

Gary Kemp and **Frederique Janssen-Lauret**, eds.. *Quine and His Place in History*. Palgrave Macmillan 2016. 224 pp. \$100.00 CAD (Hardcover ISBN 9781137472502).

During the last few decades, the various historiographies of so-called analytic philosophy have increased rapidly. Nevertheless, most of them have focused on the philosophical and historical contexts of Frege, Russell, Wittgenstein and the Vienna Circle. If one accepts the editor's point that the aim of historical studies is a 'certain type of intellectual self-consciousness' and while pursuing them 'we learn more about who we are' (1), then dealing with Willard van Orman Quine one indeed learns something about his profession given Quine's central place and unavoidable role among analytic philosophers. Interestingly, Quine has often escaped the attention of historians.

Quine and His Place in History, edited by Gary Kemp and Frederique Janssen-Lauret and published in Palgrave Macmillan's justifiably recognized 'History of Analytic Philosophy' series, might be expected by the reader as a good promise to bridge the aforementioned gap. Though some of her expectations will be fulfilled, some will remain unsatisfied.

The collection has four more or less connected parts. I will summarize each paper's main points and voice some critical remarks if necessary. Part 1 contains three short pieces from Quine's *Nachlass* with some contextualizing introductions by Douglas B. Quine and from Gary Ebbs. 'Levels of Abstraction' is a 1972 paper written for the First International Conference on Unified Science. Quine discusses various candidate meanings for 'abstractness' and accepts two of them: from the logical viewpoint abstractness is connected to classes (as things, classes of things, classes of classes of things etc.) and from a psychological point of view to 'cyclic principles of generation, and cyclic principles of generation of cyclic principles of generation, and so on up' (17).

Quine establishes some connection to computer science (which may have some relevance to recent issues with quantum computers, etc.), but more interesting are his comments on the 'natural selection of conceptual schemes' (17) and his expectation that there is a 'correlation between the intellectual level of culture, in some significant sense of intellectual level, and the abstractness of its mathematics' (19).

The other two materials are responses to Gary Ebbs' review of Quine's *Pursuit of Truth*. They document Quine's evolving views about stimulus meaning and intersubjectivity. Ebbs accused Quine of introducing certain non-naturalistic elements into his account and Quine, in response, tried to show that this was not the case: he reconstructed the idea that the notion of similarity is connected to the 'preestablished intersubjective harmony of perceptual similarity standards', which is, in turn, 'rooted in natural selection' (29).

The second part, entitled 'Quine's Contact with the Unity of Science Movement: A Glimpse of His Friendship with Ed Haskell', contains only one article from Ann Lodge, Rolfe A. Leary and Douglas B. Quine. Though the title indicates well its content and range (Quine's relation to Ed Haskell), given such notions as 'unity of science movement' and 'unified science', the reader cannot fail to associate immediately with the logical empiricists' unified science movement, led by Rudolf Carnap, Otto Neurath and Philipp Frank. This is mentioned only once (53) and given their recent recognition among analytic philosophers, Quine's relation to Carnap, Neurath, and Frank, and the fact that he participated at the Fifth International Congress for the Unity of Science (1939, Harvard), one would be justified in expecting a chapter on these issues.

Unfulfilled expectations aside, however, what we get is indeed very interesting and presents a lesser known aspect of Quine's connection to the movement. Haskell developed and directed the Council for Unified Research and Education organization, and edited volumes and papers on the unification of the various scientific disciplines to achieve a unified theory of human knowledge. During his research, Quine was (as usual) a gadfly, Haskell's 'severest critic' (39). The authors draw on the unpublished correspondence of Quine and reconstruct the general line of a five decades-long intellectual relationship. '[O]ne of the most important points Van asserted to [Haskell] was', as they summarized their paper (53), 'that unification must happen at the level of explanation rather than description'. The latter approach was also pursued by logical empiricists (their idea was that cross-connections among the sciences are already there, they just have to be made explicit), and given Quine's special approach to scientific explanation, one could sense here some further research programs.

Part 3 is about 'Quine's connection to pragmatism', in particular to William James and C. I. Lewis. Yemima Ben-Menahem's article is an interesting journey in the history of philosophical ideas; her aim is to develop the various continuities between Quine's philosophy and James' epistemology, which has 'strikingly similar features' (59). Though Ben-Menahem conducts her comparison (about the continuities and discontinuities) in a comprehensive and convincing manner, the whole paper is a bit like an editorial introduction to a volume on James and Quine.

