

Opposition

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In two previous essays ([2] and [3]) I argued that the logical relations represented by the square of opposition hold for all category correct sentences. The ideas there were derived in large measure from the work of Fred Sommers (especially [13], [14], and [15]). During the past fifteen years Sommers has developed a simple calculus for syllogistic which puts the old logic on a competitive footing with the modern predicate calculus. I have traced the development of the new syllogistic in [9]. Sommers' most recent and extensive defense of the new syllogistic [19] provides both opportunity and stimulation to extend my previous remarks on opposition.

In [6] I argued that the general form of an assertion is

every/some (non)*S* is/isn't (non)*P*.

In other words, each such sentence is categorical, consisting of a subject and a predicate. A subject is a universally or particularly quantified term and a predicate is a term affirmed or denied of a subject. Any subject-term and any predicate-term may or may not be negated. Two sentences are "primitive" contradictories of one another whenever one denies of a given subject just what the other affirms of that subject. Consider a sentence of the form

(1) some *S* is *P*.

The primitive contradictory of (1) is

(2) some *S* isn't *P*.

Now (2) must not be confused with

(3) Some *S* is non*P*.

For (3), like (1), is not a denial but an affirmation. It affirms a negative predicate-term of *some S*. The "n't" in (2) forms the contradictory of (1). We could read (2) as 'not: some *S* is *P*', or 'not an *S* is *P*' (cf. "not a creature was

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