CHAPTER III
Quine's Critique of Transcendentalism

Quine's rejection of transcendentalism is conditional upon his empirical approach to the world and language. For him a theory of the world is also a theory of language at the same time. So his aim is to examine the empirical evidence underlying the world and language. His article 'Two dogmas of empiricism', which is called a classic in the recent philosophy, shows that he is not satisfied with the modern empiricism as it contains in it notions that are not empirically tenable. He writes:

"Modern empiricism has been conditioned in large part by two dogmas. One is a belief in some fundamental cleavage between truths which are analytic, or grounded in meanings independently of matters of fact, and truths which are synthetic, or grounded in fact. The other dogma is reductionism: the belief that each meaningful statement is equivalent to some logical construct upon terms which refer to immediate experience. Both dogmas, I shall argue, are ill-founded. One effect of abandoning them is, as we shall see, a blurring of the supposed boundary between speculative metaphysics and natural science. Another effect is a shift toward pragmatism."

For Quine both these dogmas are identical at root. If correspondence with a possible empirical fact is the criterion of meaningfulness of a statement as reductionism urges, then where will one find the possible empirical facts that correspond to analytic truths, which do not seem to refer to any facts at least directly? So the way out of the dilemma for the modern empiricist was to say that they were true independent of facts. A synthetic statement is generally represented in philosophical discourse by a statement like "Human beings are biped" and an analytic one by "Human beings are rational animals". Quine's objection to defining some truths as independent of facts is that it goes against what he considers common sense.
basic tenet of empiricism that any truth is verifiable in sense experience. In the following remark Quine briefly sketches the history of analyticity as it was held by Hume and non-empiricists like Kant and Leibniz:

"Kant's cleavage between analytic and synthetic truths was foreshadowed in Hume's distinction between relations of ideas and matters of fact, and in Leibniz's distinction between truths of reason and truths of fact. Leibniz spoke of the truths of reason as true in all possible worlds. Picturesqueness aside, this is to say that the truths of reason are those which could not possibly be false. In the same vein we hear analytic statements defined as statements whose denials are self-contradictory. But this definition has small explanatory value; for the notion of self-contradictoriness, in the quite broad sense needed for this definition of analyticity, stands exactly in the same need of clarification as does the notion of analyticity itself. The two notions are the two sides of a single dubious coin.

Kant conceived of an analytic statement as one that attributes to its subject no more than is already conceptually contained in the subject. This formulation has two shortcomings: it limits itself to statements of subject-predicate form, and it appeals to a notion of containment which is left at a metaphorical level. But Kant's intent, evident more from the use he makes of the notion of analyticity than from his definition of it, can be restated thus: a statement is analytic when it is true by virtue of meanings and independently of fact. Pursuing this line, let us examine the concept of meaning which is presupposed."

It is evident from this remark that the notions such as 'self-contradictoriness' and 'containment', according to Quine, fail in defining analyticity, the former being as undefined as analyticity and the later metaphorical. And he will show in the later part of the article under consideration that a sentence as taken to consist of subject and predicate is not the basic meaningful entity of language in the philosophical sense but language as a whole in which different parts of it such as sentences, words, and their various relations find themselves meaningful in virtue of their being i. it.
So he says that Kant’s definition of analyticity commits the mistake of its being about a sentence taken as a relation between subject and predicate in isolation. Still he pursues Kantian definition by paraphrasing it as about meanings to know whether meanings support the claim that analytic truths are independent of facts.

Quine finds that as far as language is concerned there cannot be anything called "meanings" as entities in the world that make it meaningful. So we must look at meaningfulness of language which is expressed in synonymies, instead of meanings, and how these synonymies make sense of sense experience. If the meanings of the terms 'morning star' and ‘evening star’, being different from each other in meaning, are not the Venus that they refer to commonly, then for Quine there is nothing called meaning. And what we have is on the one hand synonymies like "Morning star is evening star" in language and on the other, references like the planet Venus seen at different times. So the synonymy that ‘Morning star is evening star’ has to be analysed in terms of the relation between it and its reference. Quine seems to believe that any complete expression in language is some sort of a synonymy. To follow this line of thought is to see 'He is John' as a synonymy of 'he' and 'John', 'He is 20 years old' as that of 'his age' and '20 years' and 'Red' as 'red' and 'the colour true of whatever is red', or to see each linguistic expression as synonymous with itself. For language all what is there about it is nothing but its being meaningful as related to field of our sense experience. If we do not find entities called meanings in this relation we should abandon our faith in their being and settle for language as meaningful not by its containing "meanings" that lie outside itself as intermediary entities between it and its reference but in its unmediated relation with reference. Thus the 'morning star' becomes 'the Venus seen in the morning' and the ‘evening star' 'the Venus seen in the evening' and these relations can express synonymies in different ways. Quine writes:

"Once the theory of meaning is sharply 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; meanings themselves, as obscure intermediary entities, may well be abandoned.⁵

Now Quine sees that his task is to see whether sense can be made of the claim that analytic truths are truths independent of fact by looking at the relation of synonymy involved in it. He recognises two classes of analytic truths: the first class of them is represented by, (1) No unmarried man is married, and the second class by, (2) No bachelor is married. He calls the first class logical truths and the second analytic truths. He says that the first are trivial truths explained in terms logical particles such as 'no', 'un-', 'if', 'then', 'and', etc., whereas the second class need to be defined in terms of their empirical content for the reason that they are not logical truths, which are trivial like ‘a = a’. But there is an argument that if we substitute 'unmarried man' for 'bachelor' in (2) it becomes the logical truth expressed by (1) and that it shows that its truth is not dependent on facts. But Quine says that it amounts to saying that 'bachelor' is logically equivalent to 'unmarried man' and that it cannot be a proper characterisation of these two terms as their equivalence is not a matter of logic for him but of empirical evidence relevant to it. And he holds that the empirical evidence cannot show how 'bachelor' is equivalent to 'unmarried man' properly, but he adds here that this does not mean that truths like them are logical truths as they still depend on empirical evidence in indirect ways.

This position of Quine amounts to a rejection of a priori truths outlined and explained by Plato and Kant. He admits the possibility in language of the a priori truths only of the trivial kind which do not say anything factual about the world and are of the form ‘a = a’. If one says that 'to be human being is to be a rational animal necessarily' Quine will argue that the concept of necessity involved in this cannot be made sense of given the fact that we have a world which is contingent in nature and a language which is equally contingent like it. This paves way for his doing away with transcendental and a priori truths in general in his system.
Quine examines now the defence of synonymy of 'bachelor' and 'unmarried man' offered in terms of definition, interchangeability and semantical rules. He first questions the claim that given our language we can define 'bachelor' as 'unmarried man' independent of fact. According to this view, once it is established by some way that John is an unmarried man it will follow from it a priori that John is a bachelor because 'unmarried man' and 'bachelor' are synonymies by definition. But Quine says that there cannot be an a priori definition of their being synonymies. A definition always has its roots in the matters of fact of the world one way or other. He holds that a transparent definition of synonymy in general and analyticity in particular is not possible owing to the evasive nature of the relation between language and the facts of world. In his own words:

"Just what it means to affirm synonymy, just what the interconnections may be which are necessary and sufficient in order that two linguistic forms be properly describable as synonymous, is far from clear; but, whatever these interconnections may be, ordinarily they are grounded in usage. Definitions reporting selected instances of synonymy come then as reports upon usage."

