





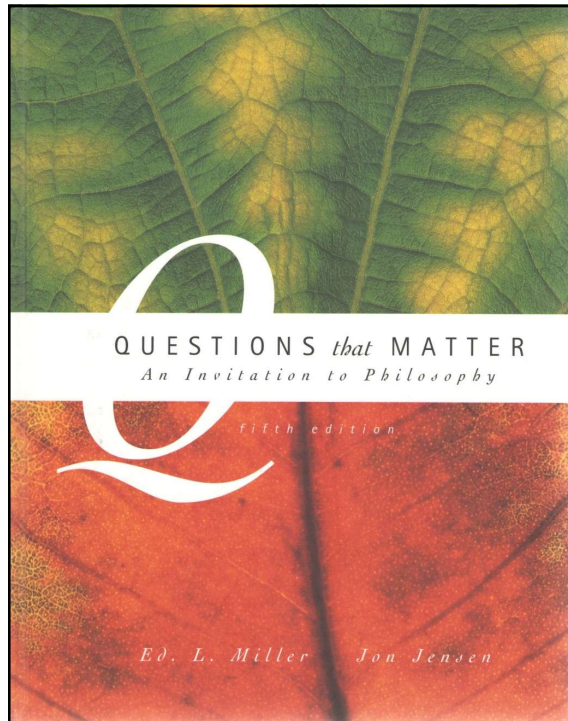
**φίλος (philos); φιλέω (phileo)**  
**beloved, friend; I love**

**+**

**σοφία (sophia)**  
**skill in arts or crafts or in matters of**  
**common life; sound judgment,**  
**intelligence, practical wisdom**

- **φιλοσοφέω (philosophéo) - discuss, investigate, study**
- **φιλόσοφος (philosophos) - lover of wisdom; used of all men of education and learning**
- **φιλόσοφια (philosophia) - used only once in the NT (Col. 2:8), in a bad sense**





## Philosophy

*the attempt to think rationally and **critically** about the most important questions*

- ✓ **rationally** = reasonableness; opposed to undue emotions
- ✓ **critically** = subjecting to legitimate critique; opposed to gullibility

## How do philosophy and religion compare and contrast?

- ✓ *Both can deal with the same subjects.*
- ✓ *Both utilize the tools of language and logic.*



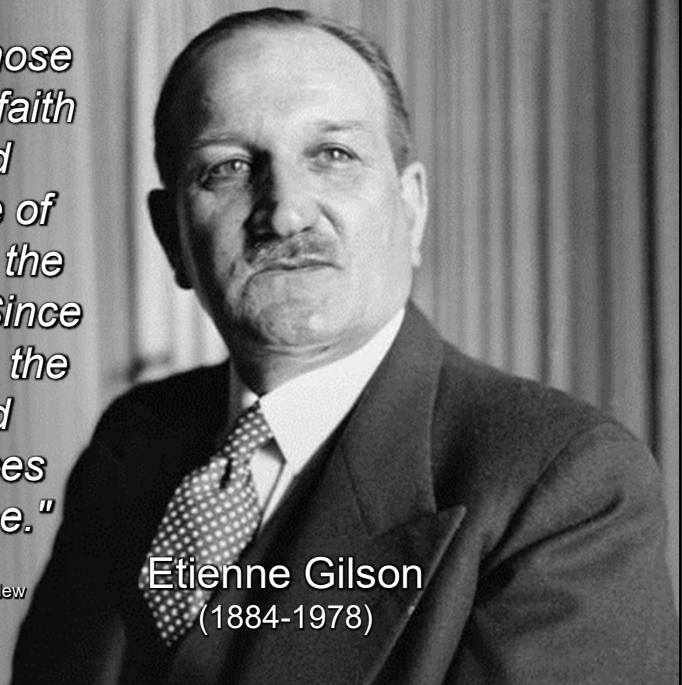
## How do philosophy and religion compare and contrast?

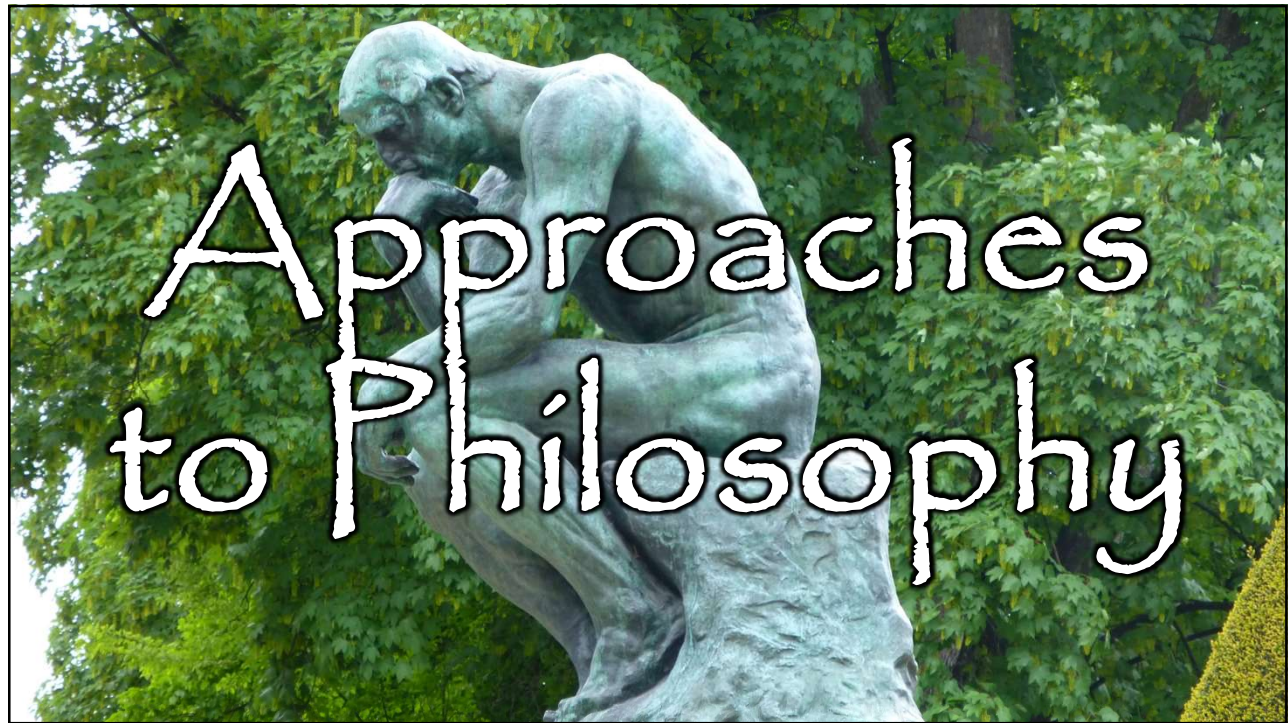
- ✓ *Philosophy as such recognizes no authority except reason itself.*
- ✓ *Religion often, though not always, recognizes additional authority such as a sacred book. (= reason vs. revelation)*

*"Theology is the science of those things which are received by faith from divine revelation, and philosophy is the knowledge of those things which flow from the principles of natural reason. Since their common source is God, the creator of both reason and revelation, these two sciences are bound ultimately to agree."*

[Etienne Gilson, *The Unity of Philosophical Experience: A Survey Showing the Unity of Medieval, Cartesian, and Modern Philosophy* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1937), 62]

Etienne Gilson  
(1884-1978)





- ❧ Analytic Philosophy ❧
- ❧ Existential Philosophy ❧
- ❧ Continental Philosophy ❧
- ❧ Classical Philosophy ❧



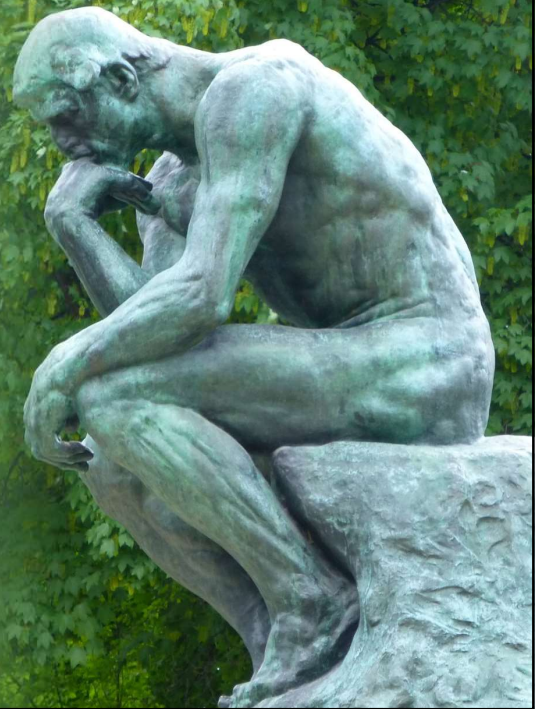
## Existentialism



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of Philosophy

- ❖ intellectual movement that exploded onto the scene in mid-20<sup>th</sup> century France
- ❖ often viewed as historically situated against the backdrop of the horrors of

WW II when many were forced to confront the human condition and anxiety-provoking givens of death, freedom, and meaninglessness occasioned by the Nazi death camps and atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki

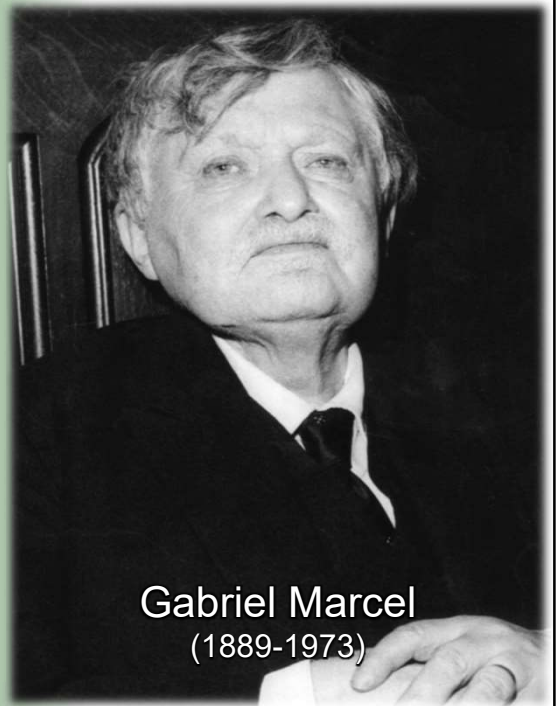


## Existentialism



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- ❖ Notable thinkers were French and included Gabriel Marcel



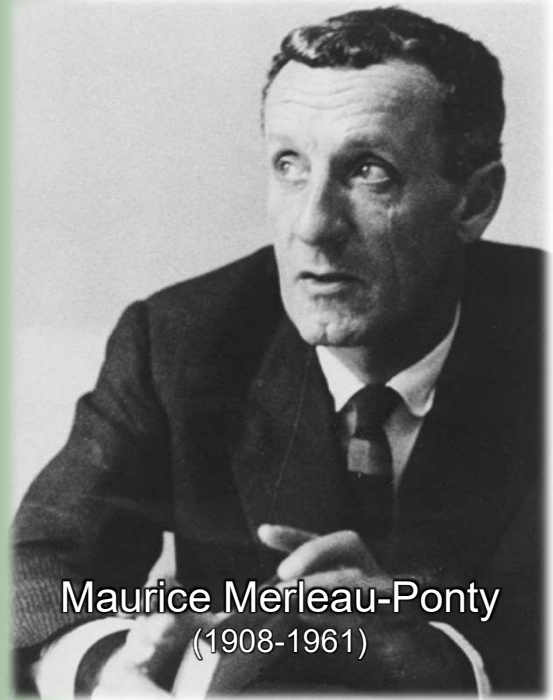
Gabriel Marcel  
(1889-1973)

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❖ Notable thinkers were French and included Gabriel Marcel, Maurice Merleau-Ponty



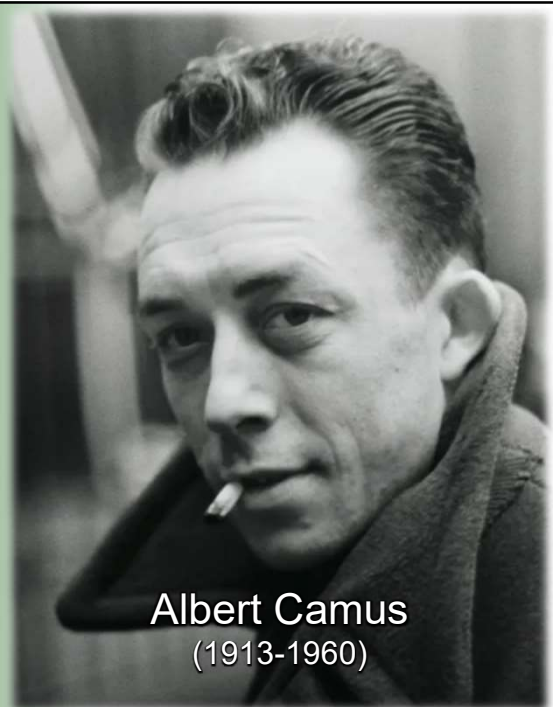
Maurice Merleau-Ponty  
(1908-1961)

## Existentialism



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❖ Notable thinkers were French and included Gabriel Marcel, Maurice Merleau-Ponty, and Albert Camus.



Albert Camus  
(1913-1960)



## Existentialism



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❖ Notable thinkers were French and included Gabriel Marcel, Maurice Merleau-Ponty, and Albert Camus.

❖ Conceptual groundwork was laid by earlier thinkers such as:

- ✓ Søren Kierkegaard



Søren Kierkegaard  
(1813-1855)

## Existentialism

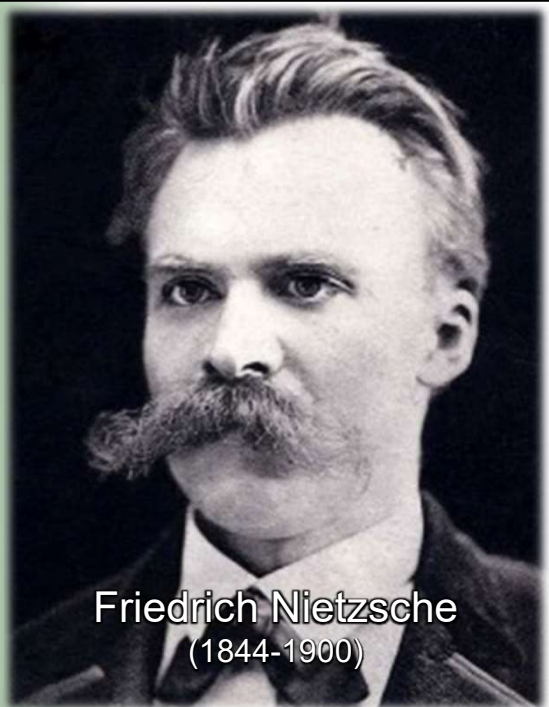


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Friedrich Nietzsche  
(1844-1900)

## Existentialism

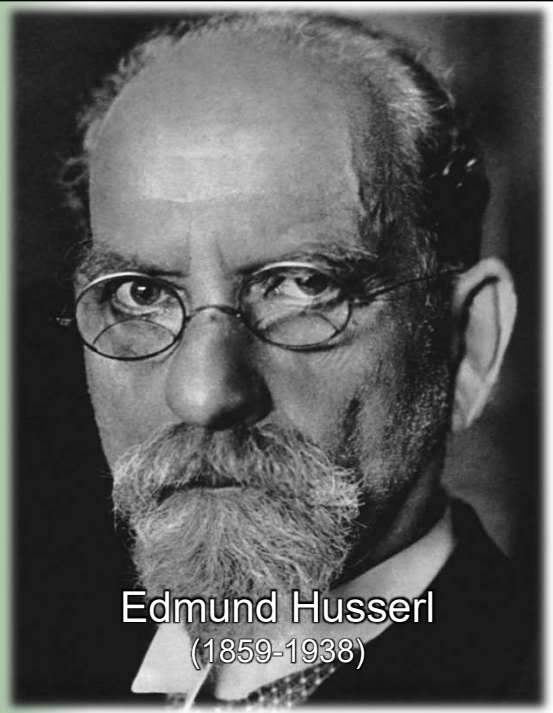


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- ✓ German philosophers Edmund Husserl



Edmund Husserl  
(1859-1938)

## Existentialism

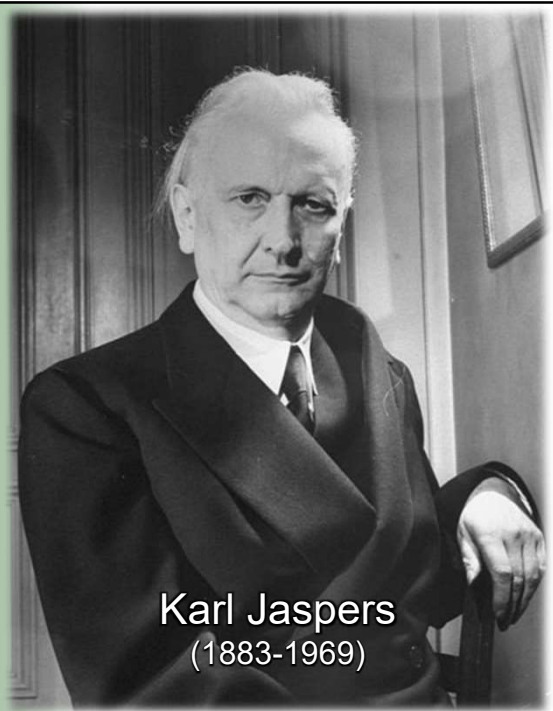


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- ✓ German philosophers Edmund Husserl, Karl Jaspers



Karl Jaspers  
(1883-1969)



## Existentialism

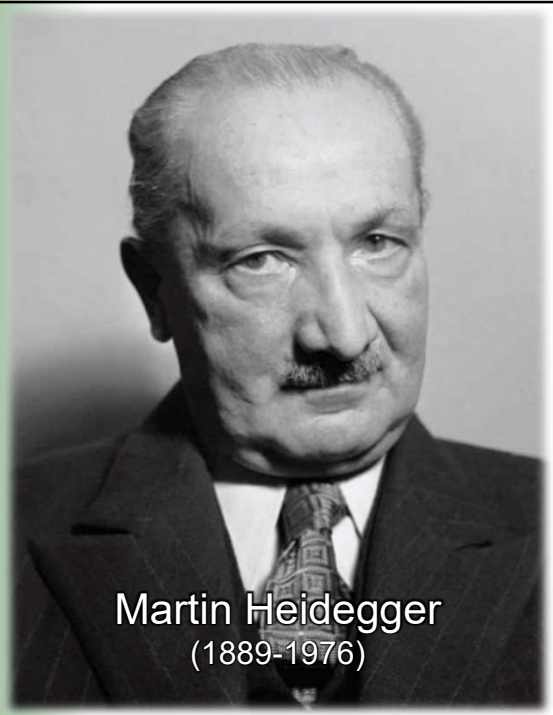


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- ✓ Søren Kierkegaard and Friedrich Nietzsche (19<sup>th</sup> century)
- ✓ German philosophers Edmund Husserl, Karl Jaspers, and Martin Heidegger (20<sup>th</sup> century)



