Philosophy 240: Symbolic Logic Fall 2009 Mondays, Wednesdays, Fridays: 9am - 9:50am Hamilton College Russell Marcus rmarcus1@hamilton.edu

Quine and Ontological Commitment Handout

Q1. What exists?

Q2. How do we know?

- A: There is no such thing as Pegasus.
- B. Benedict Hall is a warm building.
- C. Pegasus is a winged horse.
- D. "McX would sooner be deceived by the crudest and most flagrant counterfeit than grant the nonbeing of Pegasus" (Quine, 'On What There Is' (OWTI), p 2)!
- E. "Wyman, by the way, is one of those philosophers who have united in ruining the good old word 'exist'" (OWTI, 3)!
- F: "Certainly the doctrine has no intrinsic appeal..." (OWTI, 5)
- G. To be is to be the value of a variable.



H. 'The King of America is bald'.

I. $\sim Bk \bullet \sim \sim Bk$

J. 'The king of America is bald' becomes: $(\exists x)[Kx \bullet (y)(Ky \supset y=x) \bullet Bx]$

K. 'The king of America is not bald' becomes: $(\exists x)[Kx \bullet (y)(Ky \supset y=x) \bullet \neg Bx]$

L. We can regiment 'Pegasus does not exist' as ' $\sim(\exists x)Px'$.

M. "The singular noun in question can always be expanded into a singular description, trivially or otherwise, and then analyzed out $\dot{a} \, la$ Russell" (OWTI, 8).