

Abstract: Eckhart's interest in semantics has thus far been overlooked in literature probably because no extensive and systematic treatment is found in his corpus. Yet, his views in this field deserve attention, for they stand out as original contributions to the late-medieval semantic debate.

The essay is intended to deal with two closely related issues: signification and the imposition of names. Eckhart's ideas on signification can be assessed from remarks and discussions found especially within the contexts of creation and ontology. The main point of his conception is that the essence of a creature, which is what a common name refers to, is the same as the model after which God made creatures. Each creature has a more perfect mode of existence in the Divine Word, the so-called *esse virtuale*. Accordingly, naming means grasping its quiddity, defining it, ascending to the superior ontological condition, returning to the Word of God. Metaphysics is the branch of knowledge which deals with essences. The second part of the paper focuses on Eckhart's exegesis of the biblical account of Adam's assignment of names to the animals (Gn 2, 19-20). This text, together with Aristotle's *Peri hermeneias*, was the standard one for the medieval reflection on imposition, giving rise to many discussions on issues related to signification. Since Adam gave names in accordance with the essences of things, he had to first know these essences. Hence, Adam possessed the essential knowledge of all of reality: he was the true metaphysician, able to define the quiddities of things and name them.

Keyword: Eckhart, Signification, Imposition, Name, Concept, Essence, Quiddity, Adam, Creation