Martin Heidegger  
(1889-1976)

## Existentialism

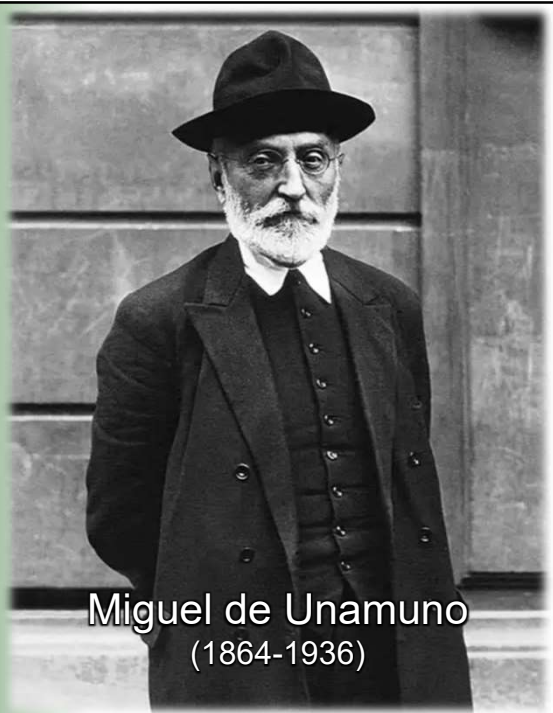


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- ✓ Søren Kierkegaard and Friedrich Nietzsche (19<sup>th</sup> century)
- ✓ German philosophers Edmund Husserl, Karl Jaspers, and Martin Heidegger (20<sup>th</sup> century)
- ✓ Spanish intellectuals Miguel de Unamuno



Miguel de Unamuno  
(1864-1936)

## Existentialism

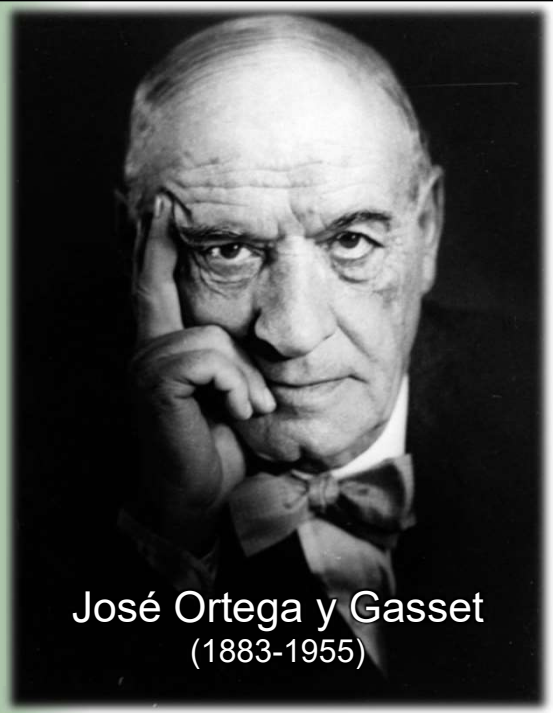


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- ✓ German philosophers Edmund Husserl, Karl Jaspers, and Martin Heidegger (20<sup>th</sup> century)
- ✓ Spanish intellectuals Miguel de Unamuno and José Ortega y Gasset. (20<sup>th</sup> century)



José Ortega y Gasset  
(1883-1955)

## Existentialism



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❖ Existentialism was as much a literary phenomenon as a philosophical one.

❖ Sartre's ideas are better known through his fictional works (such as *Nausea* and *No Exit*) than through his more purely philosophical ones (such as *Being and Nothingness* and *Critique of Dialectical Reason*)



Jean-Paul Sartre  
(1905-1980)



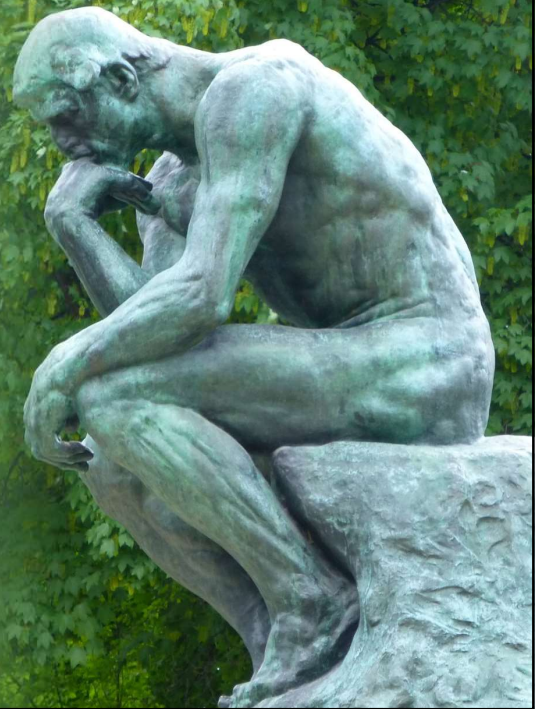
## Existentialism



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❖ Existentialism does not deny the validity of the basic categories of physics, biology, psychology, and the other sciences.

❖ Rather, it claims that these are not enough to understand what a human being is.



## Existentialism



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❖ “Existentialism” therefore, may be defined as the philosophical theory which holds that a further set of categories, governed by the norm of authenticity, is necessary to grasp human existence.





## Existentialism



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❖ All the themes popularly associated with existentialism—dread, boredom, alienation, the absurd, freedom, commitment, nothingness—find their philosophical significance in the context of the search for a new categorial framework, together with its governing norm.

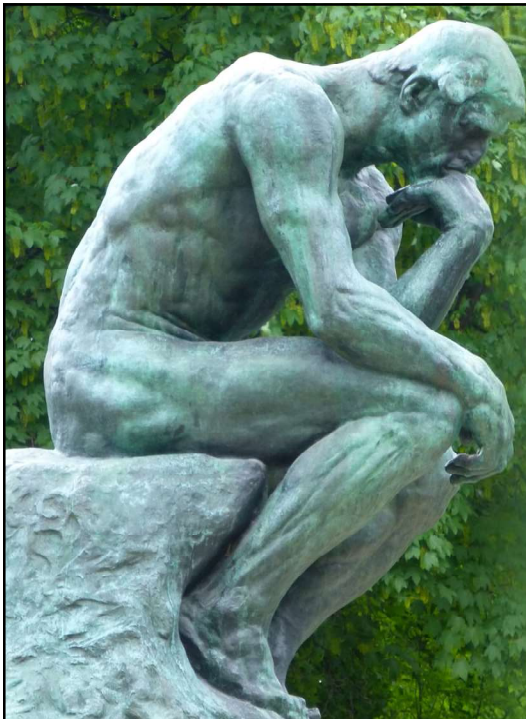
[<https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/existentialism/>]



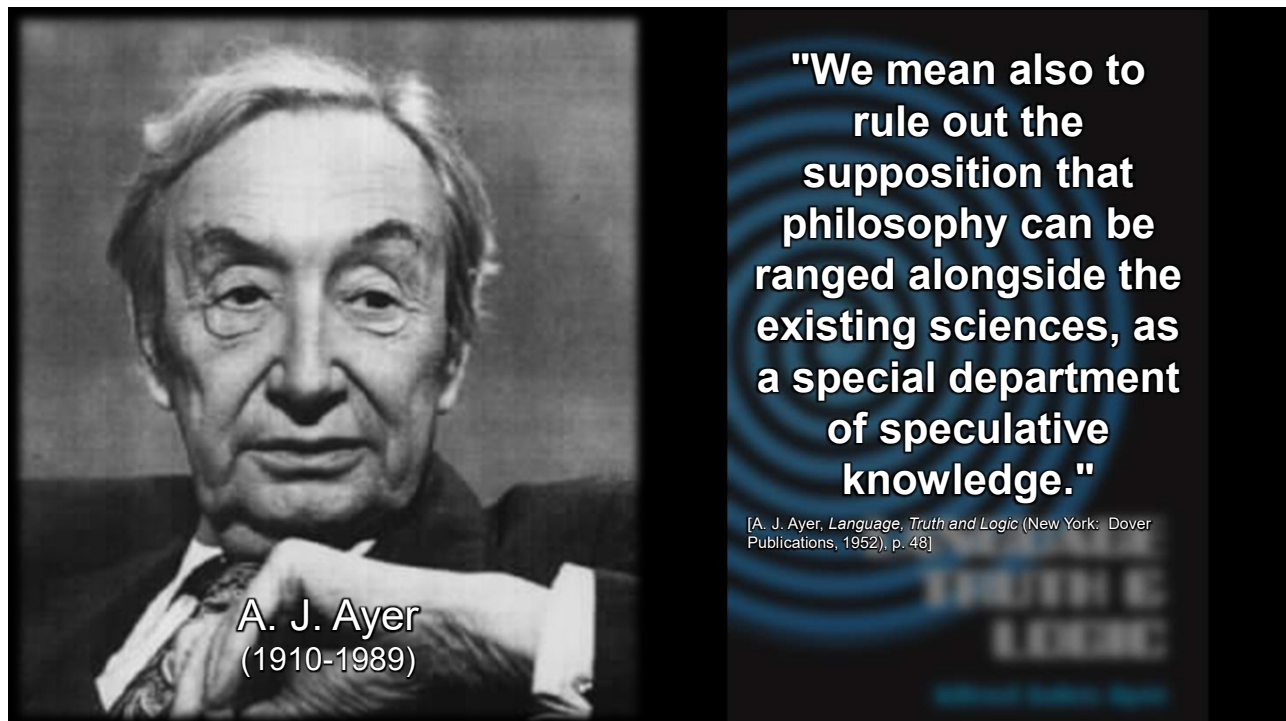
## Analytic Philosophy

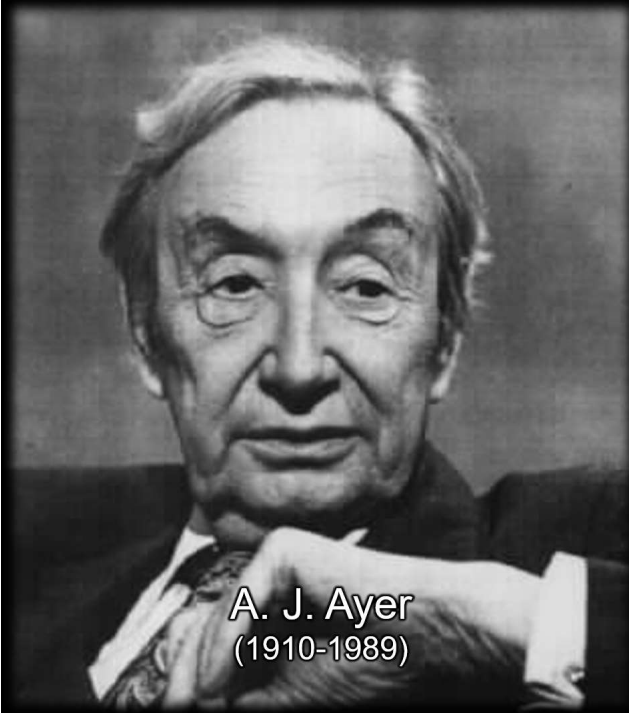
*Analytic philosophy is concerned primarily with the analysis of concepts and terms and the clarification of language.*

*In its most extreme forms, it denies that philosophy has its own body of knowledge*





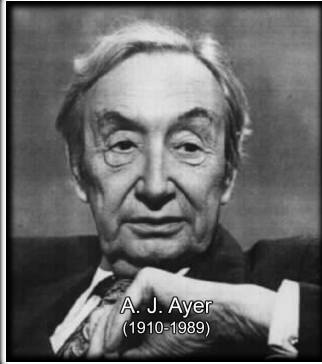




A. J. Ayer  
(1910-1989)

**"There is no field of experience which cannot, in principle, be brought under some form of scientific law, and no type of speculative knowledge about the world which it is, in principle, beyond the power of science to give."**

[Ayer, *Language*, p. 48]



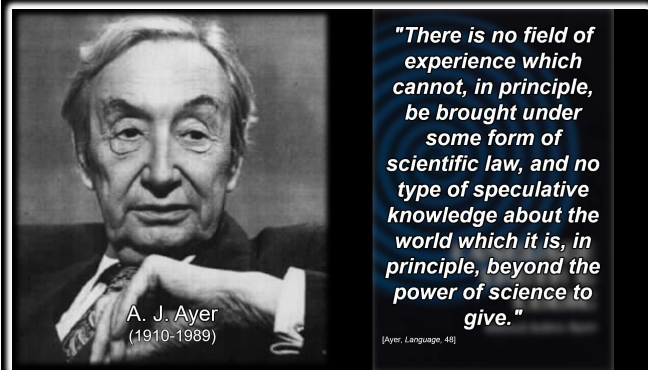
A. J. Ayer  
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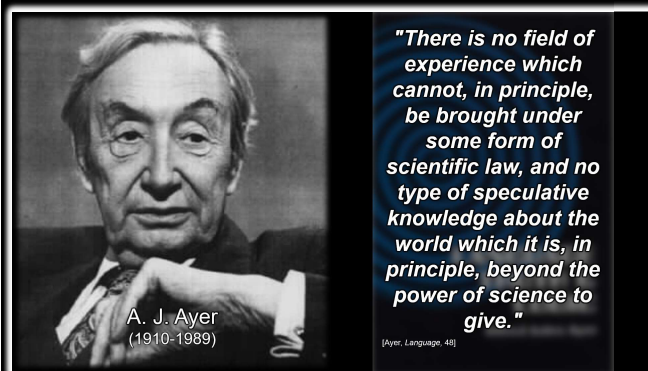
[Ayer, *Language*, p. 48]

***Can this statement be "brought under some form of scientific law"?***

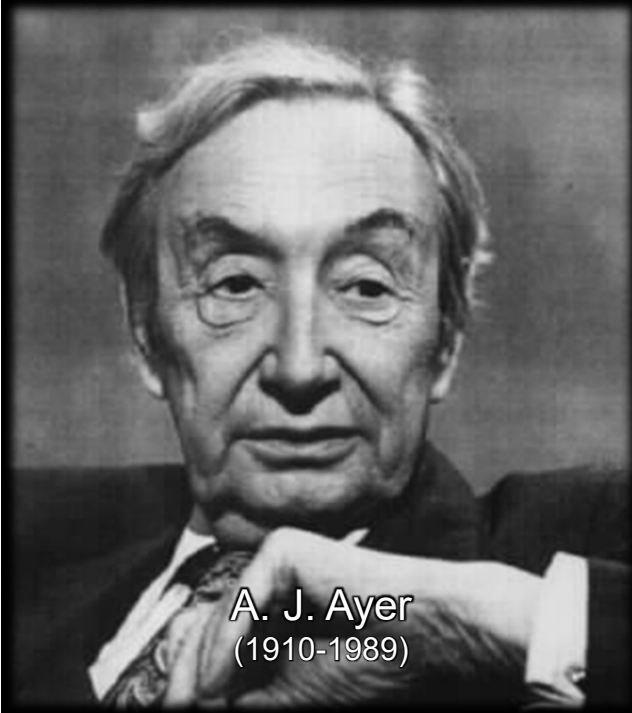




***If the answer is no, then this statement is not a scientific statement.***



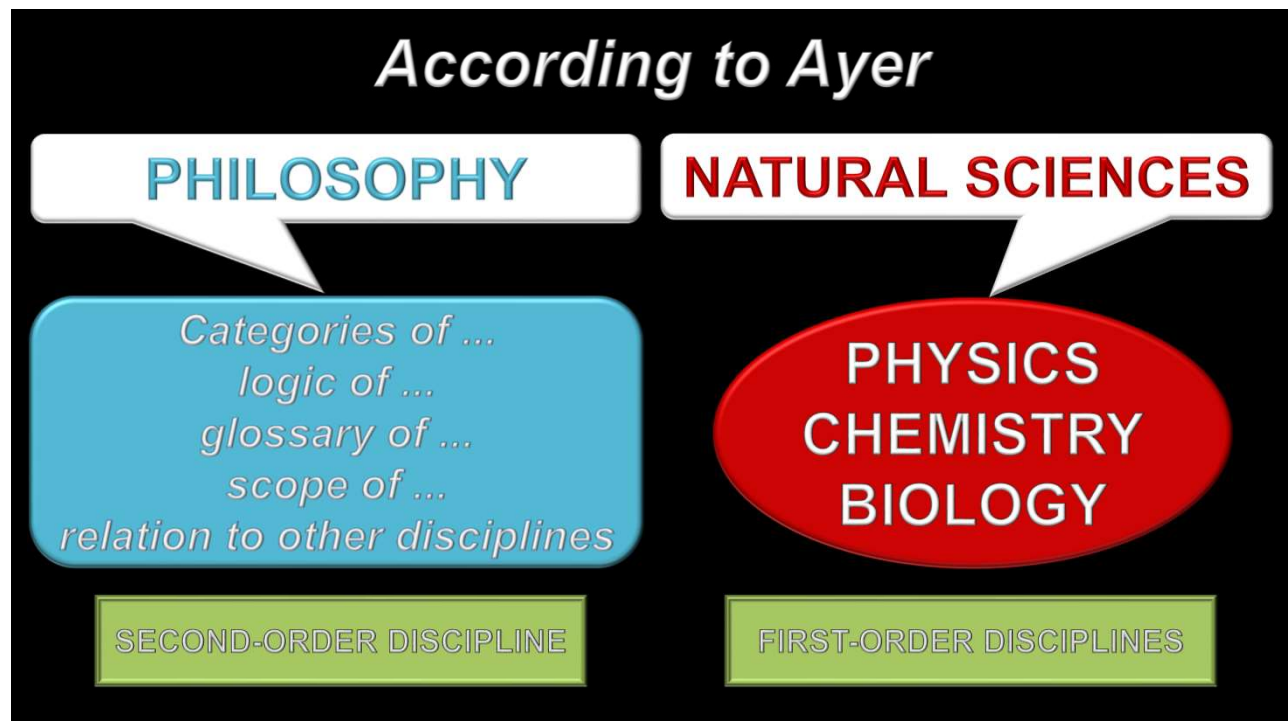
***If this statement is a philosophical statement, is it a scientific statement?***



