



WORKING  
FROM  
WITHIN

*The Nature and Development  
of Quine's Naturalism*

SANDER VERHAEGH

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It is understandable [...] that the philosopher should seek a transcendental vantage point, outside the world that imprisons [the] natural scientist and mathematician. He would make himself independent of the conceptual scheme which it is his task to study and revise. “Give me που στω [a place to stand]”, Archimedes said, “and I will move the world.” However, there is no such cosmic exile. [...] The philosopher is in the position rather, as Neurath says, “of a mariner who must rebuild his ship on the open sea”.

W. V. Quine (notes for *Sign and Object*, November 5, 1944)

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## Preface

This book is the result of almost nine years of thinking and writing about Quine's naturalism. The project started with a term paper on the Carnap-Quine debate for Jeanne Peijnenburg's inspiring course on the history of analytic philosophy in 2008 and gradually evolved into a dissertation about the relation between holism and naturalism in Quine's philosophy, which I defended in Groningen in 2015. Encouraged by the warm support of my colleagues and a number of fellow Quine scholars, I spent the last two years revising and extending the manuscript. Having acquired a serious case of 'archive fever', a significant chunk of this period was spent at the W. V. Quine Papers at Houghton Library, Harvard University. Using his published corpus as well the thousands of letters, notes, draft manuscripts, lectures, grant proposals, teaching materials, and annotations collected at the archives, I have aimed to write a book that reconstructs both the nature and the development of Quine's naturalism. The notes, letters, and lectures that have most influenced my views about (the development of) Quine's naturalism are transcribed and collected in the appendix.

Parts of this book have been published elsewhere. I thank the respective journals for granting me permission to reprint these papers:

Quine's Argument from Despair (2014). *British Journal for the History of Philosophy*, 22(1), 150-173. (chapter 2)

Blurring Boundaries: Carnap, Quine, and the Internal-External Distinction (2017). *Erkenntnis*, 82(4), 873-890. (chapter 3)

Boarding Neurath's Boat: The Early Development of Quine's Naturalism (2017).  
*Journal for the History of Philosophy*, 55(2), 317-342. (sections 4.1-4.2, 6.2, and 6.6)

Quine on the Nature of Naturalism (2017). *The Southern Journal of Philosophy*,  
55(1), 96-115. (section 4.5)

Sign and Object: Quine's Forgotten Philosophical Book Project (forthcoming).  
*Synthese*. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11229-018-1693-z>. (chapter 5)

Quine's 'Needlessly Strong' Holism (2017). *Studies in History and Philosophy of  
Science, Part A*, 61(1), 11-20. (sections 6.8-6.11)

Setting Sail: The Development and Reception of Quine's Naturalism (forthcoming).  
*Philosophers' Imprint*. (chapter 7)

Still, this book aims to be more than a collection of papers. Many sections have been revised, extended, and rewritten for the purposes of this book. Moreover, an introductory chapter, a conclusion, several new sections (i.e. 4.3-4.4; 4.6-4.8; 5.5; 6.3-6.5; 6.7), and seven appendices have been included to fill the gaps and to present a comprehensive account of Quine's naturalism.

Much of this research has been funded by The Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research (grants 322-20-001 and 275-20-064). My research visits to Harvard University, Houghton Library, Bethel, CT, and the Harvard University Archives have been funded by a Kristeller-Popkin Travel Fellowship from the *Journal of the History of Philosophy*, a Rodney

G. Dennis Fellowship in the Study of Manuscripts from Houghton Library, and a Travel Bursary from the Evert Willem Beth Foundation. I am very grateful for this financial support.

