

Departmental boundaries within the corporate body of theory:  
Quine on the holistic foundations of logic

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ABSTRACT

This article argues that Quine's holistic and naturalized semantics provides an inadequate account of the foundations of logical expressions and misrepresents the internal structure of theories. By considering a Quinean model of theoretical revision, I identify the status and foundation holism provides to the propositions of logic. I contend that a central tenet of Quinean holism – the Revisability Doctrine – cannot be held consistently, and that the inconsistencies surrounding it mark a series of pervasive errors within naturalized holism. In response, I propose that semantic theories must reflect the different linguistic functions of different types of expressions and the specific relationships that individual concepts within a theory or language have to one another.

Godden, David M. 2006. 'Departmental boundaries within the corporate body of theory: Quine on the holistic foundations of logic,' *Dialogue: Canadian Philosophical Review*, 45(3), pp. 505-528.