QUINE'S NATURALISTIC CONCEPTION OF TRUTH

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Spring 2017

ABSTRACT

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Page count: 91

This study attempts to provide a description of the truth conception that is a part of Willard Van Orman Quine's (1908–2000) philosophical system. Quine discusses the nature of truth in many of his works systematically throughout his career. Regardless of this, Quine's truth conception has not been studied apart from few individual articles. This study attempts to offer a contribution to this lack of research concerning Quine's truth conception in the reasonably broad field of research that concerns his philosophical system.

I argue that Quine's philosophical system includes a coherent truth conception that is based on his philosophical commitments. I will present support for my claim of how Quine's truth conception consists of two aspects, one relating to the functional nature of the truth predicate and the other to the immanent nature of truth to a scientific theory. I present an interpretation of how these two aspects can be understood as connecting to one another and thus forming a single and coherent truth conception. This conception is further based on Alfred Tarski's (1944) semantic conception of truth and Quine's own naturalistic philosophy.

This study presents a view of Quine's philosophical system that sees his naturalistic thought, which includes his commitments to strict empiricism and scientism, as the most central aspect of his overall philosophical system. The philosophical commitments of Quine's naturalistic philosophy prove to be determining factors in relation to his philosophy of language; especially Quine's commitments to linguistic behaviorism and empirical notion of meaning are influenced by the commitments of his naturalistic philosophy. All of these commitments further affect the nature of Quine's truth conception.

This study presents a differing interpretation of Quine's truth conception to what some contemporary researchers have claimed. The results of this study can be utilized in arguing against those types of interpretations that see Quine's philosophical system as including multiple truth conceptions. Additionally, the results of this study can be used as an instrument in problematizing those types of interpretations that label Quine as a supporter of a deflationary theory of truth. At a more general level, the results of this study can provide utility to the research concerning naturalistic thought systems in general and the types of truth conceptions they entail.

Keywords: W.V. Quine, naturalism, theories of truth, philosophy of science, philosophy of language, immanence

TIIVISTELMÄ

QUINE'S NATURALISTIC CONCEPTION OF TRUTH

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Tämän tutkielman tavoitteena on muodostaa kuvaus Willard Van Orman Quinen (1908–2000) filosofiseen järjestelmään sisältyvän totuuskäsityksestä. Quine käsittelee totuuden luonnetta lukuisissa teoksissaan systemaattisesti läpi pitkän uransa ajan. Tästä huolimatta hänen totuuskäsitystään ei ole tutkittu muutamia yksittäisiä artikkeleita lukuun ottamatta. Tämän tutkielman tavoitteena on täyttää tätä olemassa olevaa aukkoa suhteellisen laajassa Quinen filosofista järjestelmää käsittelevässä tutkimuskentässä.

Argumentoin sen puolesta, kuinka Quinen filosofisen järjestelmän osaksi kuuluu hänen filosofisiin sitoumuksiinsa perustuva koherentti totuuskäsitys. Pyrin osoittamaan, kuinka tämä totuuskäsitys koostuu kahdesta aspektista, joista ensimmäinen koskee totuuspredikaatin funktionaalista luonnetta kielellisenä instrumenttina ja toinen tieteellisiin teorioihin liittyvää totuutta eräänlaisena tutkimuksellisena päämääränä. Esitän tulkinnan, jonka mukaan nämä kaksi aspektia liittyvät toisiinsa muodostaen Quinen yhtenäisen totuuskäsityksen. Tämä totuuskäsitys perustuu edelleen Alfred Tarskin (1944) semanttiseen totuuskäsitykseen ja Quinen omaan naturalistiseen filosofiaan.

Tutkielma esittää näkemyksen jonka mukaan Quinen naturalistinen filosofia, joka perustuu hänen sitoumuksiinsa koskien jyrkkään empirismiä ja skientismiä, osoittautuu hänen filosofisen järjestelmänsä keskeisimmäksi osa-alueeksi. Quinen naturalistiseen ajatteluun sisältyvät filosofiset sitoumukset osoittautuvat määrittäviksi tekijöiksi koskien hänen kielifilosofisia näkemyksiään erityisesti behavioristisen kielikäsityksen ja empiristisen merkitysteorian osalta. Kaikki edellä mainitut sitoumukset vaikuttavat Quinen totuuskäsityksen luonteeseen.

Tutkielma esittää aikaisemmin esitetyistä tulkinnoista poikkeavan näkemyksen Quinen filosofiseen järjestelmään sisältyvän totuuskäsityksen luonteesta. Tutkielman tulosten perusteella voidaan argumentoida sellaisia näkemyksiä vastaan, jotka esittävät Quinen sitoutuvan useampaan kuin yhteen totuuskäsitykseen. Tämän lisäksi tutkielman tulosten perusteella voidaan problematisoida Quinen totuuskäsitystä koskevia deflationistisia tulkintoja. Yleisemmällä tasolla tutkielman tuloksia voidaan soveltaa naturalististen ajatusjärjestelmien ja niihin sisältyvien totuuskäsitysten tutkimuksessa.

Asiasanat: W.V. Quine, naturalismi, totuusteoria, tieteenfilosofia, kielifilosofia, immanenssi

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1. INTRODUCTION

> Naturalism is probably the dominant philosophical perspective in analytic philosophy today and the naturalist par excellence is surely Willard Van Orman Quine (Weir 2014, 114).

1.1 Research subject: Quine's Conception of Truth

The primary subject of this study concerns Willard Van Orman Quine's (1908–2000) truth conception. Quine is one of the most influential philosophers of the late 20th century and especially his naturalism has had a major influence on contemporary academic philosophy. Additionally, Quine is widely recognized for his work on philosophy of language and philosophy of science.

The title of this study *Quine's Naturalistic Conception of Truth* is a combination of the name of Alfred Tarski's (1944) widely recognized article "Semantic Conception of Truth" and of Quine's central naturalistic philosophy. The idea of forming this title stems from Quine's way of basing his truth conception on both, Tarski's initial truth definition and Quine's own naturalistic philosophy (1995c, 353). Thus, the title attempts to summarize the type of coherent truth conception that will be presented in the latter part of this study; it fittingly illustrates how Quine's central philosophical commitments form the foundation for his distinctive truth conception.

The reason for choosing Quine's truth conception as the primary subject of this study stems from the lack of research concerning the subject in contemporary research publications. This lack of research proves to be especially surprising when realizing how there have been numerous attempts in forming a comprehensive view of Quine's total philosophical system (Orenstein 2002; Gibson 2004; Hylton 2007; Murphey 2012; Harman & Lepore 2014). This does not mean that every nuance of said philosophical system has been studied in sufficient detail; according to my interpretation, one unexplored nuance of Quine's philosophical system is his distinctive truth conception. In relation to this, the exact research question of this study concerns the description of the nature of Quine's truth conception and its philosophical foundation.

1.1.1 Framework of this Study: Truth in Context of Quine's Philosophical System

The general framework of this study is broad, for the subjects that will be covered are extensive by nature. However, each of the subjects that will be discussed in the course of this study have been chosen solely for their contribution to the description of Quine's truth conception.[1] As Quine's naturalistic philosophy forms the core of his overall philosophical system, and the most central philosophical commitments of his naturalistic thought have direct and indirect impact on the nature of his truth conception, the sufficient description of his naturalistic thought forms a central step for reaching the primary objective of this study.

In the context of this study, Quine's truth conception is approached through the framework of his general naturalistic thought. This methodological choice is based on two features: (1) First, there is a wide consensus amongst the contemporary researchers of Quine's philosophy about the centrality of his naturalistic thought in relation to his overall philosophical system (Hylton 2007, 7; Kemp 2012, 2; Hylton 2014, 148; Weir 2014, 114). It will be noted throughout this study how the most central philosophical commitments of Quine's naturalistic philosophy have direct and indirect impact on the nature of his truth conception. (2) Second, Quine (1995c, 353) has explicitly stated that a significant aspect of his truth conception is based on his naturalistic thought.

Quine has explicitly committed to two distinct ideas in relation to truth: (1) Quine's theory of *disquotationalism* concerns the linguistic aspect of truth, for it attempts to define the nature and function of the truth *predicate*. (2) Quine has further committed to a view concerning the *immanent* nature of truth. In this sense, the nature of truth reduces to the true sentences that constitute a specific scientific theory. Truth is seen as being included as a part in some scientific theory, and thus, truth must be understood as such in the context of the particular theory that contains it. Because of these two distinct ideas and how they relate to Quine's coherent truth conception, the description of Quine's naturalistic philosophy – containing his unique conception of science – and his philosophy of language constitute a

[1] Philosophical theories of truth come in great variety. Some categorize them into classical and neo-classical theories. Another distinction can be made between realist and anti-realist theories. Further, truth is sometimes reviewed through the referential relations between linguistic expressions and facts, and through the relations between states of affairs and mental representations. (Glanzberg 2016.) This study will not introduce any description concerning the variety of views that are associated with different theories of truth. The focus of this study is firmly in the description and analysis of Quine's philosophical truth conception.

large part of this study's thematic framework. Additionally, some of Quine's individual commitments and theses are described throughout this study, for his arguments concerning *holism*, *indeterminacy of translation* and *inscrutability of reference* prove to have direct and indirect effect on the nature of his truth conception.

Some subjects that are systematically present in Quine's philosophical works have been intentionally left out from the framework of this study; these are philosophy of mind, set theory, logic, and the more technical arguments of his philosophy of language. The reason for leaving these subjects out from the framework of this study reduces to my interpretation of how these left out subjects do not relate to Quine's philosophical truth conception in any sense that would be mandatory for the description of its nature. For example, in relation to logical truth, Quine has stated that: "I now perceive that the philosophically important question about analyticity and the linguistic doctrine of logical truth is not how to explicate them; it is the question rather of their relevance to epistemology." (1986d, 207).

1.1.2 Previous Research on Quine's Conception of Truth

As has been briefly noted, Quine's philosophical truth conception has not attracted much attention from contemporary researchers. There is hardly any work done on the description and analysis of said subject. A concrete example of this is how in *The Cambridge Companion to Quine* (Gibson 2004) and *Blackwell Companion to Quine* (Harman & Lepore 2014) not a single chapter is devoted to the subject of Quine's truth conception, rather, truth is discussed in a scattered manner with no systematicity. In Peter Hylton's (2007) extensive study of Quine's overall philosophical system *Quine*, which for example Alan Weir (2014, 135) has described as a "magisterial study", a five page chapter is devoted for Quine's views on the nature of truth. Additionally, in those rare cases where one can find an in-depth analysis of Quine's truth conception, the focus is strongly on logical truth and on the more technical aspects of the function and nature of the truth predicate as a linguistic instrument. This lack of interest in Quine's substantive truth conception is especially surprising when keeping in mind that Quine talks about truth systematically in many of his philosophical works (1960, 19; 1875b 327; 1981, 38; 1986a, 12; 1995a 16) and he has even devoted whole monographs for the subject, as is the case with *Pursuit of Truth* (1992).

However, some researchers have studied Quine's truth conception in a manner that is similar to the objectives of this study. The most similar attempts can be found in Lars Bergström's two published articles "Quine's Truth" (1994) and "Quine, Empiricism and Truth" (2000). In the first one, Bergström (1994, 1) claims that Quine's works include two distinct truth conceptions; one of these is *disquotational* and the other is *empiricist*. In the second article, Bergström's (2000, 1) focus is in refining some of the ideas that he introduced in the first one; explicitly stated, his focus is in refining the empiricist conception of truth, for Quine directly rejected the idea of labeling him as a supporter of this idea (Bergström 2000, 63). In addition to this, some researchers have interpreted Quine as a supporter of deflationist theory of truth (see Davidson 2005, 85).

1.2 Objectives and Significance of the Study

The exact research objective of this study is to provide a description of Quine's truth conception and its philosophical foundation. This objective is approached through defining the central philosophical commitments of Quine's naturalistic thought, his philosophy of language and those individual theses and ideas that directly or indirectly relate to his truth conception.

The primary claim of this study is that Quine's philosophical works include a distinctive and coherent truth conception that further consists of the *disquotational* nature of the truth predicate and of the *immanent* nature of truth to a scientific theory. I will argue that this conception is further constrained and partially based on the most central philosophical commitments of Quine's naturalistic though hence naming it as Quine's naturalistic conception of truth. The argumentation will be presented in the fourth chapter of this study, after I have sufficiently described Quine's naturalistic philosophy, philosophy of language and subject closely related.

First, the conclusions that will be drawn in the fourth chapter of this study are in contrast to Bergström's (1994 ,1) interpretation of how Quine can be understood as sustaining two distinct truth conception. Second, the interpretation of Quine's truth conception that will be formed in the fourth chapter of this study is in contrast with the types of views that see Quine as a support of a deflationary theory of truth (see Davidson 2005, 85). Thus, my arguments

for Quine's substantive and coherent truth conception can be used as an instrument in problematizing both of the previously mentioned views.

The results of this study can be utilized in the research concerning naturalistic thought systems in general, and specifically in the research on the type of truth conceptions that they entail. For example, further research could be achieved in reviewing Quine's immanent truth conceptions applicability to naturalistic thought systems in general. This study provides perspectives for anyone who is interested in naturalistic thought systems, world views and the type or truth conceptions that relate to them.

1.3 Method and Structure of the Study

My choice of method in describing Quine's truth conception is based on the following hypotheses: (1) The philosophical commitments of Quine's naturalistic philosophy determines the philosophical framework that includes his distinctive truth conception. (2) Quine's truth conception forms a single and coherent unit that consists of two aspects. (3) Quine's truth conception is partially based on his naturalistic philosophy. All of these hypotheses are reinforced by Quine's (1995c, 353) statements, for he has stated that his theory of *disquotationalism* is based on Tarski's (1944) semantic conception of truth – an idea that is central for Quine's "naturalistic view of language" (1968, 187) – and Quine's *immanent* conception of truth is based on his own naturalistic philosophy.

The structure of this study follows this general guideline: (1) In the following chapter two of this study, a sufficient description of Quine's general naturalistic philosophy and its most central philosophical commitments will be provided. In a pioneer spirit, this section is based on a method of distinguishing between three different forms of naturalism: Quine's naturalistic philosophy will be described through the aspects of *epistemological, ontological* and *metaphilosophical* naturalism. (2) After this, in the third chapter of this study, a description of Quine's philosophy of language and subjects closely related will be provided. This section deals with Quine's view on the nature of language and linguistic meaning; additionally, some of his more specific ideas and theses will be reviewed, these include his *holism, indeterminacy of translation* and *inscrutability of reference*. (3) In the fourth chapter of this study, I will provide an explicit and systematic description of Quine's truth conception

through reviewing his statements on the subject. Additionally, the works of contemporary researchers will be utilized in bringing depth to our description and analysis throughout this study.

2. QUINE'S NATURALISM

> It [naturalism] is rational reconstruction of the individual´s and/or the race´s actual acquisition of a responsible theory of the external world. It would address the question of how we, physical denizens of the physical world, can have projected our scientific theory of that whole world from our meager contacts with it: from the mere impact of rays and particles on our surfaces and a few odds and ends such as the strain of walking uphill. (Quine 1995a, 16.)

2.1 Introduction: Naturalism as the core of Quine's philosophical system

Quine's naturalistic thought includes many of his most central philosophical commitments. In relation to this, there is a wide consensus of how naturalism forms the core of Quine's overall philosophical system (Hylton 2007, 7; Kemp 2012, 2; Hylton 2014, 148; Weir 2014, 114). For example, Hylton (2007, 2) has stated that: "At the heart of Quine's [philosophical] system is his naturalism, his rejection of any form of knowledge other than our ordinary knowledge manifested in common sense and in science." One might even argue that Quine's overall philosophical system is based on his distinctive naturalistic thought.

One of the numerous descriptions that Quine has offered for his naturalistic position, in addition to the citation that is presented on the first paragraph of this chapter, can be found in his article "Naturalism; or, Living within One's Means" (1995b):

> Naturalistic philosophy is continuous with natural science[2]. It undertakes to clarify, organize, and simplify the broadest and most basic concepts, and to analyze scientific method and evidence within the framework of science itself. The boundary between naturalistic philosophy and the rest of science is just a vague matter of degree. (Quine 1995b, 256–257).

In the light of the previous citation, it is not surprising how Hylton (2007, 231) has described Quine as a "scientifically minded philosopher". Indeed, Quine himself has stated his primary

[2] In the context of this study, it is not necessary to distinguish semantic nuances between the concepts of "science" and "natural science". Quine himself uses different terms – "science" and "natural science" – in referring to the same idea (1995a 16). One nuance that is worth to note is how Quine separates "harder sciences" from the "softer" ones in relation to the methods that they utilize: "Mathematics subsists on them, and serious hard science without serious mathematics is hard to imagine." (1995a, 40).

philosophical commitment as being his distinctive form of *scientism*. We will return to the analysis of this subject shortly in the following subchapter of this study.

Because of the centrality of Quine's naturalistic thought for his overall philosophical system, the sufficient description of his naturalism forms a central objective for achieving a sufficiently detailed description of his truth conception. In the context of this chapter, we are especially interested in the specific philosophical commitments that constitute Quine's naturalistic philosophy and how these commitments define the general framework that includes his distinctive notion of truth. This description will be utilized in the fourth chapter of this study when the arguments concerning Quine's truth conceptions foundation on his naturalistic thought are presented.

In the following subchapter, our focus is in providing sufficient description of Quine's naturalistic philosophy and its most central philosophical commitments. The method that is utilized in the description of Quine's naturalistic philosophy is based on Hans-Johann Glock's (2008 137–138; 2014, 530–531) initial example: naturalism can take three different forms of *epistemological*, *ontological* and *metaphilosophical* naturalism. The pioneer spirit of applying this method to Quine's philosophical system stems from the difference of how Glock initially used this method on the analysis of naturalistic thought systems in general.

2.2 Contextualization of Quine's Naturalistic Philosophy

> Indeed his [Quine's] work and influence have been prime factors in the triumphant march of a naturalistic world view (Weir 2014, 114).

One way of grasping Quine's naturalistic philosophy can be achieved through understanding his general naturalistic orientation. This orientation is present in Quine's commitment to a distinctive form of *scientism*: "Scientism in the form that I accept it says only that science is our only way to knowledge and truth." Further, Quine sees this conception of scientism as his primary philosophical commitment. (1996, 9). As will be shown in the course of this chapter, Quine's commitment to scientism has significantly influences many of his central philosophical commitments.

Naturalism – in some broad definition – acts as a prominent orientation or school of thought in the field of contemporary academic philosophy.[3] For example, Jack Ritchie (2009, 1) states how the so called "naturalistic trend" has emerged in the field of contemporary philosophy: "But if you were to ask a contemporary philosopher in the English-speaking world – one of the living and thus not so great – to classify her philosophical position, I would wager that the most common answer would be: I´m a naturalist." Lynne Baker (2013, 3) has made a similar claim that further emphasizes the close relation between naturalistic thought systems and science: “Naturalism, the philosophical companion of science, now dominates Anglophone philosophy.” Thus, naturalism acts as a visible and influential orientation or movement in the field of contemporary academic philosophy. Further, Quine is as a prime example of a naturalistically oriented philosopher.

According to Glock (2014, 531), Quine's naturalistic philosophy has had a direct impact on the field of contemporary American philosophy: "In the wake of Quine, most American philosophers these days profess allegiance to naturalism." In relation to this, Baker (2013, 4) has made even a stronger claim and stated how Quine's work has been crucially important for the development of contemporary naturalistic thought: “The origin of current naturalism lies in Quine's naturalized epistemology”. Thus, Quine's distinctive naturalistic philosophy has had a significant impact on contemporary naturalistic thought and on the field of contemporary academic philosophy.