The problem, as Quine sees it, with the claim that 'unmarried man' and 'bachelor' are synonymies independent of matters of fact is that they are interchangeable in all contexts whereby the meaning or truth of the statements concerned are not affected is that it shows only that an extensional agreement exists between them. So interchangeability, according to him, fails in providing us with a necessary connection of the desired type between the two expressions. He writes:

"There is no assurance here that the extensional agreement of 'bachelor' and 'unmarried man' rests on meaning rather than merely on accidental matters of fact, as does the extensional agreement of 'creature with a heart' and 'creature with kidneys'."
An attempt to define analyticity in terms of semantical rules can be explained by the following example. Suppose we have to clarify the contours of ordinary language to get rid of its vagueness by constructing an artificial language with explicit semantical rules. In ordinary language sense is not definite (let us remember the later Wittgenstein here), but it may be expected that in an artificial language it will be. Suppose a rule of such a language says "a statement of the form 'S is P' is a proposition" (Carnap gives such a description of an artificial language in his article 'Empiricism, Semantics, And Ontology'). Then the statement in that language "'Chicago is large' is a proposition" (Carnap's example in that article) is analytic for its truth follows from the semantical rule concerning a proposition in it. Here one can argue that the notion of analyticity is saved in such an event because beyond the empirical determination of a language, the language in question derives some truths only on the basis of its semantical rules. And this notion by extension can be viewed as holding for any language in general including the ordinary one. But Quine argues here that this supposed break of the truth from empirical determination described thus is a myth and that it cannot do without the notion of semantical rules, which are either left unexplained like the notion of analyticity itself or are to be explained by appealing to the rationale of a possible or actual use of language.

Following this line of thought Quine states that truth in general is dependent on both language and extralinguistic fact. And, for him, any attempt to separate them from their mutual dependence is bound to fail. So he insists that there cannot be truths that are true in terms of meanings of language alone on the one hand and those in terms of the relation between language and the world on the other. And when we examine his concept of ontological relativity we will see that our having world as we have now out of our sense experience is due to the structure of our language.

Along with the dogma of analytic-synthetic distinction what goes by the board in Quine's thought is a belief in radical reductionism. He says that the
empiricists like Locke and Hume thought that the basic units of experience are individual ideas, in semantical jargon, the ideas which correspond to individual terms. But later it was found, owing to Frege and Russell, that ordinary language consists of sentences basically and a term gets its meaning in the context of a sentence, which refers to a fact in the world. Russell has shown how an ordinary name can be seen as a description incomplete in itself and how a sentence as a whole in which it appears makes it meaningful in his theory of definite description. Now what Quine suggests is that language does not have its sentences separately given in it but as related to one other making it a composite whole. If one believes in radical reductionism, he writes, one cannot explain how 'is at' in 'Quality q is at x;y;z;t' (it reads that a given quality in three spatial dimension and one temporal dimension) corresponds to an immediate data of sense experience. But when language is taken as a practical adjustment to cope up with nature, he argues, it looks reasonable to think about its relation with the world not in terms of reductionism but in that of not so transparent connection it has with sense experiences. Quine writes:

"The dogma of reductionism survives in the supposition that each statement, taken in isolation from its fellows, can admit of confirmation or infirmation at all. My counter suggestion, issuing essentially from Carnap's doctrine of the physical world in the Aufbau, is that our statements about the external world face the tribunal of experience not individually but only as a corporate body." 7

Following this he says that language is a man-made fabric and only its edges touch sense experience. The interior part of it, according to him, is related to sense experience only through indirect ways. Whereas the statements such as 'His face is dirty' and "Human beings are featherless biped' are in close touch with sense experiences, the statements such as ‘No bachelor is married' and ‘Human beings are rational animals' are away from them. For Quine all kinds of statements are related to sense experience with varying degrees of distance; some are very close to it and some far away from it, and in between lies infinite others. And he further says that if tomorrow it is shown that the empirical statements 'John is a featherless biped' and
'John is a human being' are not equivalent to each other it may affect the truth value of what we generally call as the analytic statement ‘Human beings are rational animals’. His point is that there is no conceptually defined truth over and above what is related to sense experience. He writes:

"Conversely, by the same token, no statement is immune to revision. Revision even of the logical law of the excluded middle has been proposed as a means of simplifying quantum mechanics; and what difference is there in principle between such a shift and the shift whereby Kepler superseded Ptolemy, or Einstein Newton, or Darwin Aristotle?""^8

Quine is of the view that empirical statements, logical ones, theoretical ones, logical connections and other devices of language are to be understood in the context of their relation with sense experiences and their serving our purpose of survival in nature. No one of them is privileged over any other and all of them serve the purpose of our ways of relation with the world in different but related capacities. In this picture if certain statements are seen to be more germane to sense experience particularly and others are not, he clarifies that this feature is a matter of our dealing with the relation between language and sense experience to leave the talk of the world the least disturbed. And he concludes his celebrated article ‘Two dogmas of empiricism' with the affirmation of a pragmatic approach towards language and the world. To quote him:

"Each man is given a scientific heritage plus a continuing barrage of sensory stimulation; and the considerations which guide him in warping his scientific heritage to fit his continuing sensory promptings are, where rational, pragmatic."^9

Quine on Physical Objects

Quine’s ontological view is determined by his belief that the reality is a flux of stimulations produced on our senses from without and that we can know them
not as they are but through the physical objects, which are not real as such but a result of the interaction between language and stimulations. He thinks that his belief in stimulations is scientific. He writes:

"Science tells us that our only source of information about the external world is through the impact of light rays and molecules upon our sensory surfaces."\(^{10}\)

The nature of our belief in the world of physical objects, according to Quine, is conditioned by our expectation of the stimulations that they follow certain patterns in their repeated occurrences. We have seen the rising of the sun in the east many a time and we expect the sun will rise in the east tomorrow also. But each sunrise, to follow Quine, is a distinct event and what makes us expect it tomorrow again as before is that we are reinforced in our disposition to believe that the world is marked by the repetition of similar events. We learn that fire burns us from our experience and when we go near fire next time we do not think that this fire, as it is distinct from the old episodes of fire, will not burn us. We establish in each one of us the relation of similarity between events, which are taken to be similar on the basis of our past experience. And Quine says that even animals are guided in their life by the similarity patterns they experience in nature. But he adds here that the similarity standards on which these patterns are based are innate and subjective in their nature in that my similarity standards are in me and yours in you. And it is these similarity standards, Quine says, that make induction and prediction possible for us. We think for example that all ravens are black because we have learned from the past on the basis of our innate similarity standards, which inform us about the uniformities in nature, that when we recognise a certain being at the instance of certain stimulations it is always black. We predict that the sun will rise tomorrow based on our innate standards, which have helped us recognise so far a recurring uniform pattern called the rising sun at a particular time. In short, Quine finds the uniformities in nature as phenomena that can be explained only in terms of a combination of our innate standards and the relevant stimulations.
But Quine notices that our language and science contain in them knowledge that cannot be explained merely in terms of observed similarities in nature through our stimulations. When we say: “All men are mortal”, we go beyond the bounds of observations to include even the men in the distant times to come and in that it is different from the statement: "Now I see a man in front of me". But the sentence “All men are mortal” still has intimate connection with the observed phenomenon called the mortality of man. And when we examine, Quine believes, the sentences like 'Human beings are rational animals' we see that they lack a transparent explanation in terms of stimulations and induction by way of their justification. Quine says that here what helps us in making such judgments is the hypothetico-deductive method which though related to stimulations hews the way for us to go beyond them in our encounter with nature. And the whole body of mathematical and logical knowledge along with sentences like ‘Human beings are rational animal’ and 'No bachelor is married' owe their connection with the stimulations to this method. He writes about this method:

"In any event, and for whatever good it may do us, the hypothetico-deductive method is delivering knowledge hand over fist. It is facilitating prediction."

