

## GENERAL INTRODUCTION

W.V. O. Quine (1908-2000) has occupied a central position in the domain of analytic philosophy or philosophy of language. He is certainly the best well known analytic thinker of the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. However, his philosophical writings in most general cases have been undervalued. Even though Quine perhaps would not be appraised as an original thinker like Kant, Descartes, Wittgenstein and Heidegger, but he, of course, would certainly be recognized as authentic critical thinker. His critical approach towards the well-established philosophical doctrines actually portrayed his insightful ingenuity. As a leading campaigner of critical philosophy in modern period, Quine enables to occupy the centrality in linguistic philosophy. The other distinctive aspect of his philosophical writing is that he offers us a unified, systematic and comprehensive treatment of his philosophical thought. According to Quine, philosophy is all about of clarification and precision without any philosophical dogma. Accordingly, he has attempted to do the same in technical work, such as, in logic and set-theory. As a systematic thinker, Quine develops his philosophical theories as a *coherent whole*. More succinctly, it can be said that as an incalculably methodical thinker Quine has attempted to fix his philosophical doctrines to form a *coherent whole*.<sup>1</sup> Even though Quine's writing is wide-ranging in nature, but as a systematic thinker Quine has linked his various philosophical aspects into a single and unified whole with utmost consistency. Unlike practical philosophy or value theory, Quine has deeply engaged within the realm of theoretical philosophy. His writing on analytic philosophy directly or indirectly touches upon every topic of analytic concept since the time of Frege. He has no interest in ethics, or the nature of just society, or the nature of aesthetics, rather he has given emphasize more on human knowledge having theoretical implication.

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<sup>1</sup> See Gibson, Roger F., *The Philosophy of W. V. Quine: An Expository Essay* (Tampa FL: University of South Florida Press, 1982), p. xvii.

Quine started his philosophical career with logic and it is learnt that early encyclopedias classified him as a logician. However, within a short period, he came to be known as a general philosopher. Even though he started his philosophical career with logic and language, but in due course his philosophical reflection spread over other branches of philosophy, such as, ontology, epistemology and metaphysics. Together with Nelson Goodman, Quine has explored the possibility of being a nominalist. However, unlike Goodman, he settled for a platonic realism and independently worked towards indeterminacy of reference. The other main theme of Quine's philosophy is his critical outlook towards analyticity and modality. Quine resolved his criticisms of the modalities by arguing that quantification into modal contexts leads to a collapse of modal distinctions.

While developing his philosophical writings, Quine had profusely been influenced by Carnap. It has been reflected in a tribute that he gave soon after the demise of Carnap in 1970. Quine acknowledged Carnap as the greatest predecessor and teacher. He considered himself as the ardent disciple. He developed his philosophical career almost half a decade under the tutorship of Carnap. However, in the subsequent years Quine developed various philosophical theories some of which went against Carnap in various ways. He disagreed with Carnap but he candidly confessed that his line of thought was profusely determined by problems that he felt was underlined in Carnap's philosophical thought. His indebtedness to Carnap has been more pronounced with the dedication of his first philosophical monograph *Word and Object*. In fact, Quine's initial interest on philosophy actually grew by his reading Poe's "Eureka" and William James's *Pragmatism*. However, as a student of undergraduate, Quine revealed that philosophy like mathematics and classics is an area of *concentration*. In this regard, Quine was influenced by Bertrand Russell. Quine observes that Russell's philosophy of language in general and his

philosophy of logical atomism in particular is an assortment of both mathematics and philosophy. As a follow up, he wrote a thesis on ‘mathematical philosophy’. His admiration of Russell also led him to read *Our Knowledge of the External World, Introduction to Mathematical Philosophy* and in turn has remarked that these books “whetted my appetite for cosmic understanding.”<sup>2</sup> This reflects that Quine has started his philosophical career with little background in philosophy. At the earlier stages, Quine was not as much systematic in compare to his later stages. Even though the later Quine appears to us as a critique, but at his earlier stage he was so much critical about others’ philosophical writings. However, his first serious philosophical disagreement began with Carnap. Before his encounter with Carnap, Quine read Russell’s philosophy seriously. Even though there we witness some philosophically overlapping distinct ideas between Russell and Quine in the real sense of the term, but Quine has been influenced by Russell’s ‘scientific method in philosophy’ that has been forecasted by Russell in his *Our Knowledge of the External World*. It takes natural sciences as model of knowledge. It emphasizes more on the analysis of knowledge with the background of logic as an essential tool and method of philosophy. In this regard, Russell says, “...the study of logic becomes the central study in philosophy: it gives the method of research in philosophy, just as mathematics gives the method of research in physics.”<sup>3</sup> The main contention of Russell in advocating of scientific method in philosophy is to make philosophy as a progressive discipline. Russell goes on to say that philosophy of our time is becoming scientific by way of the simultaneous acquisition of new facts and logical methods.