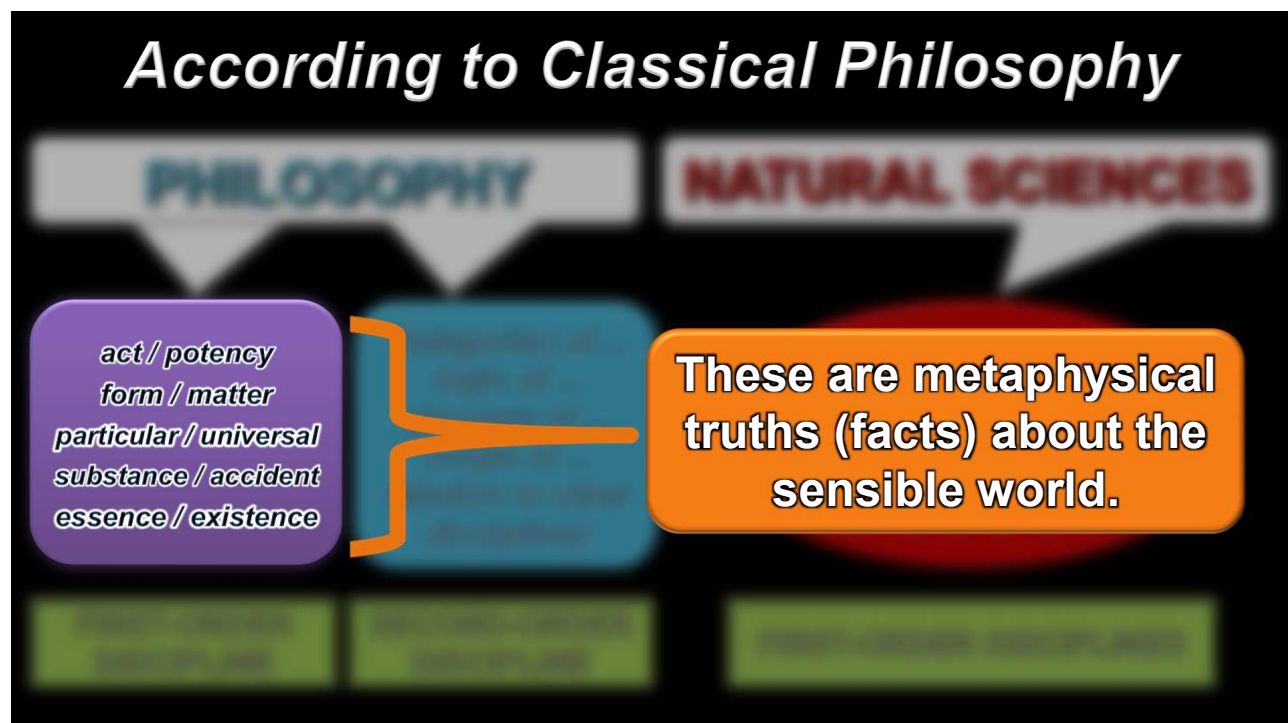
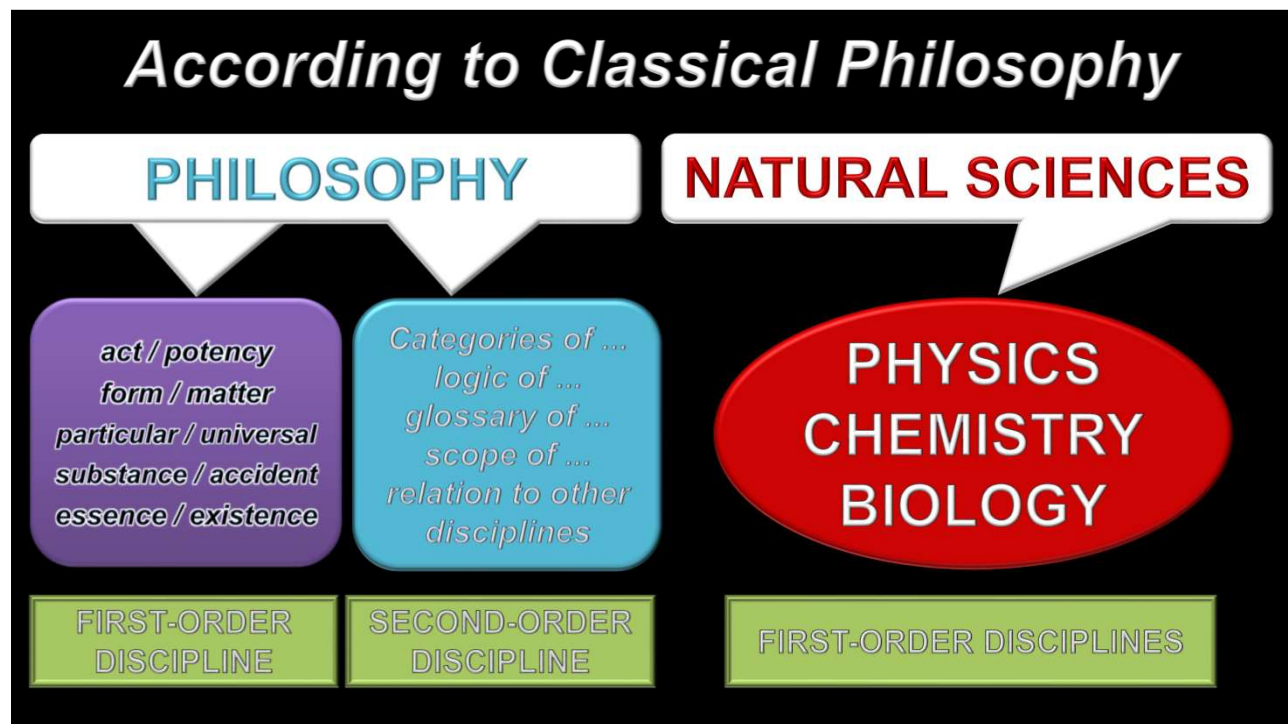
A. J. Ayer  
(1910-1989)

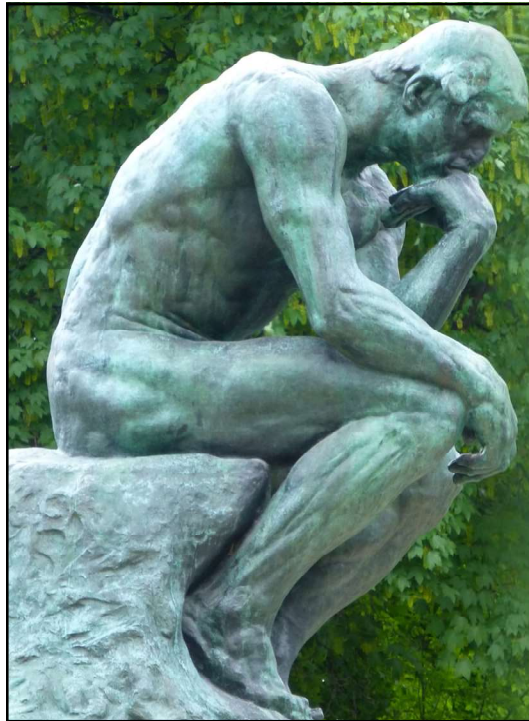
"But, actually, the validity of the analytic method is not dependent on any empirical, much less any metaphysical, presupposition about the nature of things. For the philosopher, as an analyst, is not directly concerned with the physical properties of things. **He is concerned only with the way in which we speak about them.** In other words, the propositions of philosophy are not factual, but linguistic in character."

[Ayer, *Language*, p. 57]



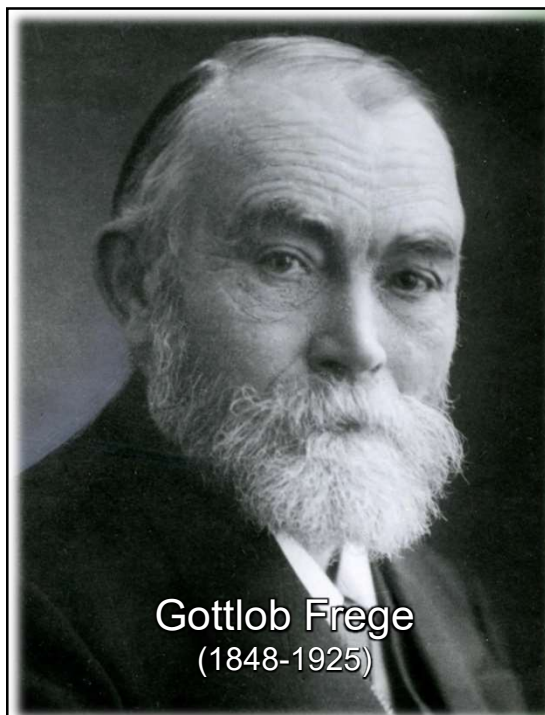






## ⌘ Analytic Philosophy ⌘

- ❖ 'Analytic' philosophy today names a style of doing philosophy, not a philosophical program or a set of substantive views.
- ❖ Analytic philosophers, crudely speaking, aim for argumentative clarity and precision; draw freely on the tools of logic; and often identify, professionally and intellectually, more closely with the sciences and mathematics, than with the humanities.



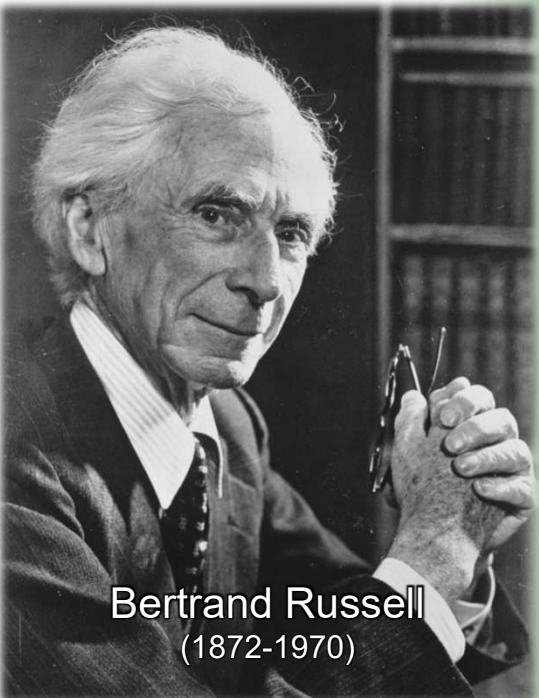
Gottlob Frege  
(1848-1925)

## ⌘ Analytic Philosophy ⌘

- ❖ The foundational figures of this tradition are philosophers like Gottlob Frege








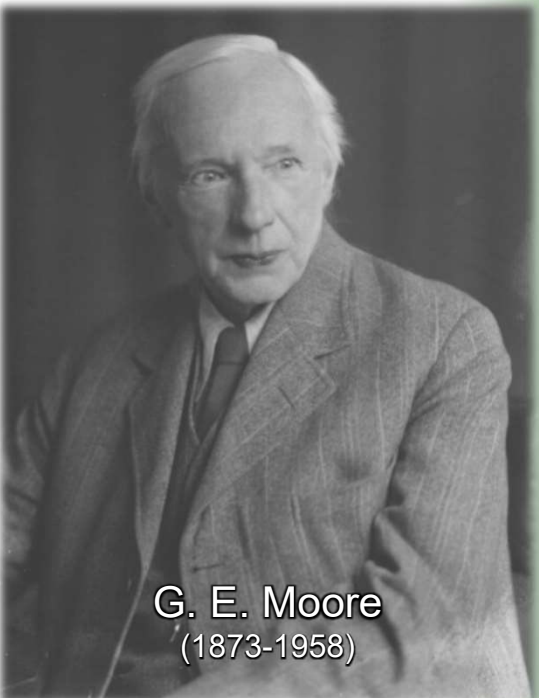
**Bertrand Russell**  
(1872-1970)

## ↻ Analytic Philosophy ↻

- ❖ The foundational figures of this tradition are philosophers like Gottlob Frege, Bertrand Russell




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**G. E. Moore**  
(1873-1958)

## ↻ Analytic Philosophy ↻

- ❖ The foundational figures of this tradition are philosophers like Gottlob Frege, Bertrand Russell, G. E. Moore




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**Ludwig Wittgenstein**  
(1889-1951)

## ✧ Analytic Philosophy ✧

❖ The foundational figures of this tradition are philosophers like Gottlob Frege, Bertrand Russell, G. E. Moore, and the early Ludwig Wittgenstein.

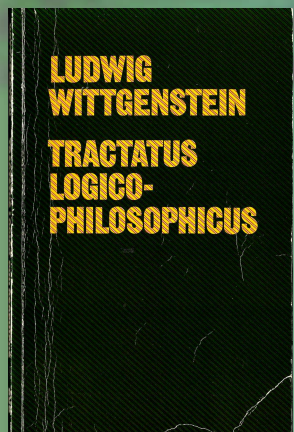


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**Ludwig Wittgenstein**  
(1889-1951)

## Philosophers today distinguish the philosophy of "the early Wittgenstein"

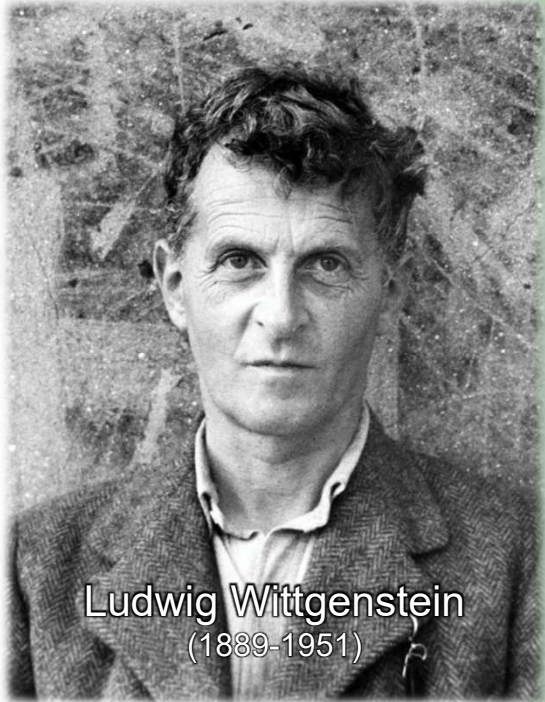


**LUDWIG WITTGENSTEIN**  
**TRACTATUS LOGICO-PHILOSOPHICUS**



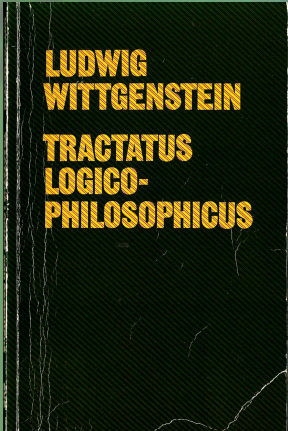
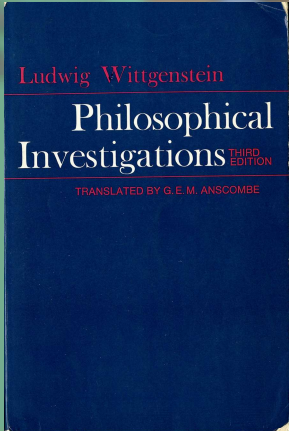
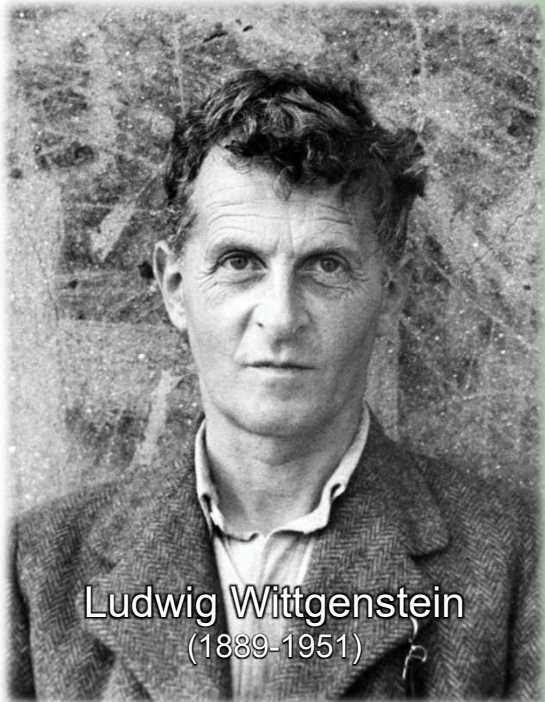
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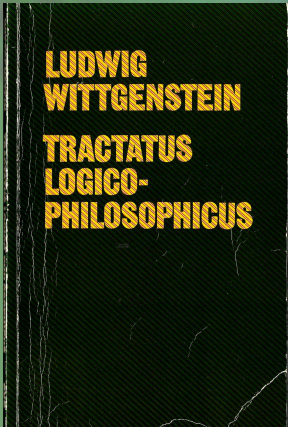
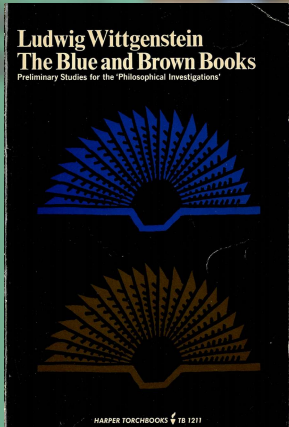
Ludwig Wittgenstein  
(1889-1951)

Philosophers today distinguish the philosophy of "the early Wittgenstein" from the philosophy of "the latter Wittgenstein."