It is important to know for a student of Quine that he believes that stimulations are not private sense data. What makes them the shared events of a community of speakers of language is that we can either assent to or dissent from uniformly in public the sentences queried at their instance. That is, they are not our creations but happen from without. Quine says that a red object is red not only for me but also for others. And it takes him to say that there holds an agreement between our different subjective innate standards and this agreement, for him, is the basis of our shared public world at the instance of stimulations caused from without. He writes:

"Happily the agreement holds; and no wonder, since our similarity standards are a matter partly of natural selection and partly of subsequent experience in a shared
environment. If substantial agreement in similarity standards were not there, this first step in language acquisition would be blocked."

Though our innate similarity standards agree with each other's, Quine emphasises, it does not mean that you and I share the same stimulations even when we in our talk refer to the same object that we see before us now. My stimulations are different from yours any time. Then what prevents them from being private sense data? Quine is of the view that though we are prompted to talk at the instance of our stimulations, which are subjective, our talk is not a report on what is happening in us privately but a pointer to what is out there and in that respect it is objective. Quine retains a distinction between the subjective stimulations and an objective talk about the world on the basis of them. And for him this distinction is there even in our talk, which is objective, about what only we can feel within us that include the pain I may have in my stomach and not you, and phenomena like that. A talk about any phenomena is such that the stimulations that are responsible for it remain subjective, but it on that account does not remain a report on private sense data. If one feels something strange about this distinction then Quine shows in his philosophical theory that this strangeness is that what underlies our language and the world. Of course for Quine there is nothing strange about the distinction. He writes about the distinction in the following way:

"We have been beaten into an outward conformity to an outward standard; and thus it is that when I correlate your sentences with mine by the simple rule of phonetic correspondence, I find that the public circumstances of your affirmation and denials agree pretty well with those of my own. If I conclude that you share my sort of conceptual scheme, I am not adding a supplementary conjecture so much as spurning unfathomable distinctions; for, what further criterion of sameness of conceptual scheme can be imagined?"

Quine puts forward the view that a child in its early phase is confronted not with a world of objects at all but with a field of stimulations. And it is at the later
period that the child finds a world of objects for himself which he shares commonly
and publicly with his society and that the transition to this from the field of
stimulations on his senses is through his picking up of language which makes
individuation of objects from stimulations possible for us in general. In the initial
stage of his learning his language the child does not learn terms such as "mama",
"red" and "water" as references for objects but as "a matter of learning how much
of what goes on about him counts as the mother, or as red, or as water". And the
theory of stimulation leads Quine to opine that there is a stage in the life of child
where individuation of objects from his stimulations is felt necessary for him in his
learning the language given the fact that the language encourages it. And it occurs
when he has come to the stage of learning words that refer to objects, which ought
to be distinguished from one another and identical with themselves taken
individually. The example Quine offers is the way that the child picks up the use of
the term "apple" to refer to an object as distinguished from the ones that are also
called by the same term. A child cannot have two mothers biologically in the normal
circumstances, so the individuation of the mother as different from others does not
arise, and water is scattered about like red with the difference that "things can be
red, but only stuff is water". Quine believes that when it comes to the learning of
terms like "apple" as terms for individual objects (for Quine sees the possibility of the
child's learning "apple" as a term like "red" in the initial stage of his learning the
language) obviously the scene is different and it demands of the child the skill of
individuation of objects from stimulations. He seems to think that the child learns
its language in a linear fashion in which first comes bulk terms like "water" and
"red" and then terms for physical objects and other phenomena. He writes:

"It is only when the child has got on to the full and proper use of individuative terms
like "apple" that he can properly be said to have taken to using terms as terms, and
speaking of objects. Words like "apple," and not words like "mama" or "water" or
"red," are the terms whose ontological involvement runs deep. To learn "apple" it is
not sufficient to learn how much of what goes on counts as apple; we must learn
how much counts as an apple, and how much as another. Such terms posses built-in modes of individuation.”

The individuation of objects takes place in the child’s learning language, Quine says, when he gets on to the use of terms such as "same", "another", "an", "that", "not that" etc., in relation with terms like "apple", "ball", "block", etc. The child starts making sense of the uses, for example with reference to ‘apple’, such as "that apple", "not that apple", "an apple", "same apple", "another apple" "these apples" and the like at a particular stage of his learning the language. And these uses develop the habit of individuation in him. Quine writes:

"Doubtless the child gets the swing of these peculiar adjectives "same," "another," "an," "that," "not that," contextually: first he becomes attuned to various longer phrases or sentences that contain them, and then gradually he develops appropriate habits in relation to the component words as common parts and residues of those longer forms. His tentative acquisition of the plural "-s," lately speculated on, is itself a first primitive step of the kind. The contextual learning of these various particles goes on simultaneously, we may suppose, so that they are gradually adjusted to one another and a coherent pattern of usage is evolved matching that of one's elders. This is a major step in acquiring the conceptual scheme that we all know so well. For it is on achieving this step, and only then, that there can be any general talk of objects as such. Only at this stage does it begin to make sense to wonder whether the apple now in one’s hand is the apple noticed yesterday.”

Once the child learns how to individuate objects from stimulations as his elders, Quine points out, it does no way settle the problem of the reference of a sentence in language. To drive home this point he makes a distinction between truth and reference. If I utter a sentence “That is a rabbit" pointing to a rabbit, to follow Quine, it is true on the basis of empirical evidence if I actually see a rabbit in front of me but it does not show what I am actually referring to. It can be, according to him, a rabbit taken as a whole or a temporal segment of it or an undetached part of
it or what is believed to be a local manifestation of rabbithood. The same simulations vouch for all these or more referents at the same time inspite of our frame of reference that clearly effects a demarcation between them in our usual talk about the world for practical purposes. It is not the reference that makes a sentence true but the sensory stimulations at which it is uttered. And this position of Quine makes a transparent picture of truth impossible as we cannot have clear knowledge of stimulations except through reference which he considers inscrutable. He writes:

"Grant that a knowledge of the appropriate stimulatory conditions of a sentence does not settle how to construe the sentence in terms of existence of objects. Still, it does tend to settle what is to count as empirical evidence for or against the truth of the sentence."16

After elaborating on the different stages of a child’s learning his language Quine recognises in those a plane of language that contributes to the tendency of abstraction in and through language. It is at this level a space is sought for attributes and qualities and "is marked by the advent of abstract singular terms like "redness," "roundness," "mankind,"" and the like. He explains this level as follows. The child learns in the initial stage of his learning of language terms like ‘red’, 'water' etc., as bulk terms referring to certain stuff or scattered phenomena, but later on he sees with the advent of individuation in his engagement with the world through language that they must also have a level of individuation where they become singular terms for individual objects. So the child develops, though unknowingly may be, a psychological tendency to see them as terms referring to individual objects like apple or ball. And the individuation of red and water cannot be a phenomenon of our ordinary world and it requires, Quine shows, a positing of an abstract world where they may be looked upon as abstract individual attributes shared by things and stuffs of different kinds of the ordinary world. Thus ‘water’ becomes an attribute shared by "sundry puddles and glassfuls" and 'red' by red things and stuff. Quine does not see this abstraction as a logical requirement for the use of language and it is for him rather a result of certain confusions that haunt the
use of language. Quine believes that it is the tendency to abstract in the face of the uses of terms like "red" and "water" that, later on, becomes the rampant tendency for abstraction with regard to the use of any term resulting in an abstract world of entities.

