

Glossary entry

logic (formal, propositional): A form of logic based on the premise that contradictions in theories make the theories useless.

Further explanation

In answering his question, 'What is Dialectic?', Popper (1963) rejects dialectical claims to knowledge as, '*without the slightest foundation. Indeed, they are based on nothing better than a loose and woolly way of speaking*' (p.316).

Popper demonstrates, using two laws of inference, that if a theory contains a contradiction, then it entails everything, and therefore, indeed, nothing. He says that a theory which adds to every information which it asserts also the negation of this information can give us no information at all. *A Theory which involves a contradiction is therefore entirely useless as a theory* (p.317).

Popper, K. (1963) *Conjectures and Refutations*, Oxford, Oxford University Press.