With the influence of Carnap and Russell, Quine in his earlier stage develops logic as the general conception of philosophy. According to Quine, logic as such sets the standard of philosophy and

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<sup>2</sup> Hylton, P., *Quine* (New York: Routledge, 2007), p. 33.

<sup>3</sup> Russell, B., *Our Knowledge of the External World* (London: George Allen and Unwin, Second edn, 1926), p. 243.

in turn gives us a paradigm of philosophy. Quine gives importance on clarity and precision and his work on logic certainly at length helps him to work on the desired direction. Quine argues against **mentalism** and **intensionality** because logic does not match with these. Instead of developing his own philosophical theory, most of Quine's philosophical effort was directed towards clarifying and simplifying the works of others. That is why we understand Quine as the critique of philosophy. While attributing Quine's philosophy Joseph S. Ullian, a notable commentator remarks, "He weaned the infant [field of mathematical logic] from its ontological and notational excesses, bathed it in clarity, and clothed it in elegance."<sup>4</sup> Quine's logical development was centered round with Russell's *Principia Mathematica*, because Quine has deeply engaged in modifying the theory of that book in one way or another. His main objective is to generalize the theory of *Principia Mathematica* and by way of doing this; he has attempted to revise and clarify the basis of the system, resolving confusions and in turn, imposing extensionality. Quine then developed two-systems of set-theory, each of which in some sense or other is an offshoot of the type theory of *Principia*. Thus, he developed logic and set-theory which is in some sense or other would be the ramification of *Principia Mathematica*. The distinctive aspect of Quine's set-theory is that it is purely intuitive in nature and it gives importance on the *syntactic exploration*.

We think Quine's philosophy of language addresses a transformation or shift from Epistemology (First philosophy) to Naturalized Epistemology. The default Quine reveals in classical epistemology is that it is somehow or other deviates from human knowledge and it deals with a priori knowledge. Classical epistemology, being the First philosophy, distinguishes between a priori knowledge and a posteriori knowledge with the introduction of the distinction between

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<sup>4</sup> Ullian, J. S., "Quine and the Field of Mathematical Logic", in L. E. Hahn and P. A. Schilpp (eds.), *The Philosophy of W. V. Quine* (Peru IL: Open Court, 1986; Second expanded edn, 1998), p. 569.

analytic and synthetic propositions. Classical epistemology also makes a distinction between first-order philosophy and second-order philosophy. Even classical epistemology accommodates the discourse of ethics which according to Quine is a second order activity. Quine reveals that any attempt of making distinction between a priori and a posteriori; first-order and second-order philosophy, actually goes beyond the limit of human knowledge. According to Quine, human knowledge would be naturalized and we do not find any relevance of naturalism in Quine's sense in the discourse of ethics, epistemology and logical reduction. Epistemology, being the First Philosophy even would be regarded as normative science because it deals with *is-ought* dichotomy. Quine in his celebrated article "Two Dogmas of Empiricism" criticizes both Kant and Carnap. According to Quine, Kantian distinction between a priori and a posteriori associated with the distinction between analytic and synthetic actually hinges on a dogma and Carnap's distinction between first and second-order of philosophy again hinges on another dogma. Philosophy associated with human knowledge, Quine opines, must be free from any sort of dogmas.

What then is epistemology according to Quine? How does Quine reconceive epistemology as naturalized epistemology? In this regard, Quine in his essay entitled "Epistemology Naturalized" says, "Epistemology, or something like it, studies a natural phenomenon, viz., a physical human subject."<sup>5</sup> Epistemology, Quine says, is concerned with the foundations of science. He elsewhere makes a parallelism between epistemology of natural knowledge and the foundations of mathematics. Quine says, "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."<sup>6</sup> David Hume was a

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<sup>5</sup> Quine, W. V. O., "Epistemology Naturalized", in W. V. Quine, *Ontological Relativity and other Essays* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1969), p. 82.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p.71.

classical epistemologist. Hume contemplated the epistemology of natural knowledge both as conceptual and doctrinal. Conceptual aspect deals with meaning and doctrinal aspect deals with truth. The old epistemology or the first philosophy, of course, aspires to contain a natural science and it has been developed out of sense-data. However, epistemology in its new setting is contained in natural science as a chapter of psychology. According to Quine, one effect of seeing epistemology in a psychological setting is that “it resolves a stubborn old enigma of epistemological priority.”<sup>7</sup>

As Quine’s naturalized epistemology is predominantly associated with human knowledge of first-order or a posteriori knowledge, he thereby inclines to say that within the sphere of human knowledge, there is no relevance of the distinction between a priori and a posteriori knowledge and first-order and second-order knowledge. In this regard, Quine says, “The quest of a simplest, clearest overall pattern of canonical notation is not to be distinguished from a quest of ultimate categories, a limning of the most general traits of reality.”<sup>8</sup> The default of First Philosophy, Quine reveals, is that it functions with the dictation of philosophical dogmas and it finds unnecessary distinction between first and second-order and also between a priori and a posteriori knowledge. First philosophy, Quine opines, thus fails to address the desires of humans as it goes beyond the limits of human knowledge based on naturalized epistemology.