Even though naturalism acts as a prominent perspective in the field of contemporary academic philosophy, the term itself lacks a distinctive and widely applicable definition. In relation to this, Ritchie (2009, 1) has noted that: "Like most of the –isms in philosophy, naturalism embraces many different views.” Other researchers have expressed similar views, for example Heikki Koskinen (2004, 60) notes that: “[T]here are quite remarkable varieties in the usage of the term ‘naturalism’." Further, David Papineau (2015, 1) directly claims that "[t]he term ‘naturalism’ has no very precise meaning in contemporary philosophy” and how

[3] Naturalistic orientation has also been criticized by some notable figures in the field of contemporary western philosophy. One example being Karl Popper (2002, 53) who has stated that: “I reject the naturalistic view: It is uncritical. Its upholders fail to notice that whenever they believe to have discovered a fact, they have only proposed a convention. Hence, the convention is liable to turn into a dogma. This criticism of the naturalistic view applies not only to its criterion of meaning, but also to its idea of science, and consequently to its idea of empirical method.”

"[d]ifferent contemporary philosophers interpret 'naturalism' differently". Thus, there seems to be no consensus on the general and widely applicable definition for the term.[4]

Some common nominators for the variety of views that are associated with contemporary naturalistic philosophy can be defined with the help of the various publications that deal with the subject (Ritchie 2009; Baker 2013; Bashour & Muller 2014). From these works, one can find some consensus on the most definitive features of contemporary naturalistic thought. In relation to this, Ritchie (2009, 1) has stated that "[i]t is certainly true that all naturalists share an admiring attitude towards science" and how "[n]aturalists are impressed by science; science is to be a model for philosophy" (2009, 74). According to Baker (2013, 3), there are two features that apply to general naturalistic thought: "[A] commitment to science as the discoverer of what really exists and how we know it and a repudiation of anything that smacks of the supernatural." In relation to this, Quine (1996, 9) has explicitly committed to the first feature, but the second one is not addressed in his writings – at least to my knowledge.

Indeed, naturalistic philosophy is generally associated with a view that emphasizes the close relation between philosophy and science. As was briefly noted in the first paragraph of this subchapter, Quine's fundamental philosophical commitment is his scientism. In this sense, the general naturalistic tendency of emphasizing the importance of science in one way or the other is also a central feature of Quine's naturalistic philosophy. One need not seek far to find praising of science from Quine's writings, for statements like "[s]cientific method is the way to truth" (1960, 21) and "it is within science itself, and not in some prior philosophy, that reality is to be identified and described" (1981, 21) are only a few examples of how Quine often highlights the centrality of science in relation to various philosophical themes.

At least broadly and conceived, Quine's naturalistic philosophy fits well with any general definition for naturalism. Thus, Quine can be understood in the context of general naturalistic philosophy as both, as a prominent member of the movement, as well as a significant contributor to its development. In relation to this, Robert Sinclair (2016, 1) has stated that:

[4] Papineau (2015, 1) has noted how it is a rather unavailing endeavor to define naturalism in some general manner: "It would be fruitless to try to adjudicate some official way of understanding the term [naturalism]. Different contemporary philosophers interpret 'naturalism' differently."

"While few philosophers have adopted Quine's strict standards or accepted the details of his respective positions, the general empirical reconfiguration of philosophy and philosophy of science recommended by his naturalism has been very influential." Indeed, the details and nuances of Quine's extremely broad naturalistic philosophy are what distinguish him from the numerous amount thinkers who label themselves as naturalists. Our focus will now turn to the description and analysis of these details, for they prove to have considerable influence on the nature of Quine truth conception.

As we have achieved a sufficient overview on the context of discussion concerning general naturalistic thought and the way in which Quine's naturalistic philosophy relates to it, we will move on to the description of the general framework of Quine's naturalistic philosophy. This general description will further receive depth through the method of dividing Quine's naturalistic philosophy in to three distinct aspects of *epistemological, ontological* and *metaphilosophical* naturalism.

2.3 Overview on Quine's Naturalistic Philosophy: Science as a Model for Philosophy

> From the impacts on our sensory surfaces, we in our collective and cumulative creativity down the generations have projected our systematic theory of the external world. Our system is proving successful in predicting subsequent sensory input. How have we done it? (Quine 1992, 1.)

The question that Quine leaves us with at the end of this citation simply reflects his conception of the problem that the naturalistic philosopher is seeking an answer to. In Quine's view, the naturalistic philosopher seeks to *rationally reconstruct* the process of how we humans have ended up with the type of "responsible theory of the external world" that we at any time possess (1995a, 16).

As is perhaps evident at this point, Quine's comprehensive naturalistic philosophy involves numerous philosophical commitments. Further, these commitments have direct and indirect implication for his truth conception. The purpose of this subchapter is to provide a sufficient description of the most central philosophical commitments and features that constitute Quine's naturalistic philosophy. Additionally, this subchapter's function is instrumental in

achieving the main objective of this study; sufficient overview on Quine's naturalism is required for achieving a sound description of his truth conception.

As was highlighted in the introduction of this chapter, from the vast amount of contemporary research that address Quine's philosophy, one can find a unanimous interpretation that highlights the importance of naturalistic thought for his overall philosophical system. In relation to this, Gary Kemp has stated that:

> The most significant fact about Quine's philosophy, and also perhaps the least appreciated, is his thoroughgoing commitment to a certain version of philosophical naturalism. [...] For Quine's commitment to naturalism is not simply an isolated strand which could be safely removed from his philosophy; it is the main thread which is interwoven throughout all his philosophy. (Kemp 2012, 2.)

In the spirit of the previous citation, our focus now turns to the question of what are the most central commitments and features that constitute Quine's naturalistic thought.

Perhaps the most general feature of Quine's overall philosophy – also applying to his naturalistic thought – is a commitment that sees epistemological pursuits as the most central tasks of philosophy. In relation to this, Quine (1975a, 67) has explicitly stated that: "Those of us who look upon philosophy primarily as the theory of knowledge." Thomas Kelly (2014, 1) has summarized this commitment in the following manner: "For Quine, as for many canonical philosophers since Descartes, epistemology stands at the very center of philosophy." What follows from this, is that Quine's philosophical system and many of his philosophical works deal with epistemology and subjects closely related. This is not surprising when keeping in mind how Quine's (1996, 9) distinctive *scientism* acts as his primary philosophical commitment.

Because of the way in which Quine sees epistemology as the primary subject of philosophy, and his philosophical corpus is thoroughly enriched with subjects relating to epistemology either directly or indirectly, it becomes increasingly important to understand the type of truth conception that acts as an inseparable part of his philosophical system. It becomes increasingly surprising how Quine's truth conception has received so little attention from contemporary researchers, for as has been shown, Quine's naturalistic philosophy can simply be seen as an attempt in achieving a description of how we humans have come up with the

type of “scientific enterprise” (Quine 1992, 31) that we at any given time possess. Further, Quine has expressed how in his view “science is our only way to knowledge and truth” (1996, 9; see 1960, 21). Indeed, for Quine (1995a, 67) truth acts as the "single elusive goal or grail" of our scientific pursuits, and the foundation and nature of these pursuits is the subject that the naturalistic philosopher is trying to understand (1995a, 16). In the context of this study, we are simply trying to understand Quine’s view on the nature of the grand objective of our epistemological endeavours.

One of the most commonly cited statements that Quine has given as a description for his naturalistic position can be found in *Theories and Things* (1981) where Quine defines his naturalistic position as "the recognition that it is within science itself, and not in some prior philosophy, that reality is to be identified and described" (1981, 21). In this sense, Quine sees science as an activity that does not need any justification from sources outside itself; the grand project of science is determined and regulated from within. In relation to this, it is easy to see why Quine has explicitly committed to a distinct version of scientism, for if one does not have a strong belief in the ability and potential of science, the type of view that Quine just presented can prove difficult to sustain.

The citation that is presented in the last paragraph also illustrates Quine’s rejection of the idea of “first philosophy”[5] – in a sense that there could be a theoretical standpoint that somehow proceeds science and that this extra-scientific standpoint could justify our knowledge. In Quine’s view, the job of the philosopher is not to work from outside of the framework of science; rather, scientifically minded philosopher seeks to include themselves as theoreticians who work through the “conceptual scheme of science and common sense”:

> The philosopher’s task differs from the others […] in detail, but in no such drastic way as those suppose who imagine for the philosopher a vantage point outside the conceptual scheme he takes in charge. There is no such cosmic exile. He cannot study and revise the fundamental conceptual scheme of science and common sense without having some conceptual scheme, whether the same or

[5] The full argument against the idea of "first philosophy" can be found in Quine's widely recognized article "Epistemology Naturalized" (1969a). Quine bases his argument on the seeming failure of traditional epistemology in trying to justify true beliefs and knowledge. The proposition that Quine derives from this is that we should dismiss the project of traditional epistemology and replace it with the project of an adequate empirical science: "Epistemology, or something like it, simply falls into place as a chapter of psychology and hence of natural science. [...] But a conspicuous difference between old epistemology and the epistemological enterprise in this new psychological setting is that we can now make free use of empirical psychology." (Quine 1969a 82). This version of empirical epistemology is then labeled "Epistemology Naturalized".

> another no less in need of philosophical scrutiny, in which to work. He can scrutinize and improve the system from within, appealing to coherence and simplicity, but this is the theoretician's method generally. (Quine 1960, 275.)

We have surely gotten to the point in our description of Quine's naturalistic philosophy in which one starts to wonder about this notion of "science" that is so persistently present in Quine's writings. Especially in relation to the just presented citations, one starts to wonder about the nature Quine's notion of science. As is perhaps evident at this point, Quine's conception of science is fundamentally important for the system of his naturalistic thought. Not least for the reason of how Quine has described his naturalistic philosophy as the attempt of forming a conception of how we humans "have projected our scientific theory of that whole world from our meager contacts with it" (1995a, 16). Further, it proves useful to note that Quine's science conception is unavoidably central for his truth conception. It seems that in the context of Quine's philosophical writings, if one appreciates truth then he must surely value science – the question then arises that what does Quine mean by "science"?

Two features of Quine's science conception have been implicitly noted. First, philosophy ought to be part of – or in *continuum* with – the rest of the scientific enterprise. Second, this enterprise is to be treated with a significant degree of respect, especially for its merits concerning knowledge acquisition. Additionally, a central feature of Quine's science conception has been pointed out by Geert Keil (2003, 260) who describes it as "sweeping notion of science" to illustrate its extremely broad nature. Indeed, Quine (1995a, 49; 1995b, 251) explicitly commits to this broad use of the notion.

The broadness of Quine's notion of science can be described through various perspectives. Quine himself has used the term "science" synonymously with terms such as "total science" and "fabric of science" (1951, 43−49). Both of these alternative terms express unity. In his later works, Quine (1995a, 74–75) speaks of science as "our overall theory of the world". Thus, Keil's (2003, 261) interpretation of how Quine uses the term "science" to mean "our scientific world view" or "our overall theory of the world" seems to be in accord with what Quine himself has stated.[6]

[6] Murphey (2012, 228) has noted that this type of science conception is close to that which Vienna Circle upheld: "From Carnap, and other members of the Vienna Circle, Quine acquired a number of beliefs. Among these are [...] (2) that all science are parts of a single scientific system of the world".

There are at least two distinct commitments that cause Quine's conception of science to expand: (1) First, even though Quine sees the progress of physics as fundamentally important for the development and progress of the scientific enterprise, he explicitly includes the fields of *psychology*, *economics, sociology,* and *history* in his notion of science. This is something that for example Bergström (2008, 26) has pointed out: "[B]ut [for Quine] natural science should then be taken in a wide sense, including such disciplines as physiology, neurology, and evolutionary genetics, but also psychology, sociology, psycholinguistics, history of science, and logical analysis." (2) Second, Quine sees science as an activity that is continuous with the ordinary and intuitive way that we humans reason and try to make sense of the world: "Science is not a substitute for common sense but an extension of it" (1957, 229); "[s]cience is a continuation of common sense" (1953, 45). In Quine's view, science is based on – and indeed continuous with – the so-called common sense.[7]

Both of these commitments, the idea that science is understood as a monistic construction that forms a coherent whole, and the idea that our scientific pursuits are simply an extension of the ordinary and perhaps natural way of reasoning and making sense of the world, can be rather effortlessly projected with critical remarks. The ordinary way in which we humans reason includes frequent fallacies and inconsistencies. Further, Quine's monistic conception of a coherent "total science" (1953, 42) is problematic for its inherently uncritical nature; ordinary scientific discourse – especially in social sciences – is enriched with divergent views and healthy criticism, for which Quine's system of "total science" could be a prime target for. However, the further evaluation of these critical claims is left to another occasion, for in this chapter's context, our focus is in achieving a sufficient view of the most central philosophical commitments that constitute Quine's naturalistic thought.

A careful reading has presented us with two continuity theses that are involved in Quine's science conception. The first continuity is between philosophy and science: "Naturalistic philosophy is continuous with natural science." (Quine 1995b, 256). The second continuity involves common sense and science: "[S]cience is a continuation of common sense." (Quine 1953, 45). When these two theses are enriched with Quine's view on how science forms our overall theory of the world, the broadness of his science conception is evident. Especially

[7] This interpretation raises additional questions, for it seems that Quine's conception of the so-called "common sense" is rather vague and inexplicit. Further research could be achieved in relation to the description and analysis of Quine's notion of common sense.

Quine's claim for continuity between common sense and science spawns an uncontrollably wide notion of science; this is something that Quine was aware of: "Not that prediction is the main purpose of science. One major purpose is understanding. Another is control and modification of the environment." (1992, 1–2).

This far we have noticed how the notion of science that is embedded in Quine's naturalistic philosophy can be described through three different perspectives: (1) First, science is understood as our overall theory of the world; in this sense, we are talking of a *monistic* conception of science which sees it as a single coherent theory and unit of inquiry. (2) Second, Quine sees science as an extension of common sense. (3) Last – and relating to the previous perspective – Quine's conception of science includes two continuity theses: philosophy ought to be continuous with science and science is to be continuous with common sense. Relying on the discussion executed thus far, I argue that these perspectives contribute to Quine's notion of "total science" (1953, 42).

One more feature of Quine's naturalistic philosophy must be pointed out before we move on to the in-depth analysis of the three aspects that can be interpreted from said philosophical system. One distinctive feature of Quine's naturalistic philosophy is that it is not based on anything else. In relation to this, Murphey (2012, 2) has noted that: "One more revolutionary aspect of Quine's naturalism is that, it is based on nothing else; the status of the naturalistic claim is that it too must be based on science, and the circularity here is accepted." Keil has made a similar interpretation, though he offers a more detail analysis on the nature of this circularity. According to Keil, Quine has repeatedly stated that science has shown empiricism to be true, and that science itself is based on empiricism. (2003, 254−255.) This is something that can be directly interpreted from Quine's own statements: "[S]cience itself tells us that our information about the world is limited to irritations of our surfaces[.]" (1981, 72; see 1975a, 68; 1992, 19). Another circular claim – addressing the problem of regulating science from within – is also present in Quine's writings: "[T]he skeptical challenge springs from science itself" and that "in coping with it [the skeptical challenge] we are free to use scientific knowledge." (1974, 2−3). Thus, at least two sources of circularity are currently present: Science is based on empiricism, and it is science itself that has shown this to be true. Further, the skeptical claims towards science are regulated by science itself.

Quine had no problem with these circularities: “Unlike the old epistemologists, we seek no firmer basis for science than science itself; so we are free to use the very fruits of science in investigating its roots.” (1995a, 16). Thus, Quine sees no *circulus in demonstrando,* for he wants to see science as a process that is taking place in the very same world that it studies: “We are after an understanding of science as an institution or process in the world, and we do not intend that understanding to be any better than science which is its object.” (1969a, 84). Quine’s acceptance of these previously mentioned circularities can be explained through his commitment to scientism, for as he saw it “science is our only way to knowledge and truth” (1996, 9). What seems to be the case is that when science directs its research on the roots of itself – indeed this is what Quine’s (1995a, 16) naturalistic philosophy is all about – the previously mentioned circularities follow accordingly.

As we have formed a sufficiently detailed conception of the general features and most central philosophical commitments of Quine’s naturalistic philosophy, some concluding remarks can be drawn. As for example Hylton (2016, 2.1) has summarized: “There is no *foundation* for Quine's naturalism: his naturalism is not based on anything else." Additionally, Quine’s strict empiricism proved to be central constituent of his conception of science: “The stimulation of his sensory receptors is all the evidence anybody has had to go on, ultimately, in arriving at this picture of the world.” (1969a, 75). Quine’s distinct form of scientism – which sees science as the only way to knowledge and truth – and his strict empiricism, act as the central commitments of his overall naturalistic philosophy.[8] These two commitments form the core of his naturalistic philosophy – if not his overall philosophical system.

What has been achieved in the course of this subchapter is a sufficiently detailed overview of the general framework of Quine’s naturalistic philosophy. What follows next, is a tripartite analysis of the distinct philosophical aspects that can be interpreted as constituting

[8] What is often not mentioned in research publications is that Quine's naturalism has a different type of foundation. For example, Hylton (2016, 2.1) states that: “This is the revolutionary step: naturalism self-applied. There is no *foundation* for Quine's naturalism: it not based on anything else.” I interpret this to mean that Quine's naturalism is a philosophical system that does not seek justification from anywhere outside itself. Quine sees a clear foundation for his naturalistic thought, however, for he spends a number of pages to describe his view on how the naturalistic project of “rational reconstruction” is not his invention in his last published monograph *From Stimulus to Science* (1995a 1–14). In addition to this, Glock (2014, 530) has noted how: “Quine is famous for his naturalism, an idea he traces back to Peirce and Dewey.” Thus, even though Quine does not seek justification for his naturalistic philosophy from outside sources, he clearly sees that there is a different type of foundation – he sees that there is a distinctive historical discourse that his naturalistic philosophy can be seen as an extension of.

Quine's naturalistic thought. This distinction includes the aspects of *epistemological*, *ontological* and *metaphilosophical* naturalism. As has been noted, this method has been initially introduced by Glock (2008 137–138; 2014, 530–531). Glock describes his view of this tripartite distinction as follows:

> Naturalism can take three different forms. Metaphilosophical naturalism claims that philosophy is a branch of, or continuous with, natural science; epistemological naturalism (scientism) insists that there is no genuine knowledge outside natural science; ontological naturalism denies that there is any realm other than the natural world of matter, energy, and spatiotemporal objects or events. (Glock 2014, 530.)

Other researchers have provided similar categorizations of Quine's naturalistic philosophy. Weir (2014, 114) has distinguishes between methodological/epistemological and ontological aspects, while Hylton (2014, 148; 2016) makes a distinction between the negative and positive arguments that are involved with Quine's naturalistic philosophy. The reasoning behind why I have chosen to utilize Glock's (2008, 137–138; 2014, 531−532) specific method of distinction is that it can be made to include both Weir's and Hylton's distinctions. When applying Glock's (2008; 2014) method of distinction to Quine's naturalistic philosophy, I will also present some of the arguments that Weir (2014) and Hylton (2014) have provided, for in many cases they offer unique perspectives that are not present in those of Glock's texts that have been utilized in the context of this study.

The reason for choosing to utilize this type of method in general stems from its ability to provide systematicity and clarity to the description and analysis of the contents that are involved with Quine's naturalistic philosophy. Rather than providing a broad scale description of the philosophical substance that is involved with Quine's naturalistic thought, we can instead distinguish between each specific aspect and the philosophical commitments that relate to them. Further, this distinction provides preciseness to reference concerning Quine's naturalistic philosophy, for we can directly review his statements concerning philosophy of language and truth in relation to the specific aspects of said philosophical system.

2.3.1 Quine's Epistemological Naturalism

> Epistemology is contained in natural science, as a chapter of psychology (Quine 1969a, 83).