Robert Sinclair's paper examines the role of the a priori and the analytic/synthetic distinction in Quine's early and later works with respect to C. I. Lewis' philosophy. He uses some of Quine's unpublished seminar papers (written for Lewis) to reconstruct his early formative years that led finally to the famous 'Two Dogmas' article. By focusing on Quine's lesser known lectures about Carnap (from 1934), Sinclair develops his idea that though Quine accepted Lewis' main point about the pragmatic a priori, by rejecting the analytic/synthetic distinction (which was crucial for Lewis), he extended 'the pragmatic criteria beyond the a priori to the empirical' (96).

The fourth and final part of the collection is about understanding Quine and contains five (more or less general) studies about the various aspects of Quine's philosophy. Peter Hylton considers Quine's philosophies of language. He argues that there are (at least) two main and distinct enterprises which could be counted as 'philosophy of language' in the workings of Quine: the questions of ontology (reference) and the area of linguistic *understanding*.

Hylton contrasts Quine's approach with Russell's, since the latter thought that the two enterprises 'come together'— in order to understand a sentence, one has to translate it into a logically perfect language and has to be acquainted with the entities to which those simple terms refer. On the other hand, Quine distinguished his theory of reference (ontology) and his ideas on linguistic understanding (captured in naturalistic terms of psychology). Hylton addresses at the end of his paper that Quine's twofold approach could be motivated by the fact that, 'there is no reason to expect that [language] should raise only one kind of philosophy question' (120), but it is still a further (non-historical) question whether one should prepare such unified accounts of language as did Russell, or go after plural accounts like Quine's. And it is a further question whether any plural account of language should be focused on such neuro-psychological ideals as did Quine's.

Gary Ebbs' paper about the 'reading of Quine's claim that no statement is immune to revision' might seem to bite off more than it can chew given its focus on Quine's notorious 'Two

Dogmas of Empiricism’—but Ebbs still manages to say something important and original about it. With painstakingly many details, he is able to show that the usual reading of Quine’s famous statement from the end of ‘Two Dogmas’ faces serious problems, but it may be interpreted in a way which avoids them. Though Ebbs’ paper is much more problem-oriented than historical, it will be an important contribution to general philosophy of science with respect to such questions as belief-revision, theory-comparison, etc.

Frederique Janssen-Lauret’s work touches upon Quine’s metaphysical and ontological ideals. She argues against those readings of Quine (like Huw Price’s) according to which, as a consequence of Quine’s ontological commitment, metaphysics becomes insubstantial. She reveals that if there is a flaw in Quine’s conception, it is connected to the fact that Quine cannot handle *direct reference* by names. She uses as an example Ruth Barcan Marcus and her name-based meta-ontology. Janssen-Lauret’s paper might be relevant also from a general point of view, since Barcan Marcus played an influential and important role in the history of modal logic, though her exact considerations are still subsumed under the received view.

The two closing papers contextualize Quine’s works against the background of classical philosophy, especially metaphysics. Gary Kemp tries to shed some light on the supposed tension between Quine’s realism and his acceptance of the underdetermination of empirical theories. He interprets the latter variously and reveals Quine’s changing attitude toward it in the second half of the twentieth century.

Finally, in his quite essayistic-paper, Andrew Lugg tries to present a new picture of Quine and Wittgenstein. ‘Their projects’, states Lugg (194), ‘are not in conflict but incommensurable in the sense that there is no saying one is philosophically superior to the other’. In his view, both Quine and Wittgenstein responded to the same situation: to the untenable status of the old and ‘outmoded philosophical speculation’ (203). Though their paths differed highly, Lugg argues, by some accidental quotations, that though the majority of philosophers misunderstood the projects of Quine and Wittgenstein, they are not contradictory but pursued with different agendas.

Quine and His Place in History contains many important historical materials and documents, so anyone working on Quine shall welcome the volume. On the other hand, many of its papers are on a quite general level, raising hitherto unnoticed parallels, puzzles, and research topics for further studies. In that sense, the volume is a good starting point to bridge the gaps in our understanding of the history of analytic philosophy rather than itself being that bridge.

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