



## Dialectic: The Pulse of Freedom (Classical Texts in Critical Realism (Routledge Critical Realism))

*Roy Bhaskar*

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Dialectic: The Pulse of Freedom is now widely regarded as a classic of contemporary philosophy. This book, first published in 1993, sets itself three main aims: the development of a general theory of dialectic, of which Hegelian dialectic can be seen to be a special case; the dialectical enrichment and deepening of critical realism, viz. into the system of dialectical critical realism; and the outline of the elements of a totalizing critique of Western philosophy.

The first chapter clarifies the rational core of Hegelian dialectic. Chapter 2 then proceeds to develop a general theory of dialectic. Isolating the fallacy of "ontological monovalence", i.e. a purely positive account of being, Roy Bhaskar then shows how absence and other negating concepts such as contradiction have a legitimate and necessary ontological employment. He then goes on to give a synoptic account of key dialectical concepts such as the concrete universal; to sketch the further dialectical development of critical naturalism through an account of what he calls four-planar social being; and following consideration of the dialectical critique of analytical reason, he moves on to the real definition of dialectic as absenting absence and in the human sphere, the axiology of freedom.

Chapter 3 extends and deepens critical realism's characteristic concerns with ontology, science, social science and emancipation not only into the realms of negativity and totality, but also into the fields of reference and truth, spatio-temporality, tense and process, the logic of dialectical universalizability and on to the plane of ethics, where it articulates a combination of moral realism and ethical naturalism, whereby consideration of elemental desire involves commitment to the eudaimonistic society. This is then followed—in Chapter 4—by a sublime discussion of key moments in the trajectory of Western philosophy, the tradition of which can now be seen to be based on what the author calls the unholy trinity of the epistemic fallacy or the reduction of being to knowledge, primal squeeze or the collapse of structure and alethic truth, and ontological monovalence.

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