Bergström (2001, 2) has summarized Quine's epistemological stance in the following manner: "His [Quine's] empiricism can be summarized in the two theses that 'whatever evidence there is for science is sensory evidence' and that 'all inculcation of meanings of words must rest ultimately on sensory evidence'." In addition to Bergström's notes, Quine's epistemological position can be seen as a combination of *foundationalism* and *coherentism*. His foundationalism – in a sense that the foundation of our knowledge and beliefs rests in sensory observations – is based on his view of how "the checkpoints of beliefs are sensory observations" and his coherentism "is evident in my [Quine's] holism, however moderate" (Quine 1990, 128). What "moderate" holism means is that the unit, which is understood as a holistic construct, can be seen as either covering the whole of science or some significant part of it. If the holistic structure is understood as covering the whole of science, it is a form of *extreme holism*. In the case of which the holistic structure is understood to cover a part of the whole theory, it is a form of *moderate holism*. (Gibson 1996, 81.) We will deepen our description of Quine's holism in subchapter 3.2.3 of this study.

As was noted in the previous subchapter of this study, for example Hylton (2007, 6) and Weir (2014, 116) have noted that Quine's philosophical concern is primarily on epistemology and subjects closely related. This feature carries over to the context of this naturalistic philosophy, for as Weir (2014, 116) has noted, Quine's primary concern is with the epistemological or methodological implications of his naturalistic thought. In this sense, the epistemological insights of Quine's overall naturalistic philosophy prove to have priority over other subjects, say his ontological commitments. We will return to this subject in the following subchapter when our focus turns to Quine's ontological naturalism.

Even though Quine (1987, 109) sees the concept of "knowledge" as too vague for scientific use, I will use it in the context of this study for the sake of simplicity. Quine's skepticism towards the concept of "knowledge" can be directly encountered in his writings where he states that the concept is "useful and unobjectionable in the vernacular where we acquiesce in vagueness, but unsuited to technical use because of lacking a precise boundary" (1984, 295). Quine has further stated that: "[F]or scientific or philosophical purposes the best we can do is give up the notion of knowledge as a bad job and make do rather with its separate

ingredients." (1987, 109). As was noted in the end of the previous subchapter, Quine's naturalistic philosophy can be interpreted to include positive and negative arguments, and indeed the rejection of the concepts of "meaning", "belief" and "knowledge" constitutes a significant part of his negative arguments (Hylton 2016, 2.1).

The foundation of Quine's epistemological naturalism can be seen in his way of understanding science as an extension of common sense: "Science is not a substitute for common sense but an extension of it" (1957, 229). Thus, the basic framework of Quine's naturalistic epistemology rises from the foundation of the so-called common sense; coarsely put, the process of formulating human knowledge starts with sensory input in one end, and through the process of common sense, ends up with science in the other (Quine 1957, 228–229). Quine has explicitly stated this in some of his later writings: "The business of naturalized epistemology, for me, is an improved understanding of the chains of causation and implication that connect the bombardment of our surfaces, at one extreme, with our scientific output at the other." (1995c, 349).

Perhaps the most explicit individual work that deals with Quine's epistemological naturalism is his widely recognized and controversial article "Epistemology Naturalized" (1969a). In this text, Quine gives arguments for his view on the failure of the project of traditional epistemology.[9] Quine uses this failure as a foundation for his positive arguments: as the pursuit of traditional epistemology has ended up in a failure, we must rely on the second-best candidate in relation to the description and justification of our beliefs and knowledge. According to Quine, we must rely on the most suitable empirical science to define knowledge and the process of how we acquire it:

> Just as mathematics is to be reduced to logic, or logic and set theory, so natural knowledge is to be based somehow on sense experience. This means explaining the notion of body in sensory terms; here is the conceptual side. And it means justifying our knowledge of truths of nature in sensory terms[.] (Quine 1969a, 71.)[10]

[9] Traditional epistemology in this context means *a priori* reasoning or the so called "armchair philosophy". In addition, traditional epistemology can be seen as the project that seeks to *justify* our knowledge through the method of *a priori* reasoning.

[10] Jaegwon Kim (1988) has directed some widely recognized critique towards Quine's idea of naturalized epistemology. Kim argues in an article labeled "What is 'Naturalized Epistemology" (1988, 383–389) that: "Epistemology is a normative discipline as much as, and in the same sense as, normative ethics" and further that "[w]e characterized traditional epistemology as essentially normative[.]" Kim (1988. 389) then claims that: "As earlier noted, knowledge itself is a normative notion. Quine's non-normative, naturalized epistemology has

Thus, our “knowledge of truths of nature” must be justified in sensory terms – through empirical study. Gregory (2008, 7) has noted that for Quine “there is no more fruitful avenue for epistemology than to turn to psychology”. Psychology is simply the most potent discipline concerning the description of our knowledge and beliefs, and thus, epistemology falls in as a “chapter of psychology” (Quine 1969a, 83).

The consequence of Quine’s view concerning this type of scientific epistemology – an idea that is an extension of his epistemological naturalism – is that the traditional epistemologist must lay down his project of trying to justify and find foundation for our knowledge claims, and let the appropriate empirical scientist define the process of knowledge acquisition and the formation of beliefs. Weir (2014, 117) summarizes this point accordingly: "Quine's naturalism does not repudiate epistemology, but assimilate it to empirical psychology."

Quine’s epistemological naturalism can be viewed as an extension of his *scientism*; our epistemological pursuits should be left for the appropriate empirical science to deal with, for science is once more our“only way to knowledge and truth (Quine 1996, 9). Indeed, the most central negative argument of Quine’s epistemological naturalism concerns the failure of the project of traditional epistemology and the most central positive argument concerns the project of naturalized epistemology, and as its extension, a type of empirical epistemology.

2.3.2 Quine’s Ontological Naturalism

> Truth, for me, is immanent. Factuality, matterhood or fact, is likewise immanent (Quine 1986c, 367).

Quine’s ontological position is one of those rare subjects that he changed his mind on during his career.[11] From "The Scope and Language of Science" (1957) one can find a description of Quine's earlier views on the nature of reality and how we humans come to know of it:

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no room for our concept of knowledge." Thus, according to some interpretations, normativity separates Quine's naturalized epistemology from the so called traditional epistemology. Quine himself has addressed this point: “Naturalism in epistemology does not jettison the normative and settle for indiscriminate description of the on-going process. For me normative epistemology is a branch of engineering. It is the technology of truth seeking, or in more cautiously epistemic terms, prediction.” (Hahn & Schlipp 1986, 663–664).

[11] It is widely emphasized that Quine's thought concerning ontological matters developed considerably during his long career (Orenstein 2014, 166; Murphey 2012, 28; Orenstein 2014, 166; Hylton 2016, 6.1). Hylton

> I am physical object sitting in a physical world. Some of the forces of this physical world impinge on my surface. Light rays strike my retinas; molecules bombard my eardrums and fingertips. I strike back, emanating concentric airwaves. These waves take the form of a torrent of discourse about tables, people, molecules, light rays, retinas, prime numbers, infinite classes, joy and sorrow, good and evil. (Quine 1957, 228.)

As is apparent, this statement includes traces of Quine's strict empiricism. Another distinctive feature can be noted in Quine's way of using the word "world" to describe what is perhaps commonly understood as *reality*. Additionally, at least in one case, Quine uses the word "nature" synonymously with "world" (1980, 53–54). Thus, the words "nature" and "world" are sometimes used synonymously in the context of Quine's works, but in a separate sense from "reality". The reason for this can be explained through Quine's way of understanding the notion of reality as actually describing a scientific invention (1996, 11). In some contexts, Quine sees it more suitable to speak of that *aspect* of reality, which presents itself directly to us humans, rather than the scientific invention that attempts to explain the totality of what exists. This note can prevent confusion, for in many citations Quine explicitly speaks of the world, but he does not explicate how it differs from his conception of reality.

From *Word and Object* (1960, 221) one can find statements that relate to Quine's ontological naturalism, for he states that science seeks to "limning the true and ultimate structure of reality". This statement presents Quine's commitment to *realism*[12] in a sense that there exists a human independent reality. Additionally, and by no means surprisingly, Quine seems to propose that science has some way of describing – or perhaps defining – reality.[13] The

(2007, 231) has noted how in earlier parts of his career, Quine actually flirted with the idea of nominalism. This is not surprising, for this matter is addressed by Quine himself (Quine 1996, 9). Especially in a co-authored work with Nelson Goodman titled "Steps Toward a Constructive Nominalism" (1947) Quine can be seen as attempting to "find a way of dispensing with abstract objects entirely, while still maintaining enough mathematics for physical science." (Hylton 2007, 385).

[12] I use the term "realism" in similar manner to Glanzberg (2016, 4.1) who describes the two key features of realism as: "1. The world exists objectively, independently of the ways we think about it or describe it. 2. Our thoughts and claims are about that world."

[13] This statement can be interpreted as committing to metaphysical realism, according to which there exists a human independent reality. Further, it seems that Quine sees science as an activity that has some way of forming knowledge claims about said reality. There has been a long debate in philosophy of science between scientific realists and instrumentalists. In relation to this, Quine has stated how: "In fact the debate between scientific realists and instrumentalists is made meaningless and empty when one accepts naturalism." (Quine 1996, 11)

description of the nature of this human independent reality further proves to be a central task of science:

> That is, nothing happens in the world, not the flutter of the eyelid, not the flicker of a thought, without some redistribution of microphysical states […] If the physicist suspected that there was any event that did not consist in the redistribution of the elementary states allowed for in his physical theory, he would seek a way of supplementing his theory. Full coverage in this sense is the very business of physics, and only of physics. (Quine 1981, 98.)

Here we simply see a similar method of elimination that was presented in the description of Quine's epistemological naturalism. The description of reality and the definition of what it consists of is left for the adequate empirical science, which in Quine's view is physics: "Physics is a fundamental science in a sense that it attempts to describe everything that happens." (1996, 9). As epistemological naturalism claimed that the project of traditional epistemology is to be left for the adequate empirical science to execute, ontological naturalism claims that the traditionally seen as ontological matters are left for the adequate empirical science to deal with. The adequate empirical sciences were then stated as psychology and physics.

Quine has expressed his ontological position in a compact and informative form in one of his late interviews. When Quine is asked if he should be described as a supporter of *physicalism* – in a sense that one believes everything that exists to be physical – Quine answers:

> I would say that extensionalism is my fundamental commitment. The existence of classes and numbers must be accepted in science even though classes and numbers are not physical objects; physicalistic theory must be bound to them. In physics, we must quantify over numbers. The adequate understanding of a theory requires that the theory is described in an extensional language. I cannot fully understand non-extensional, intensional theories. I can only get a vague impression of them. When it comes to physicalism, it is not so much a claim about everything being physical, but rather a commitment concerning the continuity of our ontology with the historical development of physics. "Physicalism" is a confusing term. The ontology that I commit to is the ontology of physics, but inside the theory of physics, there is unavoidably some abstract, non-physical entities, such as numbers. (Quine 1996, 8–9.)

This citation proves to be important for two reasons. First, it illustrates how Quine's ontological commitments are clearly in line with his general naturalistic orientation. The

ontology that Quine commits to is the ontology of physics; it is science itself that determines its own ontology. Second, and perhaps on a more hidden level, this quote illustrates the general criteria that is embedded in Quine's naturalistic philosophy: clarity and explicitness are held as virtues in the context of Quine's naturalistic philosophy. Intensional theories are dismissed because of their vague nature: "I find extensionality necessary, indeed, though not sufficient, for my full understanding of a theory." (1995a 90–91).[14]

Glock (2014, 531) has noted that according to Quine's naturalistic ontology, those things are understood as existing which are featured in the explanation of the most fundamental science. This interpretation gets support from Quine's own works, for example in *Word and Object* (1960, 20–21) Quine states that: "What reality is like is the business of scientists, in the broadest sense, painstakingly to surmise; and what there is, what is real, is part of that question."

According to Weir (2014, 115), Quine´s acceptance of mathematical objects into his ontology commits him to *mathematical platonism*. Weir (2014, 116) states that: "Quine´s philosophy contains starkly anti-naturalist components, at least when one looks at the ontological dimension." While this might be the case, Weir (2014, 116) continues to explain how Quine does not see his ontological anti-naturalism as a problem, since this tendency directly follows from the primacy epistemological naturalism. Weir (2014, 116) concludes that: "His [Quine's] main concern is with the methodological or epistemological insights of naturalism and if that leads him to conclusions which clash with the ontological prejudices of earlier naturalists, so be it." While Quine's ontological commitments might first seem anti-naturalistic, these commitments simply follow from the hierarchy of what he sees as the most important features for his naturalistic system; Quine's naturalistic philosophy seems to be fundamentally and primarily a philosophical thought system that emphasizes epistemological implications.[15]

[14] This criterion of clarity is clearly something that Quine regards as important, for he has stated concerning the scientific legitimacy of philosophy that: "[A]and the central virtues of analytic philosophy, such as explicitness and clearness, are features which I have tried to uphold in my work." (1996, 7).

[15] Bergström (2008, 26) has noted how this type of view pictures a commitment that epistemological naturalists in general subscribe to: "In general, epistemological naturalists accept the existence of abstract entities to the extent that these are accepted in science."

Moving on with the description of Quine's naturalized ontology, Quine has expressed his view of how we have no other way of defining what reality consists of, except through our scientific endeavors:

> The term ‘reality’ is in itself a term of the natural sciences, if we abandon all the transcendental concepts. In fact the debate between scientific realists and instrumentalists is made meaningless and empty if one accepts naturalism. We do not have any way, outside of science, in looking at whether or not our science pictures ‘reality’. (Quine 1996, 11.)

Thus, in Quine’s view, there is no way of knowing what reality consists apart from science. Through this citation, we return to the starting point of Quine’s naturalistic thought; for Quine, naturalism is once more "the recognition that it is within science itself, and not in some prior philosophy, that reality is to be identified and described" (1981, 21).

This leaves us in a state where it is left as the job for the natural scientist to identify and describe the sorts of things that reality consists of; ontological commitments are simply understood as *immanent* to those scientific theories that form and commit to them. The true statements that for example physics provides are integral part of our scientific world view. Further, those statements that concern the nature and structure of reality – traditionally seen as ontological subjects – are formulated and regulated by science itself.

2.3.3 Quine’s Metaphilosophical Naturalism

> I hold that knowledge, mind, and meaning are part of the same world that they have to do with, and that they are to be studied in the same empirical spirit that animates natural science. There is no place for a prior philosophy. (Quine 1969c, 26.)

This chapter's focus will be on Quine’s circular claim of how science is seen as an enterprise that needs no justification from outside itself. More centrally, we will focus on how this relates to truth, for science is understood as the highest form of inquiry and as such Quine sees is as the “pursuit of truth” (1992, 99; 1995a, 67). As the concept of truth has been studied traditionally in philosophy, and additionally, the justification of our knowledge and beliefs is something that philosophers have been attempting to do throughout the history of said

discipline, the following remarks will help us clarify Quine's position in relation to the relevance of philosophy and the justification of the project of science.

As has been noted previously in this chapter, Quine has described his naturalism as "the recognition that it is within science itself, and not in some prior philosophy, that reality is to be identified and described" (1981, 21) and he has further suggested the "abandonment of the goal of a first philosophy prior to natural science" (1981, 67). These two claims form the foundation of Quine's general naturalistic philosophy and further stand in the center of Quine´s metaphilosophical naturalism. The science conception that is embedded in Quine's naturalistic philosophy defines it as "an inquiry into reality, fallible and corrigible but not answerable to any supra-scientific tribunal, and not in need of any justification beyond observation and the hypothetic-deductive method" (Quine 1981, 72). What strikes as an evident follow up question is that what room is there left for the philosopher to operate in?

So far, we have discovered how in the context of Quine's naturalistic philosophy, epistemological and ontological inquiry is left for the adequate natural science to execute. On the other hand, Quine has stated that epistemology is the most central task of philosophy. This surely leads to a confusing trail of thought, for one starts to wonder about the relevance of philosophy all together. Hylton (2007, 298) has described Quine's view on the relevance of philosophy as follows: "An important philosophical task, according to Quine, is to show how our theory of the world can best be clarified, simplified, and systematized." This interpretation gets support through Quine´s writings, where one can find statements like: "Naturalistic philosophy […] undertakes to clarify, organize and simplify the broadest and most basic concepts, and to analyze scientific method and evidence within the framework of science itself." (1995b, 256). This type of view pictures the job of the philosopher as a certain type of conceptual and argumentation analyst.

Indeed, the philosopher must adopt to the "fundamental conceptual scheme of science and common sense" (1960, 276). In the context of Quine's naturalistic philosophy, there is no clear boundary between philosophy and science. If science were seen as the most successful path of inquiry, then why wouldn't philosophy use its methods and results in its own project – why wouldn't it seek to form a union with the most successful path of inquiry. Once more, Quine seems to base his though on the rejection of first philosophy. If philosophy wants to remain as a worthwhile activity, it must accommodate itself to the methods and conventions

of empirical science. This type of argument obviously relies on the premise that science – in some however broad definition – is the most successful path of inquiry. In this sense, Quine seems to propose that science pictures a type of *last philosophy*.

Glock (2014, 531) has accordingly summarized that Quine defines naturalism in metaphilosophical terms as the abandonment of first philosophy. As seen earlier in this subchapter, Quine held that naturalistic philosophy ought to be continuous with science (1981, 72; 1986a, 2). According to Glock (2014, 531), Quine´s metaphilosophical naturalism is reinforced with his epistemological naturalism and conception of science: "[P]hilosophy is a part of science because otherwise it could not be a cognitive discipline aspiring for knowledge." Further, Quine´s metaphilosophical naturalism proposes a "readiness to see philosophy as natural science trained upon itself and permitted free use of scientific findings" (1981, 85).

As Quine saw it, there is simply no other way of pursuing truth than through science: "[W]e have no higher access to truth than our evolving theory, however fallible." (1992, 99). Further, this "theory" itself is firmly based on empiricist assumption: "[W]hatever evidence there is for science is sensory evidence." (Quine 1969a, 75). These statements can be further reviewed in relation to Quine's metaphilosophical viewpoint: "Naturalistic philosophy is continuous with natural science." (1995b, 256). The question then follows that in what sort of position do these commitments leave us. Science – in the extremely broad sense that Quine uses the term – is seen as the single most potent way of obtaining knowledge. Additionally, science is seen as an activity that is based on sensory experience, for in the spirit of Quine's naturalisms circular nature, it is science itself that has shown this to be true. In addition, no path of inquiry – no other aspiration for knowledge – is to be reinforced, but that which directly seeks to improve and advance the pursuit executed by the scientific enterprise.

As was noticed, the philosopher is not left out of the picture. For Quine, the answer to the question of what is the job left for the scientific philosopher is the so-called *regimentation* of our theory of the world. Hylton (2007, 232) describes Quine's conception of regimentation as follows: "As he sees the matter, the philosopher considers how our science, our theory of the world, might best be organized and systematized, simplified and clarified." While this definition is rather vague in a sense that it offers no concrete examples of what the philosopher scientist ought to do, it still pictures a view in which Quine sees the philosopher

scientist as mainly working as a type of conceptual analyst. Geert Keil (2003) reinforces this type of interpretation in his detailed analysis on Quine's metaphilosophical position. Keil (2003, 267) proposes a "Quine's job description for naturalistic philosophers". Further, Keil (2003, 268) describes the conception of philosophy that is embedded in Quine's naturalistic thought: "Philosophy seems to be, in a word, conceptual analysis, though 'within the framework of science itself'." However, a problem arises from this type of interpretation, for it is left unsolved what concepts should one analyze and how this analysis is to be executed; conceptual analysis by itself stands for many different methods.

Quine sees any worthwhile philosophical activity as necessarily involved with science. The job of the philosopher scientist is to organize, systematize and clarify our total theory of the world as a member of the scientific community: "The quest of a simplest, clearest pattern of canonical notation [ideal language] is not to be distinguished from a quest of ultimate categories, a limning of the most general traits of reality." (Quine 1960, 161). Thus, in Quine's idealistic view, the grand project of the scientific enterprise is to be pursued with every member involved who can provide some sort of utility to the advancement and development of the overall scientific world view.

2.4 Chapter summary: Quine's Naturalistic Philosophy

As was noted at the beginning of this chapter, naturalism has emerged as one of the leading trends, or -isms, in the field of contemporary Anglophone philosophy. It was further noted how the term "naturalism" in general is difficult to define, when keeping in mind its broad nature and how it is often applied in vague contexts.

