁴ Using transcendental 'knowing' (as in Kant or Husserl), Caleb would not be relying on empirical examination, but "inner evidence" substantiated intuitively (Husserl, 1970).

⁵⁵ What is necessary for this assumption is the fact that this realm of ideas is accessible, not that it has been accessed.

⁵⁶ Caleb's approach can be regarded as reductive dispositionalism, that can be defended by Husserl's description of the structure of perceptual meaning, wherein lawfulness governs consciousness. This is connected to subjectivity and objectivity via intentionality (Rump, 2020, pp. 11-2)

⁵⁷ This psychologistic notion of "inner evidence" is defended by Husserl (2001) and rejected by Wittgenstein (1968).

⁵⁸ Intersubjective validity is different from intersubjective agreement.

⁵⁹ Hutcheson (1979) speaks of difference between "solipsistic" and "intersubjective" phenomenology, focusing on the presence of other (transcendental) subjects. Husserl (1969) claimed, "when actualized, are the unqualified truths as themselves given; cognitional acquisitions, abiding from then on, capable of again becoming accessible to insight at any time, and accessible in this manner to everyone as a rationally thinking subject" (pp. 125-126).

⁶⁰ Chalmers (2014) discusses the topic of scrutability in depth.

⁶¹ One could argue that there is the possibility of "conventionally correct signification". However, I would argue that only a natural name is a real name, and a conventional name would *de facto* be incorrect.

⁶² Constructivism moves beyond knowing reality as it is, while preserving everything else (Fox, 2001)

⁶³ Sidelle (2009) and Nyseth (2020) discuss this topic further.

⁶⁴ Fasching (2012, p. 139) quotes "Even in the most "subjective" sensuous perception, the subject is not enclosed in the interiority of its subjectivity but exists as the disclosure of transcendent objects".

⁶⁵ This moves from phenomenon to the concept (*eidos*), then to the perception of the clear intention within an objective content (*noema*), and finally, to the perception of the intentional act itself (*noesa*) (Petrescu, 2013, pp. 15-18).

⁶⁶ Logocentrism (metaphysics of presence) is a school of thought that is characterized by reliance on fixed *a priori* transcendental meanings as Derrida puts it, and he opposes this framework by saying that there is no meaning that is fixed

or static (Bennington & Derrida, 1993, p. 71). Baştürk (2019) emphasizes the importance of distinguishing the logos from mere sound (signifier) “because man has the ability to create meaningful speech (*logos*) while the other animals can only make sound (*psophos*)” (pp. 76-77)