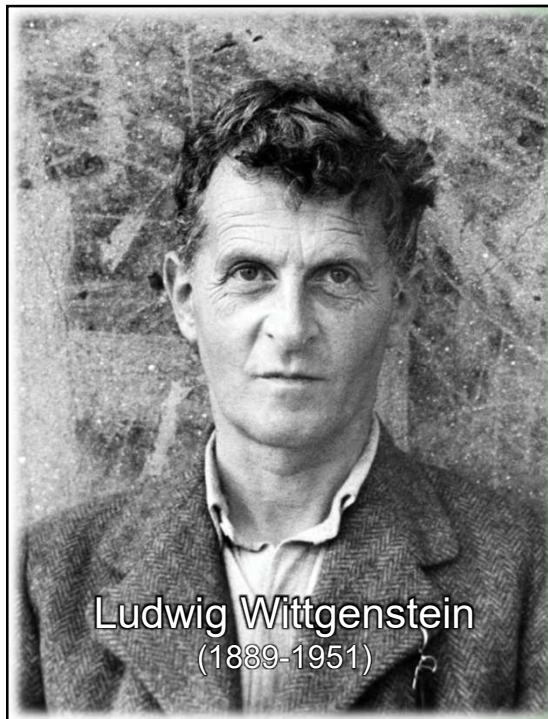




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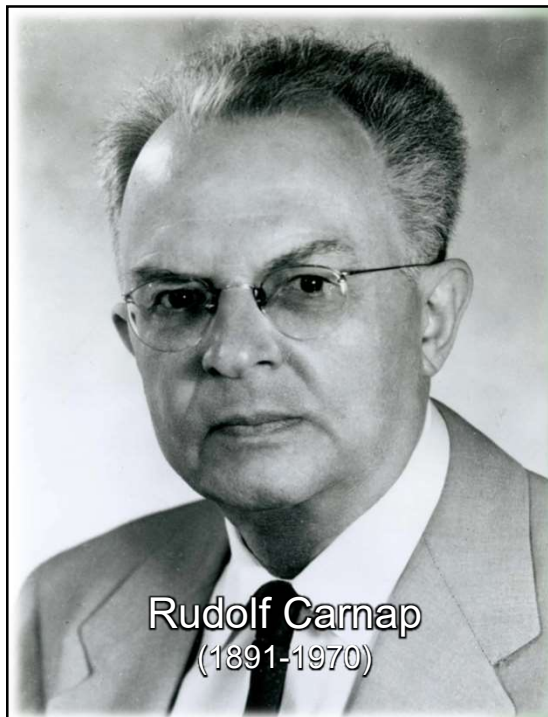
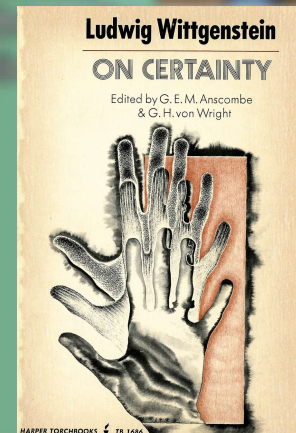
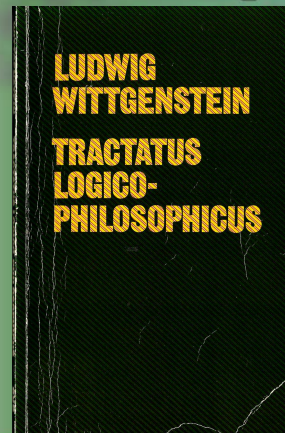







Ludwig Wittgenstein  
(1889-1951)

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Rudolf Carnap  
(1891-1970)

## ⌘ Analytic Philosophy ⌘


❖ The foundational figures of this tradition are philosophers like Gottlob Frege, Bertrand Russell, G. E. Moore, and the early Ludwig Wittgenstein.

❖ Other figures include: Rudolf Carnap



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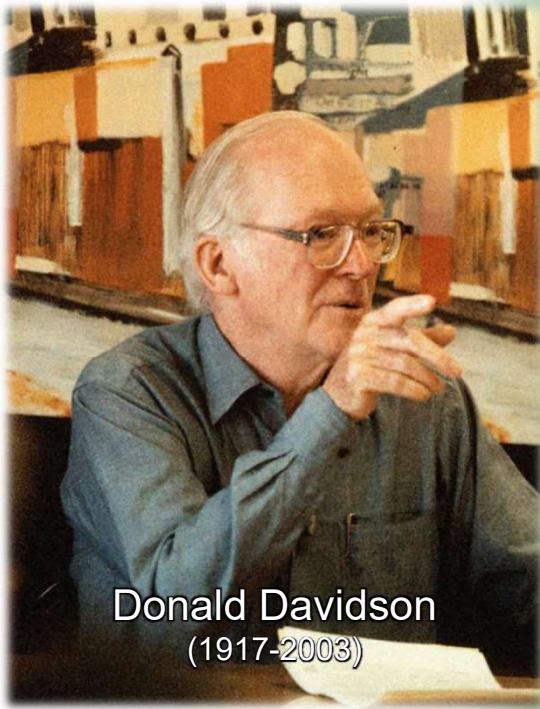
Willard Van Orman Quine  
(1908-2000)

## Analytic Philosophy

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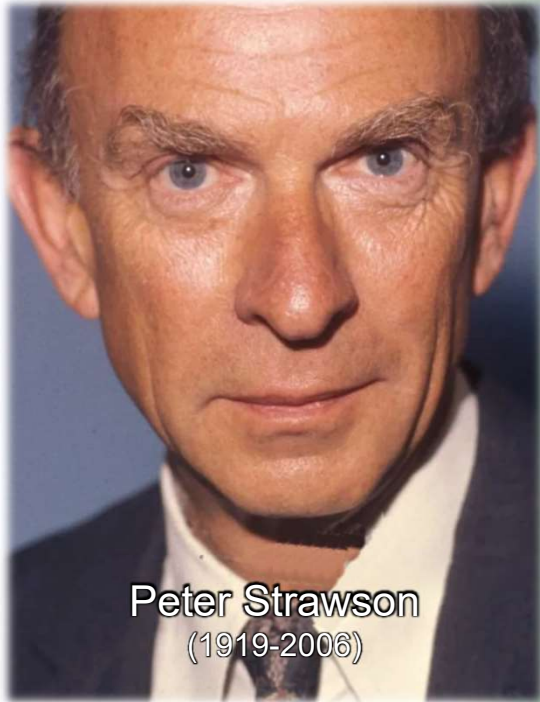
Donald Davidson  
(1917-2003)

## Analytic Philosophy

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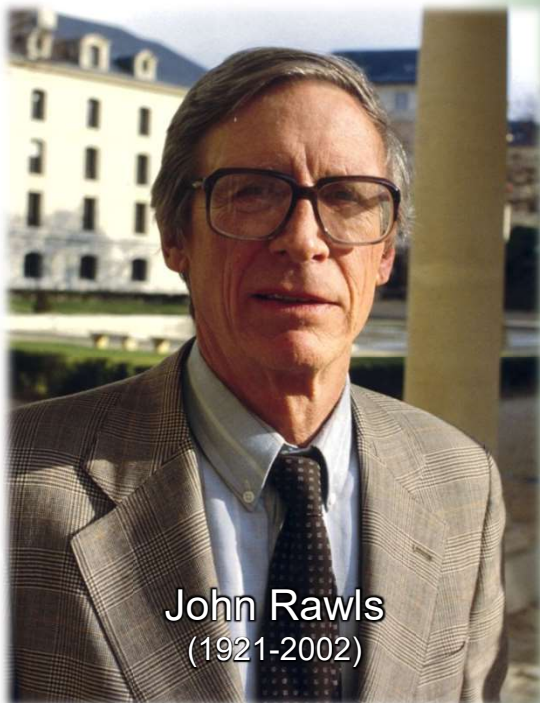
**Peter Strawson**  
(1919-2006)

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**John Rawls**  
(1921-2002)

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**Michael Dummett**  
(1925-2011)

## Analytic Philosophy

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- ❖ Other figures include: Rudolf Carnap, Willard Van Orman Quine, Donald Davidson, Peter Strawson, John Rawls, Michael Dummett




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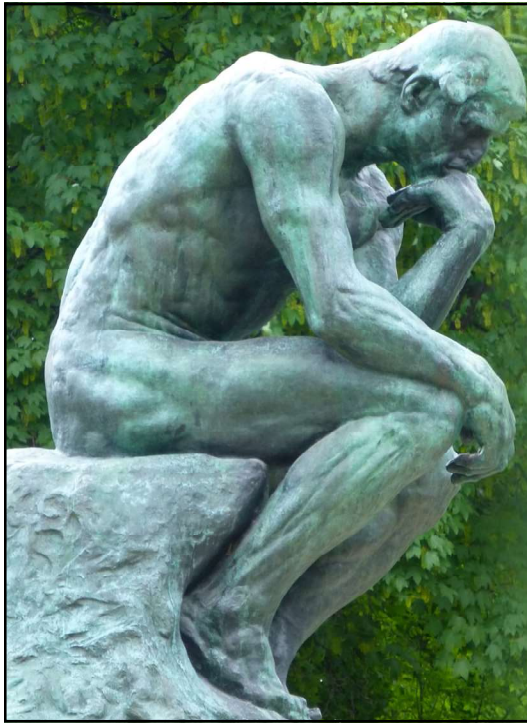
**Saul Kripke**  
(1940-2022)

## Analytic Philosophy

- ❖ The foundational figures of this tradition are philosophers like Gottlob Frege, Bertrand Russell, G. E. Moore, and the early Ludwig Wittgenstein.
- ❖ Other figures include: Rudolf Carnap, Willard Van Orman Quine, Donald Davidson, Peter Strawson, John Rawls, Michael Dummett, and Saul Kripke.

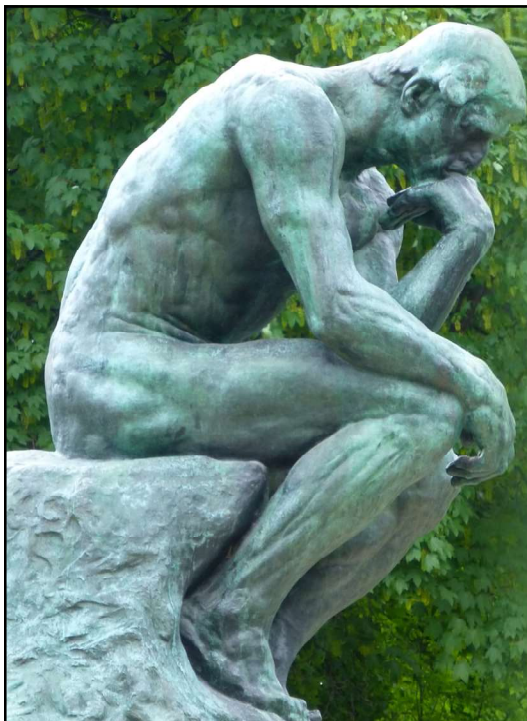


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## ☞ Continental Philosophy ☞

- ❖ Continental philosophy ... demarcates a group of (primarily) French and German philosophers of the 19th and 20th centuries.
- ❖ The geographical label is misleading: Carnap, Frege, and Wittgenstein were all products of the European Continent, but are not "Continental" philosophers.

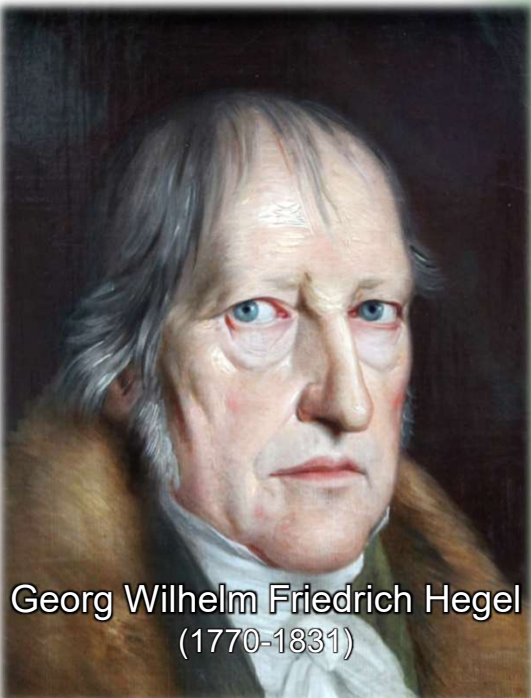


## ☞ Continental Philosophy ☞

- ❖ Continental philosophy is sometimes distinguished by its style (more literary, less analytical, less reliant on formal logic . . .),
- ❖ More interested in actual political and cultural issues and, loosely speaking, the human situation and its 'meaning', and some of its substantive commitments (more self-conscious about the relation of philosophy to its historical situation).








Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel  
(1770-1831)

## ☞ Continental Philosophy ☞

- ❖ "The foundational figure of this tradition is usually thought to be Hegel"



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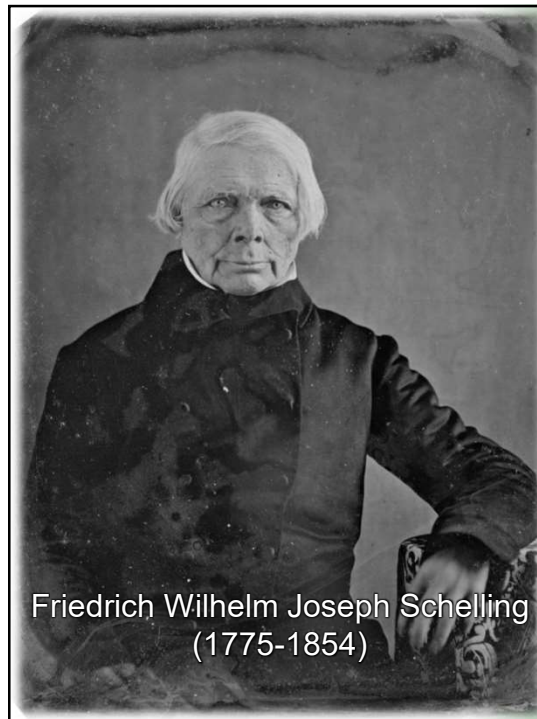
Johann Gottlieb Fichte  
(1762-1814)

## ☞ Continental Philosophy ☞

- ❖ "The foundational figure of this tradition is usually thought to be Hegel; other canonical figures include the other post-Kantian German Idealists (e.g., Fichte"



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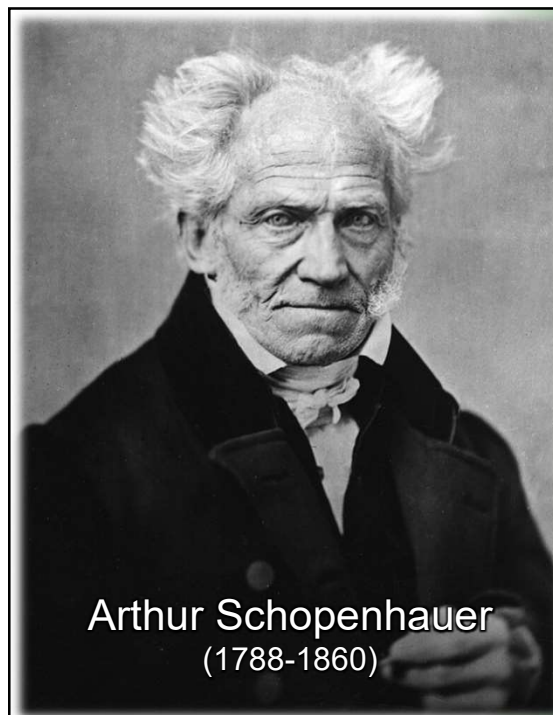
Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph Schelling  
(1775-1854)

## ☞ Continental Philosophy ☞

- ❖ "The foundational figure of this tradition is usually thought to be Hegel; other canonical figures include the other post-Kantian German Idealists (e.g., Fichte, Schelling)



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Arthur Schopenhauer  
(1788-1860)

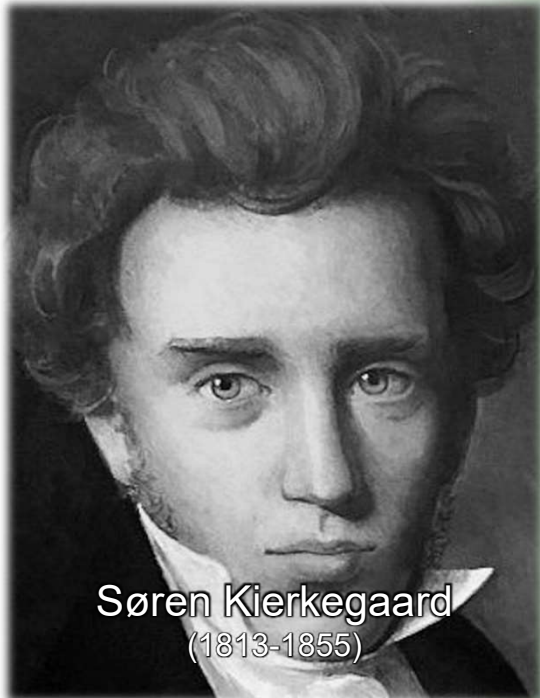
## ☞ Continental Philosophy ☞

- ❖ "The foundational figure of this tradition is usually thought to be Hegel; other canonical figures include the other post-Kantian German Idealists (e.g., Fichte, Schelling), Schopenhauer



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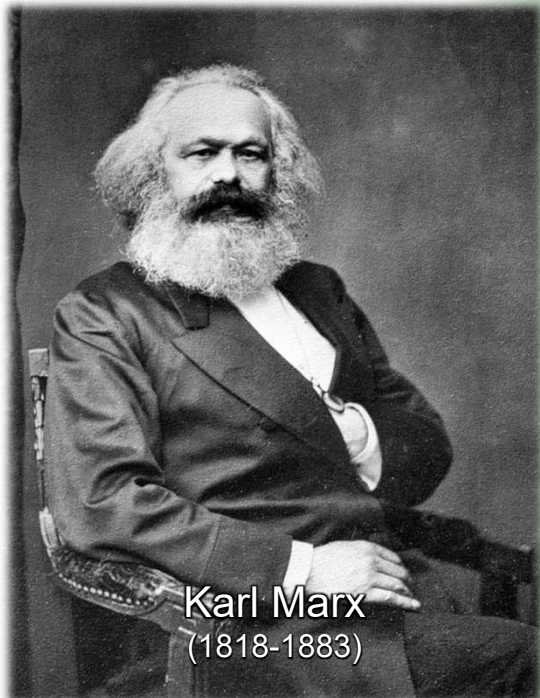
**Søren Kierkegaard**  
(1813-1855)

## ☞ Continental Philosophy ☞

- ❖ "The foundational figure of this tradition is usually thought to be Hegel; other canonical figures include the other post-Kantian German Idealists (e.g., Fichte, Schelling), Schopenhauer, Kierkegaard




