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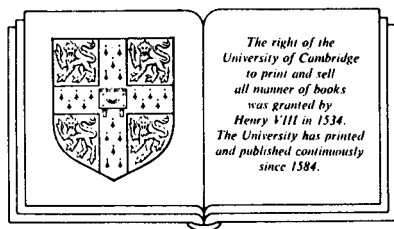
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# KANT'S DIALECTIC

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[More information](#)

## CONTENTS

<i>Preface</i>	<i>page viii</i>
<i>System of References</i>	x
<b>I INTRODUCTION</b>	
1. Locating the subject-matter	1
2. The main topics	3
3. Background materials	5
<b>2 CONCEPTS AND INTUITIONS</b>	
4. The sensory/intellectual continuum	9
5. Trouble from the continuum	12
6. Kant's breakthrough	16
7. Content <i>v.</i> activity	20
8. Concepts and judgments	23
9. Concept-empiricism	26
10. The theory of categories	30
11. Categories and 'innate ideas'	35
<b>3 SUBSTANCES AND REALITY</b>	
12. Substances and aggregates	40
13. Cartesian substances	42
14. Leibniz on substances and reality	44
15. Leibniz on relations and reality	46
16. Kant on reality	49
17. Things in themselves	52
18. Imposition and things in themselves	54
19. Substances as sempiternal	56
20. The balance principle	59
21. Existence-changes and quantifiers	62
<b>4 THE SUBSTANTIALITY OF THE SOUL</b>	
22. The Cartesian basis	66
23. The search for the thinking subject	69
24. The soul as substance	72
25. Inflating the first paralogism	76
26. My death	78

Cambridge University Press  
 978-0-521-09849-6 - Kant's Dialectic  
 Jonathan Bennett  
 Frontmatter  
[More information](#)

## CONTENTS

<b>5</b>	<b>THE SIMPLICITY OF THE SOUL</b>	<i>page</i>
	27. The soul as simple	82
	28. Mental fission	85
	29. Mental disunity	87
	30. Simplicity and immateriality	90
<b>6</b>	<b>THE IDENTITY OF THE SOUL</b>	
	31. The third paralogism: blind alleys	93
	32. Locating the third paralogism	94
	33. Quasi-memory	97
	34. Kant's observer	100
	35. Identity and substrata	103
	36. Substrata: two sources	105
	37. Substrata: four consequences	108
	38. Strawson on the paralogisms	111
<b>7</b>	<b>INFINITY</b>	
	39. The antinomies chapter	114
	40. The limits of the world	117
	41. Infinite tasks	121
	42. The futurizing move	123
	43. Infinite number	125
	44. Numbers and natural numbers	129
	45. The weakening move	132
	46. Infinite and indefinite	137
<b>8</b>	<b>LIMITS</b>	
	47. Leibniz on space	143
	48. Leibniz on vacuum	146
	49. Why the world is not finite	151
	50. Other arguments	155
	51. Why the world did not begin	159
<b>9</b>	<b>DIVISIBILITY</b>	
	52. Simple substances	163
	53. The divisibility of the extended	164
	54. Real divisibility	167
	55. Kant against atomism	170
	56. Substance and substances	174
	57. The supposed infinity problem	177
	58. The divisibility of space	180

Cambridge University Press  
 978-0-521-09849-6 - Kant's Dialectic  
 Jonathan Bennett  
 Frontmatter  
[More information](#)

## CONTENTS

<b>IO FREEDOM</b>	<i>page</i>
59. The third antinomy	184
60. From cosmology to humanity	187
61. The skeleton of a theory	189
62. A reconciliation?	193
63. Hume and Schlick	195
64. Restricting determinism	199
65. When does freedom occur?	201
66. Reactive attitudes	204
67. Kant and reactivity	209
68. Agency	211
69. Self-prediction	214
70. Kant and agency	218
71. Excuses for Kant's theory	223
<b>II GOD</b>	
72. The Kant-Frege view	228
73. Existence and necessary existence	232
74. Why Malcolm's argument fails	234
75. Aquinas's third way	237
76. The fourth antinomy	240
77. The cosmological argument	243
78. The second step	247
79. Kant's attack	250
80. The radical criticism	253
81. The argument from design	255
<b>I2 REASON</b>	
82. Inferences of reason	258
83. Ascending reason	260
84. Conditions	264
85. The source of dialectical error	267
86. Regulative principles	270
87. Are there any regulative principles?	274
88. Regulative and constitutive	275
89. The architectonic of the Dialectic	280
90. Reason and cosmology	284
<i>Index</i>	289

Cambridge University Press  
978-0-521-09849-6 - Kant's Dialectic  
Jonathan Bennett  
Frontmatter  
[More information](#)

## PREFACE

This book is a sequel to my *Kant's Analytic*, but it does not presuppose knowledge of the earlier work. It is the only English book-length commentary on the Dialectic in Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason*. It may be suggested that one is one too many – that my book fills a welcome gap in the literature – but I would dispute that. I have found that the Dialectic, together with relevant materials from earlier philosophers, especially Descartes and Leibniz, provides the basis for a satisfactory course of fifty-odd classroom hours for graduate students and able undergraduates. Such a course covers a useful amount of 'history of philosophy', guided throughout by an interest in a varied but not too scattered set of philosophical problems. *Kant's Dialectic* might be a help, but what I am confidently recommending is a different work – Kant's Dialectic.