Even though one can face difficulties in trying to define philosophical naturalism, some common nominators for contemporary naturalists were noted in the subchapter 2.2. Some of these similarities can be noted as (1) a belief that "nature" or "reality" is all-inclusive, in a sense that anything "supernatural" is rejected. In addition, (2) naturalists in general uphold a respectful attitude towards science and the scientific discipline. Additionally, these two features are integral to Quine's naturalistic philosophy.

In relation to Quine's distinctive naturalistic thought, epistemology is seen as the most important subject of philosophy. Further, epistemological naturalism is the most central aspect of his naturalistic philosophy. Epistemological naturalism claimed that science is the best possible way of obtaining knowledge, and as such it is the most potent path of inquiry. This naturalistic orientation, which is sustained through Quine's commitment to *scientism*, acts as the core of Quine´s philosophical system. What this means, is that it is by no means fruitful to view Quine's naturalism as an isolated strand of his philosophy; naturalism is the main thread which is interwoven throughout Quine´s philosophical system. Hylton (2007, 7) has summarized the previously mentioned point in the following manner: "At the heart of Quine's [philosophical] system is his naturalism, his rejection of any form of knowledge other than our ordinary knowledge manifested in common sense and science."

As the objective of this study is to describe the type of truth conception that is embedded in Quine's philosophical system, the definition and analysis of naturalism – the core of his philosophical system – proves to form a central step in reaching this objective. As was noted in the course of this chapter, Quine's naturalistic thought has been thoroughly examined in the works of contemporary researchers; this previously established research has been strongly utilized in the course of this chapter. As was shown through the works of contemporary researchers, one can describe Quine's naturalistic philosophy in many ways. I chose to follow in the theoretical footsteps of Hans-Johann Glock (2014, 530), who has made a distinction of Quine's naturalistic philosophy that splits it into three aspects of *ontological*, *epistemological* and *metaphilosophical* naturalism. Through the description and analysis of these aspects, we achieved a comprehensive view of the total system of Quine's naturalistic philosophy and its most central theoretical commitments.

To summarize, the primary objective of this chapter was to describe the nature of Quine's naturalistic philosophy and the most central philosophical commitments involved with it. With the help of the tripartite distinction, we achieved a precise and theoretically sound description of Quine's naturalistic philosophy, which is further specific enough for the analysis of how three distinct aspects – and the philosophical commitments involved with them – relate specifically to Quine´s arguments on the nature of truth. (1) In the case of Quine's *ontological naturalism*, we saw how the ontology of any given scientific theory or worldview is integral part of that system itself, and as such, the truths on the ontological matters of any scientific theory are immanent to that specific theory. (2) In the case of

epistemological naturalism, we saw how in Quine's view "[e]pistemology is contained in natural science, as a chapter of psychology" (1969a, 83). According to Quine's epistemological naturalism, science is seen as the most potent path of inquiry; though here we are working with Quine's unique conception of science. (3) Lastly, in the case of *metaphilosophical naturalism*, the project of the first philosophy was rejected and philosophy – the field of inquiry that has traditionally studied truth – was seen as forming a union with the rest of the sciences. According to Quine´s metaphilosophical naturalism, science is once more the only way to knowledge and truth and because of this "[t]here is no place for a prior philosophy" (Quine 1969c, 26).

In the following chapter three, we will move our focus to Quine's philosophical commitments concerning philosophy of language and subjects closely related. The already described naturalistic orientation will carry over to the following chapter, however, for many of Quine's commitments concerning philosophy of language are determined by his naturalistic position.

3. QUINE'S PHILOSOPHY OF LANGUAGE

> [T]he purpose of concepts and language is efficacy in communication and prediction. Such is the ultimate duty of language, science, and philosophy, and it is in relation to that duty that a conceptual scheme has finally to be appraised. (Quine 1961, 79.)

3.1 Introduction: Quine's Naturalistic View of Language

The primary subject of this study concerns the type of truth conception that is present in Quine's philosophical writings. In the previous chapter of this study, our attempt was in offering a sufficient description of Quine's naturalistic philosophy. In this chapter, the goal is to provide a similar description of Quine's philosophy of language, which has further significance for the linguistic aspect of Quine's truth conception. As will become evident, many of Quine's commitments concerning philosophy of language closely relate or simply follow from the philosophical commitments that constitute his naturalistic thought. In this sense, Quine has described his view on the nature of language as the "naturalistic view of language" (1968, 187).

This chapter's description will proceed in the following manner: (1) in subchapter 3.2, we will achieve a description of the general framework of Quine's philosophy of language. (2) In subchapter 3.2.1, we will focus more heavily on Quine's commitments on the nature and *function* of language. (3) In subchapter 3.2.2, Quine's semantic framework will be described in sufficient detail. After reviewing Quine's views on the nature of meaning (4) we will move on to the description of his *holism*, executed in subchapter 3.2.3. Two additional ideas follow directly from Quine's commitment to holism. These are (5) Quine's theses for indeterminacy of translation, reviewed in subchapter 3.3.1 and (6) Inscrutability of reference, which will be described in the subchapter 3.3.2.

3.2 Context and Framework of Quine's Philosophy of Language

> Language is a social art which we all acquire on the evidence solely of other people's overt behavior under publicly recognizable circumstance (Quine 1969c 26).

A central and highly controversial[16] feature of Quine's philosophy of language is his commitment to a certain type of linguistic behaviorism: “In psychology one may or may not be a behaviorist, but in linguistics one has no choice.” (1992, 37). This linguistic behaviorism is based on Quine’s view on the nature of language acquisition:

> Each of us learns his language by observing other people’s verbal behavior and having his own faltering verbal behavior observed and reinforced or corrected by others. [...] There is nothing in linguistic meaning beyond what is to be gleaned from overt behavior in observable circumstances. (Quine 1992, 38.)[17]

As was noted in the subchapter 2.3.1 of this study, Quine’s strict empiricism proved to be one of the central features of his naturalistic thought. Indeed, this commitment to empiricism proves to have significant effect on his view on the nature of language and linguistic meaning. Two philosophical commitments strongly influence Quine’s philosophy of language. These commitments are his *linguistic behaviorism* and *empiricism*. It can be argued that the type of strict empiricism that is integral to Quine’s naturalistic philosophy is highly compatible with the sort of linguistic behaviorism that Quine expressed in the just mentioned citation. Further, as was noted in subchapter 2.3.2 of this study, Quine saw epistemology as the most important subject of philosophy, and further his own epistemological view is strictly empiricist. It seems that linguistic behaviorism is simply the most compatible idea with Quine’s commitment to strict empiricism.

As Quine has committed to a strict form of empiricism and linguistic behaviorism, it may not come as a surprise how his philosophy of language is mostly concerned with the concrete aspects of language. Verbal behavior is a phenomenon that can be tied directly to sensory observations and thus Quine´s central commitment to empiricism is not endangered. Further, in the context of Quine’s philosophy of language, linguistic meaning is understood as something that an expression – seen as some sort of behavior – *might* transmit, depending on the interpretation (Quine 1981, 44). Additionally, we will see how one researcher has addressed the similarity between Quine's view on the nature of language and that of the late

[16] For example, Murphey (2012, 224) has stated that the behaviorism of Quine is the "Achilles heel of his philosophy".

[17] B.F. Skinner held a series of lectures at Harvard in 1948 labeled “Verbal behavior”. From these lectures, one can interpret a conception of language that is strikingly similar to that of Quine´s. Further research could be achieved in reviewing the similarities between Quine’s conception of language and those of the prominent behaviorists.

Wittgenstein's (Keil 2003, 260–269). This type of association is not surprising, for Quine explicitly refers to Wittgenstein's ideas in multiple occasions (1969c, 27–39; 1981, 46; 1992, 34–35).

What follows next is a more in depth description of the most central philosophical commitments of Quine's philosophy of language. Our focus will be in Quine's views concerning the nature and function of language.

3.2.1 Quine's Philosophy of Language

> When with Dewey we turn thus toward a naturalistic view of language and a behavioral view of meaning, what we give up is not just a museum figure of speech. We give up an assurance of determinacy. Seen according to the museum myth, the words and sentences of a language have their determinate meanings. To discover the meanings of the native's words we may have to observe his behavior, but still the meanings of the words are supposed to be determinate in the native's *mind*, his mental museum, even in cases where behavioral criteria are powerless to discover them for us. When on the other hand we recognize with Dewey that "meaning [...] is primarily a property of behavior," we recognize that there are no meanings, nor likenesses nor distinctions of meanings, beyond what are implicit in people's dispositions to overt behavior. For naturalism the question whether two expressions are alike or unlike in meaning has no determinate answer[.] (Quine 1968, 187.)

The single most visible and determining feature of Quine's philosophy of language is his dismissal of a determinate notion of meaning. Quine's behavioristic view of language and his empiricist conception of meaning commit him to a view according to which the meanings of our expressions are inherently *indeterminate*. We will move our focus more deeply to Quine's semantic framework in subchapter 3.2.2 of this study. It is worth to note, however, that Quine's skepticism towards a determinate notion of meaning is a strong and influential commitment in the context of his philosophy of language.

Quine's conception of the nature and function of language reduces to the more pragmatic and concrete aspects of language use. This is evident in Quine's (1961, 79) own words when he states for example that: "[T]he purpose of concepts and of language is efficacy in communication and in prediction" and that "success in communication is judged by smoothness of conversation, by frequent predictability of verbal and nonverbal reactions, and by coherence and plausibility of native testimony." (1992, 43). These statements present

the general view of language that acts as a part of Quine's philosophical system: language is a practical skill or instrument, which further relates to the themes of human communication, prediction of empirically detectable events and the evaluation of verbal behavior.

Quine's philosophy of language has been studied in a reasonable extent. For example, Hylton (2007, 54) describes Quine's view on the nature of language in the following manner: "[For Quine] [u]nderstanding language consists, very roughly, in being able to use it in appropriate ways". Indeed, Quine's philosophy of language is easily associated with those types of views and theories that emphasize the pragmatic aspect of language in the project of trying to describe its nature:

> Wittgenstein has stressed that the meaning of a word is to be sought in its use. This is where the empirical semanticist looks: to verbal behavior. John Dewey was urging this point in 1925. "Meaning" he wrote, "... is primarily the property of behavior." And just what property of behavior might meaning then be? Well, we can take the behavior, and use, and let the meaning go. (Quine 1981, 46.)[18]

The previous citation illustrates the similar orientation that Quine sees himself as having with that of the late Wittgenstein. It is worth to note that while Quine clearly refers to Wittgenstein in relation to the description of the nature of language, the *behavioral* viewpoint does not – at least in any evident sense – follow from Wittgenstein's commitments. Another interesting feature can be interpreted from the just mentioned citation, for Quine seems to link his conception of *empirical semantics* directly with his linguistic behaviorism. If verbal behavior and interpretation is all that goes in to meaning, then what room is there for a notion of meaning that sees it as an abstract entity with clear identity criteria.

Gilbert Harman (2009, 1) has offered an informative interpretation of Quine's conception of language: "In his [Quine's] view, to understand someone is to *interpret* them - that is, to find a way to translate from their outlook into your own. Interpretation is translation. And translation is indeterminate." In Quine's view, there is nothing objective that a linguistic reference can be directed at, or in these cases where the reference is determinate, we have

[18] Darlei Dall'Agnol has noted in his article "Quine or Wittgenstein: the end of analytic philosophy" that: "Quine's interpretation of Wittgenstein's ideas was misleading." Dall'Agnol bases his critical remarks on Quine's alleged behaviorism: "That is to say, Quine himself was, with some qualifications, a behaviorist. But, clearly, Wittgenstein would reject a behaviorist explanation of the meaning of a word in his Investigations." (2003, 81.)

no way of confirming this determinacy. Empirical meaning is inherently indeterminate, and in the context of Quine's philosophical system, this idea gives rise to two additional indeterminacies: the *indeterminacy of translation* that is discussed in subchapter 3.3.1 of this study and the *inscrutability of reference* that is the subject of the subchapter 3.3.2.

So far, we have seen how Quine's commitments seem to leave no room for a *mentalistic* notion of meaning – in a sense that meanings exists in the minds of people in the form of mental representations or such. If one rejects the perhaps intuitive mentalistic notion of meaning, then one needs to explain how language is learned without any reference to meanings as abstract entities. In relation to this, Quine has stated that:

> The sort of meaning that is basic […] to the learning of one´s own language, is necessarily empirical and nothing more. A child learns his first words and sentences by hearing and using them in the presence of appropriate stimuli. These must be external stimuli, for they must act both on the child and on the speaker from whom he is learning. (Quine 1969c, 81.)

From the previous citation, one can interpret how the strict empiricism of Quine gives foundation for his view concerning language acquisition. In relation to this, Hylton (2007, 102) has stated that: "Quine's approach to language is simply a special case of his general empiricism." In Quine's view, what one learns when she is learning a language is to use or accept sentences in response to appropriate stimuli. Quine's description of the nature and function of language is devoid of any reference to mental phenomena.

Davidson (2005, 81) has made an interesting interpretation of Quine´s conception of language that relates to the feature of how scientific theories and linguistic systems are not clearly distinguishable in the context of Quine's philosophical works: "My confusion here may well be traceable to the fact that 'theory' and 'language' are not to be clearly distinguished in Quine's writings." Davidson states that Quine does not explicate his view on how language systems are to be distinguished from scientific theories. Now, as one might imagine, language systems act as instruments in the construction of scientific theories. One similarity that Quine sees in relation to scientific theories and language systems is that they both abide holistic conformities of law. As will be noted in the subchapter 3.2.3 of this study, Quine's *epistemological holism* concerns systems of belief – such as scientific theories – and his *semantic holism* concerns the meaning of linguistic systems. It is worth to note, however,

that this does not mean that language systems and scientific theories are identical in Quine's philosophical context – even if they both can be understood as holistic systems.

In relation to the similarity between scientific theories and language systems, Quine (1992, 2) has stated that: "Theory consists of sentences, or is couched in them; and logic connects sentences to sentences." Additionally, Quine has once more referred to Wittgenstein in relation to how science frames a distinct language game:

> But when I cite predictions as the checkpoints of science, I do not see that as normative. I see it as defining a particular language game, Wittgenstein's phrase: the game of science, in contrast to other good language games such as fiction and poetry. A sentence's claim to scientific status rests on what it contributes to a theory whose checkpoints are in prediction. (Quine 1992, 20.)

In this sense, scientific activity involves a commitment to a certain type of language game and thus linguistic systems are necessary instruments in relation to our scientific pursuits. Further, this "game of science" describes a similar idea to that of the "conceptual scheme of common sense and science" that Quine (1960, 276) has used to describe his conception of the grand scientific theory or the "total science" (1951, 42). What seems to be the case is that in Quine's view, the conceptual scheme of common sense and science frames a type of language game, which differs from others similar to it in virtue of its ability to advance the predicting of empirically detectable events. The difference between "language" and "theory" can be understood as a difference between an instrument that makes it possible to participate in a "game of science" and this games product – a scientific theory.

Quine's strict empiricism generated his empirical conception of meaning and behavioral view of language. In Quine's view, language is a pragmatic instrument that enables us to communicate efficiently and it further advances our ability to make predictions in scientific context. This conception what then labeled as the "naturalistic view of language" (Quine 1968, 187)

The following subchapter discusses Quine's semantic framework. The relevance of the following subchapter for the purposes of this study is generated through the feature of how the notions of meaning and truth are often accompanied by another in the context of Quine's works: "Truth, meaning, and belief are sticky concepts. They stick together." (Quine 1981,

38). Indeed, Quine's view on the nature of meaning has significant relevance for the description of his truth conception.

3.2.2 Quine's Semantic Framework

> Meanings are, first and foremost, meanings of language. Language is a social art which we all acquire on the evidence solely of other people's overt behavior under publicly recognizable circumstances. Meanings, therefore, those very models of mental entities, end up as grist for the behaviorist´s mill. Dewey was explicit on the point: 'Meaning [...] is not a psychic existence; it is primarily a property of behavior.' (Quine 1968, 185.)

This subchapter deals with the description of the semantic framework that is embedded in Quine's philosophical system. As was emphasized in the previous subchapter of this study, for Quine, language is primarily a pragmatic skill: "[T]he purpose of concepts and of language is efficacy in communication and in prediction." (1961, 79). Additionally, Quine commits to an empirical approach to meaning; to mean something is to transmit an interpretation with one's behavior. To enrich the description of Quine's philosophy of language, our focus now turns to Quine's conception of the nature of meaning. The discussion that is executed in this subchapter can be seen as an extension of the following statement: "'What is meaning?' thus qualifies as a peculiarly philosophical question." (Quine 1981, 44).

For Quine, meanings are meanings of expressions. As Quine (1981, 44) sees it, expressions are either strings of phonemes or strings of written symbols depending on if one prefers terminology that refers to speech or written communication – some expressions are sentences, some are words. In the context of Quine's philosophical system, when expressions are mentioned, they simply refer to "the sheer string of phonemes and nothing more" (Quine 1981, 44). Quine's notion of expression can further be expanded to include meanings: "A meaning, still, is something that an expression, a string of phonemes, may have, as something external to it[.]" (1981, 44). The point here is that meaning must be understood as something that is generated through expressions.

In the earlier parts of his career, Quine (1943, 120) held that a linguistic or psychological definition for synonymity would be a major contribution to both, the study of language and

to philosophy. Additionally, Quine claims that if synonymity would be sufficiently defined, then one could derive the notion of meaning with the aid of said definition:

> Just what the meaning of an expression is – what kind of object – is not yet clear; but it is clear that, given a notion of meaning, we can explain the notion of synonymy easily as the relation between expressions that have the same meaning. Conversely also, given the relation of synonymy, it would be easy to derive the notion of meaning in the following way: the meaning of an expression is the class of all the expressions synonymous with it. (Quine 1943, 120.)

What follows, however, is that Quine found major problems with achieving this type of definition. In 1951, Quine published "Two Dogmas of Empiricism" where he projects a firmly critical attitude towards the ideas of meaning and synonymy. Quine's argues that when the theory of meaning is separated from the theory of reference, it is a "short step to recognizing as the primary business of the theory of meaning simply the synonymy of linguistic forms and the analyticity of statements" (1951, 22). However, what follows is that Quine found major problems with defining synonymy in sufficiently determinate way and this had a major impact on his conception on the nature of meaning:

> It is not even clear, granted meanings, when we have two and when we have one; it is not clear when linguistic forms should be regarded as synonymous, or alike in meaning, and when they should not. If a standard of synonymy should be arrived at, we may reasonably expect that the appeal to meanings as entities will not have played a very useful part in the enterprise. (Quine 1951, 22.)

Hylton (2007, 54) claims that Quine´s suspiciousness towards a "scientifically respectable" notion of meaning stems from the fact that meanings do not have a determinate and universally distinguishable identity: "In the case of meanings, questions of identity-criteria reduce to the question of sameness of meaning, or synonymy." Further, Hylton has stated that: "If we had a clear and objective sense for the notion of synonymy, we would thus have identity-criteria for meanings." (2007, 54). This can be directly interpreted from Quine himself when he states for example that: "Defining the notion of meaning for sentences may properly be said to consist simply in specifying the circumstances in which two sentences have the same meaning." (1995a, 75–76).

In addition to the already mentioned problems that Quine found in relation to achieving a determinate notion of meaning, he also rejected the at one time popular view according to which *propositions* can be understood as sentence meanings:

> The uncritical acceptance of propositions as meanings of sentences is one manifestation of a widespread myth of meaning. It is as if there were a gallery of ideas, and each idea were tagged with the expression that means it; each proposition, in particular, with an appropriate sentence. (1986a, 7.)