Finally, it is my great pleasure to thank the many people without whom I could not have completed this book: Jeanne Peijnenburg, Allard Tamminga, Lieven Decock, Gary Ebbs, Hans-Johann Glock, Peter Hylton, Gary Kemp, Fred Muller, Martin Lenz, and two anonymous referees for Oxford University Press for their comments on earlier versions of this book; Harvard's Department of Philosophy, Nyasha Borde, Monique Duhaime, Juliet Floyd, Warren Goldfarb, Leslie Morris, Mark Richard, Thomas Ricketts, and the staff at Houghton Library and the Harvard University Archives for their warm welcome during my research visits; Douglas and Maryclaire Quine for welcoming me into their house to examine the remaining 57 boxes of unprocessed archive material; Jody Azzouni, Richard Creath, Fons Dewulf, Juliet Floyd, Dagfinn Føllesdal, Warren Goldfarb, James Levine, Thomas Ricketts, Eric Schliesser, Andrew Smith, Serdal Tumkaya, Thomas Uebel, Wim Vanrie, the members of the EPS seminar in Tilburg, the members of the PCCP and the WiP seminars in Groningen, and audiences in Amsterdam, Athens, Bloomington, Bologna, Calgary, Chicago, Denver, Edinburgh, Groningen, Konstanz, Manchester, Milan, Modena, Munich, Rotterdam, Tampa, Tilburg, and Zürich for their comments on various papers and chapters in various stages; Reto Gubelmann, Frederique Janssen-Lauret, Gary Kemp, and Sean Morris for their wonderful Quine workshops in Denver, Glasgow, Manchester, and Zürich; and Douglas B. Quine (W. V. Quine Literary Estate), and Catherine Z. Elgin (Literary executor for Nelson Goodman) for granting me permission to publish some of Quine's and Goodman's papers, notes, and letters as appendices to this book. Of course, the above individuals do not necessarily agree with my conclusions and they are not responsible for any residual errors or omissions.

A note on citation and transcription: Unless specified differently, the unpublished documents I refer to in this book are part of the W. V. Quine Papers, collection MS Am 2587, Houghton Library, Harvard University. In the main text and in the footnotes, I refer to these documents by citing dates (if known) and item numbers. A letter of Quine to the American Philosophical Association, for example, could be referred to as (January 1, 1950, item 31). For quick reference, the item numbers are listed in the List of Abbreviations (pp. xiii-xxii). The items' full titles and box numbers are provided in the bibliography. In transcribing Quine's autograph notes, drafts, and letters, I have aimed to minimize editorial interference and chosen not to correct ungrammatical shorthand. In referring to Quine's *published* work, I use abbreviations (listed in the List of Abbreviations) as well as the year in which the paper or book was first published. If the paper is incorporated in one of Quine's collections of papers, the page numbers will refer to this collection. The first page of "Two Dogmas of Empiricism", for example, will be referred to as (TDE, 1951a, 20). The details of Quine's published work cited in this book are provided in the bibliography.

In his autobiography, *The Time of My Life*, Quine argues that science and history of science appeal to very different tempers: "An advance in science resolves an obscurity, a tangle, a complexity, an inelegance, that the scientist then gratefully dismisses and forgets. The historian of science tries to recapture the very tangles, confusions, and obscurities from which the scientist is so eager to free himself" (TML, 1985a, 194). I hope this book accomplishes a bit of both; although I will show that Quine faced many tangles, confusions, and obscurities in developing his naturalism, I also hope to convey that the system he created is one of great clarity and elegance.

Sander Verhaegh

March 2018

## List of Abbreviations

This section provides a list of abbreviations used in this book to refer to W. V. Quine's published and unpublished work. Detailed references can be found in the Bibliography. A complete list of Quine's publications up to approximately 1997 (including reprints and translations) can be found in Yeghiayan (2009). For an overview of papers, books, reprints, and translations after 1997, see Douglas B. Quine's website <http://www.wvquine.org>. Most of Quine's unpublished papers, letters, lectures, and notebooks can be accessed at Houghton Library, Harvard University. The documents' call numbers, box numbers, and item numbers are provided in the Bibliography. A finding aid for much of Quine's unpublished work can be found at <http://oasis.lib.harvard.edu/oasis/deliver/~hou01800>. Archival sources from Quine's Unprocessed Papers, Quine's Library, and the Papers of Nelson Goodman are not listed here because they are not properly itemized. Details about these sources are listed in the Bibliography.