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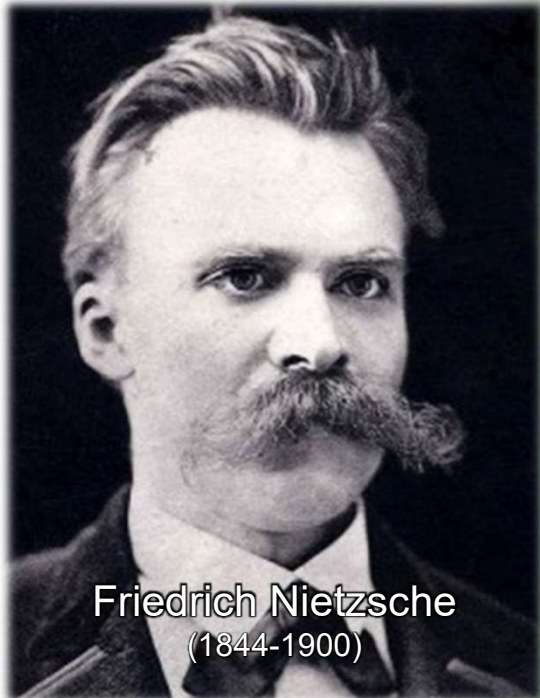
**Karl Marx**  
(1818-1883)

## ☞ Continental Philosophy ☞

- ❖ "The foundational figure of this tradition is usually thought to be Hegel; other canonical figures include the other post-Kantian German Idealists (e.g., Fichte, Schelling), Schopenhauer, Kierkegaard, Marx




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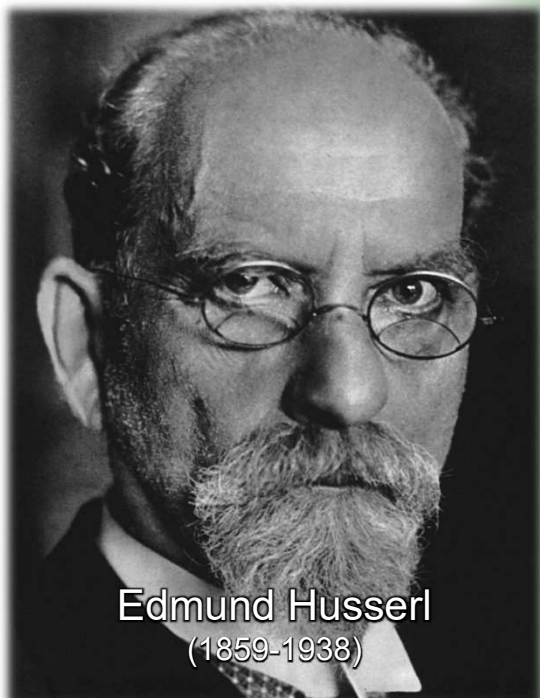
**Friedrich Nietzsche**  
(1844-1900)

## ☞ Continental Philosophy ☞

❖ "The foundational figure of this tradition is usually thought to be Hegel; other canonical figures include the other post-Kantian German Idealists (e.g., Fichte, Schelling), Schopenhauer, Kierkegaard, Marx, Nietzsche




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**Edmund Husserl**  
(1859-1938)

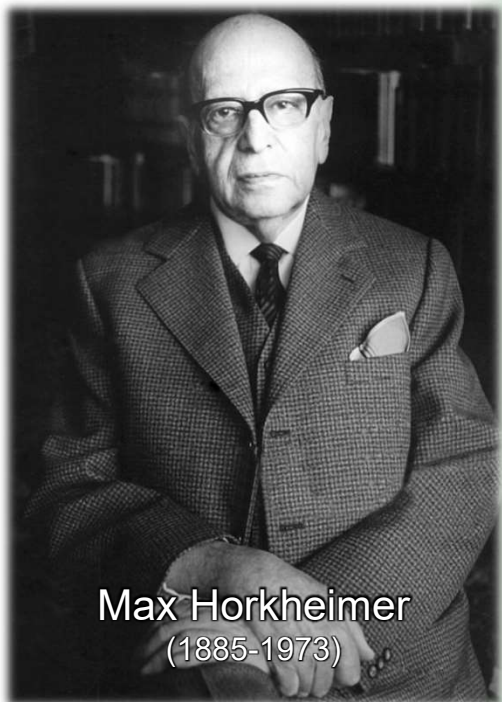
## ☞ Continental Philosophy ☞

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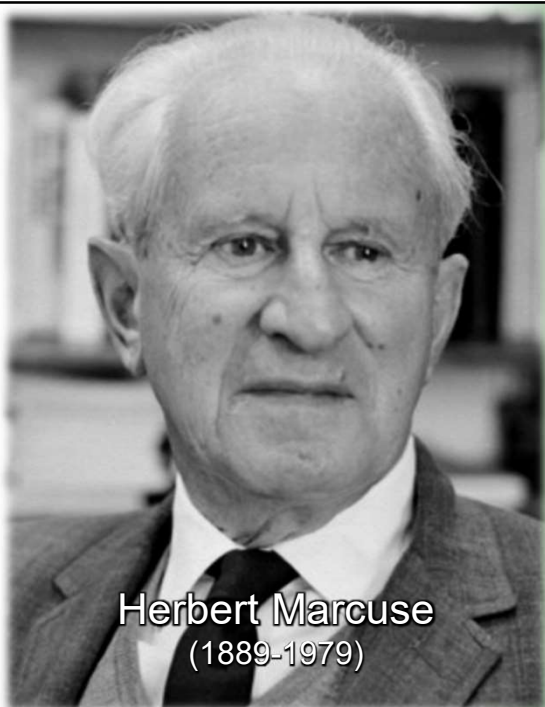
**Max Horkheimer**  
(1885-1973)

## ☞ Continental Philosophy ☞

❖ "The foundational figure of this tradition is usually thought to be Hegel; other canonical figures include the other post-Kantian German Idealists (e.g., Fichte, Schelling), Schopenhauer, Kierkegaard, Marx, Nietzsche, Husserl, Horkheimer




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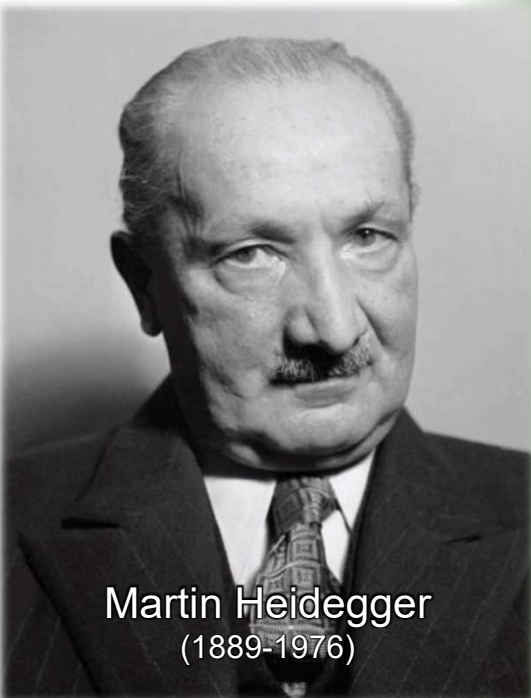
**Herbert Marcuse**  
(1889-1979)

## ☞ Continental Philosophy ☞

❖ "The foundational figure of this tradition is usually thought to be Hegel; other canonical figures include the other post-Kantian German Idealists (e.g., Fichte, Schelling), Schopenhauer, Kierkegaard, Marx, Nietzsche, Husserl, Horkheimer, Marcuse




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**Martin Heidegger**  
(1889-1976)

### ☞ Continental Philosophy ☞

❖ "The foundational figure of this tradition is usually thought to be Hegel; other canonical figures include the other post-Kantian German Idealists (e.g., Fichte, Schelling), Schopenhauer, Kierkegaard, Marx, Nietzsche, Husserl, Horkheimer, Marcuse, Heidegger




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**Hans-Georg Gadamer**  
(1900-2002)

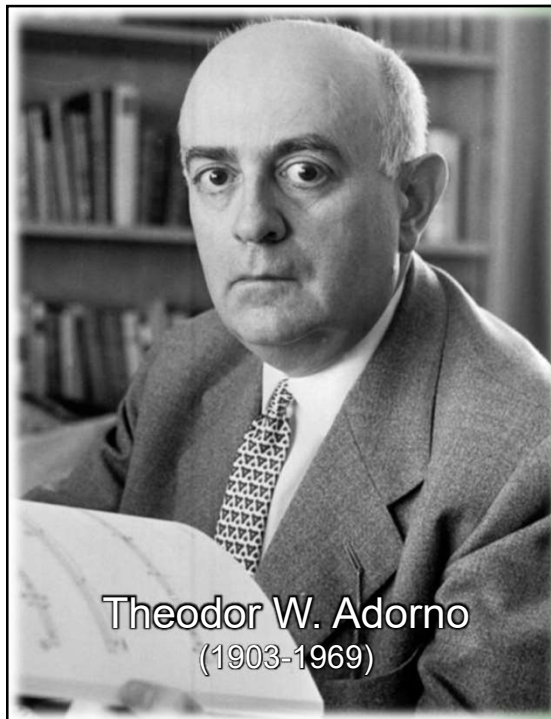
### ☞ Continental Philosophy ☞

❖ "The foundational figure of this tradition is usually thought to be Hegel; other canonical figures include the other post-Kantian German Idealists (e.g., Fichte, Schelling), Schopenhauer, Kierkegaard, Marx, Nietzsche, Husserl, Horkheimer, Marcuse, Heidegger, Gadamer



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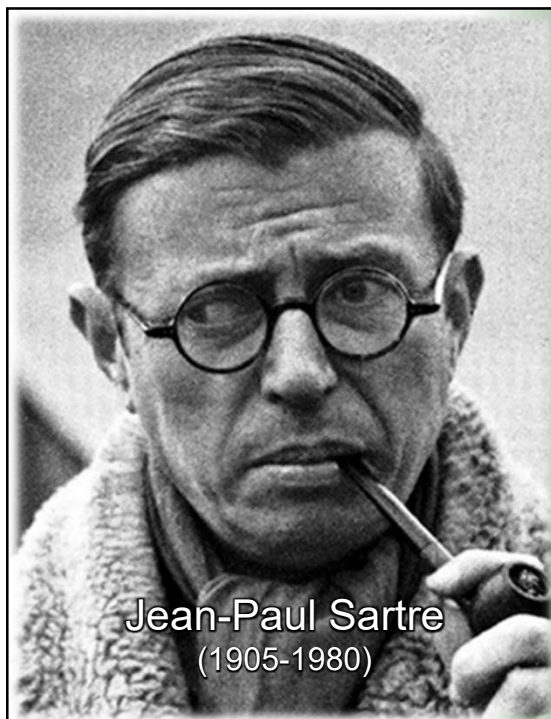
Theodor W. Adorno  
(1903-1969)

## ☞ Continental Philosophy ☞

❖ "The foundational figure of this tradition is usually thought to be Hegel; other canonical figures include the other post-Kantian German Idealists (e.g., Fichte, Schelling), Schopenhauer, Kierkegaard, Marx, Nietzsche, Husserl, Horkheimer, Marcuse, Heidegger, Gadamer, Adorno



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Jean-Paul Sartre  
(1905-1980)

## ☞ Continental Philosophy ☞

❖ "The foundational figure of this tradition is usually thought to be Hegel; other canonical figures include the other post-Kantian German Idealists (e.g., Fichte, Schelling), Schopenhauer, Kierkegaard, Marx, Nietzsche, Husserl, Horkheimer, Marcuse, Heidegger, Gadamer, Adorno, Sartre



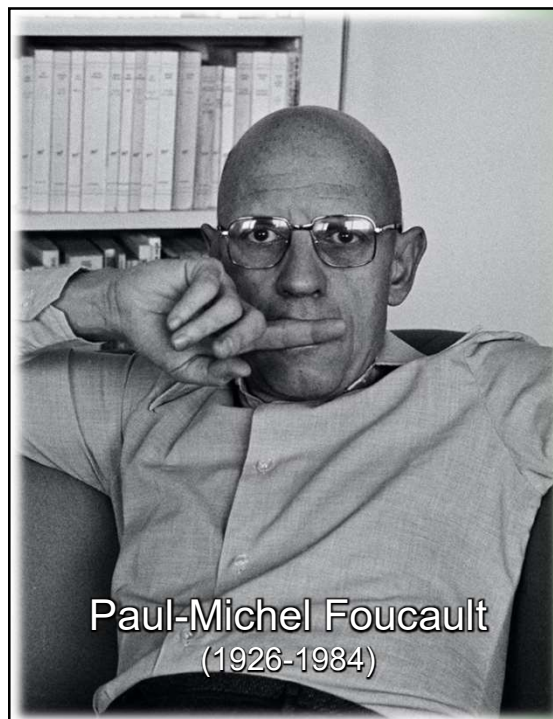
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Maurice Merleau-Ponty  
(1908-1961)

## ☞ Continental Philosophy ☞

❖ "The foundational figure of this tradition is usually thought to be Hegel; other canonical figures include the other post-Kantian German Idealists (e.g., Fichte, Schelling), Schopenhauer, Kierkegaard, Marx, Nietzsche, Husserl, Horkheimer, Marcuse, Heidegger, Gadamer, Adorno, Sartre, Merleau-Ponty



Paul-Michel Foucault  
(1926-1984)

## ☞ Continental Philosophy ☞

❖ "The foundational figure of this tradition is usually thought to be Hegel; other canonical figures include the other post-Kantian German Idealists (e.g., Fichte, Schelling), Schopenhauer, Kierkegaard, Marx, Nietzsche, Husserl, Horkheimer, Marcuse, Heidegger, Gadamer, Adorno, Sartre, Merleau-Ponty, Foucault







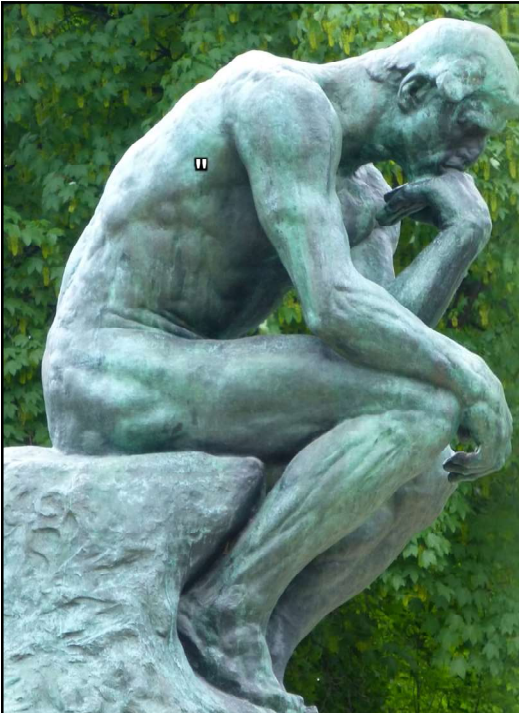
Jürgen Habermas

## ☞ Continental Philosophy ☞

- ❖ "The foundational figure of this tradition is usually thought to be Hegel; other canonical figures include the other post-Kantian German Idealists (e.g., Fichte, Schelling), Schopenhauer, Kierkegaard, Marx, Nietzsche, Husserl, Horkheimer, Marcuse, Heidegger, Gadamer, Adorno, Sartre, Merleau-Ponty, Foucault, and Habermas.




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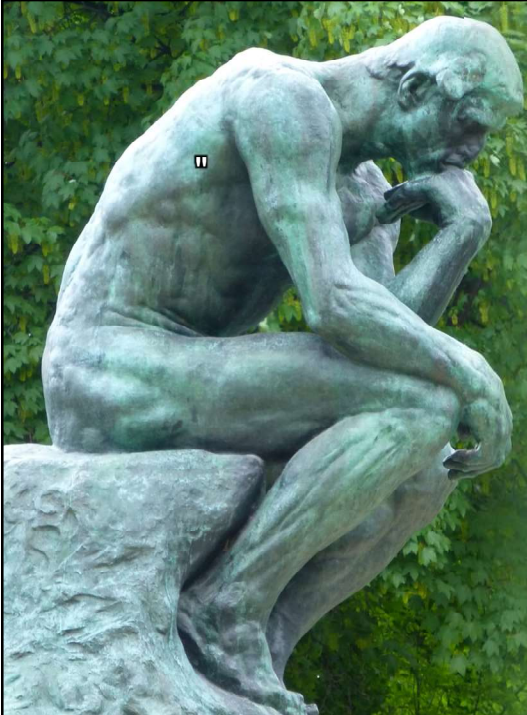


## ☞ Continental Philosophy ☞

- ❖ "So-called 'Continental philosophy' is not, however, a monolith; indeed, 'analytic philosophy,' before its demise at the hands of Quine and Sellars, was a far more coherent philosophical movement than the two hundred years of philosophy on the European Continent since Hegel.




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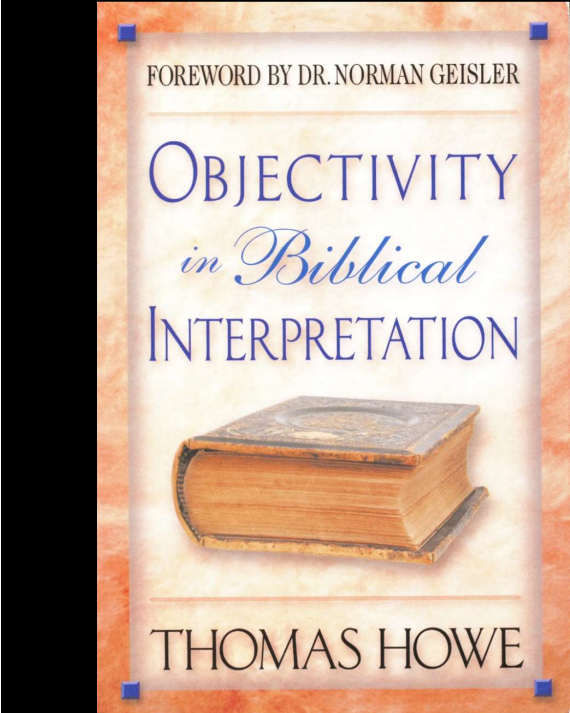
## ☞ Continental Philosophy ☞

❖ "'Continental philosophy' is more aptly characterized as a series of partly overlapping traditions in philosophy, some of whose figures have almost nothing in common with other."