What then Quine exactly means by naturalized epistemology? What is the distinctive philosophical mark of naturalized epistemology? In what sense does epistemology be conceived as naturalized epistemology? These are the very important questions those need to be taken care of when we deal with Quine’s philosophy of language. Naturalism, Quine opines, is supposed to

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<sup>7</sup> Ibid., p. 84.

<sup>8</sup> Quine, W. V. O., *Word and Object* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1960), p. 161.

be “the recognition that it is within science itself, and not in some prior philosophy, that reality is to be identified and described.”<sup>9</sup> Within the sphere of naturalism, there is no vantage point, no method, no stance, and no dogmas. Quine seeks to find the philosophical requirement of naturalism in words (language). In his first philosophical monograph, namely, *Word and Object*, Quine gives us a sense of naturalism. Human knowledge, according to Quine, is all about the relationship between word and object. Every word, Locke says, is the sensible mark of idea. In this sense every word in some sense or other is linked with reality. Thus, the relationship between word (language) and object (reality) is the centrality of Quine because it is the desired knowledge through which the relationship between language and reality can be comprehended. Thus, in one sense we can say that Quine’s first monograph as appeared as the name of *Word and Object* actually help us to foresee in what sense and how much human knowledge can be acquired within the straight jacket of naturalism which is supposed to be the by-product of science and common sense. In this sense, it can be said that Quine’s philosophy of naturalism is a continuous process of rebuilding of the philosophy of the predecessors who have emphasized more on the gulf between first-order and second-order or the gulf between a priori and a posteriori knowledge. In this regard, Quine in some sense or other encounters Kant and Carnap. This has been reflected in his book *Word and Object*. Quine, in fact, has dedicated this book to Carnap and the book begins with the epigraph taken from Otto Neurath: “We are like sailors who must rebuild their boat on the open sea, without ever being able to put into dock and reconstruct it from the best components.”<sup>10</sup>

Quine’s objective of naturalized epistemology is to rebuild philosophy on the face of human knowledge where there is no room for any sort of philosophical prejudices. According to Quine,

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<sup>9</sup> Quine, W. V. O., *Theories and Things* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1981), p. 21.

<sup>10</sup> See Neurath, O., “Protokollsatze”, *Erkenntniss* 3 (1932-33); trans. in P. Hylton, *Quine*, op. cit., p. 7.

within the realm of naturalized epistemology, a philosophy must work with the background of conceptual scheme and there is no need to go outside beyond the conceptual scheme. Human knowledge, Quine says, is the by-product of science and common sense and within this framework there is no room for cosmic-exile. A philosopher, can, at best, scrutinize and improve the system from within; beginnings in the middle of things.

But how do we come to know where we are and when we are ‘in the middle of things?’ We are in the middle of things, Quine opines, actually means ‘we are in the middle of our system of knowledge’. As a result, every philosopher should work or so to speak contribute to that system. It can be attained through the scientific culture of human cognition or through the scientific culture of theoretical activity. Thus, there is nothing wrong to suggest that Quine’s naturalism is based on science and common sense through which reality can be identified and described. According to Quine, common sense without science is philosophically fruitless. Naturalized epistemology is the by-product of both science and common sense. Quine’s naturalized epistemology thus is a transition from epistemology (first philosophy) to naturalized epistemology. Therefore, in the **First Chapter** of this thesis we propose to analyse Quine’s naturalized epistemology and it would be entitled as **Transition from Epistemology (First Philosophy) to Naturalized Epistemology**.

It seems to us that while reconceiving epistemology as naturalized epistemology, Quine gives emphasis on two concepts, such as shared responses to stimulation and observation sentence. Thus, there is nothing wrong to claim that the transition from first philosophy (classical epistemology) to naturalized epistemology is made possible through language and translation manuals. Therefore, it is pertinent at the very outset to explicate the nature of language after Quine. What then is the nature of language according to Quine? Is Quine a believer of ordinary

or artificial language? The debate between ordinary and ideal language is prominent in philosophy. In fact, linguistic philosophers have been divided into two groups regarding the very nature of language. Some of them adhere to the view that ordinary language should be treated as the method of linguistic philosophy and in this regard there appears the pragmatic aspects of language and others hold that as ordinary language is ambiguous, it should be revised in such a way so that the non-referential terms can be eradicated from the body of language. Thus, there develops ideal or artificial language. The semantists are the architect of ideal language. We should not read Quine as a proponent of ideal or ordinary language. Rather we think that Quine has developed a different kind of language known as *cognitive language*. Therefore, in the **Second Chapter** of this thesis we propose to analyze and examine the nature and philosophical implication of cognitive language after Quine and it would be entitled as **Cognitive Language**.