### *Archival sources*

- |          |  |
|----------|--|
| Item 31  | Correspondence with the American Philosophical Association (1936-1986)                   |
| Item 40  | Correspondence Ap- through As- (various dates)   |
| Item 86  | Correspondence with Lars Bergström (1988-1996)   |
| Item 96  | Correspondence with Evert Willem Beth (1947-1964)  |
| Item 205 | Correspondence with the Center for Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences (1955-1979) |

- Item 224 Correspondence with Alonzo Church (1935-1994)
- Item 231 Correspondence with Joseph T. Clark (1951-1953)
- Item 234 Correspondence Co- (various dates)
- Item 248 Correspondence with Columbia University (1949-1970)
- Item 254 Correspondence with James Bryant Conant (1951-1979)
- Item 260 Correspondence with John Cooley (1932-1962)
- Item 270 Correspondence with Richard Creath (1977-1998)
- Item 287 Correspondence with Donald Davidson (1957-1997)
- Item 293 Correspondence with Grace De Laguna (1950-1954)
- Item 306 Correspondence Di- through Do- (various dates)
- Item 315 Correspondence with Burton Dreben (1948-1997)
- Item 336 Correspondence Er- through Ez- (various dates)
- Item 370 Correspondence with Philipp Frank (1951-1967)
- Item 420 Correspondence with Nelson Goodman (1935-1994)
- Item 471 Correspondence with Harvard University, Department of Philosophy (1930-1994)
- Item 473 Correspondence with Harvard University, Faculty of Arts and Sciences (1931-1998)
- Item 475 Correspondence with Harvard University, Grants (1931-1988)
- Item 479 Correspondence with Harvard University, President's Office (1937-1998)
- Item 499 Correspondence with Carl Gustav Hempel (1936-1997)
- Item 529 Correspondence with Christopher Hookway (1988)
- Item 530 Correspondence with Paul Horwich (1991-1992)
- Item 545 Correspondence with the Institute for Advanced Study (1955-1965)
- Item 553 Correspondence Ir- through Iz- (various dates)

- Item 570 Correspondence with the Journal of Symbolic Logic (1936-1996)
- Item 616 Correspondence with Imre Lakatos (1964-1974)
- Item 637 Correspondence with Michelle Leonelli (1966-1998)
- Item 643 Correspondence with Clarence Irving Lewis (1929-1996)
- Item 675 Correspondence with Joseph Margolis (1967 and undated)
- Item 724 Correspondence with Hugh Miller (1948-1952)
- Item 741 Correspondence with Charles W. Morris (1936-1947)
- Item 755 Correspondence with John Myhill (1943-1985)
- Item 758 Correspondence with Ernest Nagel (1938-1964)
- Item 921 Correspondence with the Rockefeller Foundation (1945-1980)
- Item 958 Correspondence Sc- (various dates)
- Item 972 Correspondence with Wilfred Sellars (1938-1980)
- Item 1001 Correspondence with B. F. Skinner (1934-1998)
- Item 1005 Correspondence with J. J. C. Smart (1949-1998)
- Item 1014 Correspondence with Ernest Sosa (1970-1995)
- Item 1200 Correspondence with Paul Weiss (1937-1972)
- Item 1213 Correspondence with Morton White (1939-1998)
- Item 1221 Correspondence with Donald Cary Williams (1940-1994)
- Item 1237 Correspondence with Joseph Henry Woodger (1938-1982)
- Item 1239 Correspondence with the World Congress of Philosophy (1952-1998)
- Item 1244 Correspondence with Morton G. Wurtele (1938-1997)
- Item 1263 Correspondence concerning requests to publish or for copies (1950-1959)
- Item 1355 Editorial correspondence with D. Reidel Publishing Company (1960-1982 and undated)
- Item 1391 Editorial correspondence concerning *Mathematical Logic* (1939-1940)