Quine (1986a, 3) summarizes the problem with seeing propositions as sentence meanings in the following manner: "If there were propositions, they would induce a certain relation of synonymy or equivalence between sentences themselves: those sentences would be equivalent that expressed the same proposition" and further that "[t]he long and short of it is that propositions have been projected as shadows of sentences, if I may transplant a figure of Wittgenstein´s. At best they give us nothing the sentences will not give." (1986a, 10). The problem that Quine has with propositions as sentence meanings can thus be reduced to the fact that if propositions could be defined as meanings of sentences, then meaning could be determinately defined. In Quine's view, this type of determinacy is simply not warranted.[19]

Hylton (2007, 51; see also 2016, 2.2) has summarized Quine's view on the nature of meaning in the following manner: "Quine thus insists that the idea of meaning cannot simply be taken for granted and used as a philosophical tool; it is available for philosophical use only to the extent that we are able to make empirical sense of it. He also argues, of course, that we cannot make full empirical sense of the idea."[20] Indeed, after rejecting a determinate notion of meaning, Quine proposes his notion of empirical meaning, for as he sees it "there is no meaning but empirical meaning" (1975a, 80). Quine's (1960, 27) proposal for an empirical notion of meaning reduces to his conception of *stimulus meaning*; the stimulus meaning of a particular sentence is given when one describes the type of sensory stimulation that would prompt the assent to this sentence: "The stimulus meaning of a sentence for a subject sums up his disposition to assent to or dissent from the sentence in response to present stimulation.

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[19] Quine's commitment to see truth as a property of sentences is something that is in accord with Tarski's (1944, 342) initial proposal: "[A]s regards the term 'proposition,' its meaning is notoriously a subject of lengthy disputations by various philosophers and logicians, and it seems never to have been made quite clear and unambiguous. For several reasons it appears most convenient to *apply the terms 'true' to sentences*, and we shall follow this course." (emphasis added).

[20] What I interpret Hylton (2007, 51) to mean by "full empirical sense" is that we we cannot make determinate sense of meanings as entities.

The stimulation is what activates the disposition[.]" (1960, 30). This idea is fully compatible with Quine's strict empiricism and his behavioral view of language. However, it also introduces inherent indeterminacy relating to language use and reference. These indeterminacies will be discussed in further detail on the latter part of this subchapter.

One brief note is in accord before we move on the description of Quine's holism and indeterminacy theses. Panu Raatikainen (2003) has studied Quine's conception of meaning in relation to *verificationism*.[21] Raatikainen (2003, 401) has defined verificationism in the following manner: "Any view according to which the conditions of a sentence´s or a thought's being meaningful or intelligible are equated with the conditions of its being verifiable or falsifiable." In relation to this, Roger Gibson (1988, 21) has spoken of "Quine's explicit commitment to verificationism". Raatikainen (2003, 401) further comments how: "The content of Gibson´s claim is also quite clear: that Quine 'explicitly commits' himself to verificationism in the form of 'Peirce's thesis' that the meaning of a sentence turns purely on what would count as evidence for its truth." Indeed, if Quine could be labeled as a supporter of verificationism, this commitment would have significant effect on the nature of his truth conception. What follows, however, is that if Quine could be seen as the supporter of the idea, he would additionally hold that a sentence with no empirical consequences would count as meaningless or illegitimate. Raatikainen (2003, 402) claims that "Quine is not a verificationist in such sense". This claim gains support from Quine's writings, for he has stated for example that: "Contrary to positivist spirit, I do not repudiate sentences for lack of empirical content." (1994, 479). Additionally, Quine (1996, 9) has stated that: "I [Quine] do not commit to verificationist theory of meaning."

However, even though Quine explicitly rejects the idea of labeling him as a supporter of verificationism, I have not encountered sufficient evidence for approving or rejecting this claim. Thus, in the context of this study, this question must be left unsolved. Contemporary researchers simply propose contradicting claims and the further analysis of this subject would quickly lead to a sidetrack. I must conclude, however, that Quine´s commitment to verificationism would have a significant effect on the nature of his truth conception.[22]

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[21] The general idea of verificationism is often associated with Logical positivism. For example, Raatikainen (1997, 14) has stated that: "This is the *meanings verification thesis* ("verification thesis"), according to which a meaning of a sentence is its method of verification[.]"

[22] This can be seen for example in the way in which the logical positivists tried to reject the idea of metaphysics through the thesis of verificationism. Thus, the truth's about metaphysical matters would be regarded as

As we have defined Quine´s linguistic and semantic frameworks in sufficient detail for the purpose of this study, we will move on to the already mentioned subject of Quine's holism. After this, we will discuss the two indeterminacy theses that are found in Quine´s works. All of the remaining subjects of this subchapter can be seen as some of the more challenging ideas that are included in Quine's overall philosophical system. For this reason, I will try to provide as explicit description of these ideas as possible; this description is based on both Quine´s own works, and because of the rather ambiguous and technical nature of these subjects, commentary and research material will be utilized to a reasonable extent. The reason I see the description of Quine's holism and indeterminacy theses as important for achieving the primary objectives of this study is that these ideas have direct and indirect implication for his truth conception.

3.2.3 Quine's Holism

> [O]ur statements about the external world face the tribunal of sense experience not individually but only as a corporate body (Quine 1951, 41).

Holism has become a frequent point of interest in contemporary Anglophone philosophy.[23] Gibson emphasizes the way in which especially two philosophers have had a major influence on the present trend of researchers becoming interested in holism:

> 'Holism' has become a "buzz-word" of contemporary philosophy. It figures prominently in current discussions in philosophy of language, philosophy of mind, philosophy of science, and epistemology. [...] Two prominent

meaningless, for they seemed to have no empirically verifiable content. Quine on the other would not have claimed that metaphysical claims are meaningless, rather – as has been shown in chapters 2.3.1 and 3.2.3 – he would regard them as being relative, or integral to a total scientific theory. This can be interpreted from Quine's (1953, 44) own words, when he states for example that: "But in point of epistemological footing the physical objects and the gods [of Homer] differ only in degree and not in kind. Both sorts of entities enter our conception only as cultural posits. The myth of physical objects is epistemologically superior to most in that it has proved more efficacious that other myths[.]"

[23] The rising popularity of studying holism does not apply to philosophy alone, for it seems that the study of holistics systems is also a frequent point of interest in physics. Richard Healey (2016, 1) has noted how: "It has sometimes been suggested that quantum phenomena exhibit a characteristic holism or nonseparability, and that this distinguishes quantum from classical physics" and that "[h]olism has often been taken as the thesis that the whole is more than the sum of its parts. Several different interpretations of this epigram prove relevant to physics, as we shall see. Here is a correspondingly vague initial statement of nonseparability: The state of the whole is not constituted by states of its parts."

> philosophers whose writings have contributed significantly to the recent "'holism' phenomenon" are W.V. Quine and Ludwig Wittgenstein. (Gibson 1996, 81.)

Indeed, one similarity between Quine and Wittgenstein was noted in subchapter 3.2.1 of this study when both of them were noted to hold a similar view in relation to philosophy of language; both emphasized the pragmatic and concrete aspects of language in describing its nature as a communicative system.[24]

Gibson (1996, 80) has further noted how Quine's "Two Dogmas of Empiricism" (1951) can be interpreted to "evince holistic tendencies". Indeed, "Two Dogmas" is frequently mentioned in those research publications that deal with Quine's holistic arguments (see Okasha 1996, 43; Hylton 2007, 42; Hylton 2016, 3.1). Allegedly, Quine himself has expressed that: "The primary reference for my holism is 'Two Dogmas'[.]" (Gibson 1996, 80).[25] We will move on the description of the philosophical substance that is involved with Quine's arguments concerning the nature of holism.

Hylton (2007, 14) has summarized the general idea behind Quine's holism in the following manner: "The claim that there are sentences which are related to sensory stimulations but are not directly correlated with them is often known as *holism*, and it plays a key role in Quine's thought." This interpretation illustrates how Quine's holism has a little to do with the commonsensical conception of holism, which states that a holistic system is something more than the sum of its parts. Rather, Quine's holism claims that the parts of a holistic system – say the true sentences that constitute our scientific world view – are to be understood as such in the context of the system that includes them.

The following citation is from the last two pages of "Two Dogmas" and it illustrates the frequently cited description that Quine has presented for his conception of holism:

> The totality of our so-called knowledge or beliefs, from the most casual matters of geography and history to the profound laws of atomic physics or even of pure mathematics and logic is a man-made fabric which impinges on experience only along the edges. Or, to change the figure, total science is like a field of force

[24] One can find a thorough analysis of this subject from Gibson's (1996) article "Quine, Wittgenstein and Holism".
[25] Gibson (2000, 80) does not provide a citation for this statement.

> whose boundary conditions are experiences. A conflict with experience at the periphery occasions readjustments in the interior of the field. Truth values have to be redistributed over some of our statements. Reevaluation of some statements entails reevaluation of others because of the logical interconnections. [...] But the total field is so underdetermined by its boundary conditions, experience, that there is much latitude of choice as to what statements to reevaluate in the light of any single contrary experience. No particular experience are linked with any particular statements in the interior of the field, except indirectly through considerations of equilibrium affecting the field as a whole. (Quine 1951, 42–43.)

From this citation, one can interpret Quine's monistic conception of science that was discussed in the subchapter 2.4 of this study; Quine talks of "the totality of our so-called knowledge and beliefs" and of "total science". In this sense, Quine's description directly relates to epistemological themes. However, there is another aspect that is involved with Quine's holism, for he speaks of "the empirical content of an individual statement" and further states that "the unit of empirical significance is the whole of science." As is evident, these statements are presented in close company to the primary epistemological concerns. However, these statements can be interpreted to describe Quine's *semantic holism*, which deals with the *meaningfulness* of the statements that are couched in the holistic structure. Thus, Quine's holism addresses two distinct subjects, one relating to epistemology and the other to semantics.

What proves to be especially interesting in the context of this study is that Quine's philosophical system includes two distinct holistic arguments, or his holism can be seen as including two aspects. One of these is *confirmation holism* that deals primarily with scientific or epistemological *evidence* and how scientific theories abide holistic conformities of law.[26] The other aspect is *semantic holism* that deals with meaning and meaningfulness in context of language systems, scientific theories and structures of belief. Samir Okasha (2000, 1) has stated that: "Quine has advocated both types of holism [confirmation and semantic] and argued for an intimate link between the two."[27]

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[26] Glock has noted how Quine's epistemic holism generates the thesis of underdetermination of theory by evidence: "This thesis of the underdetermination of theory by evidence is fuelled by Quine's epistemic holism." (2003, 127).

[27] In addition to this, Okasha (2000, 1) has noted how: "Holistic claims about evidence are commonplace in philosophy of science; holistic claims about meaning are commonplace in the philosophy of language." Now, it is not surprising how Quine's philosophical system includes both holistic types, for as has been shown for example in chapter 3.2.1 of this study, Quine did not explicate his views concerning how scientific theory and linguistic systems are to be separated from one another.

What is the relation between Quine's semantic and confirmation holisms? Okasha (2000, 1) suggests that the question concerning the relation between meaning and evidence depends on whether Quine can be interpreted as a verificationist: "One plausible-looking suggestion is this: given a verificationist starting point, confirmation holism entails semantic holism. For the verificationist identifies semantic relations with relations of evidential support[.]" Quine (1974, 38; 1969a, 80) himself has argued for semantic holism precisely in this way. One problem arises from Okasha's (2000, 1) suggestion on how confirmation holism entails semantic holism if one commits to verificationism, for as was shown in the previous subchapter of this study, Raatikainen (2003, 407) has argued that: "[O]ne should not classify Quine as a verificationist, at least, not without a number of qualifications." Indeed, Quine has explicitly rejected the idea of labeling him as a verificationist (1994, 479; 1996, 9). As the question concerning Quine's verificationism was left unsolved in the previous subchapter of this study, this "plausible looking suggestion" must be left as a subject for further research.

Quine's truth conception partially relies on his conception of holism. Quine (1951, 38–43) uses the terms "corporate body" and "fabric of science" synonymously with his view of the holistic structure of the overall scientific theory. Gibson notes this (2004, 14) and states that: "The holism espoused by Quine in 'Two Dogmas' is extreme because he intended the expression 'corporate body' therein to include all of science."[28] In relation to this, Hylton (2007, 72) has noted that in Quine's view, the true statements that are embedded in any corporate body cannot be reviewed as such in isolation, or outside of the context of this body. Rather, the truth of our statements is to be understood as such in the context of the theory that includes said statement as its part. This relates to Quine's conception of the *immanence* of truth – as Quine has expressed "[t]ruth is immanent [to a theory], and there is no higher" (1981, 22).

According to Quine's holism, the truth-values of the sentences that constitute any particular scientific theory or worldview are dependent on the holistic conformities of law and the systems internal balance. This holistic theory is constrained by the boundary conditions of

[28] Additionally, Gibson (2004, 14) states that: "[N]early a decade later in Word and Object (1960) and in some of his subsequent writings he moderated his holism. He acknowledged that it is more accurate to think of significant stretches of science, rather than the whole of science[.]" This notes the already mentioned change of view from extreme to moderate holism.

sensory experience, but it alone does not determine the truth-values of the sentences that constitute said theory, for the logic of the system and the internal balance of the truth values plays a crucial role in the total success of the theory. In this sense, we are not talking about truth in *transcendental* or *Ding an sich* sense. This theoretical or scientific truth is simply something that is immanent to the holistically structured theory.

If one accepts the general version of holism that Quine (1951, 42–43) has proposed, then there are potentially infinite way in which a scientific theory can be formed. For example, the ontological commitments of a theory – or any theoretical commitments for that matter – become theory dependent and relative. What I mean by this is that there are various ways in which a theory's holistic structure can be re-organized without any effect on the total effectiveness in making predictions. In the context of Quine's philosophy of science, the purpose of a scientific theory is to succeed in predicting empirically detectable events: "As an empiricist I continue to think of the conceptual scheme of science as a tool, ultimately, for predicting future experience in the light of past experience." (Quine 1953, 45).

Quine's holism can be summarized through citing Bergström: "In particular, consider what Quine often refers to as ´our total, or overall, theory of the world´. We can take this total theory to be (equivalent to) the conjunction of all theoretical sentences we hold true." (2000, 69). Indeed, Quine himself has expressed this in the following manner: "Theory consists of sentences, or is couched in them; and logic connects sentences to sentences." (1992, 2). Finally, Gibson (2004, 15) has rightfully emphasized how "moderate holism is an important part of Quine's philosophy of science". As will be seen throughout the fourth chapter of this study, this science conception is crucial for Quine's conception of truth – Quine (1995a, 67) sees truth as the "single elusive goal or grail" of our scientific pursuits.

3.3 Quine's Indeterminacy Theses

The following two subchapters 3.3.1 and 3.3.2 are devoted to the two types of indeterminacies that are present in Quine´s works. The aim is to try and keep the following subchapters in as compact forms as possible. However, the primary focus is in providing enough support for the claim of how the following two theses relate to Quine's conception of truth. As is perhaps apparent at this point, both of the indeterminacy theses –

indeterminacy of translation and inscrutability of reference – are firmly based on some of the already mentioned philosophical commitments that Quine has committed to. Especially Quine´s commitments concerning the nature of meaning and his holistic arguments are key for both of his indeterminacy theses.

The following two subchapters have a few noteworthy features involved with them. First, as for example Hylton (2016, 6.) has noted in relation to the importance of understanding Quine's indeterminacy theses: "Neither is essential for understanding Quine´s overall philosophy, although in each case, but especially in the case of indeterminacy [of translation], the opposite claim has been made." Additionally, Hylton (2007, 205) has stated that: "Quine sees holophrastic indeterminacy, indeterminacy of the translation of whole sentences, as more important than indeterminacy of reference."[29]

The origin of these two indeterminacies can be found in *Word and Object* (1960). It has been further pointed out by Orenstein (2014, 165) that the previously mentioned two indeterminacies were actually not distinguished from each other until Quine´s later writings. In relation to this, Quine has stated that:

> The indeterminacy of translation that I long since conjectured, and the indeterminacy of reference that I provided, are indeterminacies in different senses. My earlier use of different words, ´indeterminacy´ for one and ´inscrutability´ for the other, may have been wiser. (Quine 1997, 572.)

The reason why these two indeterminacies were not clearly distinguished in the earlier writings of Quine may follow from the close relation of these two theses. In relation to this, Harman (2014, 225) has noted that "Part of Quine's argument for indeterminacy of translation involves an appeal to ontological relativity." What follows from this is that there seems to be an evident link between many of Quine's commitments concerning philosophy of language, but these relations have not been explicated by Quine himself. His indeterminacy of meaning, holism, indeterminacy of translation and inscrutability of reference seem to be all intimately connected, however, one can only form a vague conception of what this connection *might* be like. Further research could be achieved in studying the actual nature of these connections.

[29] Hylton (2007, 205) does not provide a citation for this claim.

What follows next is a sufficiently detailed description of the nature of the already mentioned two indeterminacy theses. This description will be further utilized in the description of Quine's truth conception. In the context of the following two subchapters 3.3.1 and 3.3.2, we are particularly interested in how Quine saw the truth of an expression as immanent to both language and a theory.

3.3.1 Indeterminacy of Translation

> Of course the truth predicate carries over to other languages by translation. If this is transcendence, truth is indeed transcendent. (Quine 1995c, 353).

Quine first introduces the idea of indeterminacy of translation in *Word and Object* (1960, 27) but he returns to the subject multiple times throughout his career.[30] It is worth to note how the original version of the argument relies heavily on Quine's thought experiment concerning *radical translation*; radical translation means a situation where a translator of a language has nothing else to base his translation on but the empirically observable verbal behavior and speech dispositions of the people who use the translated language as a tool of communication. The following citation is from *Word and Object* and it describes Quine's view of the indeterminacy of translation:

> The thesis is this: manuals for translating one language into another can be set up in divergent ways, all compatible with the totality of speech dispositions, yet incompatible with one another. In countless places they will diverge in giving, as their respective translations of a sentence of the one language, sentences of the other language which stand to each other in no plausible sort of equivalence however loose. (Quine 1960, 27.)

Thus, according to the previous citation, multiple translations of a language can be derived from observing the same speech dispositions. Even more importantly, the idea of objectively right translation becomes troublesome, for one is able to offer various translations for a language which are all derived from same sensory evidence, but are "incompatible with one another" in the sense that "it is just that one translator would reject the other's translation of the given sentence" (Quine 1969b, 297). In the case of radical translation, there is no fact of

[30] Pagin (2014, 237) notes how in *Pursuit of Truth* (Quine 1992) one can find a slightly different argument for indeterminacy of translation.

the matter dictating a universally correct translation, rather, observable behavior and verbal dispositions are the only aid a translator gets in forming his interpretation of a language. This claim can be further interpreted to rely on Quine's critique of a determinate notion of meaning; there is no objective way of determining what a person means with their expressions, apart from interpretation that is inherently indeterminate.

According to Quine, indeterminacy of translation follows from the fact that there is nothing objective or determinate that the translator of a language can base his translation on: “we have nothing for the lexicographer to be right or wrong about” (1961, 63). Quine mentions the same point elsewhere: “I have argued that two conflicting manuals of translation can both do justice to all dispositions to behavior, and that, in such a case, there is no fact of the matter of which manual is right.” (1981, 23).

In relation to Quine’s thesis of indeterminacy of translation, Harman (2014, 219) has noted that this thesis is “a claim about the relativity of reference and meaning”. Peter Pagin summarizes the core idea behind the thesis as follows: “Between any two natural languages there are two manuals of translation that are both correct but still mutually incompatible.” (2014, 237).

It is worth to note how the thesis of indeterminacy of translation is not a claim about the impossibility of translation. Pagin (2014, 247) has noted that: “IT [indeterminacy of translation] does not entail that translation is impossible, or even more difficult that what is generally believed.” Further, Hylton has claimed that: “Fully successful translation is perfectly possible, in Quine’s view.” (2007, 201). Here it is key to note that with “fully successful” Hylton does not mean the same as “objectively right”. Indeed, Quine himself has stated that: “I am in favor also of translation, even radical translation. I am concerned only to show what goes into it.” (1969b 312).

