

# Quining Naturalism

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## Abstract

Scientific naturalism is the view that natural science should be our guide in metaphysical matters – the ontology we should accept is the ontology that turns out to be required by science. Quine is often regarded as the doyen of scientific naturalists, in this sense. In this paper I argue that Quine's own views on ontological commitment, and on the relation of philosophy to science, in fact provide little support for naturalism in this form. On the contrary, they favour a view much closer to that of Carnap's 'Empiricism, Semantics and Ontology' – a view more pluralist than naturalism about ontological commitment, and more deflationist than naturalism about what is at stake. I show that this view is not undermined by Quine's well-known criticisms of Carnap. On the contrary, Quine agrees with Carnap's metaphysical deflationism, and does not successfully challenge Carnap's pluralism.

**Keywords:** Naturalism, Realism, Anti-realism, Quine, Carnap

**Subjects:** [General Issues: Realism/Anti-realism](#)  
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