I continue to be, in the words of an unhappy reviewer of my earlier work, 'one of those commentators who are more interested in what Kant ought to have thought than in what he actually did think'. Still, I try to describe the Dialectic accurately and in some detail. This part of Kant's work is at once knottier and more interesting than is commonly supposed, but the interest is lost if the knots are left tied, and so my philosophical aims have driven me to endeavours which may count as scholarly.

The Dialectic is full of mistakes and inadequacies, or so I shall contend, and *of course* this is consistent with its being a valuable contribution to philosophy. Still, there are doubtless fewer mistakes than I allege: my charge-list has gradually shortened as I have gained in understanding of the work, and presumably it could be reduced further. But I have worked for as long as I am prepared to, and I now offer what now seems to me to be true. Anyway, when there is evidence of error the truth is better served by an open accusation than by a respectful averting of one's eyes, even in cases where the charge of error can eventually be refuted.

Throughout, I use existing translations of non-English works, modifying them where accuracy demands it. I follow Kemp Smith's translation of the *Critique* except for a few changes in the interests of clarity and a larger number of corrections of mistranslations which are philosophically significant. The most serious of the latter are noted as

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Frontmatter  
[More information](#)

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## PREFACE

they arise. For help with the German – my knowledge of which is very limited – I am indebted to Lewis White Beck, Petra von Morstein and Margaret Jackson.

*Kant's Dialectic* grew out of teaching, scattered through a decade, at several universities. My largest block of indebtedness is to students at the University of British Columbia, where I have taught courses on the Dialectic in 1971–3. A few of them are named in the text, in acknowledgment of particular contributions; but to many others – far more than I could appropriately name in a Preface – I owe stimulation, encouragement, criticism and guidance of a high order.

I have been glad of the help of Michael Beebe, who served as my research assistant and gave me, among other things, most of what grasp I have of the issue about absolute space. I am also grateful for help with various parts of the book from my colleagues D. G. Brown, Howard Jackson, Peter Remnant, Richard E. Robinson, Steven Savitt and John Stewart; from J. J. MacIntosh; and especially from M. J. Scott-Taggart.

Secretarial and other expenses were met by research grants – here gratefully acknowledged – from the Canada Council and the University of British Columbia.

*Vancouver, B.C.*  
*July 1973*

J.F.B.



## SYSTEM OF REFERENCES

To keep down the number of footnotes, some references are given in the text. Also, sometimes references which could occupy several footnotes are gathered into one. Each composite footnote refers forwards, and never beyond the end of the paragraph.

Numerals occurring alone refer to page-numbers in the second edition ('B') of the *Critique of Pure Reason*. Numerals immediately preceded by 'A' refer to pages in the first edition, and concern material omitted from B. The following abbreviations are also used:

* <i>Bounds of Sense</i>	P. F. Strawson, <i>The Bounds of Sense</i> (London, 1966).
* <i>Commentary</i>	N. Kemp Smith, <i>A Commentary to Kant's Critique of Pure Reason</i> (London, 1918).
<i>Essay</i>	Locke, <i>An Essay Concerning Human Understanding</i> .
Gerhardt	C. I. Gerhardt (ed.), <i>Die philosophischen Schriften von G.W. Leibniz</i> (Berlin, 1875–90).
Haldane & Ross	E. S. Haldane and G. R. T. Ross (eds.), <i>Philosophical Works of Descartes</i> (Cambridge, 1911–12), Vol. II.
<i>Kant's Analytic</i>	J. Bennett, <i>Kant's Analytic</i> (Cambridge, 1966).
<i>Kant's Arguments</i>	S. J. Al-Azm, <i>The Origins of Kant's Arguments in the Antinomies</i> (Oxford, 1972).
* <i>Leibniz–Arnauld</i>	H. T. Mason (ed.), <i>The Leibniz–Arnauld Correspondence</i> (Manchester, 1967).
* <i>Leibniz–Clarke</i>	G. H. Alexander (ed.), <i>The Leibniz–Clarke Correspondence</i> (Manchester, 1956). For references to this work in Chapter 8, see that chapter's first footnote
<i>Locke, Berkeley, Hume</i>	J. Bennett, <i>Locke, Berkeley, Hume: Central Themes</i> (Oxford, 1971).
Loemker	L. E. Loemker (ed.), <i>G. W. Leibniz: Philosophical Papers and Letters</i> , 2nd edn (Dordrecht, 1969).

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- \**Metaphysical Foundations* Kant, *Metaphysical Foundations of Natural Science* (trans. J. Ellington, Indianapolis, 1970).
- New Essays* Leibniz, *New Essays Concerning Human Understanding*.
- \**Practical Reason* L. W. Beck, *A Commentary on Kant's Critique of Practical Reason* (Chicago, 1960).
- Prolegomena* Kant, *Prolegomena to any Future Metaphysic that will be able to present itself as a Science* (trans. P. G. Lucas, Manchester, 1953).

\* I offer as a Select Bibliography of the most important readily available writings on matters treated in this book: the *Critique of Pure Reason*, Descartes' *Meditations*, and the starred items in the above list.