How does one measure the successfulness of a translation in Quine’s scheme? In the spirit of his thought experiment concerning radical translation, Quine sees the success of a translation manual – or a translation of a language – reducing to the factor of whether or not the translation can provide “fluent dialogue and successful negotiation” (1995a, 80). Thus, the scale of success of a translation reduces to the more pragmatic aspects of language use, rather than to an idealized view of, say, the objective correspondence of meanings.

Some have interpreted Quine's thesis of indeterminacy of translation as something that follows consequently from his behavioristic approach to language. In relation to this, Murphey (2012, 237) has noted how: "This thesis [indeterminacy of translation], as Quine himself has said, is a consequence of his behaviorism." It is not clear, however, whether or not Quine has said this, for Murphey offers no citation for this claim. Additionally, Pagin (2014, 243) has noted that: "At the very outset, Quine proposes that the acceptability of a translation manual turns on whether it is compatible with the totality of speech dispositions. Speech dispositions are dispositions to behavior, and so the objective facts on which translation is based are behavioral." These two interpretation seems to be in accord with one another, except Quine never committed to behaviorism *per se* as Murphey implies, rather, his commitment is to linguistic behaviorism (1992, 37).

The immediate effect that the thesis of indeterminacy of translation has on Quine's truth conception is that in linguistic sense, the truth of a sentence becomes language relative There is no objectively right way of translating the true statements of one language or theory into another language. This language relativism will be discussed in further detail in subchapter 4.3 of this study, for it additionally follows from Quine's commitment to Tarski's semantic conception of truth.

3.3.2 Inscrutability of Reference

The goal of this subchapter is to present an explicit and sound description of Quine's theses of inscrutability of reference [31] Additionally, we will see how Quine's conception of ontological relativity relates to this thesis. Both of these subjects have relevance for his truth conception. To surpass the difficulties caused by (1) the changes of view on Quine´s part which caused alterations on the nature of the theses and (2) of the rather technical nature of some of the arguments that Quine utilizes in illustrating these ideas, I have relied mostly on research and commentary literature in constructing the structure and contents of this

[31] Orestein (2014, 165) has noted how Quine has used different names for the thesis in the course of his career: "On other occasions he used different phrases. Inscrutability of reference was also referred to as indeterminacy of reference, as ontological relativity, in terms of proxy functions or cosmic complements, and as global structuralism."

chapter.[32] One thing that significantly helps with the description of the these subjects is that Quine's thesis of inscrutability of reference and his conception of ontological relativity have been studied extensively in the works of contemporary researchers (see Fogelin 2004, 35–37; Hylton 2007, 200–225; Harman 2009; Orenstein 2014, 165–181).

Quine himself explicates the thesis of inscrutability of reference in the latter part of his career, though some traces of the idea can be interpreted from his earlier works, one example being *Word and Object* (1960, 43). One of the earliest – and perhaps the single most explicit – description of the thesis is present in "Ontological Relativity" (1969c 30–34). It has been noted, however, that the arguments found in this text can present themselves as not so easily accessible: "Unfortunately, the discussion of proxy functions in 'Ontological Relativity' relies on technical matters not accessible to the non-expert." (Fogelin 2004, 37). As proxy functions will be reviewed in more detail throughout this subchapter, we only need to recognize here how Quine uses them as an instrument in illustrating his arguments concerning ontological relativity.[33]

Orenstein has described the basic idea behind Quine's thesis for inscrutability of reference as follows:

> There is an inscrutability of reference that is in keeping with empiricist strictures on deciding which ontology to accept. It is of a piece with Quine's naturalistic empiricism and was later generalized into a view he referred to as global structuralism. For Quine the [holistic] system is, so to speak, externally constrained only by the observation sentences which are construed holophrastically as indissoluble wholes [fused sentences]. As such, there are equally plausible ways of meeting these constraints and thereby invoking diverse ontologies, for example, an ontology of rabbits or of undetached rabbit parts. (Orenstein 2014, 165.)

Further, Harman (2009, 2) has summarized the core argument of Quine's inscrutability of reference as dealing with the indeterminacy that is involved with linguistic reference: "He

[32] In relation to the change of Quine's views concerning the subject, Murphey (2012, 208) has noted that: "Quine says that in his earlier writings he had not clearly differentiated between 'inscrutability of reference' and 'ontological relativity'" and that "although Quine was not entirely clear himself at this point, the inscrutability of reference due to proxy functions is a new argument, and is not the same as ontological relativity which rests on the indeterminacy of translation."

[33] The explicit definition for proxy function is in Quine's (1995a, 72) words a "one to one reinterpretations of objective reference".

[Quine] argues that there is no fact of the matter as to whether another person's word 'gavagai' refers to rabbits, rabbit-stages, undetached rabbit parts, rabbithood, or various other possibilities." Thus, linguistic reference is inherently inscrutable, for there is nothing that a determinate reference can be based on. Hylton has presented a similar interpretation: "The point is that the fundamental relation between language and the world is not a referential relation, between parts of language and objects. It is, rather, a relation between sentences—complete utterances—and sensory stimulations" and "there is more than one way that it [reference] could be derived, more than one way in which we could attribute reference to our terms while still preserving the relations of sentences to sensory stimulation." (2007, 207.) These two interpretation present a very similar summary of Quine's thesis; it seems to follow from Quine's commitment to an empirical notion of meaning that an unavoidable indeterminacy follows consequently. There simply is nothing concrete that an linguistic expression can refer to, and even if there were, we seem to have no way of determinately confirming the nature of this reference.

Quine has demonstrated his ideas of inscrutability of reference and ontological relativity with relying on an explanation that utilized the so-called "cosmic complements" of entities, which are simply a type of proxy functions:

> [W]e might reinterpret every reference to a physical object arbitrarily as a reference rather to its cosmic complement, the rest of the physical universe. The old names and predicates would be introduced by ostension as usual, but it would be deferred ostension: pointing to what was not part of the intended object. Sensory associations would carry over similarly. (Quine 1992, 31.)

If we imagine a situation where our referring terms would shift from standard reference to reference to their cosmic complements, we can see how the possibility of forming various ontologies arises with no significant effect on the total explanatory force of the theory as a whole:

> The word 'rabbit' would now denote not each rabbit but the cosmic complement of each, and the predicate 'furry' would now denote not each furry thing but the cosmic complement of each. Saying that rabbits are furry would thus be reinterpreted as saying that complements-of-rabbits are complements-of-furry things, with 'complements-of-rabbits' and 'complements-of-furry' seen as atomic predicates. The two sentences are obviously equivalent. (Quine 1995a, 71.)

To illustrate this idea, we can imagine a situation (1) where a subject sees an actual rabbit. A cosmic complement of this situation would be a case (2) where the subject is in the same situation where he sees the rabbit in the first case, but in this scenario, there is no rabbit. In both cases, all the other states of affairs in the universe are the same, except for the relation between the rabbit – which does not exist in the latter case – and reality. What seems to be the case is that in the first situation we can simply refer to the actual rabbit, and in the latter case, we can refer to the cosmic complement – as in the rest of the universe not including the rabbit – and the effect from a theoretical point of view is the same. Quine proposes that (1995a, 71) that this type of change of reference has no significant effect on a theory's ability to make predictions. Further, this type of change of reference seems to have no effect on the balance of the truth values that constitute any particular theory – given it is holistically structured.

To illustrate the idea, we can move on from concrete objects to see what Quine has said about inscrutability of reference in relation to abstract entities. For Quine (1995a, 70) intersubjective sameness of reference in concern to abstract entities is something that we cannot make determinate sense of: "I submit that intersubjective sameness of reference makes no sense, as applied to abstract objects, beyond what is reflected in successful dialogue." In illustrating this point, Quine uses the trivial example of how one cannot determine whether or not his expression of an abstract entity refers to the same "thing" as someone else's: "Who is to say whether what you refer to as the number nine is the same thing as what I refer to by that phrase? We both say that it is the size of the class of the planets, but who is to say that your two-place predicate 'size of' relates the same things as mine does?" (1995a, 69).[34]

The previous paragraph lays foundation for Quine's remarks on the consequences of committing to the thesis of inscrutability of reference and the idea of ontological relativity. As Quine sees it, *all* objects are theoretical. Additionally, the instrumental nature of our ontological commitments can be directly seen from the following citation:

[34] The thesis of inscrutability of reference in relation to abstract entities is in coherence with Quine's critique towards meanings as determinate entities. As we saw in the chapter 3.2.2 of this study, in Quine's view, there seems to be no objective way of determining what constitutes a particular meaning. What follows directly from this commitment, is that when one refers to an abstract entity, there is no way of objectively *determining* what the abstract entity consists of and to what the reference is directed at.

> I extend the doctrine [of the inscrutability of reference] to objects generally, for I see all objects as theoretical. […] The scientific output is likewise sentential: true sentences, we hope; truths about nature. The objects, or values of variables, are just reference points along the way, and we may permute or supplant them as we please as long as the sentence-to-sentence structure is preserved. (1980, 53–54.)

In a similar spirit, Quine (1995a, 70) states that the thesis of inscrutability of reference extends to unobservable concrete entities: "Much the same is true even of concrete objects when we move beyond the reach of ostension and consider theoretical objects such as elementary particles" and he concludes that "[a]bstract objects and unobservable concrete ones continue to float free." (1995a, 75). According to Quine (1995a, 74–75), it further follows that "what matter for any object, concrete or abstract, is not what they are but what they contribute to our overall theory of the world as neutral modes in its logical structure." In *Pursuit of Truth* (Quine 1992, 36) this idea is expressed in a slight variation: "A lesson of proxy functions is that our ontology, like grammar, is part of our own conceptual contribution to our theory of the world." Thus, the contribution to our "theory of the world" – a holistic structure that pictures the totality of our knowledge and beliefs – is the main objective that our ontological commitments simply help in achieving.

It thus seems that Quine does not recognize ontological matters as *meaningless,* rather, they simply prove to be instrumental in relation to the nature of our total scientific theory as an activity or process that is evaluated by its merits in predicting "future experience in the light of past experience" (Quine 1953, 45).

The description that has been presented in the course of this subchapter has been dense but informative, for a more in depth discussion of these two ideas would quickly lead to a sidetrack concerning the main objective of this study. The description that has been achieved thus far is precisely as sufficient as it needs to be to present the relevance of these two ideas for Quine's truth conception. It was noticed how the indeterminacy of translation lays foundation for Quine's conception of inscrutability of reference; this idea further generates ontological relativity. inscrutability of reference was a claim about there being no matter of fact concerning what a linguistic expression refers to. Ontological relativity described an idea of how our scientific theories include ontological commitments that are relative in the sense that the entities that constitute these ontologies can be replaced for example with their

cosmic complements with no effect on the explanatory force of the theory. Quine has summarized both of these ideas in the following manner:

> Reference and ontology recede thus to the status of mere auxiliaries. True sentences, observational and theoretical, are the alpha and the omega of the scientific enterprise. They are related by structure, and objects figure as mere nodes of the structure. What particular objects there may be is indifferent to the truth of observation sentences, indifferent to the support they lend to theoretical sentences, indifferent to the success of the theory in its predictions. [35] (Quine 1992, 31.)

What seems to be the case is that in Quine's view, the question concerning what particular objects we commit to as being included in our ontology – of what sort of things we understand the world as consisting of – is instrumental to the overall success of our scientific pursuits. In chapter 2.3.1 we reviewed Quine's ontological naturalism, according to which the questions concerning what there is – of what sorts of things does reality consists of – are to be left for the adequate natural science to discover and describe. Now what seems to be the case is that this ontology itself is required as an instrument in ensuring the success of the "scientific enterprise". However, what this ontology consists of is in itself contingent or relative, for there are various different ways in which it can be defined and organized with no effect on the "success of the theory in its predictions".[36] Thus, ontology contributes to our scientific pursuits, but there are no objective truths about ontological matters. In Quine's philosophical context, ontological matters are understood as *immanent* to a theory. This is in stark contrast with the perspective of first philosophy, according to which the nature of ontology is understood as *a priori*.

3.4 Chapter summary: Quine's Naturalized Philosophy of Language

This chapter's objective was to describe Quine´s philosophy of language and subjects closely related. After the more general description of Quine's philosophy of language in subchapters

[35] This ability to predict future events is *one* of the goals of science, for as has been noted before, Quine (1953, 45) has stated that: "As an empiricist I continue to think of the conceptual scheme of science as a tool, ultimately, for predicting future experience in the light of past experience." It is a pit puzzling, however, when later in his career Quine states for example that: "Not that prediction is the main purpose of science. One major purpose is understanding. Another is control and modification of the environment." (1992, 1–2).

[36] This has a considerable effect on a substantial part of metaphysics; ontological matters are not rejected as meaningless, rather, ontological matters are inherently relative.

3.1 and 3.2, we moved on to the description of Quine's conception on the nature of language and linguistic meaning in subchapters 3.2.1 and 3.2.2. In the latter part of the chapter, we moved on to the more specific theories and theses that relate to Quine´s philosophy of language; Quine's *holism* was discussed in subchapter 3.2.3, his *indeterminacy of translation* was discussed in chapter 3.3.1 and finally his *inscrutability of reference* was the subject of subchapter 3.3.2. All of these subjects were then reviewed in relation to Quine's naturalistic philosophy and his statements concerning the nature of truth.

In relation to Quine's philosophy of language, two philosophical commitments proved to be fundamentally important. First, we saw how empiricism acted as the foundation that Quine went on to build his philosophy of language. This interpretation gained support from the works of contemporary researchers, for example Hylton (2007, 102) has stated that: "Quine's approach to language is simply a special case of his empiricism." Thus, one of the most central commitments of Quine's general naturalistic philosophy – explicitly stated as his strict empiricism – proved to have significant impact on his view on the nature and function of language. Second, we saw how Quine has committed to linguistic behaviorism: "In psychology one may or may not be a behaviorist, but in linguistics one has no choice[.]" (1992, 37). These two commitments – explicitly stated as empiricism and behaviorism – form the foundation for Quine's (1968, 187) "naturalistic view of language".

The description of Quine's semantic framework is relevant for the purposes of this study for several reasons. First, it lays foundation for the two indeterminacy theses that were discussed in the last two subchapters. The behavioral criterion that was introduced in the description of Quine's conception of the nature and function of language had major influence over his conception on the nature of meaning. Quine's critique towards a determinate notion of meaning is a dominant feature of his philosophy of language: "[M]eanings themselves, as obscure intermediary entities, may well be abandoned." (1951, 22). We further saw how Quine (1981, 44) understood meaning as something that an expression *may* have, depending on the interpretation. What was seen to follow from these commitments is that Quine's philosophy of language leaned towards the pragmatic aspect of language use and its nature as a communicative system: "[T]he purpose of concepts and language is efficacy in communication and prediction." (1953, 79). In addition, we saw how in the latter part of his career, Quine (1960, 27–35; see 1969c 79–80) went on to formulate his own conception of empirical meaning in the form of *stimulus meaning* that is inherently indeterminate: "For

naturalism the question whether two expressions are alike or unlike in meaning has no determinate answer, known or unknown, except insofar as the answer is settled in principle by people's speech dispositions, known or unknown." (1968, 187). Thus, the naturalistic view of language emphasizes the pragmatic aspects of language use and the success it provides in communication and making predictions. As Harman (2009, 1) has accordingly expressed: "In his [Quine's] view, to understand someone is to interpret them - that is, to find a way to translate from their outlook into your own. Interpretation is translation. And translation is indeterminate."

Quine's holism is a central subject in the context of this study for a couple of reasons: First, Quine understands language systems and scientific theories as holistic systems. Second, Quine's holism lays foundation for the claim of how truth is immanent to a theory. Quine's holism and its two forms have effect on his view on the nature of science, scientific theories and linguistic systems; all of these themes relate directly to his truth conception.

Quine's indeterminacy of translation was noticed to rely on his rejection of a determinate notion of meaning. The referential relation between language and reality was seen as inherently indeterminate. The "enterprise of translation" is inherently indeterminate (Quine 1960, 9). Further, the truth of a sentence becomes language relative. However, Quine (1995c, 353) saw that the function of the truth predicate is something that carries over translation.

Through the rejection of a determinate notion of meaning and the thesis of indeterminacy of translation we finally described Quine's thesis of inscrutability of reference, which was a claim about the indeterminacy of languages referential relation to reality – there is no way of determining what any linguistic expression refers to. From this, Quine derived that the ontological commitments of any scientific theory or world view become relative or instrumental. The thesis of ontological relativity claims that "[t]he objects, or values of variables, are just reference points along the way, and we may permute or supplant them as we please as long as the sentence-to-sentence structure is preserved" (Quine 1980, 53–54) and that "[w]hat particular objects there may be is indifferent to the truth of observation sentences, indifferent to the support they lend to theoretical sentences, indifferent to the success of the theory in its predictions" (1992, 31).

In the following chapter, our focus will turn to Quine's conception of truth. The descriptions and discussions that have been presented thus far in the previous two chapters will acts as a foundation for the third chapter of this study, for Quine's naturalistic philosophy and his philosophy of language directly relate to his considerations on the nature of truth.

4. QUINE'S CONCEPTION OF TRUTH

> It is rather when we turn back into the midst of an actually present theory [...] that we can and do speak sensibly of this or that sentence as true. Where it makes sense to apply true is to a sentence couched in the terms of a given theory and seen from within the theory. (Quine 1960, 24.)

4.1 Introduction: The Context of Studying Quine's Truth Conception

So far, we have established a sufficiently detailed description of Quine's naturalistic philosophy and its aspects. Additionally, Quine's philosophy of language was reviewed in equally sufficient detail. One of the most central features that was noted in the previous chapter of this study concerned the way in which Quine's naturalistic commitments proved to have significant impact on his views on nature of language and linguistic meaning. In the context of this chapter, our focus turns to reviewing how both of these already discussed aspects of Quine's philosophical system – his naturalistic thought and philosophy of language – relate to his truth conception.

The description and analysis of this chapter will be executed in the following manner: (1) I will first provide a general description of what Quine has said about truth in some of his works. This section achieves a general description of Quine's conception of truth. (2) Further, the most visible contemporary research will provide aid in bringing more depth to our analysis. (3) Additionally, the discoveries achieved in the previous chapters of this study will be utilized in reviewing how the most central commitments of Quine's philosophical system relate to his views on the nature of truth. The objective is to provide a balanced description and analysis that relies primarily on Quine's own writings, but which is further illuminated through the works of contemporary researchers.

As was noted in the introduction of this study, Quine's truth conception has not been given much attention in contemporary research publications. This can be surprising when keeping in mind how there have been several comprehensive monographs published that cover Quine's overall philosophical system (see Orenstein 2002; Hylton 2007; Murphey 2012; Harman & Lepore 2014). While there are multiple works that attempt to offer a comprehensive view of overall Quine's philosophical system – and many of these works are

exceedingly successful in said attempt – this does not mean that every nuance of said system is studied in sufficient detail. Indeed, I have interpreted Quine's truth conception to be this sort of nuance. A concrete example of this is how in *The Cambridge Companion to Quine* (Gibson 2004) and *Blackwell Companion to Quine* (Harman & Lepore 2014) not a single chapter has been devoted to the subject of Quine's truth conception, rather, truth is discussed in a scattered manner with no systematicity. This is surprising when keeping in mind how Quine's has discussed the nature of truth systematically throughout his career and even devotes whole monographs for this subject (1960, 19; 1975b, 327; 1981, 38; 1986a, 12; 1992, 99; 1995a 16).

