

gave naturalists the idea of genera, an idea which can only be employed when we view objects in the gross, but which vanishes when we apply it to reality, or when we consider Nature minutely.

Men began by appropriating different names to objects which appeared to them distinctly different, and at the same time, they gave general denominations to such as seemed to resemble each other. Among unenlightened nations, and in the infancy of languages, there are hardly any but general names, or vague or ill-formed expressions for objects of the same order, though in themselves highly different. Thus the oak, beech, linden, fir, yew, pine, had at first no name but that of tree; afterwards the oak, beech, and linden, were called oak, when they came to be distinguished from the fir, pine, and yew, which in like manner would be called fir. Particular names could proceed only from a minute examination of each species, and of course those names would be increased in proportion as the works of Nature were more studied and better understood; the more they studied her, the more generic and specific names would be introduced. To represent Nature, therefore, by general denominations, or genera, is to refer us back to the dark and infant state  
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