- Item 1401 Editorial correspondence concerning *Methods of Logic* (1947-1950)
- Item 1422 Editorial correspondence concerning *Ontological Relativity* (1968-1988)
- Item 1423 Editorial correspondence concerning *On Translation* (1956-1959)
- Item 1443 Editorial correspondence concerning *On What There Is* (1948-1975)
- Item 1401 Editorial correspondence concerning *Theory of Deduction* (1946-1949)
- Item 1488 Editorial correspondence concerning *Word and Object* (1952-1960)
- Item 1489 Editorial correspondence concerning *Word and Object* (1959-1980 and undated)
- Item 1490 Editorial correspondence concerning *Words and Objections* (1966-1974)
- Item 2388a Quine's Annotated Copy of Putnam's *Meaning and the Moral Sciences* (undated)
- Item 2441 *Epistemology Naturalized; or, the Case for Psychologism* (1968)
- Item 2498 *In conversation: Professor W. V. Quine. Interviews by Rudolf Fara* (1993)
- Item 2733 *Russell's Ontological Development* (1966-1967)
- Item 2756 *Stimulus and Meaning* (1965)
- Item 2829 *A Short Course on Logic* (1946)
- Item 2830 *Theory of Deduction* (1948)
- Item 2836 Foreword to the Third Edition of *From a Logical Point of View* (1979)
- Item 2884 *Questions for Quine* by Stephen Neale (1986)
- Item 2902 For Rockefeller Lecture (1968)
- Item 2903 For Symposium with Sellars (1968)
- Item 2928 The Inception of "New Foundations" (1987)
- Item 2948 *Kinds* (1967)
- Item 2952 Levine Seminar Questions for Quine (1982)
- Item 2954 *Logic, Math, Science* (1940)

- Item 2958     Mathematical Entities (1950)
- Item 2969     Nominalism (1937)
- Item 2971     The Notre Dame Lectures (1970)
- Item 2994     Ontological Relativity (1967)
- Item 2995     Ontological Relativity (1968)
- Item 3011     The Place of a Theory of Evidence (1952)
- Item 3015     The Present State of Empiricism (1951)
- Item 3102     Word and Object Seminar (1967)
- Item 3158     Philosophy 148 (1953)
- Item 3169     Early Jottings on Philosophy of Language (1937-1944)
- Item 3170     Erledigte Notized (various dates)
- Item 3181     Ontology, Metaphysics, etc... (1944-1951)
- Item 3182     Philosophical Notes (various dates)
- Item 3184     Pragmatism, etc... (1951-1953)
- Item 3225     Miscellaneous Papers (1925-1931)
- Item 3236     Papers in Philosophy (1930-1931)
- Item 3254     General Report of my Work as a Sheldon Traveling Fellow 1932-1933 (1934)
- Item 3266     Philosophy 148 (ca. 1947)
- Item 3277     Oxford University Lectures (1953-1954)
- Item 3283     Oxford University Lecture: Philosophy of Logic (1953-1954)

*Published work*

- ANM             Animadversion on the Notion of Meaning (1949)

AWVQ	Autobiography of W.V. Quine (1986)
CA	Carnap (1987)
CB	Comment on Berger (1990)
CCE	<i>Confessions of a Confirmed Extensionalist and Other Essays</i> (2008)
CD	Contextual Definition (1995)
CGC	A Comment on Grünbaum's Claim (1962)
CLT	Carnap and Logical Truth (1954)
CPT	Carnap's Positivist Travail (1984)
CNT	Comments on Neil Tennant's "Carnap and Quine" (1994)
CVO	Carnap's Views on Ontology (1951)
DE	Designation and Existence (1939)
EBDQ	Exchange Between Donald Davidson and W. V. Quine Following Davidson's Lecture (1994)
EESW	On Empirically Equivalent Systems of the World (1975)
EN	Epistemology Naturalized (1969)
EQ	Existence and Quantification (1968)
FHQP	Four Hot Questions in Philosophy (1985)
FLPV	<i>From a Logical Point of View</i> (1953/1961)
FM	Facts of the Matter (1977)
FME	Five Milestones of Empiricism (1975)
FSS	<i>From Stimulus to Science</i> (1995)
GQW	Nelson Goodman, W. V. Quine and Morton White: A Triangular Correspondence (1947)
GT	Grades of Theoreticity (1970)
IOH	Identity, Ostension, Hypostasis (1946)