As a conceptual relativist Quine emphasizes more on the nature of cognitive language which in turn is associated with his famous thesis indeterminacy of translation. In fact, Quine's thesis of indeterminacy of translation has become the most discussed of all his philosophical conclusions. Quine's indeterminacy of translation is based on two important philosophical assumptions. First, the translation manuals that correlate two languages are under-determined by the evidence very similar to the hypothesis that we notice in science. Secondly, the translation manuals are not like hypothesis in the science because scientific hypotheses are true or false whereas the question of truth and falsity in the case of translation manuals simply does not arise. As a conceptual relativist Quine adheres to the view that there remains indeterminacy in any sort of translation in terms of degree. Two translation of the same text may not be equal. According to Quine, in the process of translation we actually lose some originality of the text. Quine's famous thesis of indeterminacy of translation describes that 'there exist more than one fully adequate translation

manual for each radically foreign language'. It further states that translation from one natural language into another resembles translation of number theory into set theory in that various equally good alternative but non-equivalent schemes of translation are always possible. Quine speaks of alternative manuals of translation compatible with the totality of possible observation of verbal behaviour. The indeterminacy thesis asserts the possibility of constructing two or more manuals of translation that are perfect fits. Anyway this does not hamper our communication. In the **Third Chapter** of this thesis we propose to analyze and examine with critical outlook Quine's concept of translation manuals and it would be entitled as **Quine on Indeterminacy of Translation as Radical Translation.**

Quine's theory of indeterminacy of translation what he terms it as *radical translation* has implicit philosophical implications. It actually goes against so many well-established philosophical theories and doctrines on the basis of which subsequent philosophical theories were developed over the years. While developing the concept of naturalized epistemology, Quine actually denies the philosophical foundation of First Philosophy (i.e., classical or traditional epistemology). According to Quine, the foundation of traditional epistemology is full of dogmas and it does not bear any sense in the real sense of the term. As a result of that he calls for naturalized epistemology which is completely guided by sense-experience and natural sciences. Naturalized epistemology is completely free from any sort of philosophical dogmas whatsoever. In this regard, Quine adopts translational manuals which for him indeterminate in nature. Now, this position of Quine goes against classical epistemologists who claimed epistemological knowledge on the basis of strict philosophical presuppositions or stringent rules and principles which are inviolable. In his famous article "Two Dogmas of Empiricism", Quine raises some serious philosophical reservations about Kant who was the chief architect of analytic and

synthetic distinction, or in short analyticity and also about Carnap who developed reductionism on the basis of artificial language and logical and mathematical rules. Thus, for Quine, Kant was responsible for making epistemology as dogma oriented philosophy and Carnap was equally responsible for dogma oriented philosophical, mathematical and logical theories having strong epistemological implications. Therefore, in the **Fourth Chapter** of my thesis, we propose to analyze and examine the debate between Quine and Kant and Quine and Carnap in subsequent sections and it would be entitled as **Anti-Naturalism and Anti-Reductionism: A debate between Quine and Kant and Quine and Carnap.**

Besides Kant and Carnap, Quine's debate with Noam Chomsky is again philosophically revolutionary. Noam Chomsky, many would claim, brings the Second Linguistic Revolution in philosophy. The first linguistic revolution was confined to Semanticists' and Pragmatists' interpretation of language where language has been used externally. For them the primary function of language is external. Chomsky claims the other way round. For Chomsky, the primary function of language is internal and in this regard he introduces I-language or internal language. He revived Descartes innate idea in this regard. He says that language is innate because it is spontaneously generated from the left hemisphere of the brain. He terms it **Transformation Generative Grammar** (in short TGG). Thus, for Chomsky, the primary function of language is internal and the secondary function of language is external. Accordingly, it can be said that acquisition of language is internal, mental, innate and it is no longer would be the outcome of behaviourism. This position actually goes against Quine. This is where the debate between Quine and Chomsky actually hinges on. According to Quine, one can develop language through behavioural approach. Chomsky denies it. Therefore, in the **Fifth Chapter** of this thesis,

we propose to discuss and examine the philosophical debate between Quine and Chomsky and it would be entitled as **Acquisition of Language: A debate between Quine and Chomsky**.

The **Sixth Chapter** of this thesis is entitled as **Concluding Remarks** where a critical account will be given in my own rationale.

The thesis will end with a **Selected Bibliography** followed by a brief **Index**.

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