Quine sees in the use of words for abbreviated cross-references another reason for the tendency to abstract. And instead of taking these cross-references as the uses of terms, Quine says, there develops in us wrongly a tendency to take them for words with extraordinary ontological commitments. He writes:

"Another force for abstract terms, or for the positing of abstract objects, lies in abbreviated cross-reference. E.G., after an elaborate remark regarding President Eisenhower, someone says: "The same holds for Churchill." Or, by way of supporting some botanical identification, one says: "Both plants have the following attribute in common"-and proceeds with a double-purpose description. In such cases a laborious repetition is conveniently circumvented. Now the cross-reference in such cases is just to a form of words. But we have a stubborn tendency to reify the unrepeated matter by positing an attribute, instead of just talking of words."17

In this context Quine sees how what he calls "an archaic precedent for confusing sign and object" is at work in the positing of abstract entities for terms that do not refer to objects. A baby is rewarded when he babbles "mama" in the presence of the mother. The baby hears his own utterance and sees his mother, and finds that his word signifies what he sees when he is rewarded for the use of the term "mama". So the baby tends to think, given the object-directed pattern of language, that any meaningful use of a term even when it fails to refer to an observed entity refers to an individual object on an abstract plane. And Quine sees that the case of positing abstract attributes for abbreviated cross-references testifies to this. And for him the attributes have no plane of existence. Suppose someone says the sentence "It is an apple". According to Quine, in this there cannot be three terms referring to three objects which are: one, the singular term ‘it’ as referring to
the present apple; two, the general term 'apple' as referring to apples in general; three, an abstract implicit singular term referring to an abstract attribute called applehood. Quine admits only the first two in his conceptual scheme based on his naturalistic conception of language in which terms do justice to the practical requirements of language, as they can be made sense of stimulations in relation with which only we have a world of objects, but rejects the last as arising out of some confusions in the use of language.

To recapitulate, Quine believes a child learns his language with his picking up of terms as bulk terms meant for stuff or scattered phenomena. Later on with the learning of the uses of terms like 'apple', 'ball', etc., as meant for objects he gets on to the conceptual scheme of language that makes individuation of objects from stimulations possible. But when the child does not find a way out to individuate phenomena referred to by terms like 'water' and 'red' in the context of their uses on the line of those referred to by 'apple' and 'ball' at the concrete level of existence, he finds a way for it at the abstract level. And this leads to the postulation of attributes as abstract entities as answering the demand for the individuation of certain phenomena like red, water, etc., though they remain ordinary stuff of our senses. And this brings in the tendency to see all expressions in attributive position as referring to attributes out on an abstract plane. So we, according to Quine, accommodate terms like 'redness', 'roundness', 'mankind' as terms referring to attributes in language. Quine takes objection to the claim that there are attributes for it cannot be justified in terms of stimulus conditions. He says that the assertions such as 'there are red brick houses' and 'there are children playing on the ground' are related to our sensory stimulations one way or another and that attributes are unlike them as there are no stimulations that show that they exist like the 'the red brick houses' and 'the children playing there'. So admitting singular and concrete general terms in language from the point of view of reference he rejects the possibility of there being abstract singular terms in it.
Quine's Ontological Relativity

Quine's notion of ontological relativity involves the notion of a background language and that of different conceptual schemes or ways of talking which are due to this background language but incompatible with one another even when they conform to the same empirical reality. He denies in his account of ontological commitments any space for the conceptual thinking called first philosophy that seeks the reality of world beyond the realm of sense experiences. Rather he emphasises the need for philosophy to be an explanatory base for naturalism which will show us where the concrete and objective thinking helps us understand how we have a world of physical objects through an interaction of language and stimulations. In his John Dewey lecture entitled 'Ontological Relativity' he writes:

"Philosophically I am bound to Dewey by the naturalism that dominates his last three decades. With Dewey 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." 18

Quine takes objection to the view that meanings are either mental ideas or ideas that reflect physical reality. He says that meanings are to be understood in terms of our behaviour in a given situation. The basis of his argument against mentalist conception of meaning is that language is not the creation of my or your mind but "a social art which we all acquire on the evidence solely of other people's overt behavior under publicly recognizable circumstances". This position of his is reminiscent of the later Wittgenstein's view. But Wittgenstein's behaviourism is not an empirical one. Wittgenstein does not define it in terms of sense experience. His behaviorism, as we have seen, goes beyond the causal necessity, which Quine favours, to find a logical sphere for the ordinary language and in that it sees that language bases itself not on a mere causal connection between itself and a world outside itself but on something that is logically binding about it as it is used in
concrete situations and for Wittgenstein this makes it our way of life with its blind compelling force. Quine's version of behaviourism makes its way for explaining meanings by positing what he calls our sensory stimulations due to an external realm of existence, which we in our ordinary talk call physical objects but actually are posits after them, and seeing our reactions to them. Quine says that neither stimulations as such nor use of language as such provides us with meanings but the relation between them as different entities and that this relation is for him a concrete matter of our behaviour. So meanings are, for him, not some entities but the ways of our response to given stimulatory conditions. He writes about his conception of meaning:

"Uncritical semantics is the myth of a museum in which the exhibits are meanings and the words are labels. To switch languages is to change the labels. Now the naturalist's primary objection to this view is not an objection to meanings on account of their being mental entities, though that could be objection enough. The primary objection persists even if we take the labeled exhibits not as mental entities but as *platonic* ideas or even as the denoted concrete objects. Semantics is vitiated by a pernicious mentalism as long as we regard a man's semantics as somehow determinate in his mind beyond what might be implicit in his dispositions to overt behavior. It is the very facts about meaning, not entities meant, that must be construed in terms of behavior."

A problem with stimulations is that they are subjective in nature. I have my own stimulations and you your own. Nevertheless we acquiesce in the fact that we share common world though our access to this is through our subjective stimulations. How this takes place? A reason for this is that stimulations we have at a time about what we call an object in front of us are dictated by that object itself and in that respect they are not our imaginary product. But this does not prove that you and I see the same rabbit when we say "rabbit" pointing to the rabbit we see now. But we believe that we see the same rabbit before us. Quine says that this is made possible *through our language*. Wittgenstein also says the same thing when he
points out in *Philosophical Investigations* that you and I can have the same pain as long as there is a possibility in language where we can say "you and I share the same pain now". But his view that language is our form of life brings home the point, in contrast with that of Quine, that we are not alien to one another in our language and the features of language, whatever they may be, are our common heritage in the most fundamental sense. Quine's position as to this is evident from his view that our agreement in the belief that we have a common world is a provincial one in that there is a divide between our subjective stimulations and the referents language ordinarily communicates to us. He says that you and I, inspite of our limitations as being subjective in our relation with the world, reach out to each other to have faith in a tangible concrete world. He writes:

"Each of us, as he learns his language, is a student of his neighbor's behavior; and conversely, insofar as his tries are approved or corrected, he is a subject of his neighbor's behavioral study."  