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[<http://www.philosophicalgourmet.com/analytic.asp>]

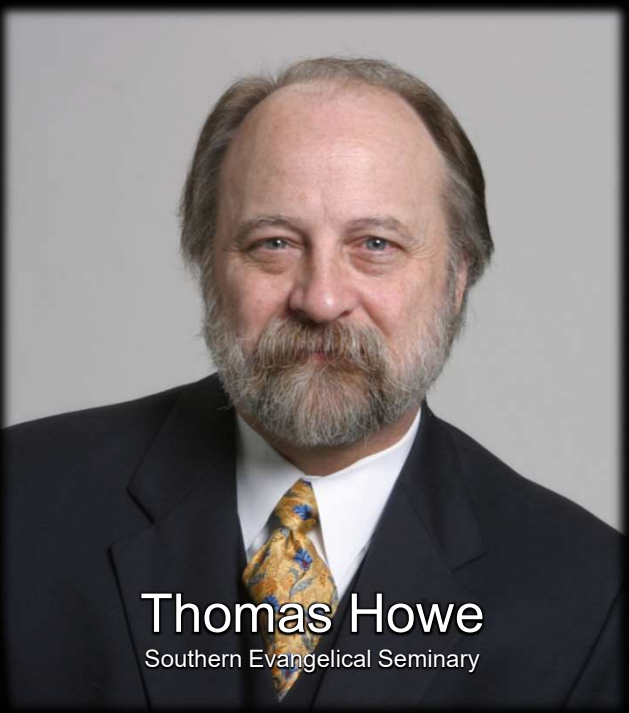


FOREWORD BY DR. NORMAN GEISLER

OBJECTIVITY  
*in Biblical*  
INTERPRETATION



THOMAS HOWE



Thomas Howe  
Southern Evangelical Seminary





*Classical philosophy is concerned also with the analysis of concepts and terms and the clarification of language, but it also seeks to synthesize its findings into a comprehensive view of all reality.*

*Classical philosophy goes beyond the supposition that the task of the philosopher is to merely clarify the language of other disciplines.*

*It maintains that philosophy has **its own body of knowledge** and can discover **truths about reality**.*

*Classical philosophy most often works philosophical questions back to basic questions of metaphysics.*

*It understands metaphysical issues in the classical categories of Plato and Aristotle, (e.g., form/matter; act/potency; substance/accidents).*



## According to Ayer

### PHILOSOPHY

*Categories of ...  
logic of ...  
glossary of ...  
scope of ...  
relation to other disciplines*

SECOND-ORDER DISCIPLINE

### NATURAL SCIENCES

PHYSICS  
CHEMISTRY  
BIOLOGY

FIRST-ORDER DISCIPLINES

## According to the Classical Tradition

### PHILOSOPHY

*act / potency  
form / matter  
particular / universal  
substance / accident  
essence / existence*

FIRST-ORDER  
DISCIPLINE

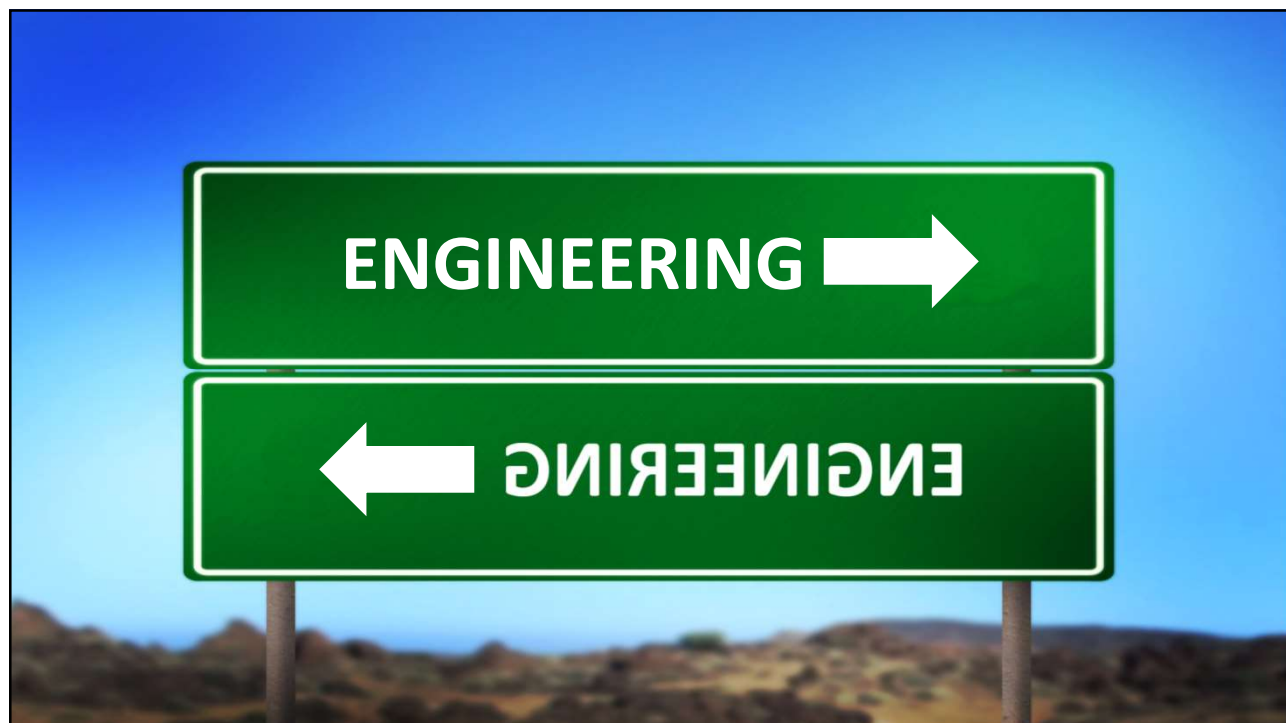
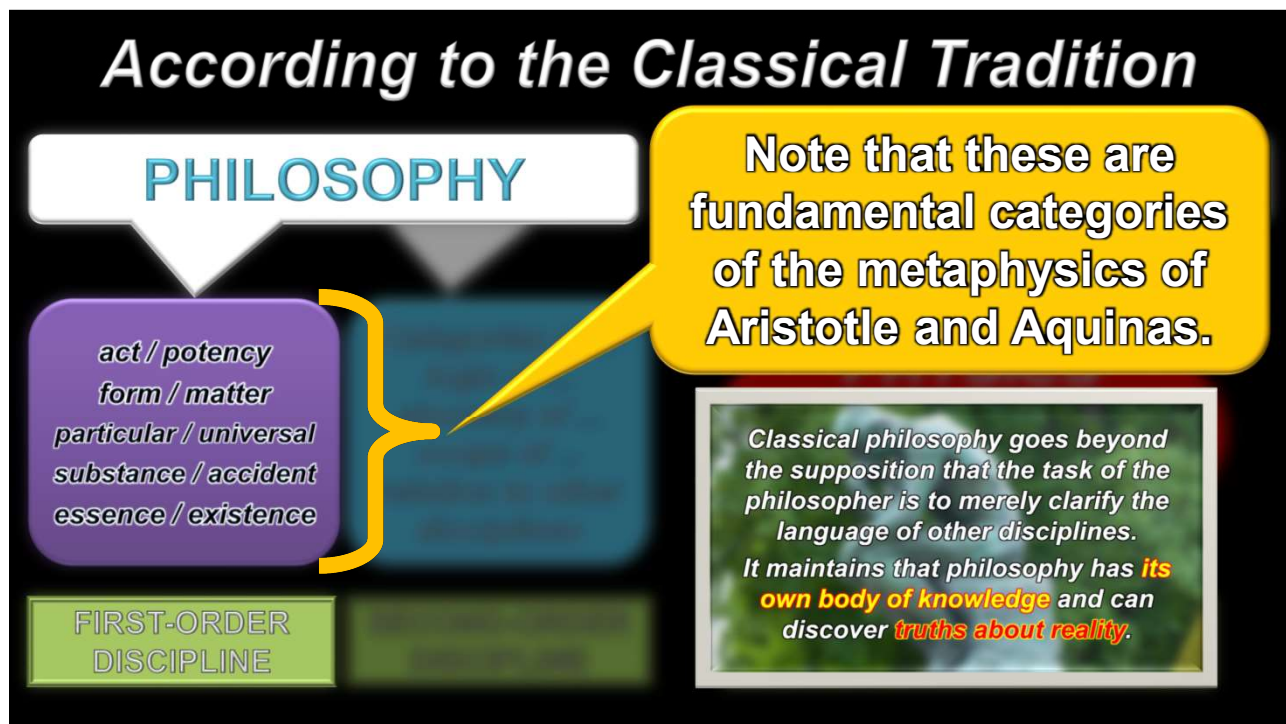
*Categories of ...  
logic of ...  
glossary of ...  
scope of ...  
relation to other  
disciplines*

SECOND-ORDER  
DISCIPLINE

### NATURAL SCIENCES

PHYSICS  
CHEMISTRY  
BIOLOGY

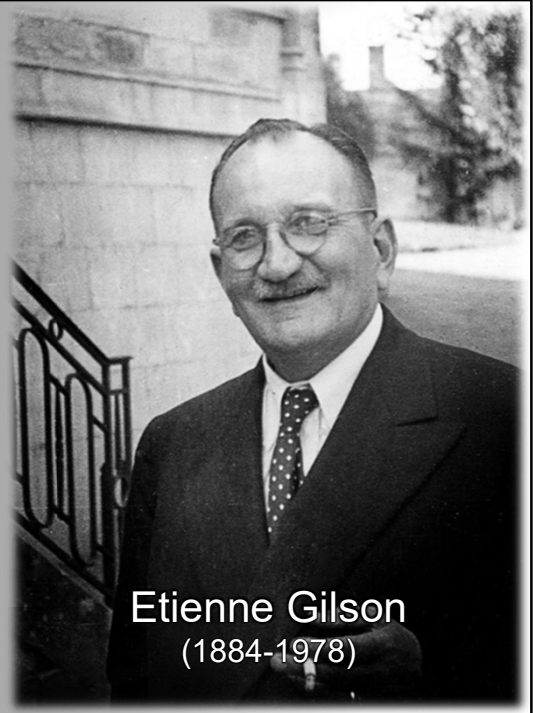
FIRST-ORDER DISCIPLINES





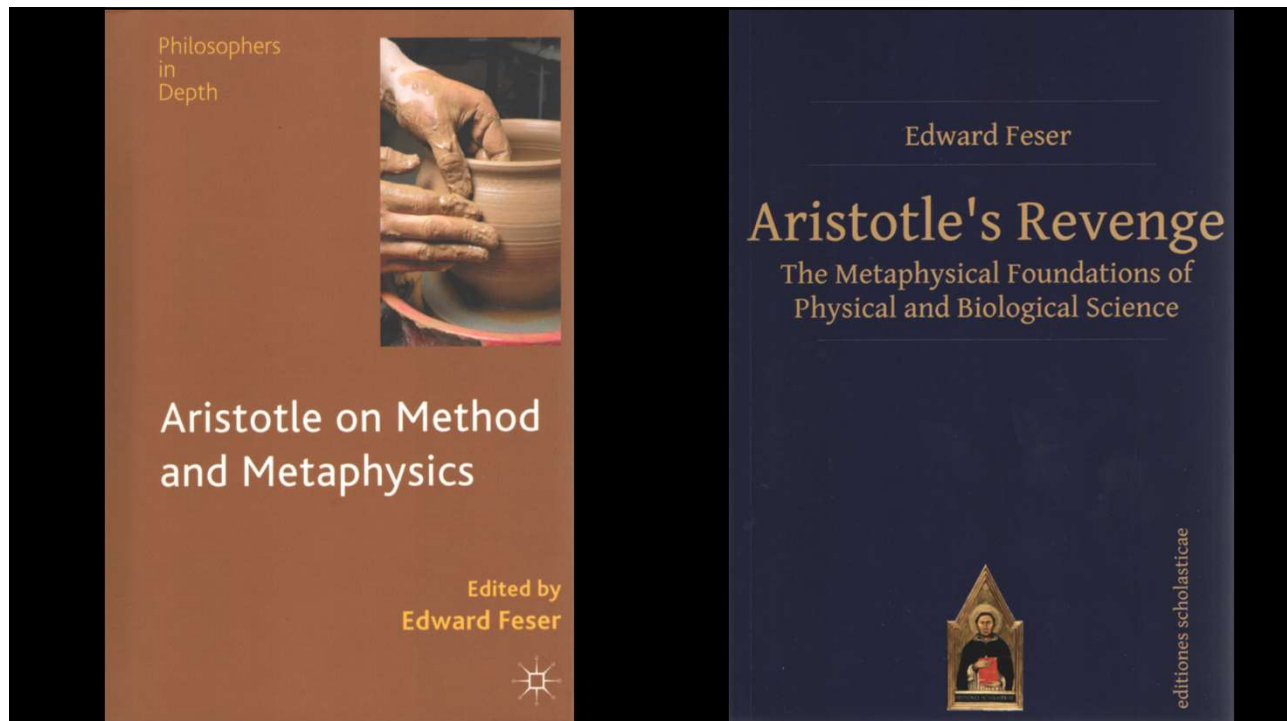
***"A philosopher talks  
about things, while  
a professor of  
philosophy talks  
about philosophy."***

*(Methodical Realism, p. 129)*

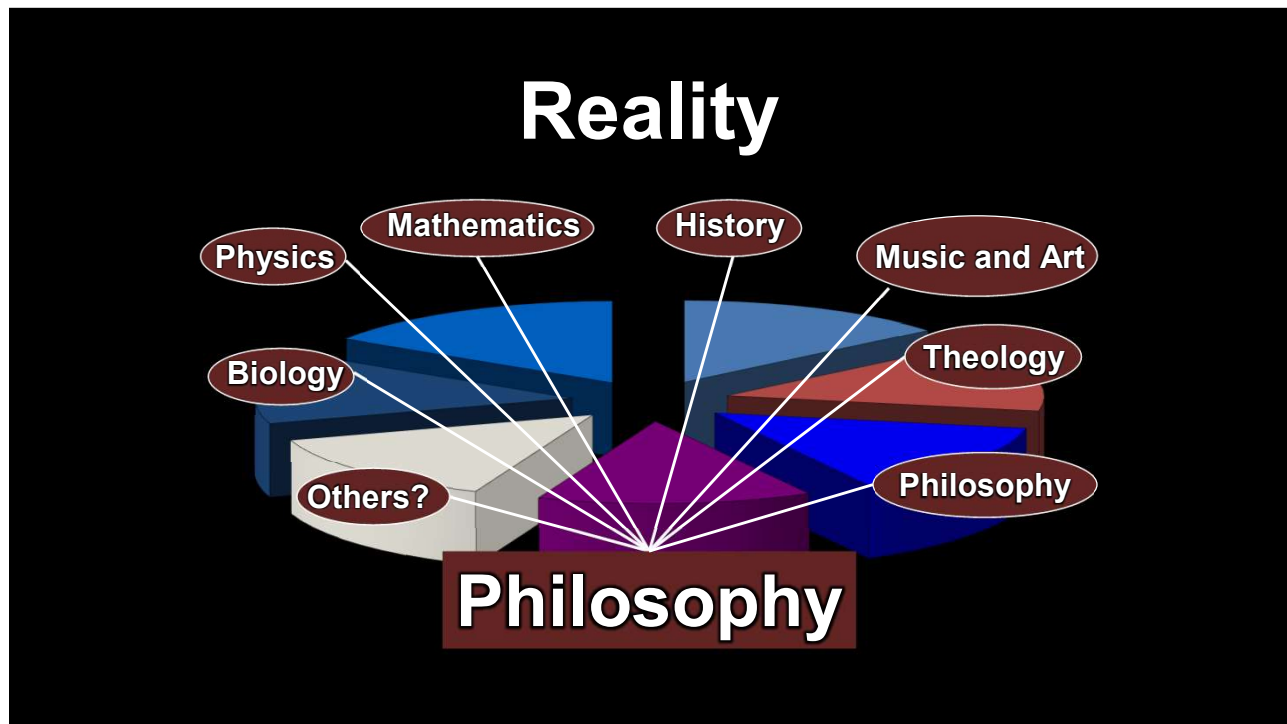


Etienne Gilson  
(1884-1978)

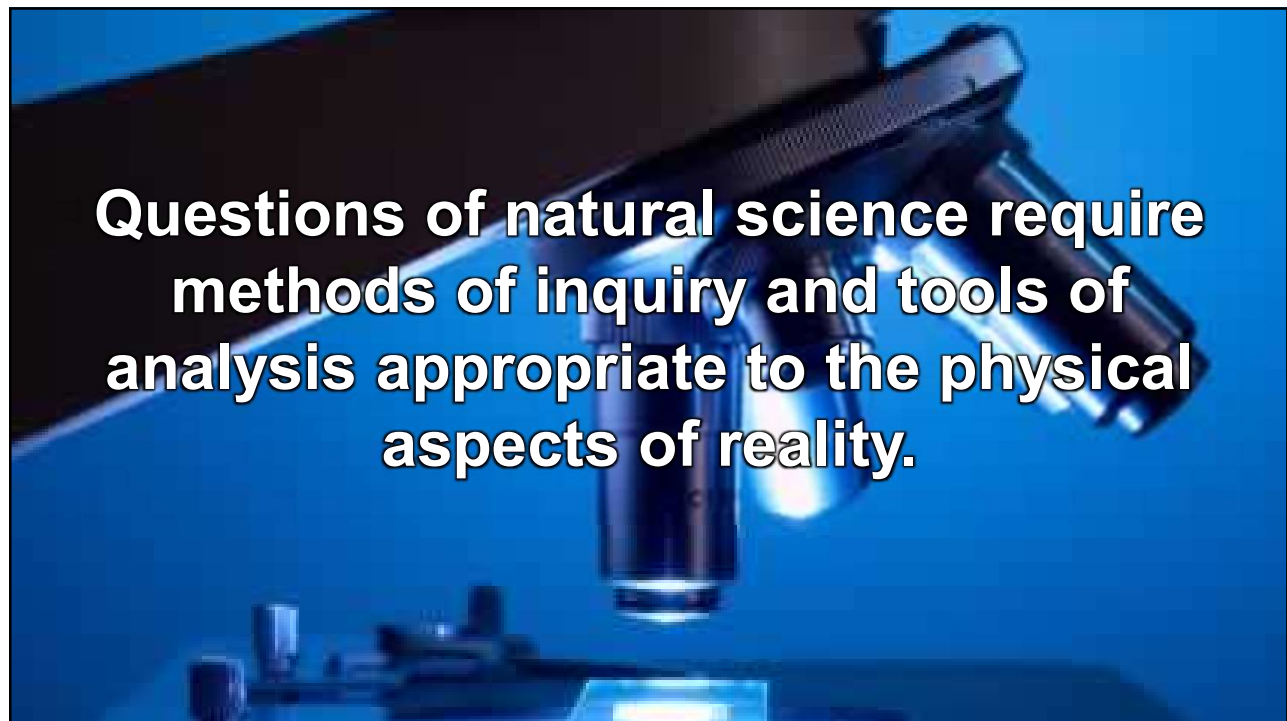
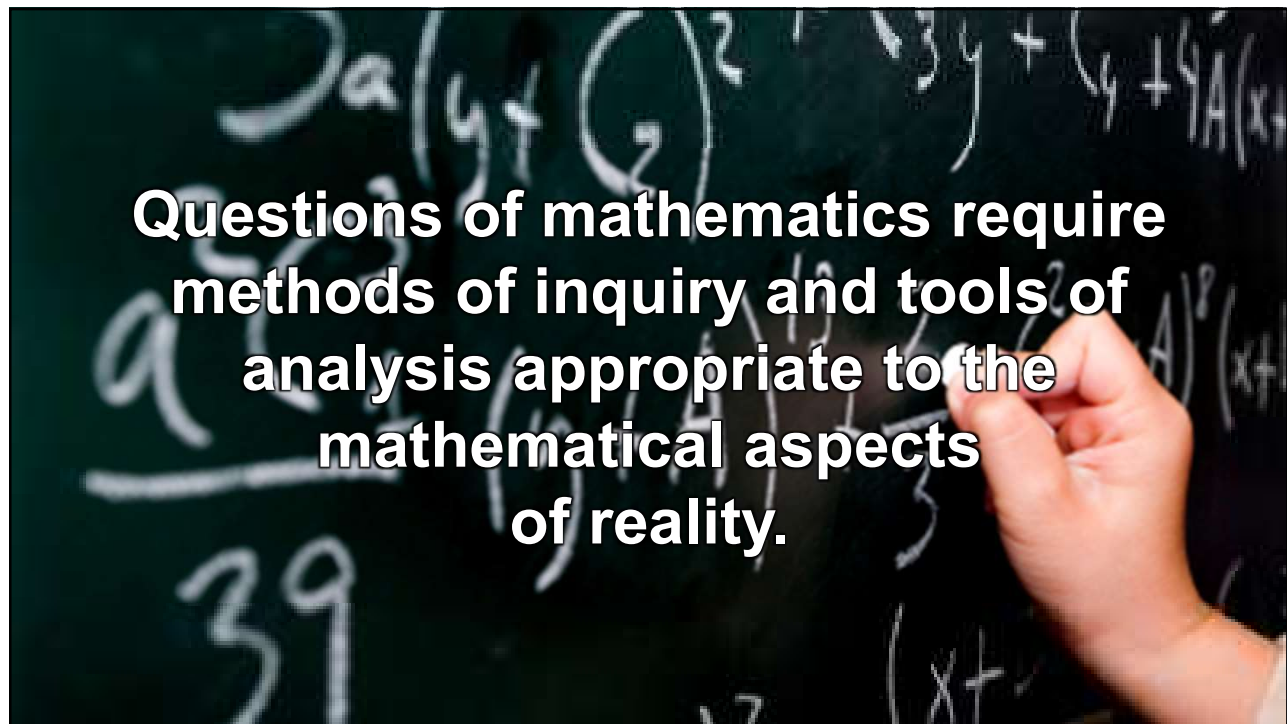
***Classical philosophy has fallen into  
much disrepute in modern and  
contemporary philosophy.  
Although ...***