Some researchers have published writings on Quine's truth conception in varying detail. (Bergström 1994; Bergström 2000; Davidson 2005, 81; Gaudet 2006, 26; Kemp 2012, 114). It must be noted, however, that in most of these cases the discussion is executed on a rather superficial level. Quine himself discusses truth frequently in his writings; this discussion is more than often directly related to logic and technical aspects of the truth predicates function in linguistic contexts. Unfortunately, these subjects are not included in the framework of this study, for they hardly relate to the more philosophical conception of truth that is present in Quine's works.[37]

It is worth reminding how the description that is executed in this study relies heavily on a dualistic distinction between the *immanent* aspect of truth and the *disquotational* nature of the truth predicate. The goal is in providing support for the claim of how these two aspects are to be understood as forming a coherent and distinctive truth conception. To illuminate the exceedingly important distinction between these two aspects, I will offer a brief introductory description of them before we move on to the more detailed analysis of Quine's truth conception: (1) First, Quine's truth conception involves a linguistic aspect; here the theory of *disquotationalism* is fundamentally important. As has been noted previously in this study, Quine's disquotational definition of the truth predicate is based on Tarski's (1944) semantic conception of truth. According to the theory of disquotationalism, the function of the truth predicate is in the "cancellation of linguistic reference" (Quine 1986a, 12). It is worth to note that the theory of disquotationalism has been studied on a much wider scale

[37] Quine discusses logical truth in a manner that is clearly a different subject from the type of truth that is central to this study. Further study could be achieved in reviewing how Quine's immanent truth conception and his theory about disquotationalism relate to his views concerning logical truth.

than the second aspect of Quine's truth conception. (2) This second, and perhaps less known aspect of Quine's truth conception concerns the epistemological or methodological aspect of truth; in this sense, Quine talks about the *immanence* of truth. This immanence means that the true statements that are generated through our scientific pursuits are to be understood as such in the context of the theory that produces them. Thus, truth is to be understood as integral to some theoretical context: "Truth is immanent, and there is no higher. We must speak from within a theory, albeit any of various." (Quine 1981, 22).

The most similar attempts in relation to the objectives of this particular study can be found in Bergström's two articles "Quine's Truth" (1994) and "Quine, Empiricism and Truth" (2000). In the first one, Bergström (1994, 1) argues that Quine's philosophical system subscribes to two distinct truth conceptions: these are the disquotational and empiricist theories of truth. In the second article, Bergström's (2000, 1) focus is on refining some of the ideas that he introduced in the first one. He is especially interested in refining his definition of the empiricist conception of truth that was introduced in his first article, for Quine has explicitly rejected the idea of labeling him as a supporter of this conception (Bergström 2000, 63). As is evident, my interpretation of the coherent nature of Quine's truth conception is in contrast with Bergström's (1994, 1) dualistic proposal. My claim is that Quine subscribes to a single and coherent notion of truth.

The conclusions of my argumentation will be presented in the subchapter 4.3 of this study, where I offer my interpretation of Quine's coherent truth conception. After providing sufficient support for my claim of how this truth conception is based on the philosophical commitments of Quine's naturalistic philosophy, I will label it as Quine's naturalistic conception of truth, which also acts as the title of this study. What follows in the following three subchapters is a thorough description and analysis of Quine's statements concerning the nature of truth. The most visible research publications will be utilized in bringing depth to the discussion at hand.

4.2 Overview on Quine's Conception of Truth

This subchapter's description and analysis is heavily based on some of Quine's more extensive works; explicitly stated as *Word and Object* (1960), *Philosophy of Logic* (1986a),

Theories and Things (1981), *Pursuit of Truth* (1992) and *From stimulus to Science* (1995a). Additionally, individual articles, interviews and Quine´s comments to critical claims will be utilized. The works of contemporary researchers will further help in achieving cohesion to some of the more scattered remarks concerning truth that are found in Quine's writings. What follows from this is that the material of this subchapter can be coarsely split into primary evidence that consists of Quine's own works and secondary literature that consists of the works of contemporary researchers.

Quine talks about truth systematically throughout his career in both his minor publications and in some of the more extensive works. While truth is discussed in many of Quine's works – not including logical truth, which is intentionally left out from the framework of this study – is present in these texts, it is often executed in a fragmentary and inexplicit manner. In addition, Quine´s characteristic style involves a tendency to utilize technicalities in his argumentation. This combined to the dense style of expression that is distinctive to Quine can often lead to difficulties in understanding the actual philosophical substance of his arguments. Bergström (1994, 2) has noted this difficulty and stated that specifically Quine's statements concerning truth are vulnerable to misinterpretation. Indeed, this might be one of the reasons why Quine's conception of truth has not been studied on an extensive scale. While keeping in mind these challenges, we will now move on the description of the philosophical substance that is involved with Quine's statements on the nature of truth.

One place to start with the description of Quine's truth conception is his widely cited monograph *Philosophy of Logic* (1986a). This work can offer smooth landing to the description of Quine's truth conception because of its systematic structure, the clear and explicit style of expression and its way of discussing truth in two independent chapters. First, Quine talks about "Meaning and Truth" in chapter one of the book and then continues exclusively with "Truth" in chapter three. Another reason why this particular work acts as a solid foundation for our description is that the first edition was published in 1970, after which Quine made some refinements and published the second edition in 1986. The second edition was then preserved in an unchanged state for the rest of Quine´s career.

One thing that I would like to point out is that in *Philosophy of Logic* (1986a) Quine's focus is on the linguistic aspects of truth – this includes thoughts on the functional nature of the *truth predicate* and disquotationalism – and overall the subjects revolve around language

rather than, for example, metaphysics or epistemology. We will see how this emphasis changes in *Word and Object* (1960) where truth is discussed in close relation to naturalistic themes such as science, scientific theories and empirical evidence.

Quine begins *Philosophy of Logic* with the following question: "When someone speaks truly, what makes his statement true?" This, of course, is an old epistemological problem, and as Quine sees it: "We tend to feel that there are two factors: meaning and fact." (1986a, 1). The idea is that when someone states for example that "snow is white", she speaks truly in the virtue of two factors: the sentence must *mean* that snow is white, and that snow must *be* white. This thought seems simply as an explanation of the starting point of Tarski's semantic conception of truth, where Tarski bases his definition of the truth predicate on our *intuitions*. Tarski found the definition that Aristotle presents in the fifth book of *Metaphysics* as the most descriptive definition of our intuitions concern the nature of truth and further uses it as a foundation for his semantic conception.[38] (1944, 342−343.) Quine (1986a, 1) also speaks in a manner that seeks foundation in our intuitions, for he states how "[w]e tend to *feel*" (emphasis added) that truth's is something rather than the other. We will further see in chapter 4.2.1 how Quine takes Tarski's truth definition and interprets it in a distinctive way, forming the theory of disquotationalism.[39] Thus, Quine sees truth as relying on the meanings – meanings understood in the empirical and indeterminate sense – of our expressions and on the observable states of affairs.

Quine starts his first published monograph *Word and Object* (1960, 1–19) with a chapter labeled "Language and Truth". The role of this chapter is to give a general introduction to Quine's philosophical thought and especially to his naturalistic orientation. Quine sees empiricism as the paradigmatic epistemological view, the ordinary talk of physical things is mentioned, and language acquisition and the nature of mental contents is discussed in a reasonable length. However, some fragmentary pieces of information concerning Quine's

[38] Aristotle's original definition in *Metaphysics* 1011b25 is: "To say of what is that it is not, or of what is not that it is, is false, while to say of what is that it is, and of what is not that it is not, is true." (Ross 1928).
[39] This type of view can be directly interpreted as a correspondence theory of truth. Field (2001, 199) describes said theories in the following manner: "By correspondence theory of truth, I mean a theory that says that the notion of truth can be explained by appealing to the relation between words on the one hand and the object that they are about on the other." In relation to this, Murphey (2012, 209) has noted that: "Quine dismisses the standard correspondence theory [of truth], and turns to Tarski's definition." (2012, 209). Additionally, this type of interpretation is present in Mou's (2009, 83) writings: "Indeed, Quine often severely criticizes the correspondence theory of truth before presenting his positive view of truth."

truth conception can be interpreted from the first chapter, for Quine states that: “Scientific method is the way to truth[.]” (1960, 21). This statement is particularly interesting, for it seems to introduce a brand new aspect of consideration in addition to the linguistic aspect discussed in *Philosophy of Logic* (1986a). Later in the book Quine (1960, 221) talks about science as an activity that seeks to “limning the true and ultimate structure of reality”. Thus, Quine’s naturalistic orientation – including his fundamental commitment to *scientism* – proves to be a central commitment concerning his view on the nature of truth. This tendency to relate truth with the pursuit of science is present throughout Quine's career, for in a late interview he states: “Science is the scale of truth, insofar as there is any truth.” (1996, 6).

In Quine´s last published monograph *From Stimulus to Science* (1995a) truth is once more discussed in a seven page chapter labeled “Denotation and Truth”. In this chapter, the discussion revolves around truth in relation to semantics and philosophy of language. After a somewhat lengthy analysis of the function of the truth predicate and its disquotational nature, Quine offers his view on a more general notion of truth that clearly surpasses the explanatory force of the disquotational account:

> Along with this seriocomic blend of triviality and paradox, truth is felt to harbor something of the sublime. Its pursuit is a noble pursuit, and unending. In viewing truth thus, we are viewing it as a single elusive goal or grail. In sober fact the pursuit resolves into concern with particular sentences, ones important to us in one or another way. Some truths are elusive, some not; some worth pursuing, some not. Thanks to the negation sign, there are as many truths as falsehoods; we just can´t always be sure which are which. (Quine 1995a, 67.)

This statement proves to be an excellent description of Quine's more general view of truth and it shows that both aspects that have been introduced, the linguistic aspect manifested in disquotationalism and the naturalistic aspect in form of the immanence of truth, are presented in a coherent relation to one another. What seems to be the case is that in sober fact we are interested in the truth of the sentences that constitute our scientific worldview – or grand scientific theory – and that the process of science, which attempts to define true statements through observations and experiments, is described as the pursuit of truth. In the spirit of Quine's metaphilosophical naturalism – according to which the project of science needs no justification from sources outside itself – truth is thus seen as the single elusive goal of our scientific pursuits.

As has been noted, Quine (1986a, 1–13; 1981; 1995a, 60–67) has given extremely detailed arguments to support his conception of the nature and function of the truth predicate in linguistic contexts. This linguistic conception of truth seems to be only one aspect of Quine's total truth conception, however, for there is clearly a whole nother discourse taking place in relation to truth in the midst of his philosophical works. This discourse concerns the just mentioned pursuit of science, which clearly exceeds the pure linguistic aspect that concerns truth predicates functional nature:

> Pursuit of truth is implicit, still, in our use of 'true'. We should and do currently accept the firmest scientific conclusions as true, but when one of these is dislodged by further research we do not say that it had been true but became false. We say that to our surprise it was not true after all. Science is seen as pursuing and discovering truth rather than as decreeing it. Such is the idiom of realism, and it is integral to the semantics of the predicate 'true'. It fittingly vivifies scientific method, the method of interrogating nature by conjecture and experiment and abiding by the consequences. (Quine 1995a, 67.)

From the previous citation, one can interpret that when Quine introduces his idea of the "pursuit of truth", he is clearly speaking of truth in a sense that does include the linguistic aspect that is best understood through his theory of disquotationalism, but that this is only a part of what goes into truth. What seems to be the case is that both, the pursuit of truth in immanent or theoretical sense and the nature and function of the truth predicate in linguistic sense, describe a conception of truth that can be understood as a coherent whole. My claim is that this unique notion is to be understood as Quine's naturalistic truth conception, for the single most important commitment of his naturalistic philosophy proved to be his distinct *scientism*: "Scientism in the form that I accept it says only that science is our only way to knowledge and truth." (Quine 1996, 9). Further, what directly follows from this commitment is that science is the only way to pursue truth. Thus, truth is the single elusive goal of science (Quine 1995a, 67) and science is seen as the only way of pursuing it.

The previous citation and the reasoning executed thus far enables us to form the following interpretation: Pursuit of truth is integral to the semantics of the predicate "true" because this pursuit is executed through our scientific efforts, which present themselves in the form of scientific theories that are constituted of true sentences. The truth of the sentences that constitute each particular theory rely on (1) the logical structure of the holistic system that

forms the theory, (2) the relation between the truth values of all constitutive sentences and (3) the observable sensory periphery that has influence on the truth values of the sentences.

Thus, Quine's naturalistic truth conception relies on the ideas of (1) his naturalistic *scientism*, (2) on the view that reality renders our statements true and that the function of the truth predicate is simply to remove our focus from language to reality, (3) and on the claim of how truth is immanent to the holistically structured scientific theory that contains it. Further, the immanent conception of truth is based on the theory of disquotationalism, for Quine states that: "In sober fact the pursuit [of truth] resolves into concern with particular sentences, ones important to us in one or another way." (1995a, 67). This has also been confirmed by Quine himself, for he has stated that: "I base the immanence of truth on disquotation: To call a sentence true is just to include it in our own theory of the world" (1995c, 353).

As the just presented argument relies on Quine's views concerning the theory of disquotationalism and his conception of the immanent nature of truth, these views will be sufficiently described in the following two subchapters. Before we move on to this description, it is fruitful to review some of the interpretations that contemporary researchers have expressed in relation to Quine's truth conception. First, there is a wide consensus that Quine knew Tarski's (1944) semantic conception of truth. For example, Glock (2014, 524) states that: "Quine bases his account of linguistic truth in Tarski." Murphey (2012, 12) takes the claim even further and states that: "But he [Quine] also learned Tarski's theory of truth, which he adopted as his own." Indeed, Quine (1996, 7) has stated for example that: "In relation to the concept of truth, I follow Tarski, and not the pragmatists." [40]

According to Glock (2003, 126) and Davidson (1990, 298), Quine can be interpreted as holding an epistemic or anti-realist truth conception. This claim is based on Quine's statements concerning truth that picture it as something that is dependent on human actions: "[T]here is no extra-theoretic truth, no higher truth than the truth we are claiming or aspiring to as we continue to tinker with our system of the world from within" (1975b, 327; 1986b,

[40] It is interesting how Quine often talks about truth in a coherent sense, rather than explicating which aspect of truth he is referring to. For example, in the previous statement Quine talks about truth in a general sense, even though it is well known that Tarski's truth definition deals with the linguistic and semantic aspects of truth.

316). It is not surprising that Quine's truth conception has been interpreted as anti-realist, for this is what his claim about the immanence of truth to a scientific theory explicitly commits to. In relation to this, Bergström (1994, 1) has stated that: “It may come as a surprise to some people that Quine holds an epistemic theory of truth. For Quine has often described himself as a realist, and he has expressed his disapproval of epistemic views[.]” My claim is that this conflict simply follows from not understanding the coherent nature of Quine’s truth conception. If one interprets disquotationalism and immanence of truth separately, there is clear conflict between them as one is an epistemic theory and the other implies a commitment to realism. This conflict can be resolved through keeping in mind the primacy of Quine’s (1996, 9) commitment to scientism, through which the term “reality” itself is understood as a scientific invention (Quine 1996, 11), and according to which: “[T]here is no extra-theoretic truth.” (Quine 1975b, 327; see 1986b, 316). The thing in itself must not be confused with the human understanding of it.

In relation to the previous, Bergström (1994, 1) has stated that: “But maybe Quine’s view of truth is neither realist nor epistemic.” Indeed, Quine’s truth conception need not to be understood through the context of empiricist or realist theories of truth for it is simply something that rises from – and is consistent with – his general naturalistic philosophy. I agree with Bergström (1994, 16–17) on the point that further research could be achieved in reviewing whether these aspects of Quine’s truth conception define the notion in a way that leads to inconsistency.

In an article labeled ”What is Quine's View of Truth?” (2005) Davidson offers a detailed analysis of Quine's truth conception and further reviews it in relation to the themes of semantics and deflationism. The conclusion that Davidson offers is that because of the way in which Quine subscribes to a Tarskian truth definition, he thus commits to language relativism concerning truth; this follows from the feature of Tarski's (1944) theorem where truth is defined for each specific object language L in that languages metalanguage. Davidson does not have any problem with this type of relativity. However, another type of relativity can be interpreted from Quine’s works: “I had worried that when he [Quine] wrote that truth is 'immanent' he was expressing the idea that truth is relative not only to a language, but also is relative in some further way.” Davidson then concludes that no other relativization is present in Quine’s view: “He [Quine] assures me that no other relativization is implied beyond the familiar, and unavoidable, relativization to a language.” (2005, 81). It is unclear,

what the trail of thought behind this assurance is, for elsewhere Quine has stated that: “Of course the truth predicate carries over to other languages by translation. If this is transcendence, truth is indeed transcendent.” Quine further states that: “We go on testing our scientific theory by prediction and experiment, and modifying it as needed, in *quest* of the truth. Truth thus looms as a haven that we keep steering for and correcting to. It is an ideal of pure reason, in Kant's phrase. Very well: immanent in those other respects, transcendent in this.” (1995c, 353.) I suspect that the assurance might be based on this transcendence, but I must conclude that this interpretation generates an inconsistency with what has been previously discovered. What I mean by this is that Quine has stated for example that: “Truth is disquotation.” (1992, 80). Quine has additionally stated that: “Further, I base the immanence of truth on disquotation: To call a sentence true is just to include it in our own theory of the world.” (1995c, 353). It thus seems that truth is transcendent, immanent and based on the disquotational nature of the truth predicate.

Bergström (1994, 4) notes that: "As far as I can see, a person who accepts a naturalized epistemology may very well believe that there is objective truth, truth that is independent of human beliefs or human theorizing.” This seems to be the case, for as we will see in the subchapter 4.2.2 of this study, Quine has addressed the question concerning the transcendence of truth in relation to his immanent conception. The transcendence and immanence of truth cannot be viewed as contradicting features in the context of Quine's naturalistic truth conception, for they both relate to its nature. The immanent and human aspect of truth simply reduces to the truth of the sentences that are included our total scientific theory. What transcends is the *thing-in-itself* – the renderer of truth. Those things, which simply *are* in transcendent sense, may *render* our statements true, but truth as we humans know of it reduces to singular expressions.

Before I form a comprehensive summary of what have been the conclusions concerning my interpretation of Quine’s truth conception, we will see on a more specific detail what the theory of disquotationalism and immanent conception of truth amount to. After this, I will briefly discuss Quine’s relation to the deflationism.

4.2.1 Quine’s Theory of Disquotationalism

> Truth predicate is a reminder that, despite technical ascent to talk of sentences, our eye is on the world. The cancellatory force of the truth predicate is explicit in Tarski's paradigm:
>
> "Snow is white" is true if and only if snow is white.
>
> Quotation marks make all the difference between talking about words and talking about snow. The quotation is a name of a sentence that contains a name, namely of "snow", of snow. By calling the sentence true, we call snow white. The truth predicate is a device of disquotation. (Quine 1986a, 12.)

According to Quine, those philosophers who have favored propositions over sentences as the vehicles of meanings have done so because "truth is intelligible only of propositions, not of sentences." Quine sees that the tendency to see propositions as sentence meanings is caused by the idea of how "truth should hinge on reality, not language; sentences are language" (1986a, 10; see 1992, 77). This is something that Quine agrees on, for it is the core thesis of Quine's theory of disquotationalism:

> But he is right that truth should hinge on reality, and it does. No sentence is true but reality makes it so. The sentence 'snow is white' is true, as Tarski taught us, if and only if real snow really is white. The same can be said of the sentence 'Der Schnee ist weiss'; language is not the point. (Quine 1986a, 10–11.)

This citation shows that according to Quine, truth *per se* is something that carries over translation. What is true is true regardless of the language. In addition, while we may talk about the truth of a sentence, this is a confusion, for it is not the sentence itself that is true, rather, reality *makes* the sentence true: "Truth hinges on reality; but to object, on this score, to calling sentences true, is a confusion." (1986a, 11). The truth predicates usefulness is present in situations where we are concerned with talking about reality, but are impelled by certain technical difficulties and thus must speak of the truth of a sentence: "Here the truth predicate serves, as it were, to point through the sentence to reality; it serves as a reminder that though sentences are mentioned, reality is still the whole point." (1986a, 11). This, indeed, is the core thesis of Quine´s theory of disquotationalism: truth predicates function is instrumental in moving one's focus from language to reality.