Quine finds that it is language that helps us divide stimulations dictated to our senses from without into different wholes, which we call objects. To go by this stand means that we cannot know whether we really have a world of physical objects, which we tend to think have been referred to by language as the basis of its meanings. But Quine shows that it is physical objects that set the concrete criterion of the objectivity of meanings though we are deprived of their real nature. The point that emerges here as a challenge to the transcendental philosophy is that even the world of physical objects is a result of our managing the sensory stimulations through language, and its utility lies, as we have already seen, in the fact that it helps us in predicting future events in the light of our experience in the past and present and in such a situation ontology of transcendental kind is due to its authors' ignorance of how language works in relation with the world of physical objects. We will see this point in more detail when we examine Quine's view that ‘to be is to be a value of a variable'.
Quine sees language as a natural phenomenon and believes that like any other natural phenomenon it is governed by natural laws. And the natural laws of language can be found only in our overt behaviour as the speakers of it. If our overt behaviour does not suggest an objective criterion of the use of a word then we have to rule out it as unnecessary. He sees the overt behaviour of people as speakers of language in relation with the sensory stimulations that prompt their speech dispositions in general. This standpoint leads Quine to reject not only transcendentalism but also determinacy of meaning and reference. He shows in his argument for ontological relativity that the standards of behaviour cannot settle whether a word refers to one and the same object even at the same time under the publicly recognisable circumstances relevant to its use, even for an individual speaker. The inscrutability of the reference of a word makes its meaning indeterminate and it is natural for we do not know then what we mean by a word otherwise than a behavioural response to given stimulations. Quine writes:

"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. If by these standards there are indeterminate cases, so much the worse for the terminology of meaning."\(^{21}\)

Let us take Quine's example of the word "rabbit" as it is used to refer to a being. He says that from the point of view of stimulations caused on us by what we understand as rabbit it is not clear what we refer to by this word: it can be a rabbit or an undetached rabbit part or a temporal stage of the rabbit at the same time. Wherever any of these words occurs, the others can be substituted for it and all of them equally conform to the same stimulations. He writes:

"If you take the total scattered portion of the spatiotemporal world that is made up of rabbits, and that which is made up of undetached rabbit parts, and that which is made up of rabbit stages, you come out with the same scattered portion of the world
each of the three times. The only difference is in how you slice it. And how to slice it is what ostension or simple conditioning, however persistently repeated, cannot teach.\textsuperscript{22}

One may feel here that the nature of the ending of word, being either plural or singular, will show whether the word refers to an entity called rabbit or its many undetached parts, as a rabbit will have several undetached parts. And notion of the identity can also be an aid for this. We can ask: “\textbf{Is} this rabbit the same as that one?” while pointing to different undetached parts of it to decide whether different parts or the whole of rabbit are being referred to by the word. But Quine says it works only with reference to the language we have already got used to as our way of contact with reality. And in principle the indecision on the reference of a word is an unresolved predicament for language. He says one can understand "is same as" as "belongs with". Nothing can prevent one's understanding of it this way, according to him, given the fact that stimulations have no say in deciding what we mean by these phrases. In such a situation the question "Is this rabbit the same as that one?" can be translated or paraphrased as "Is this a rabbit part that belongs with it?" This shows Quine's avowed aim which is to show that language does not have either mental or physical entities as its meanings but it in an indeterminate manner helps us respond behaviourally to stimulus situations.

Quine does not want to insist that we do not ordinarily make sense of our claim that language has definite references. But he says that this claim is limited in nature and that a philosophical reflection on this claim will unsettle the certainty of the references of words on the one hand and show the greatness of language as it makes possible for us a way to tide over the difficulty arising out of it, on the other. Quine disturbs us by saying that you and I have different set of stimulations and in that respect we are alien to each other. And at the same time he says that language brings us together by its referring to a world that is common to us in behavioural terms and is seen as independent of us. A move of this kind is not there in Wittgenstein. In him there is no division between you and I in terms of the use of
language. If language is indefinite in making sense, for Wittgenstein this has nothing to do with the fact that you and I are different beings but for him it is a fact about public and objective phenomenon called language. Wittgenstein rejects an empiricist view of language as for him it is the internal necessity of a way of life that makes us linguistic beings. This internal necessity of Wittgenstein is blind and spontaneous and cannot be reduced stimulations observable or unobservable on which Quine discovers the base of language. We have seen earlier that use of language is a kind of reflex action for Wittgenstein, but this reflex action may include the stimulations concerned but not as a base for it, and is a result of the necessity, which is strikingly metaphysical in a respect though Wittgenstein himself may not call it so, and can be felt more tangibly in the expression "Given the situation I/we act this way and I/we cannot help it". And for Wittgenstein even your inner most emotions can be conveyed to me fully and it is because of language, which makes you myself and me yourself. If these emotions are evasive in certain ways they are evasive for both of us in the same way. And such an attitude of Wittgenstein in his PI makes it a hosanna sung in praise of oneness of human experience and the world at an illuminated level.

Quine sees that the use of language is attended by extraordinary problem of reference even for an individual speaker. An individual speaker himself does not know what he refers to by his words. So it comes down to this, for Quine, that we are alien to each other and also as individuals each of us does not know what we refer to by language. Wittgenstein does not see an extraordinary difficulty attending the use of language. However, Wittgenstein denies language an ideal and precise sense that a philosopher like Plato or Kant or his early self sees about it. He does not think that you and I are alien to each other or that even as an individual I do not know what I refer to by my words. When somebody says the shopkeeper "Five red apples" Wittgenstein notices that no difficulty of communication exists between him and the shopkeeper even in principle. In PI what he shows us is that ordinary language does its work most efficiently and he explains there the nature of the ways of its performing its office. For Quine, on the other hand, language does its work in
a precarious manner and only an evolutionary process may make it more perfect by bringing it closer to sensory stimulations to make it firmer in its sense.

If we leave the example of rabbit and come to that of objects like apple, which do not have different parts like rabbit, still there is not much improvement in the matter of indeterminacy of meaning and inscrutability of reference in the ways of their relation with language. We have no transparent notion of the nature of relation between, for example, the term 'apple' and its relation with stimulations. Quine says that except through the conceptual apparatus provided through language we have no way at the basic level of stimulations to say how one apple is different from the other and where this difference lies. He writes:

"Also, if the term is a term of divided reference like "apple," there is the question of individuation: the question where one of its objects leaves off and another begins. This can be settled by induction from multiple ostensions of a more elaborate kind, accompanied by expressions like "same apple" and "another," if an equivalent of this English apparatus of individuation has been settled on; otherwise the indeterminacy persists that was illustrated by "rabbit," "undetached rabbit part," and "rabbit stage."\(^{23}\)

Language. Variable and Ontology

Quine defines ontology as relative to language. For him language does not provide us with either determinate meanings or a way to settle the problem of this indeterminacy in terms of reference, as reference is inscrutable. He understands meaning of a word as what it shares with its translation. When Quine uses the term 'word' what he means by this is 'one-word sentence', as for him the division of sentence into words is our way of using language to make it simpler and more convenient. That is, the word 'Red' and the sentence 'That flower is red' are both sentences by way of reactions to given sets of stimulations. And we consider one of them word and another sentence for the reason of our need for a simplified version
of the use of language. Having said this, we will now turn to his definition of meaning as what a word shares with its translation as it requires some explanation.

