

## **Galen's Ontological Square**

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Galen's treatise on hypothetical logic (hypothetical syllogistics) according to Ben Morison illustrates "two important principles of Galen's system in logic – specifically that logic should be guided by things, as opposed to arguments, and it should only develop logical positions, which are useful for demonstration" [1, p.91]. Thus, hypothetical logic is governed by metaphysics.

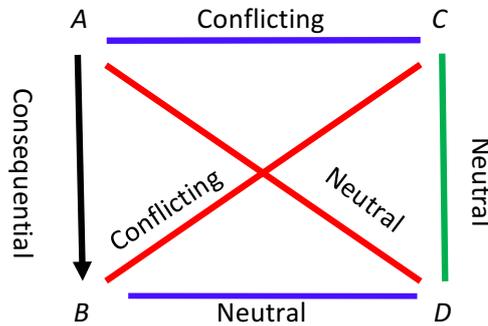
Galen's metaphysical picture of the world is based on and defined by relationships and dependences of states of affairs (things). Galen believed that there are three varieties of relationships between two states of affairs: they can be in conflict, be dependent on one another, or have no relationship whatsoever. Two states of affairs are in "conflict" only if it is impossible for them to coexist. Two states of affairs "follow one from the other" only if they must arise together. Two states of affairs are not in conflict and do not follow one from the other only when it is both possible for them to coexist as well as for neither to exist.

The first two types of relationships can be further subdivided as well. In particular, two varieties of inter-conditionality are referred to as "absolute" and "non-absolute" consequences of each other. Two conditional states follow one from the other "in an absolute manner" when the appearance of the first absolutely dictates the occurrence of the second, and vice versa. They follow one from the other "in a non-absolute manner" if, upon the occurrence of the first, the second must occur, but not vice versa. Thus, "Dion is sleeping", and "Dion is alive" are nonabsolute consequences of one another, while at the same time "John is alive" and "John is breathing" fully follow one from the other. It follows that, in stating "if John is sleeping, then John is alive" and "if John is alive, then John is breathing", we are using the same expression "if" for conveying two different types of logical relationships between states of affairs.

In regards to the conflict between the condition of affairs, Galen makes a distinction between absolute and non-absolute conflicts between states of affairs. Only assertions that reflect a complete conflict can be considered disjunctive arguments. At the same time, Galen did not consider assertions

that reflect a non-absolute conflict to be disjunctive arguments, referring to them as “para-disjunctive”. The basis for a “paradisjunctive” argument was that the two conditions of affairs influenced one another in a real sense.

Galen’s classification of the relationships between the conditions of affairs can be thought of as an original ontological square:



Here A, B, C, D represent a few conditions of affairs, “conflicting” signifies that the given pair are in a state of conflict (absolute or nonabsolute), “consequential” signifies that each state follows one from the other (absolute or nonabsolute) , and “neutral” signifies that two states of affairs neither conflict with each other, nor follow one from the other.

### **Bibliography**

Morison B. “[Logic](#)”. In: R.J. Hankinson (ed.), *The Cambridge companion to Galen*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008, pp 66-115.