

Willard Van Orman Quine

Quotes

*Men, Science, Philosophy, May, Language, Variables, Philosophical, Names,
Logic, Firsts, Doe, Order, Special, White, Systematic, Way, Doctrine, Father,
Reality, Book*

To be is to be the value of a variable.

~Willard Van Orman Quine

Yields falsehood when preceded by its quotation.

~Willard Van Orman Quine

Irrefragability, thy name is mathematics.

~Willard Van Orman Quine

Science is not a substitute for common sense, but an extension of it.

~Willard Van Orman Quine

We do not learn first what to talk about and then what to say about it.

~Willard Van Orman Quine

Creatures inveterately wrong in their inductions have a pathetic but praise-worthy tendency to die before reproducing their kind.

~Willard Van Orman Quine

I have been accused of denying consciousness but I am not conscious of having done so.

~Willard Van Orman Quine

Confusion of sign and object is original sin coeval with the word.

~Willard Van Orman Quine

One man's antinomy is another man's falsidical paradox, give or take a couple of thousand years.

~Willard Van Orman Quine

The scientist is indistinguishable from the common man in his sense of evidence, except that the scientist is more careful.

~Willard Van Orman Quine

Logic chases truth up the tree of grammar.

~Willard Van Orman Quine

It is within science itself, and not in some prior philosophy, that reality is to be identified and described.

~Willard Van Orman Quine

It is one of the consolations of philosophy that the benefit of showing how to dispense with a concept does not hinge on dispensing with it.

~Willard Van Orman Quine

Logic is an old subject, and since 1879 it has been a great one.

~Willard Van Orman Quine

Language is a social art.

~Willard Van Orman Quine

One man's observation is another man's closed book or flight of fancy.

~Willard Van Orman Quine

Implication is thus the very texture of our web of belief, and logic is the theory that traces it.

~Willard Van Orman Quine

Physics investigates the essential nature of the world, and biology describes a local bump. Psychology, human psychology, describes a bump on the bump.

~Willard Van Orman Quine

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.

~Willard Van Orman Quine

Meaning is what essence becomes when it is divorced from the object of reference and wedded to the word.

~Willard Van Orman Quine

Theory may be deliberate, as in a chapter on chemistry, or it may be second nature, as in the immemorial doctrine of ordinary enduring middle-sized physical objects.

~Willard Van Orman Quine

The familiar material objects may not be all that is real, but they are admirable examples.

~Willard Van Orman Quine

Some may find comfort in reflecting that the distinction between an eliminative and an explicative physicalism is unreal.

~Willard Van Orman Quine

Our argument is not flatly circular, but something like it. It has the form, figuratively speaking, of a closed curve in space.

~Willard Van Orman Quine

Unscientific man is beset by a deplorable desire to have been right. The scientist is distinguished by a desire to be right.

~Willard Van Orman Quine

Scientific method is the way to truth, but it affords, even in principle, no unique definition of truth. Any so-called pragmatic definition of truth is doomed to failure equally.

~Willard Van Orman Quine

Necessity resides in the way we talk about things, not in the things we talk about.

~Willard Van Orman Quine

At root what is needed for scientific inquiry is just receptivity to data, skill in reasoning, and yearning for truth. Admittedly, ingenuity can help too.

~Willard Van Orman Quine

No two of us learn our language alike, nor, in a sense, does any finish learning it while he lives.

~Willard Van Orman Quine

Treating 'water' as a name of a single scattered object is not intended to enable us to dispense with general terms and plurality of reference. Scatter is in fact an inconsequential detail.

~Willard Van Orman Quine

The lore of our fathers is a fabric of sentences. A pale gray lore, black with fact and white with convention.

~Willard Van Orman Quine

Set theory in sheep's clothing.

~Willard Van Orman Quine

If there is a case for mental events and mental states, it must be that the positing of them, like the positing of molecules, has some indirect systematic efficacy in the development of theory.

~Willard Van Orman Quine

Language is conceived in sin and science is its redemption.

~Willard Van Orman Quine

Life is what the least of us make the most of us feel the least of us make the most of.

~Willard Van Orman Quine

Wyman's overpopulated universe is in many ways unlovely. It offends

the aesthetic sense of us who have a taste for desert landscapes.

~Willard Van Orman Quine

To define an expression is, paradoxically speaking, to explain how to get along without it. To define is to eliminate.

~Willard Van Orman Quine

The word 'definition' has come to have a dangerously reassuring sound, owing no doubt to its frequent occurrence in logical and mathematical writings.

~Willard Van Orman Quine

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