When I converse with my native neighbour what actually happens there? If we take Quine seriously, what happens there is a homophonic translation in that it is essentially no way different from a heterophonic translation between two different languages. Suppose a linguist after observing a tribe understands that they in their language use the word 'gavagai' to denote what we call rabbit. So when the linguist engages himself in a conversation with that tribe he has to understand their 'gavagai' as 'rabbit' of his English. And when we turn to our home language, the same translation takes place there as well but in a different way where it is homophonic "which simply carries each string of phonemes into itself. When we understand 'rabbit' as 'rabbit' either in my conversation with my neighbour or in my soliloquy in English I translate 'rabbit' as 'rabbit'. But if Quine says like this, is it not then a case of truism? Not so for Quine. For, according to him, the word 'rabbit' can mean as 'rabbit as a whole', 'undetached rabbit part', 'temporal stage of rabbit' at the same time and all these uses conform to the given stimulations. So it is through a homophonic translation that we prefer one of them, in this case 'rabbit', to others as its translation.

To see meaning as what a language shares with its translation is not something that will find favour with Wittgenstein. He considers language as a social act where people reach out to each other and to themselves at once without the mediation of a process called translation. And we have seen that he understands the uses of words as games. In a game a player cannot wait for anything, but has to act spontaneously. In a language game a use of word sets the contours of its significance in it effectively and in the process it validates itself. For Wittgenstein language is used without much ado. But for Quine, on the other hand, use of language is a process of translation and it establishes its meanings with much ado. Inspite of the disturbing factors related to meaning and reference that he reads into language
Quine finds that a provincial agreement as to meaning and reference of it is reached among speakers.

Quine says that we cannot say what corresponds to a word in absolute terms. He writes:

"It is meaningless to ask whether, in general, our terms "rabbit," "rabbit part," 'number," etc., really refers respectively to rabbits, rabbit parts, numbers, etc., rather than to some ingeniously permuted denotations. It is meaningless to ask this absolutely; we can meaningfully ask it only relative to some background language. When we ask, "Does 'rabbit' really refer to rabbits?" someone can counter with the question: "Refer to in what sense of 'rabbits'?" thus launching a regress; and we need the background language to regress into. The background language gives the query sense, if only relative sense; sense relative in turn to it; this background language."24

Rabbit is rabbit only relative to a background language where the word for it has a use in relation with other words. The word "rabbit" is relatively closer to the field of stimulations, whereas terms represent numbers are situated away from this field. But both kinds of words serve us in our endeavour of making our engagement with the field of stimulations simple and pragmatic and the result is that we have a postulated world of physical objects and related phenomena to talk about, though not without the problem of indeterminacy of meaning and inscrutability of reference that attend the reference and meaning. If we make a regression to some background language to make sense of references of terms, then on what this background language depends to make sense of itself? Relative to a further background language? But, then, this background language can be made sense of only in terms of another background language and so on. Needless to say what results in is a desperate regression. But Quine finds that it cannot go on like this in practice. He writes:
"And in practice we end the regress of background languages, in discussions of reference, by acquiescing in our mother tongue and taking its words at face value."\textsuperscript{25}

But in principle this background language does not settle the problem of reference and meaning. And we have seen how "\textit{rabbit}" means "rabbit", \textit{undetached} rabbit part" and "temporal stage of rabbit" at the same time in principle and the indeterminacy of meaning and inscrutability of reference that arise thus holds for background language also. So it comes to this for Quine that our ontology is relative not only to a settled way of using the background language, where we do not care for the said indeterminacy and inscrutability, but also to its unsettled possibilities where an object is one and many, is and is not, at the same time. This is the reason why he says our ontology is doubly relative.

In his article ‘\textbf{On} what there is’, Quine proposes the maxim: 'to be is to be the value of a variable'. This maxim is to show that our ontology is relative to a background language and also that there are ontological commitments that we can dispense with in the light of a pragmatic approach to meaning and reference. Let us see how he accomplishes these purposes.

Quine admits that even the descriptive phrases that talk about the non-existent entities like \textit{the} round square cupola on Berkeley College' and 'the present king of France' are meaningful, but he objects to the view that this means that we have to admit in our ontological commitments entities, whether abstract or imaginary, to correspond to them. He writes in the article, following Russell, that the meaningfulness of the above phrases lies in the fact that they can appear in a sentence as a part of it. For example we can say: "The round square cupola on Berkeley College is" or "the present king of France is bald". And it is only in this way even the sentences that affirm truths about objects, which exist, make sense. When someone says "rabbit", it means only in the context of a sentence. He shows then that the example 'The round square cupola on Berkeley College is pink',
following Russell, can be rewritten as 'something is round and square and is a cupola on Berkeley College and is pink, and nothing else is round and square and a cupola on Berkeley College'. ('Nothing else' is to show that only one object is referred to and not more in the context, and this way the uniqueness of the definite article 'the' is maintained in the new sentence). Here the expression 'something' cannot take on any specific object as its value and remains a variable, and it is this variable that long with rest of the linguistic expressions which makes the sentence meaningful and not its alleged reference. For Quine even the descriptive phrases, which really refer to concrete objects, in the context of sentences can be explained as sentences with variables that take on objects for their references. To take an example, the sentence 'The author of Waverley was a poet' may have a reference in the community of human beings and this cannot be verified on the basis of the significance of the sentence alone. But this, for Quine, only shows that the variable of this sentence may not fail to refer if everything goes well, and he explains the form of above sentence as 'Someone (better: something) wrote Waverley and was a poet, and nothing else wrote Waverley'. He writes about this method of analyzing language:

"The virtue of this analysis is that the seeming name, a descriptive phrase, is paraphrased in context as a so-called incomplete symbol. No unified expression is offered as an analysis of the descriptive phrase, but the statement as a whole which was the context of that phrase still gets its full quota of meaning -whether true or false."26

Quine writes that language in general contains in it a tendency to refer and that it is the nature of language. This general tendency of language is due to its variables that form a basic unit of it. And variables as such do not stand for specific objects and it is only an empirical verification that can show whether the given sentence asserts something true or not. While Quine recognises the meaningfulness even of contradictions he denies that there are entities that stand for every
meaningful statement. This move of his is contrary obviously to the transcendental conception of world advocated by Plato and Kant. He writes:

"But in Russell's translation, ‘Something wrote Waverley and was a poet and nothing else wrote Waverley’, the burden of objective reference which had been put upon the descriptive phrase is now taken over by words of the kind that logicians call bound variables, variables of quantification, namely, words like 'something', 'nothing', 'everything'. These words, far from purporting to be names specifically of the author of Waverley, do not purport to be names at all; they refer to entities generally, with a kind of studied ambiguity peculiar to themselves. These quantificational words or bound variables are, of course a basic part of language, and their meaningfulness, at least in context, is not to be challenged. But their meaningfulness in no way presupposes there being either the author of Waverley or the round square cupola on Berkeley College or any other specifically preassigned objects."