IQ	The Ideas of Quine. Interview by B. Magee (1978)
ITA	Indeterminacy of Translation Again (1987)
IV	Immanence and Validity (1991)
IWVQ	Interview with Willard Van Orman Quine. Interview by L. Bergström and D. Føllesdal (1994)
LAOP	A Logistical Approach to the Ontological Problem (1939)
LC	Lectures on Carnap (1934)
LDHP	Lectures on David Hume's Philosophy (1946)
LP	Linguistics and Philosophy (1968)
ML1	<i>Methods of Logic</i> . First edition (1950)
ML4	<i>Methods of Logic</i> . Fourth edition (1982)
MSLT	Mr. Strawson on Logical Theory (1953)
NEN	Notes on Existence and Necessity (1943)
NK	Natural Kinds (1969)
NLOM	Naturalism; Or, Living within One's Means (1995)
NNK	The Nature of Natural Knowledge (1975)
NO	Nominalism (1946)
OI	Ontology and Ideology (1951)
OME	On Mental Entities (1953)
ONAS	On the Notion of an Analytic Statement (1946)
OR	Ontological Relativity (1968)
ORE	<i>Ontological Relativity and other essays</i> (1969)
ORPC	Ontological Remarks on the Propositional Calculus (1934)
ORWN	Ontological Reduction and the World of Numbers (1964)
OW	Otherworldly (1978)

OWTI	On What There Is (1948)
PL	<i>Philosophy of Logic</i> (1970/1986)
PPE	The Pragmatists' Place in Empiricism (1975)
PPLT	Philosophical Progress in Language Theory (1970)
PR	Posits and Reality (1955)
PT	<i>Pursuit of Truth</i> (1990/1992)
PTF	Progress on Two Fronts (1996)
QCC	The Quine-Carnap Correspondence (1932-1970)
QD	<i>Quine in Dialogue</i> (2008)
QSM	Quine Speaks His Mind. An interview by E. Pivcevic (1988)
QU	<i>Quiddities</i> (1987)
QWVO	Quine/'kwain/, Willard Van Orman (b. 1908) (1996)
RA	Responses to Articles by Abel Bergström, Davidson, Dreben, Gibson, Hookway, and Prawitz (1994)
RC	Reply to Chomsky (1968)
RCP	Reply to Charles Parsons (1986)
RE	Reactions (1995)
RES	Responses to Szubka, Lehrer, Bergström, Gibson, Miscevic, and Orenstein (1999)
RGE	Response to Gary Ebbs (1995)
RGH	Reply to Geoffrey Hellman (1986)
RGM	Responding to Grover Maxwell (1968)
RHP	Reply to Hilary Putnam (1986)
RJV	Reply to Jules Vuillemin (1986)
RMW	Reply to Morton White (1986)

ROD	Russell's Ontological Development (1966)
RR	<i>The Roots of Reference</i> (1973)
RRN	Reply to Robert Nozick (1986)
RS1	Reply to Stroud (1968)
RS2	Reply to Stroud (1981)
RSM	Reply to Smart (1968)
RST	Reply to Stenius (1968)
RTD	Reply to Davidson (1968)
RTE	Responses to Essays by Smart, Orenstein, Lewis and Holdcroft, and Haack (1997)
SCN	Steps toward a Constructive Nominalism (1947)
SLP	<i>Selected Logic Papers</i> (1966/1995)
SLS	The Scope and Language of Science (1954)
SM	Stimulus and Meaning (1965)
SN	Structure and Nature (1992)
SSS	The Sensory Support of Science (1986)
STL	<i>Set Theory and its Logic</i> (1963/1969)
TC	Truth by Convention (1936)
TDE	Two Dogmas of Empiricism (1951)
TDR	Two Dogmas in Retrospect (1991)
TI	Three Indeterminacies (1990)
TML	<i>The Time of My Life</i> (1985)
TR	Truth (1994)
TT	<i>Theories and Things</i> (1981)
TTPT	Things and Their Place in Theories (1981)

VD	Vagaries of Definition (1972)
VITD	On the Very Idea of a Third Dogma (1981)
WDWD	Where Do We Disagree (1999)
WB	<i>The Web of Belief</i> (with J. S. Ullian 1970/1978)
WIB	What I Believe (1984)
WO	<i>Word and Object</i> (1960)
WP	<i>The Ways of Paradox and other essays</i> (1966/1976)
WPB	What Price Bivalence? (1981)
WRML	Whitehead and the Rise of Modern Logic (1941)
WW	The Way the World Is (1986)