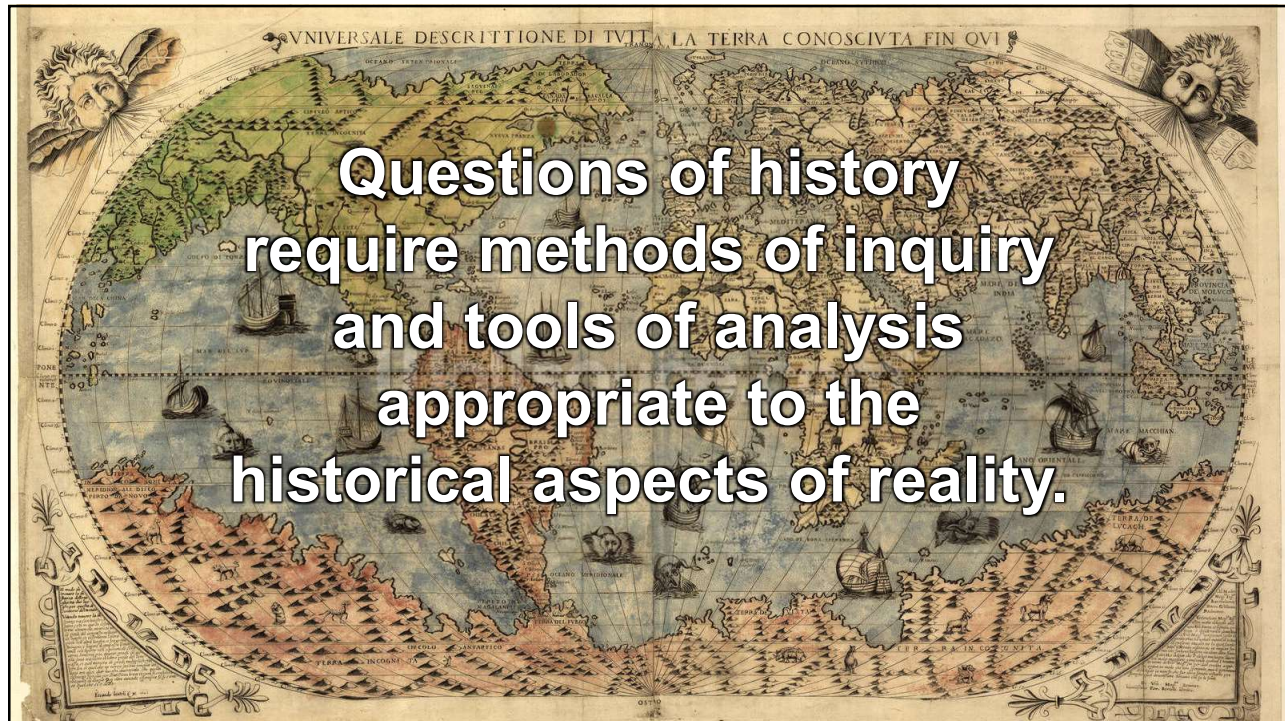




**Different aspects of reality require different methods of inquiry and tools of analysis.**







## ≈ Two Philosophical Mistakes ≈

### **The Lesser Mistake**

*taking the methods of inquiry and tools of analysis for one aspect of reality and illicitly using them for another aspect of reality*

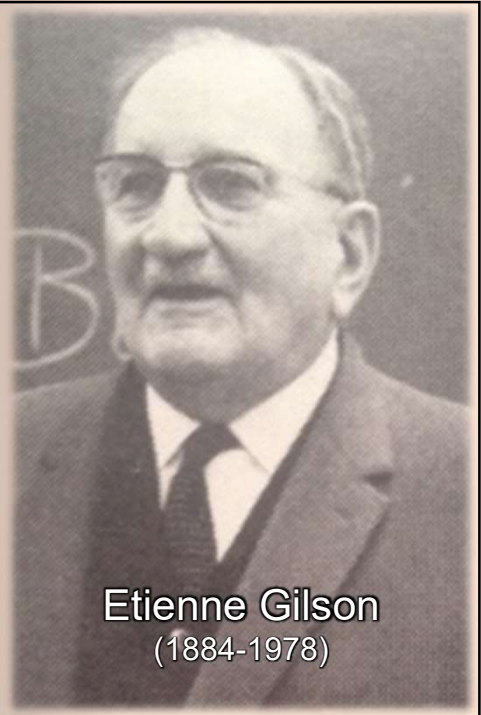
### **The Greater Mistake**

*taking the methods of inquiry and tools of analysis for one aspect of reality and illicitly using for reality as a whole*



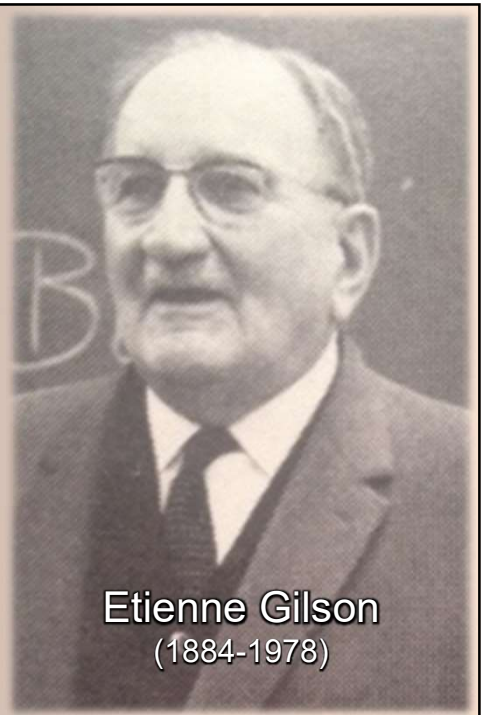


***"Metaphysical adventures are doomed to fail when their authors substitute the fundamental concepts of any particular science for those of metaphysics."***



Etienne Gilson  
(1884-1978)

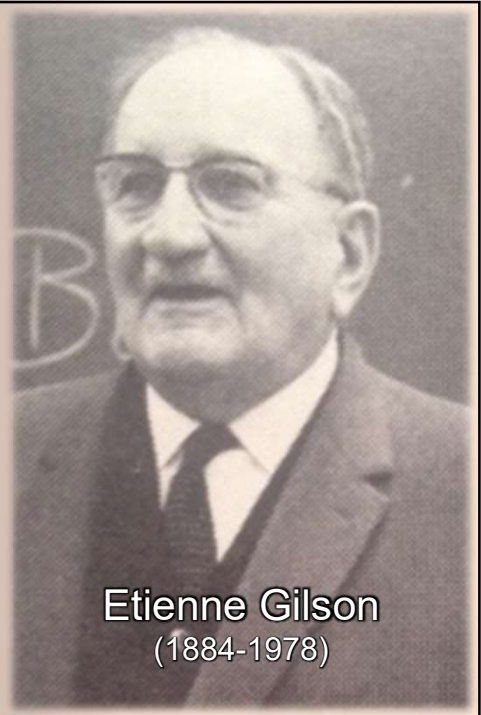
***"Theology, logic, physics, biology, psychology, sociology, economics are fully competent to solve their own problems by their own methods;"***



Etienne Gilson  
(1884-1978)

***"On the other hand ... as metaphysics aims at transcending all particular knowledge, no particular science is competent either to solve metaphysical problems, or to judge their metaphysical solutions."***

(Etienne Gilson, *The Unity of Philosophical Experience*, pp. 309-310).



Etienne Gilson  
(1884-1978)

Etienne Gilson

**THE  
UNITY OF  
PHILOSOPHICAL  
EXPERIENCE**

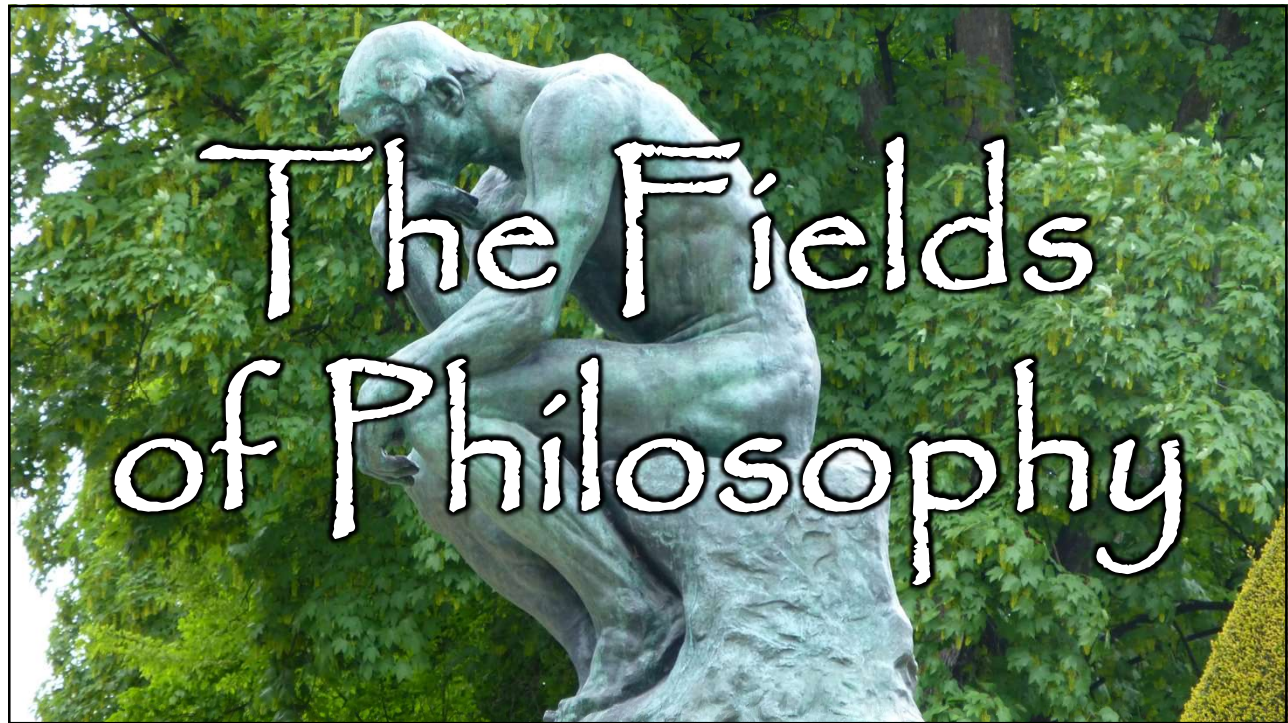
*The Medieval Experiment  
The Cartesian Experiment  
The Modern Experiment*

IGNATIUS



Etienne Gilson  
(1884-1978)





## Logic

- that field of philosophy that deals with the study of right reason or valid inferences and the attending fallacies, formal and informal.
- asks "What is a valid argument?"  
"What is fallacious reasoning?"

# Metaphysics

- that field of philosophy that deals with questions of the nature of reality
- asks "What is it to be real?"  
"How do things change yet remain the same?"

# Epistemology

- that field of philosophy that deals with questions of the knowledge of reality
- asks "How do I know what is real?"  
"Can my senses tell me everything there is to know about reality?"



# Ethics

- that field of philosophy that deals with questions of the nature of right actions
- asks "What ought I do?"
  - "Ought we to do good for its own sake, or for the sake of certain consequences, or something else?"

# Political Philosophy

- that field of philosophy that deals with questions of the nature of the state (government)
- asks "Are there certain rights that transcend the authority of the state?"
  - "Where does government derive its authority?"
  - "What is a right?"

# Philosophy of Religion

- that field of philosophy that deals with questions of the nature of God and religion
- asks "Does God exist?"
  - "Can His existence be rationally demonstrated?"
  - "What are God's attributes?"

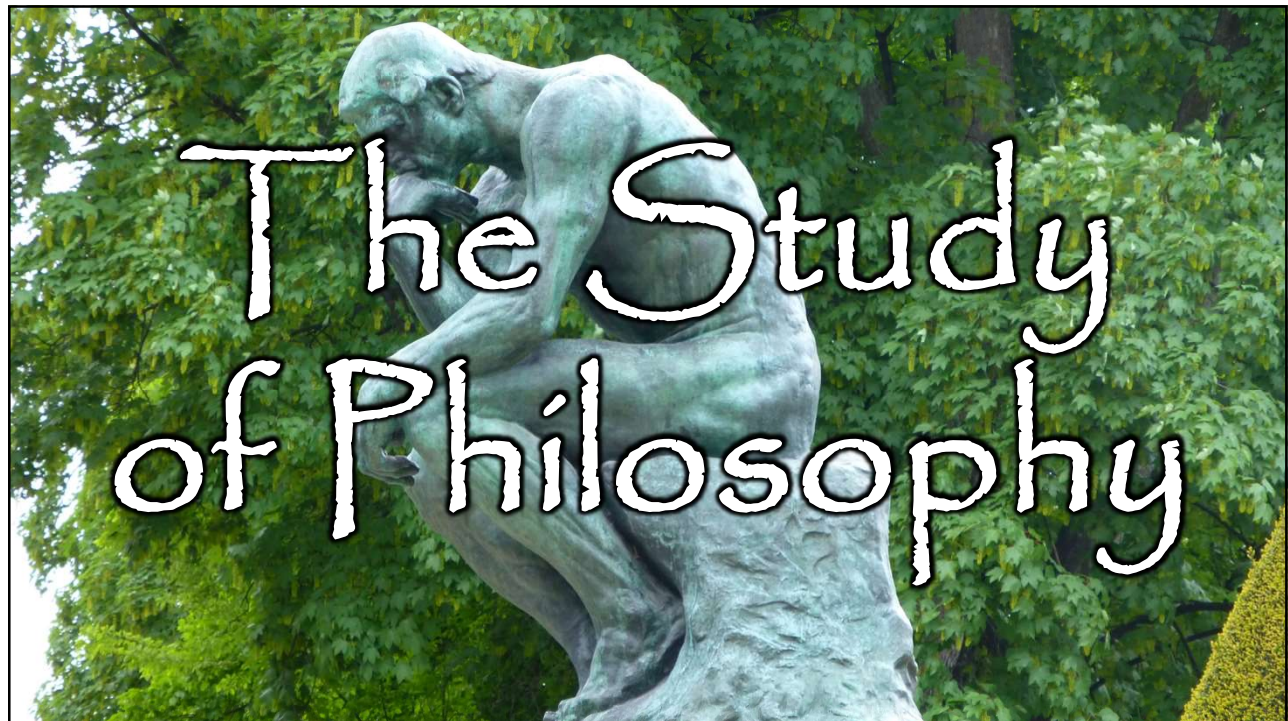
# Philosophy of Science

- that field of philosophy that deals with questions of the nature of science and scientific inquiry
- asks "Does science give us a real account of nature, or merely a model?"
  - "Are there things off limits to the scientific method?"
  - "What is the scientific method?"



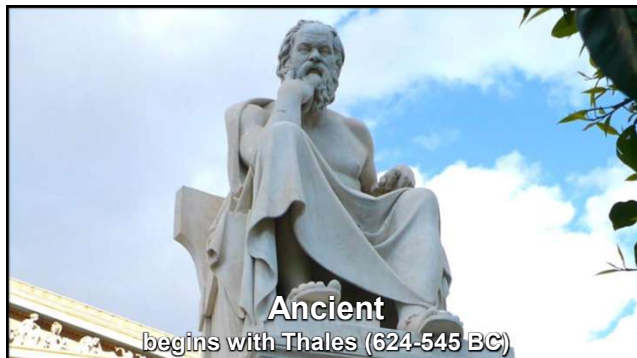
# Philosophy of ...

➤ mind, language, law, mathematics, history, education



# Historically

- ✓ follows the development of philosophy chronologically
- ✓ Philosophy is divided into four eras.