Following this he says that there cannot be universals like 'redness', 'househood', 'rosehood', etc. He writes:

"The words ‘houses’, 'roses', and 'sunsets' are true of sundry individual entities which are houses and roses and sunsets, and the word 'red' or 'red object' is true of each of sundry individual entities which are red houses, red roses, red sunsets; but there is not, in addition, any entity whatever, individual or otherwise, which is named by the word 'redness', nor, for that matter, by the word 'househood', 'rosehood', 'sunsethood'."

Quine's point here is in accordance with his view that meaningfulness of linguistic expressions cannot vouch for their ontology. There may be some sense due to the general nature of language, according to him, in saying that we agree in calling all houses by the term "house", and then in imagining that this points to that they must be sharing something common among them to be called by the same term.
But that does not mean for him what is called common to different houses names an abstract entity called ‘househood’. The concrete reference of a term is a matter of empirical verification for Quine. Quine subsequently argues for a notion of language as consisting of variables which make them meaningful one way or other and for a theory of reference as the values of those variables. He calls variables of language pronouns and the values of them “propronomens”. By this position he denies the ordinary names their tendency to be fundamental about the use of language and brings into prominence the structure of language and its relation with concrete reality as the basic phenomenon that accounts for meaningfulness and reference of our language.

His position that the names as referring to physical objects are not the basic components of language can be justified, but only as a consequence of his belief that what underlies the world of physical phenomena is a flux of sensory stimulations and physical objects are myths to be imported into our conceptual scheme to make sense of these stimulations. Nevertheless he insists that for pragmatic purposes we have to retain these myths. And when he talks about the nature of mathematics he yields to the pragmatic consideration of allowing Platonic abstract entities there. He says that mathematical rules are meaningful and in that respect they are like the sentential forms with their variables. But, he further says that their notations do not refer to concrete observable objects, so they are meaningless. It follows from this that mathematical objects do not exist and the mathematical propositions make sense only because of their rules or forms, which have remote connections with stimulations. But his phenomenalistic position towards reality ends at a point where practical considerations come into play and there he grants reality to physical objects, which are concrete and observable, and also objects of mathematical propositions which are abstract. But for him from an epistemological point of view it makes no sense to say that either physical objects or abstract mathematical objects exist. He writes:
"From among various conceptual schemes best suited to these various pursuits, one-the phenomenalistic- claims epistemological priority. Viewed from within the phenomenalistic conceptual scheme, the ontologies of physical objects and mathematical objects are myths. The quality of myth, however, is relative; relative, in this case, to the epistemological point of view. This point of view is one among various, corresponding to one among our various interests and purposes." 29

This shows the liberal trait immanent in Quine. Though he advocates ardently for phenomenalism and naturalism in philosophy he says that our views on matters of ontological commitments can vary from one epistemological position to another determined by our interests and purposes. This can be considered a tribute paid to the philosophical inquiry in general with its varied directions and commitments by a philosopher, who asserts that a thorough going epistemological outlook cannot countenance anything but an empirical approach to reality. But we will see later on whether his empirical approach to reality will stand the test. Let us now turn to Quine's view on translation to see how he explains meaning and reference of language through it.

Quine on Translation

We have seen that for Quine it is through a process of translation that we have meanings of linguistic terms. In our home language this translation is homophonic one and when between two different languages it is heterophonic. And both of them involve the same conceptual dilemmas about reference and meaning and none of them does have an advantage over the other in this respect. In his book *Word and Object* Quine concentrates on a hypothetical translation that takes place between English and language of a tribe hitherto unknown to the English. And Quine sees that the English linguist, who carries out this translation faces many a predicament and difficulty, and for him they are as same as the ones we face in our daily communication in our home language. We do not know, he says, how different sentences are understood in our language in terms of their references and meanings
and we, in the same manner, also do not know, he adds, how a translation is effected between two languages. As we have got used to the use of our home language, according to Quine, we are not ordinarily aware of our predicaments as to reference and meaning there, and he believes that in a translation between two entirely alien languages they crop up in a striking manner and that it can mirror the situation in our home turf.

Before we go on to Quine's description of translation in the book, let us have a look at some introductory remarks he makes in that. He says there that we have knowledge of the physical objects only through the effects they "induce at our sensory surfaces". But he notices that we do not in general talk about reality in sensory terms but in terms of physical objects. He finds the reason for it in the way we acquire language. We acquire it as a phenomenon related to objects out there on the evidence of other people's speech dispositions. But he says that it ought not prevent us from seeing the role of sensory stimulations in acquisition of our language and the knowledge of physical objects, as it is the basis for them. And it is the interaction between language and the stimulations that accounts for our having a world in the way as we have it now.

Though Quine considers physical objects myths, he does no way degrade their status in our present conceptual scheme. He says that they help us have a simple and coherent account of the world. And, more importantly, Quine looks to them as the observational criteria of our use of language as responses to sensory stimulations. According to him, when we utter: "That is a rabbit" by way of a response to certain stimulations that hit my sensory surfaces, the observational criterion of these stimulations and the response lie in the physical enduring object that we see before us. He writes that the physical objects may not be real but as things stand now we have nothing else to depend on for making our talk concrete and objective. In his own words:
"It was a lexicographer, Dr. Johnson, who demonstrated the reality of a stone by kicking it; and to begin with, at least, we have little better to go on than Johnsonian usage. The familiar material objects may not be all that is real, but they are admirable examples."

But he believes that this must not lead us to base our explanation of reality on what is perceived as world of physical objects. Philosophy, he urges us, must emulate science where its neologism replaces familiar objects by its own entities. So, on the same line philosophy can look into the matter with its own concrete method and it doses not matter if it displaces ordinary conception of the word. He writes:

"Scientific neologism is itself just linguistic evolution gone self-conscious, as science is self conscious common sense. And philosophy in turn, as an effort to get clearer on things, is not to be distinguished in essential points of purpose and method from good and bad science."

We have seen that for Quine it is in the context of a language as a whole that a sentence of it makes sense. But can we consider a sentence as consisting of many words? Quine understands that a sentence is uttered as a whole in response to given stimuli. For him sentences are either one-word ones as ‘Red’ and ‘Rabbit’ or many-word ones like ‘My hand hurts’, where what is considered each word makes sense either as one-word sentence (e.g. 'My hand') or in the context of the sentence (e.g. ‘...hurts’) in question. This way of looking at language helps Quine sidestep physical objects as references of it to see it as a collection of sentences primarily related to stimulations. For him language viewed as consisting of words referring to distinct objects is a derivative phenomenon answering our practical needs out of reality.

It may be asked how far we can rely on our sensory stimulations? This question makes its point felt, for example, when we see an object from a moving car of which we cannot say whether it is a crumpled paper or a stone. Which
stimulations are responsible for this indecision? If stimulations are solid and clear in themselves they ought not create confusions of the above sort in us on any occasion. But Quine says that the above indecision about the object can be settled by a reexamination of it by the people in the car and that this indecision owes its being to the influence of other past stimulations on our present ones. His position is that our concern is not with how far stimulations are pure absolutely in a situation but with how far we can make sense of our talk of the world in terms of them.