The disquotational nature of the truth predicate can be shown in the paradigmatic case that Tarski (1944, 362) used to illustrate his semantic conception of truth. If we take Tarski´s example and state "'Snow is white' is true if and only if snow is white" we see that first, the

sentence "Snow is white" is in quotes, while in the latter part, it is not. For Quine, this shows that by calling a sentence true, we simply call snow white (Quine 1986a, 12). Truth predicate simply acts as a tool of removing quotes from the first sentence. This disquotation further illustrates the way in which – with the help of the truth predicate – we move our focus from talking about linguistic expressions to the objects and states of affairs that these expressions are directed at

However, the disquotational function is not all that goes in to the usefulness of the truth predicate. Another case relates to Quine's conception of *semantic ascension*. If the truth predicates function reduces to the removal of quotation marks, then the predicates purpose would indeed be superfluous; one could simply utter the sentence without applying truth to it – snow *is* white. In relation to semantic ascension, Quine (1992, 80) notes: "But it [truth predicate] is needed for sentences that are not given. Thus, we may want to say that everything someone said on some occasion was true, or that all consequences of true theories are true." For example, when someone states a tautologous sentence, say "if time flies then time flies", one makes sense of this sentence by concluding that it is always *true*. We can further generalize these types of sentences and say that "all sentences of the form 'If *p* then *p*' are true". Because of the peculiar way in which "time flies" relates to the world, we simply need to semantically ascend from concrete reference to a level where there are objects that we can tie our reference to – namely sentences. In these types of contexts, the truth predicates function is not in removing quotation marks, rather, it acts as a bound variable. This idea can be illustrated through reviewing the sentence "all consequences of true theories are true"; the consequences act as the objects that are applied with truth-values, and in the case of tautologous sentences, the value is fixed to be always true.

By applying truth to sentences we ascend semantically from talking about the world; this ascension acts as an instrument, for as Quine sees it: "This ascent to a linguistic plane of reference is only a momentary retreat from the world, for the utility of the truth predicate is precisely the cancellation of linguistic reference." Further, Quine concludes that: "The truth predicate is a reminder that, despite technical ascent to talk of sentences, our eye is on the world." (1986a, 11–12.) In this sense, the function of the truth predicate is in reminding that even though there are technical difficulties that force us to speak about the truth of some sentences, our eye is on the world.

This function illustrates the general claim of Quine's theory of disquotationalism, thought in the case of semantic ascension, the truth predicate cannot be removed: "What is true is the sentence, but its truth consists in the world's being as the sentence says. Hence the use of the truth predicate in accommodating semantic ascent." (Quine 1992, 81). Thus, even in the narrow definition for truth that is offered by the theory of disquotationalism and the idea of semantic ascension, the truth predicate cannot be eliminated in all context and thus made trivial. We also noticed how in both cases of disquotationalism and semantic ascension, the function of the truth predicate was essentially the same; it acted as an instrument in moving one's focus from language to reality. The difference is that in the case of semantic ascension, the predicate cannot be simply removed, for we need the utility that it provides in surpassing certain types of technical difficulties.

Bergström has noted that: "This [disquotational account of truth] is not really a theory of truth at all- except in a sense that it tells us how to interpret the term 'true' in certain simple contexts." This narrowness of explanatory force is then demonstrated by Bergström when he asks: "For example, how should the title of Quine´s latest book, "Pursuit of Truth", be understood on the disquotational account?" (1994, 5.) Quine has stated in *Pursuit of Truth* (1992, 82) that: "The disquotational account of truth does not define the truth predicate—not in the strict sense of 'definition' […] [b]ut in a looser sense the disquotational account does define truth. It tells us what it is for any sentence to be true, and it tells us this in terms just as clear to us as the sentence in question itself." Indeed, through the disquotational definition, one understands what it is for the sentence "Snow is white" to be true as clearly as one understands what it is for snow to be white. Quine concludes that: "Evidently one who puzzles over the adjective 'true' should puzzle rather over the sentences to which he ascribes it." (1992, 82).

In the following subchapter, our focus turns to Quine's *immanent* conception of truth. This idea presents truth in a way that reduces its nature to the true sentences that constitute a scientific theory or world view, and thus truth must be understood in the context of the theory that contains it. Further, thoughts on the relation between the immanence and transcendence of truth will be presented, for Quine also sees truth as the grand objective of our scientific pursuits.

4.2.2 Quine's View on the Immanence of Truth

> Further, I base the immanence of truth on disquotation: To call a sentence true is just to include it in our own theory of the world. I have been guided by Tarski's *Wahrheitsbegriff* ever since it first came out [...]. Finally, I base the immanence of truth on naturalism, in disavowing any higher tribunal than our best scientific theory of the time. (Quine 1995c, 353.)

The immanence of truth claims that judgements of truth are made from within a theory. The sentences that we hold true are simply parts of our grand scientific theory or world view and as such these true sentences must be understood as such in the context of the theory that includes them. Thus, according to Quine, truth is immanent to the theory that contains it and that there is no other way of forming true statements than through some theory – better or worse:

> Whatever we affirm, after all, we affirm as a statement within our aggregate theory of nature as we now see it; and to call a statement true is just to reaffirm it. Perhaps it is not true, and perhaps we shall find that out; but in any event there is no extra-theoretic truth, no higher truth than the truth we are claiming or aspiring to as we continue to tinker with our system of the world from within. (Quine 1975b, 327.)

The immanent aspect of truth, in a sense that truth is something that must be understood in a context of a theory, illustrates the human perspective of truth. *Ascriptions* of truth are not to be equated with objectivity – they relate to our *pursuit* of something independent of us. Truth thus looms as a goal of our scientific pursuits:

> There is a remarkable feature of our use of the truth predicate that lends truth a dignity beyond disquotation. When a scientific tenet is dislodged by further research, we do not say that it had been true but became false. We say that it was false, unbeknownst, all along. Such is the idiom of realism, integral to the semantics of "true." (Quine 1994, 500.)

The claim concerning the immanence of truth is rather clear: what we believe and ascribe to be true is true in the context of some theory. If a true statement turns out to be false, then this is what reality shows it to be. This is as close as we can get to truth in the sense of "objective truth", for the only way we can reach truth is through the conceptual framework of some theory. In relation to this, Quine (1981, 21) has stated that: "We must speak from within a theory, albeit any of various. […] What evaporates is the transcendental question of

the reality of the external world — the question whether or in how far our science measures up to the Ding an sich." When one subscribes to this idea, then the question concerning the transcendence of truth evaporates, for truth is explained through its nature as something human dependent. What remains is the transcendence of the objective reality or *Ding an sich*, but there is no way of reaching it; truth, as we know of it, is an instrument in our human attempt of making sense of the world, and as such it is immanent to the theory that acts as the result of our current inquiry.

As for example Murphey (2012, 219) has noted, Quine sees truth through the perspective of our scientific pursuits, for science is the search for truth, but not only in the disquotational sense – it is an ideal of pure reason. Indeed, Quine has explicitly committed to realism (1960, 221; 1995a, 67), in a sense that one believes there to be a human independent reality, and an interesting feature follows when this commitment is combined to Quine's immanent conception of truth:

> To *call* a sentence true, I said, is to include it in our science, but this is not to say that science fixes truth. It can prove wrong. We go on testing our scientific theory by prediction and experiment, and modifying it as needed, in *quest* of the truth. Truth thus looms as a haven that we keep steering for and correcting to. It is an ideal of pure reason, in Kant's phrase. Very well: immanent in those other respects, transcendent in this. (Quine 1995c, 353.)

Quine explicitly subscribes to an immanent conception of truth, but as is evident, this sort of immanence is not contrary to transcendence. Rather, Quine's coherent truth conception involves both, the immanence and transcendence of truth.

4.2.3 Substantiality of Quine's Truth Conception

Davidson (2005, 83) has addressed the way in which some contemporary researchers have interpreted Quine's truth as a deflationary theory of truth. Stoljar & Damnjanovic have described the basic idea behind the deflationary theories of truth as:

> According to the deflationary theory of truth, to assert that a statement is true is just to assert the statement itself. For example, to say that 'snow is white' is true, or that it is true that snow is white, is equivalent to saying simply that snow is white, and this, according to the deflationary theory, is all that can be said

> significantly about the truth of ‘snow is white’. (Stoljar & Damnjanovic 2014, 1.)

Both aspects of Quine’s truth conception can be reviewed in relation to the just mentioned description. The purpose of the theory of disquotationalism is to offer an explanation for the function of the truth predicate: “Truth predicate is a reminder that, despite technical ascent to talk of sentences, our eye is on the world.” (Quine 1986a, 12). Thus, the explanation offered by the theory of disquotationalism concerns the function of the truth predicate as a technical instrument: “By calling the sentence [snow is white] true, we call now white. The truth predicate is a device of disquotation.” (Quine 1986a, 12). According to this theory, disquotation further implies the idea of moving one’s focus from language to reality.

How does this relate to the deflationist claim of “saying simply that snow is white […] is all that can be said significantly about the truth of ‘snow is white’”? It seems, indeed, that according to Quine's disquotational account, all that can be said about the truth of the sentence ‘snow is white’ is that snow actually is white. Truth predicates function is simply instrumental in these types of scenarios. However, Quine also sees that there are cases in which the truth predicate simply cannot be eliminated. In this sense, Quine 1986a, 10–12) talks about *semantic ascension*. Thus, even in the narrow definition that disquotationalism offers, the truth predicate cannot be eliminated in every scenario.

Stoljar & Damnjanovic (2014, 1) further describe the central idea that is involved with deflationism: “[according to deflationism] The common mistake is to assume that truth *has* a nature of the kind that philosophers might find out about and develop theories of. For the deflationist, truth has no nature beyond what is captured in ordinary claims such as that ‘snow is white’ is true just in case snow is white.” What seems to be the case, however, is that according to Quine, truth predicate has a functional and even irreplaceable role in certain types of linguistic scenarios. In the case of semantic ascension, truth was perceived to be ineliminable tool in cancellation of linguistic reference. I interpret this to be contrary to the standard claim of deflationary theories of truth.

There are some contemporary researchers that have expressed Quine’s tendency to lean towards a deflationary theory of truth. (Kemp 2012, 93; Stoljar & Damnjanovic 2014, 2). This is not surprising, however, for Quine’s writings involve statements that are compatible

with the just mentioned definition for deflationism: “By calling the sentence [snow is white] true, we call snow white. The truth predicate is a device of disquotation.” Contrary interpretations of Quine's truth conception have been proposed, for example Davidson (2005, 85) explicitly claims that: “Those who have taken the emphasis on the disquotational aspect of the truth predicate as a sign that Quine is a deflationist, I conclude, be wrong.” Davidson (2005, 85) bases his claim on the substantiality of Quine’s truth conception in the trail of thought: “It seems, then, that we need meaning […] if we are to apply our truth predicate to any speech but our own, and we need truth […] to understand meaning. Such basic relations between truth and meaning are incompatible with a deflationary attitude toward the concept of truth.”

However, we have only reviewed the description for deflationism in relation to Quine´s disquotationalism. What about the immanent aspect of his truth conception? As has been noted, Quine bases his immanent truth conception on both, disquotationalism and naturalism (1995c, 353). Further, we can see how Quine has describe his general notion of truth that further relates to his immanent conception: “There is a remarkable feature of our use of the truth predicate that lends truth a dignity beyond disquotation. When a scientific tenet is dislodged by further research, we do not say that it had been true but became false. We say that it was false, unbeknownst, all along.” (1994, 500). One of the central commitments that is involved with deflationist theories of truth is the dismissal of the idea of truth as something substantive: “Philosophers looking for the nature of truth are bound to be frustrated, the deflationist says, because they are looking for something that isn't there.” (Stoljar & Damnjanovic 2014, 1). When Quine states that truth has “dignity beyond disquotation” (1994, 500) and further claims that “[i]n viewing truth thus, we are viewing it as a single elusive goal or grail” (1995a, 67), it is clear that Quine’s truth conception is substantive enough to surpass the deflationary conception.

The conclusion is that even in the narrow definition that is offered by the theory of disquotationalism, the truth predicate has a clear function that proves to be useful and even mandatory in those cases that involve semantic ascension. The immanent conception of truth on the other hand proved to be remarkably substantive, for it pictures truth as the grand objective of our scientific pursuits.

4.3 Chapter summary: Quine’s Coherent Truth Conception

This chapter's discussion has revolved around Quine's conception of truth. It was noticed how Quine's truth conception has not attracted much attention in the works of contemporary researchers. Regardless, Quine's truth conception proves to be a relevant subject to execute research on, for Quine has discussed the nature of truth systematically throughout his long and active career. Further, Quine's naturalistic philosophy has had a major influence on contemporary academic philosophy, and thus the research concerning his philosophical system provides valuable insights into various discussions.

In the subchapter 4.2, a general overview of Quine's truth conception was achieved. What became evident is that the discussion concerning the nature of truth that is present in Quine's works revolves around languages referential relation to reality and the nature of scientific inquiry. Indeed, Quine's truth conception was noticed to consist of two aspects – one relating to language and the other to scientific activity. Additionally, Quine's fundamental scientism proved to form the foundation that he went on to build his truth conception; science is seen as the only way to knowledge and truth, and further, truth is seen as the gran objective of our scientific pursuits.

In the subchapter 4.2.1, Quine's theory of disquotationalism was seen to provided an explicit definition for the functional nature of the truth predicate as a linguistic instrument. By labeling the sentence "snow is white" true we simply state that snow is white. Thus, in this situation, one understands the meaning of truth as clearly as one understands what it is for snow to be white. The truth predicate is a tool in moving one's focus from language to reality – the thing that renders our statements true. In Quine's (1986a, 10) view, no statement is true unless reality makes it so, and the truth predicates function is in moving ones focus from language to reality.

In the subchapter 4.2.2, we moved our focus to the immanent nature of truth. In the project of tinkering with our overall system of the world, we are simply trying to adjust the truth of the statements that constitute our scientific world view. Truth reduces to the true sentences that help to form our scientific theories. In this sense, truth is immanent to that theory that includes it in the form of a true sentence. This view pictures the only truth that we humans can know of; to call a sentence true means that we include it in our scientific explanation of

the world, but science does not fix truth, for we go on testing our scientific theory through experimentation. Thus, truth looms as a grand objective of our scientific pursuits.

In the subchapter 4.2.3, I argued that Quine's view on the nature of truth is substantive. Quine sees truth as the grand objective of our scientific pursuits (1995a, 67). Quine has further states that truth has "dignity beyond disquotation" (1994, 500). The coherent truth conception that was formed in the course of this chapter provided clear arguments for the substantiality of Quine's truth conception, and thus one cannot label Quine as a supporter of a deflationary theory of truth, at least not in the traditional sense that is associated with the theory.

One last note must be made, for Quine has not explicated his view on how the immanent conception of truth is based on his naturalistic thought. Some interpretations concerning this relation can be made with the help of the description that has been achieved in the context of this chapter. Quine's fundamental philosophical commitment concerns his distinctive scientism. Further, Quine's scientism claims that science – in his broad definition – is the only way to knowledge and truth. (1996, 9.) Indeed, Quine additionally sees truth as the grand objective of our scientific pursuits. In this sense, Quine's immanent conception of truth is firmly based on his naturalistic philosophy through the nature of his science conception and his fundamental commitment to a distinctive form of scientism.

5. SUMMARY OF THE STUDY: CONCLUSIONS AND REMARKS

This study has discussed Quine's philosophical system, his central naturalistic philosophy, his philosophy of language, and most importantly, his philosophical truth conception. The exact research question of this study concerned the description of the type of truth conception that is included in Quine's philosophical system. The exact objective of this study was to provide a sufficient description of Quine's truth conception and its philosophical foundation. The supporting hypotheses were that Quine's philosophical system subscribes to a single and coherent truth conception that consists of two aspects. These aspects concerned the theory of disquotationalism and the immanent nature of truth to a scientific theory.

In the second chapter of this study, we described and reviewed the nature of Quine's naturalistic philosophy. The most central philosophical commitments of Quine's naturalism proved to be his strict empiricism and distinctive scientism. Further, Quine's philosophical system included his broad conception of science; science is seen as a single "fabric of science" or "total science" that pictures the "totality of our knowledge and beliefs". This broad conception of science has its foundation on the so-called common sense, which describes the ordinary or intuitive way that we humans make sense of the world. In the context of Quine's philosophical system, science is continuous with common sense and philosophy ought to be continuous with scientific inquiry. Additionally, Quine's naturalistic philosophy was described through three different aspects: Epistemological naturalism claimed that our epistemological pursuits are to be left for the adequate natural science to deal with. Ontological naturalism made a similar claim concerning the description of reality; the description of what reality consists of is to be left for the physicist. Metaphilosophical naturalism claimed that science needs no justification from sources outside itself and that philosophy ought to be in continuity with the inquiry that is executed by the scientific enterprise.

In the third chapter of this study, we moved on to the description of Quine's philosophy of language. Quine's strict empiricism proved to have a significant effect on his views concerning the nature of language and linguistic meaning. Quine's conception of language proved to be an extension of his naturalistic philosophy. Through his naturalistic view of language, Quine committed to a behavioristic viewpoint and an empiricist conception of

meaning. For Quine, language is a pragmatic skill that reduces to verbal behavior and the interpretations it transmits.

Quine's notion of stimulus meaning formed the foundation for his views concerning holism, indeterminacy of translation and inscrutability of reference. Quine understood scientific theories and language systems as holistic constructs. In the case of scientific theories, the sensory periphery constrains the framework of the holistic structure, which consists of true sentences, and these sentences are then organized in a way that abides the systems internal logical structure. Additionally, the meanings of our expressions follow from a similar type of holistic system, which is constrained by the sensory periphery, but this periphery alone does not determine the meanings of our expressions, for they also rely on the relationships between other expressions and the logical balance of the system as a whole.

The thesis of indeterminacy of translation claimed that there is no determinate way of forming a translation of one language to another. However, the functional nature of the truth predicate can be constructed in any language. The inscrutability of reference claimed that languages referential relation to reality is indeterminate and that the ontological commitments of any scientific theory are relative. They simply serve as an instrument in assuring the development and progress of the scientific enterprise.

In the fourth chapter, our focus turned to the primary objective of this study. Quine's truth conception was approached through first describing its general nature and the context of discussion that surrounds it. It was noticed how Quine's truth conception involves two distinct aspects. The theory of *disquotationalism* concerned the linguistic aspect of truth through defining the nature and function of the truth predicate. The immanence of truth saw is as integral to some scientific theory. Further, truth is seen as the single elusive goal or grail of our scientific pursuits. We simply reach for truth through tinkering with our scientific system of the world. This tinkering reduces to the adjustment of the truth values of the sentences that constitute our total scientific theory.

The results of this study relate to two different discussions concerning Quine's truth conception. The claim that Quine holds a dualistic conception of truth and the interpretation that labels Quine as a deflationist were adressed and both of these views were problematized. Quine's own statements contradict the claim that he holds two distinct truth conceptions.

The deflationist claim is in stark contrast with the way of how Quine sees truth as the grand objective of our scientific pursuits. Even though the deflationist claim applied to Quine's theory of disquotationalism, my way of showing how disquotationalism acts as a part in Quine's coherent truth conception – and that this conception as a whole is substantive – contradicts the interpretation that labels him as a deflationist.

On a more general level, this study provides insights into research concerning naturalistic thought systems and specifically to the research concerning the type of truth conceptions that they entail. This study can benefit anyone who is interested in either Quine's overall philosophical system or in naturalistic thought systems in general. Further research could be achieved in various subjects that have been introduced in the course of this study. For example, research could be executed on Quine's conception of common sense, his possible commitment to verificationism, and whether or not the linguistic behaviorism that he commits to is a necessary commitment for sustaining his overall philosophical system. Perhaps the most interesting research problem that directly arises from the framework of this study concerns the relation between Quine's theory of disquotationalism and his immanent conception of truth, for it is left unsolved whether or not these two ideas define truth in a way that would lead to a contradiction.

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