

FREE LOGIC AND THE CONCEPT OF EXISTENCE*

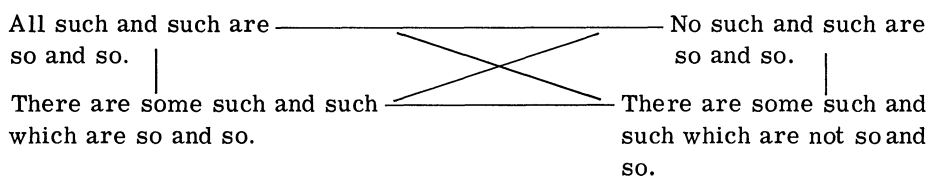
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The first part of this essay deals with one source of motivation underlying the development of *free logic*. The second part is an informal description of a logical system free of existence assumptions with respect to its terms, both general and singular. Part three presents a necessary and sufficient condition for statements of the form 'So and so exists', and the final section shows the use of this criterion as a means of testing some conceptions of the predicate 'exists'.

Part I

I shall discuss, in a rather rough and ready fashion, two squares of opposition, amendment of which generate, respectively, standard text-book quantification theory and free quantification theory.

The first square of opposition is as follows:



'Such and such' and 'so and so' are *general term* placeholders. General terms are terms which purport to "refer" to any of a group of objects: they fail to refer if there *is* nothing of which they are true. For example, the expressions 'man' and 'runs' are referential general terms because they are true of some actual objects: the expression 'unicorn' is a

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