Quine says that even if we know miraculously all the truths about the world expressed through language it will not help us have the definite references or determinate senses for its sentences. Consider the sentence ‘Brutus killed Caesar'. How we will make sense of this sentence except as relative to a frame of reference evolved out of the relation of our non-verbal stimulations with language? But there the references of it are not settled in one way but in several ways at the same time. This makes the sense of the sentence indeterminate. But only thing we can be sure of this sentence, if it is true, according to Quine, is that there is empirical evidence that substantiate this sentence, and it, given his philosophical approach, obviously will not help us believe that we have a determinate access to its references. So Quine writes that our absolute claims to truths always remain relative to our frame of reference. This position no doubt rules out the view of Plato and Kant that there is an absolute and ideal base of our ordinary world. In his own words:

"Within our own total evolving doctrine, we can judge truth as earnestly and absolutely as can be; subject to correction, but that goes without saying."

In language, according to Quine, sentences broadly fall into occasion sentences and standing sentences. The occasion sentences are the ones for the utterance of which current stimulations are needed. One learns one's mother tongue in the beginning through learning the use of occasion sentences that are uttered by elders in the presence of publicly shareable non-verbal stimulations caused by seen objects. And standing sentences are standing reports on occasion sentences. ‘Red',
'It hurts', ‘His face is dirty', ‘I see a man in front of me', 'This man is a bachelor' etc., are occasion sentences. And the sentence ‘A man called X stood in the Abids City Square at 6.30 P.M on March 24, 2002' is a standing sentence as this sentence is stating a fact that may be true independent of current stimulations. And among occasion sentences there are sentences that will admit verifiability about them in publicly observable terms and others that are not so. The sentence: ‘I see a red object in front of me' is an example of the former, whereas an angler's sudden exclamation: "I just felt a nibble" is that of the latter. Quine calls the sentences that admit the public verifiability about them observation sentences and for him they are the sentences that a learner depends in the beginning for the acquisition of his mother tongue. And there are occasion sentences, according to Quine, of which observation in terms of non-verbal stimulations tied to observable phenomena is not possible though their meanings are shared among the users of language. He calls them non-observational sentences, and an example for them is: ‘He is a bachelor', uttered by one at the sight of one's bachelor friend.

For Quine what determines the classification of sentences thus is the gradation of observationality about them in terms of non-verbal stimulations. So this classification is one in degree and not in kind. The sentences like 'Red' are less problematic in terms of observationality as we have less indeterminacy in deciding on what is it that we call by it, compared to other observational sentences like 'Rabbit' whose references cannot be determined at all in principle definitely. And in the case of 'Bachelor' we have no set of non-verbal stimulations that determine their meanings. A bachelor friend provides us with only the stimulations of a human face and it is verbal networks that define the meaning of the sentence 'Bachelor' for us by their relations with remote non-verbal stimulations. Quine writes:

"What we have is a gradation of observationality from one extreme, at 'Red' or above, to the other extreme at 'Bachelor' and below."³³
Suppose the native language of the tribe has a sentence ‘Gavagai’ which the
linguist translate as ‘Rabbit’ in English. This translation for Quine is as same as our
making sense of 'Rabbit' as 'Rabbit' in English. This translation is possible because
of the observationality of the enduring physical object called rabbit and the
difficulties attached to the translation of this for the linguist are only that of
examining different native informants on different occasions to confirm it. But this
translation no way settles the indeterminacy of meaning of the sentence and also the
inscrutability of its reference. Suppose the linguist translates the sentence ‘Gavagai’
by converting it into 'gavagai' to mean it as general term referring to a specific
being as a whole referred to by the general term 'rabbit' in English. Quine explains
the situation arising out of it:

"For, consider 'gavagai'. Who knows but what the objects to which this term
applies are not rabbits after all, but mere stages, or brief temporal segments, of
rabbits? In either event the stimulus situations that prompt assent to ‘Gavagai’
would be the same as for 'Rabbit'. Or perhaps the objects to which 'gavagai' applies
are all and sundry undetached parts of rabbits; again the stimulus meaning would
register no difference. When from the sameness of stimulus meanings of 'Gavagai'
and 'Rabbit' the linguist leaps to the conclusion that a gavagai is a whole enduring
rabbit, he is just taking for granted that the native is enough like us to have a brief
general term for rabbits and no brief general term for rabbit stages or parts."34

Quine sees that the truth functions in a language such as negation,
conjunction and alternation can be translated in behavioural terms. The rule of
negation is that it comes into being for a sentence when it is dissented from as
different from the other occasion on which it was assented to. And for the settled
sentences the conjunction is true when all the components of a compound sentence
are assented to at a given time. And an alternation is considered false only when all
its components are dissented from at a time. But Quine finds that there are no
behavioural criteria to settle the meanings of the native equivalents of quantifiers
such as 'All', 'Some' etc. for translation. And the nature of the translation of these
logical particles explains for Quine how we make sense of their equivalents in our home language.

Quine asks: how one understands ‘Bachelor’ as ‘Unmarried man’? No non-verbal stimulations can account for this understanding. And the case is similar for the translation of the native sentence that has been translated as ‘Bachelor’. There cannot be a translation of sentences like it into English from the native language on behavioural evidence in terms of non-verbal stimulation. If we take the socialisation of ‘Bachelor’ as ‘Unmarried man’ is the base for its being understood so then Quine says that they affirm a synonymy relation between them in a quite inconclusive manner and that meanings of them are radically indeterminate. And, for him, the sentences like them and their synonymies are to be made sense of the remote indeterminate relations they have with the non-verbal stimulations through devious verbal links. And for him we cannot have an objective use of a sentence whatever except as related to sensory stimulations one way or other.

The consideration of the above translation leads Quine to assert that not every sentence is translatable easily in behavioural terms from one language into another in principle. There are problems as to even the sentences that are translatable, not that of induction but that of meaning and reference in principle. But in practice translation between two remotely related languages can take place. But Quine is making a philosophical point. Quine calls the sentences of the form: ‘No bachelor is married’ stimulus analytic sentences and says that they cannot be made sense of non-verbal stimulations and that a translation of them from one language into another is only a matter of the recognition of their uses in relation with the languages in question. In short the conclusion he has reached by the method of examining a translation is not so much merely about the relation between two languages as about our own home language. In our language, to put it briefly, according to Quine, we can make sense of observation sentences and logical connectives on behavioral evidence and we cannot do so of stimulus analytic sentences and quantifiers. But even for the observation sentences, he says, the
determination of their meanings is only a practical one and in principle the indeterminacy of them and the inscrutability of their reference cannot be settled. So Quine says that even when in practice there exists a translation of a language into another it is not the unique translation between them. And there can be translations of one language into another which are incompatible with one another and the recognised one and all of them at the same time will conform to the behavioural evidence of the recognised one. In other words, our home language makes sense of itself only in a pragmatic manner and there is nothing ideal about it. Thus Quine rejects an ideal picture of reality and rules out the possibility for a transcendental and a priori base for it.
REFERENCES

2 ibid., pp. 20-21.
3 ibid., p. 22.
4 ibid., pp. 24-25.
5 ibid., p. 31.
8 ibid., p. 43.
9 ibid., p. 46.
11 ibid., p. 72.
12 ibid., p. 73.
14 ibid., p. 8.
15 ibid., pp. 9-10.
16 ibid., p. 11.
19 ibid., p. 27.
20 ibid., p. 28.
21 ibid., p. 29.
22 ibid., p. 32.
23 ibid., p. 40.
24 ibid., pp. 48-49.
25 ibid., p. 49.
27 ibid., pp. 6-7.
28 ibid., p. 10.
29 ibid., p. 19.
31 ibid., pp. 3-4.
32 ibid., p. 25.
33 ibid., p. 42.
34 ibid., pp. 51-52.