# Systematically

- follows the fields of philosophy (Logic; Metaphysics; Epistemology; Ethics; Political Philosophy; Philosophy of Religion; Philosophy of Science; Philosophy of ...)

# Individual Philosophers

- ✓ Aristotelianism, of Aristotle
- ✓ Thomism, of Thomas Aquinas
- ✓ Cartesianism, of Descartes
- ✓ Wittgensteinianism, of Wittgenstein
- ✓ Howe-ian?

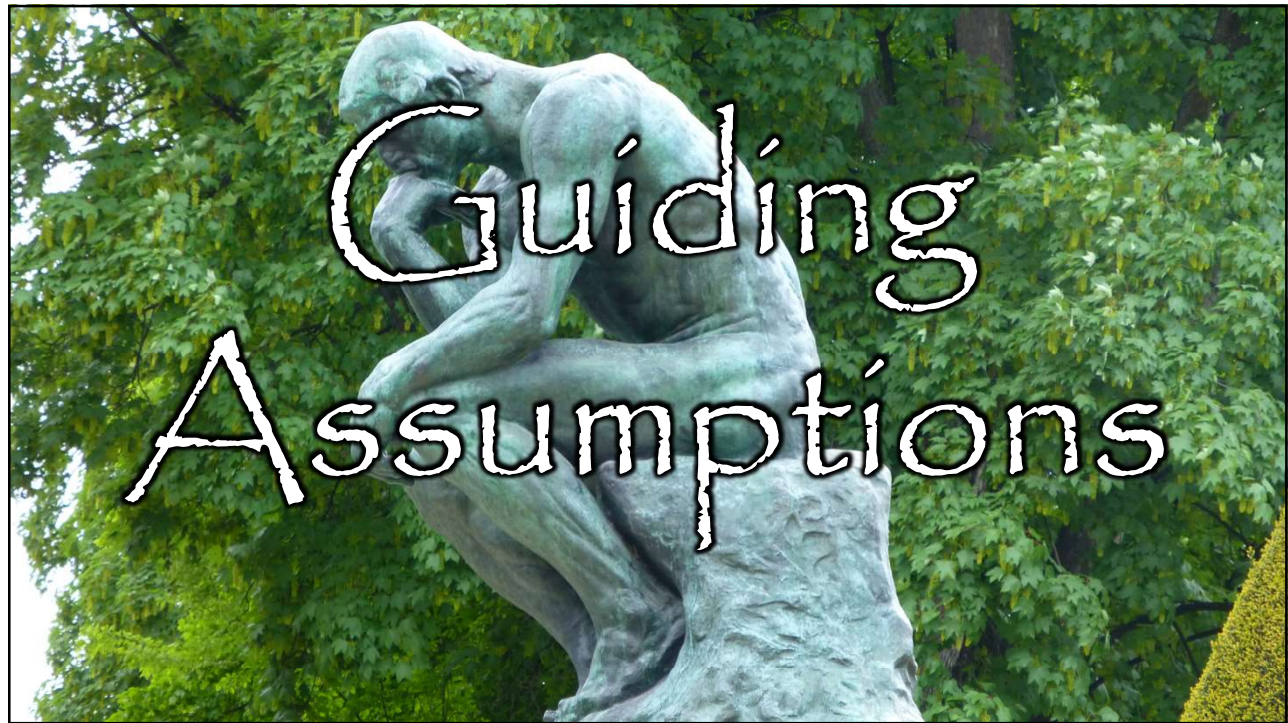
# Individual Philosophies

- ✓ British Empiricism (Locke, Berkeley, Hume)
- ✓ Phenomenology (Husserl)
- ✓ Process Philosophy (Alfred North Whitehead)
- ✓ Existentialism (Nietzsche, Sartre, Camus)

# Philosophical Problems

- ✓ Mind/Body Problem
- ✓ Freedom & Determinism
- ✓ Personal Identity and Immortality
- ✓ Faith and Reason



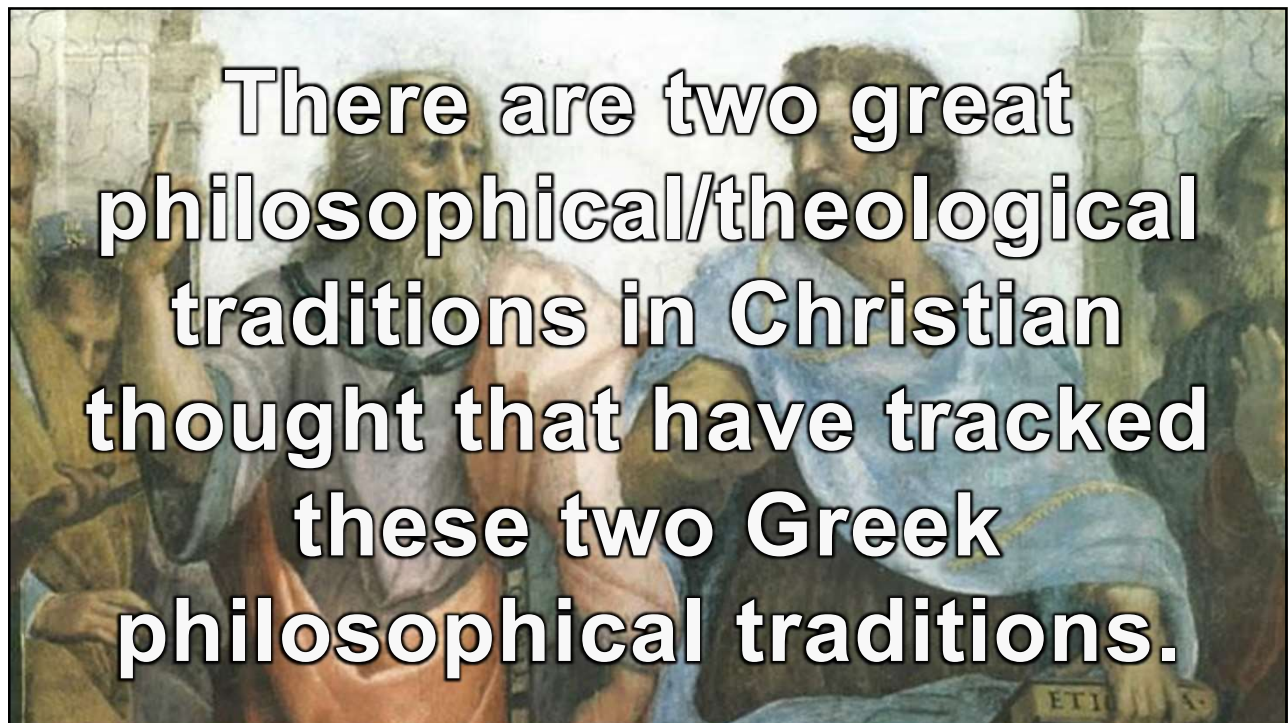


**As the title "Classical Philosophy" suggests, this course will be critiquing viewpoints from a particular philosophical perspective.**

**There are two great  
philosophical traditions in  
Western thought that have  
endured since the ancient  
Greeks.**



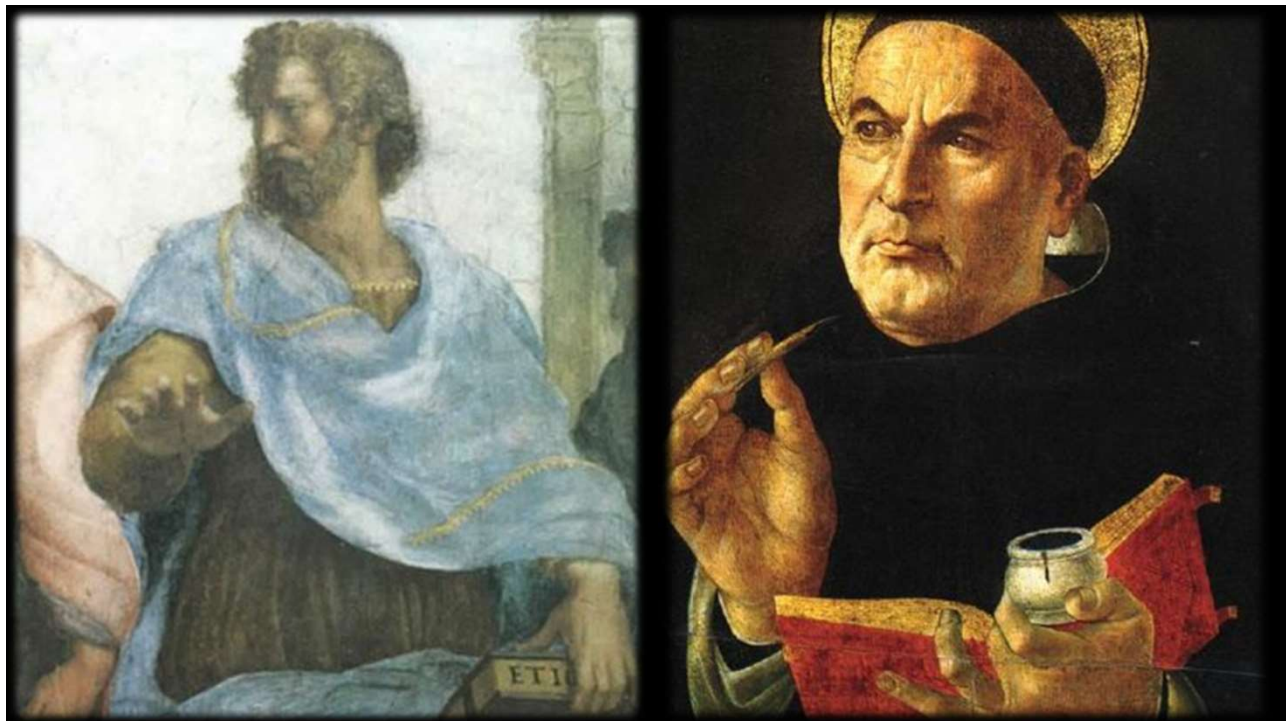
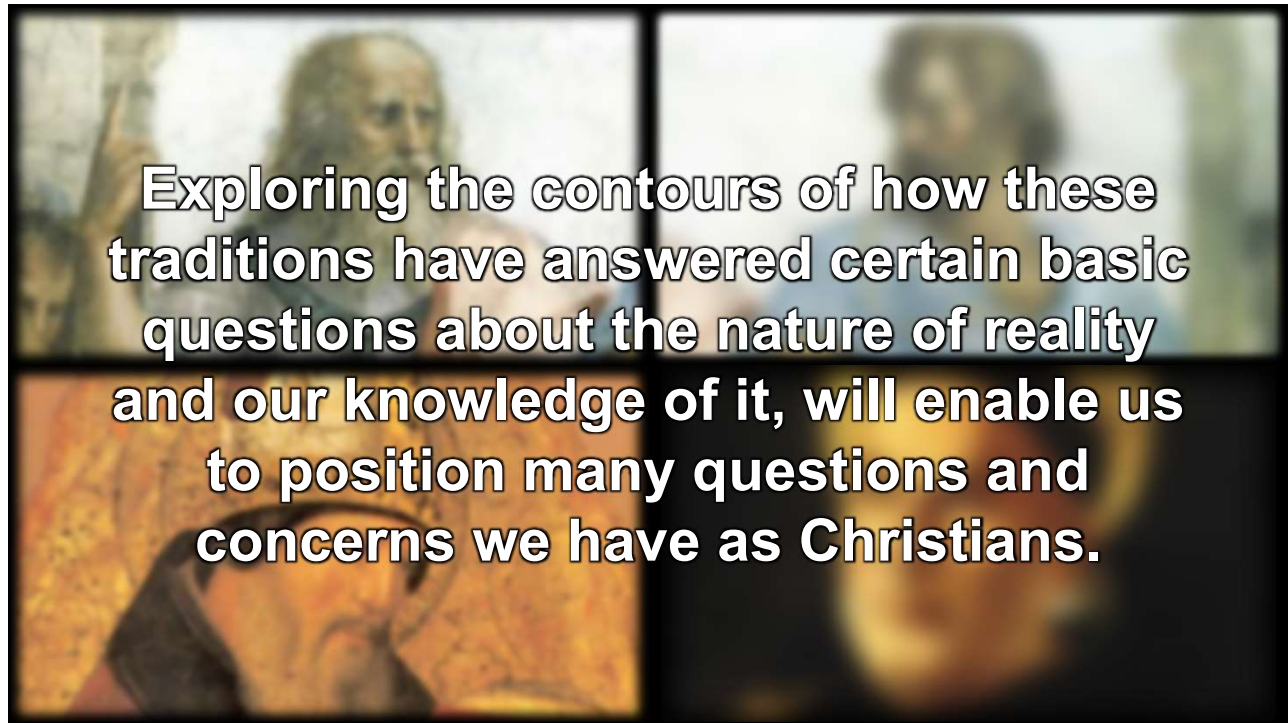


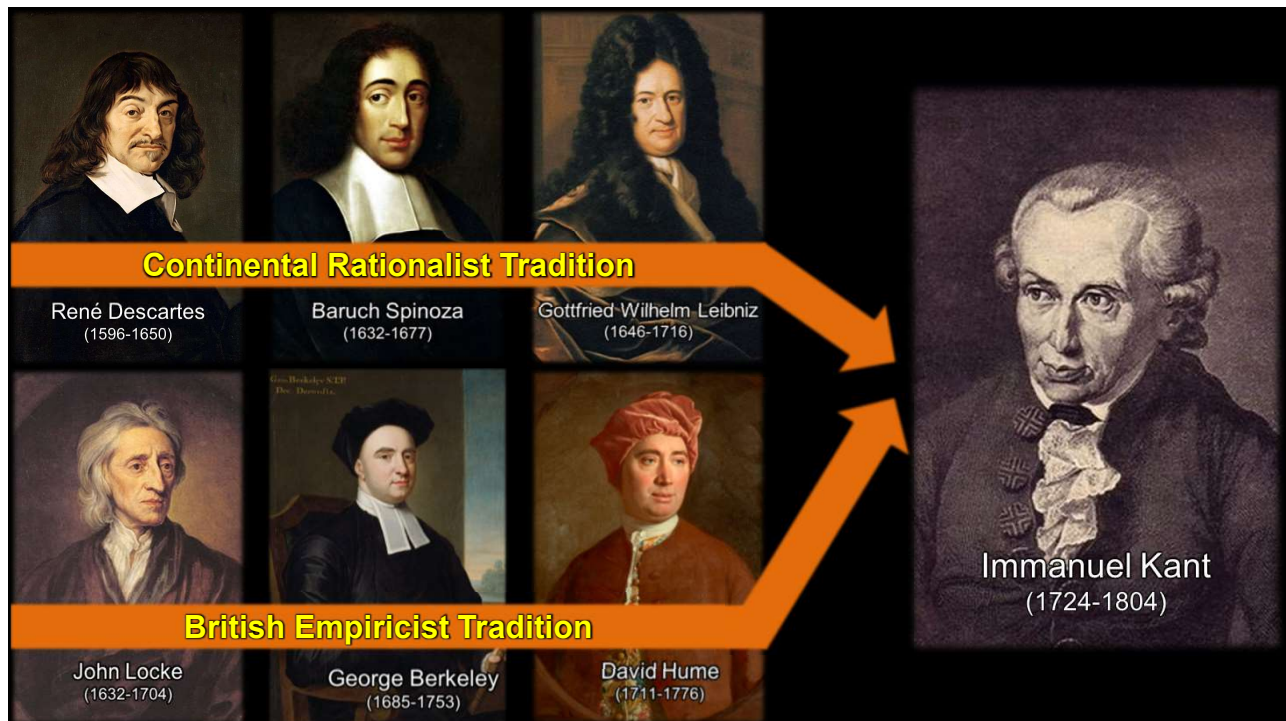










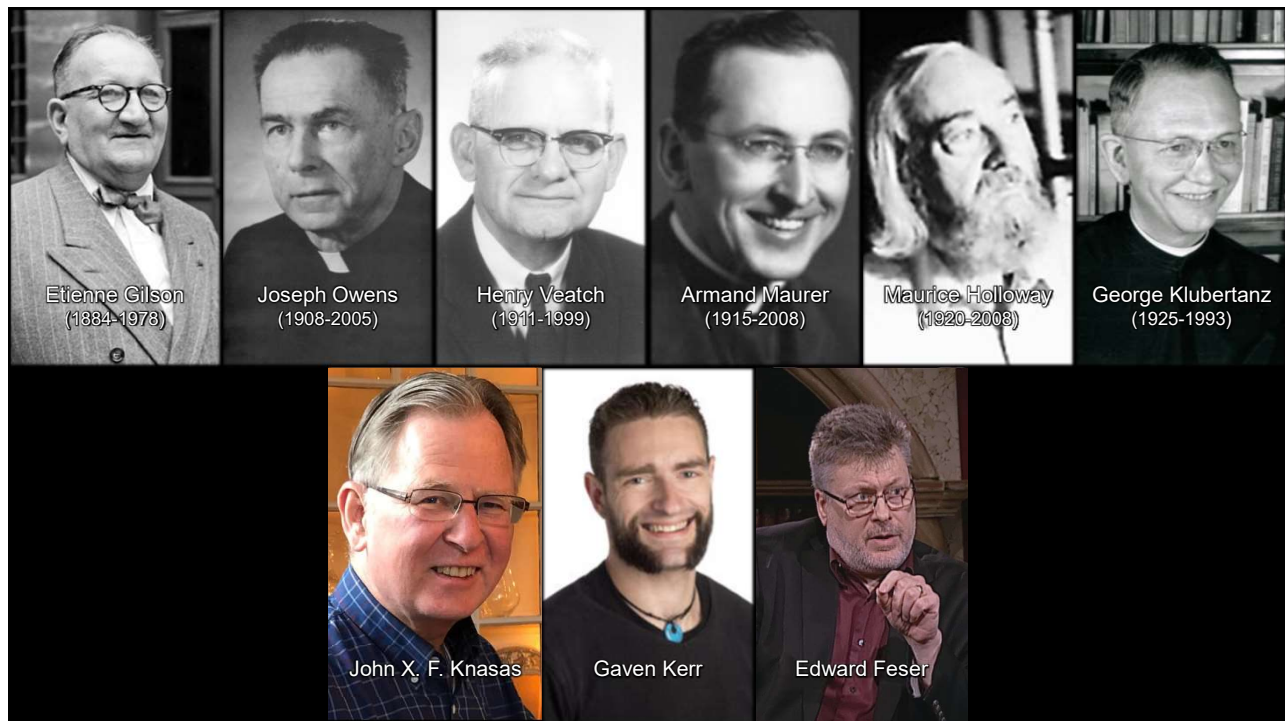


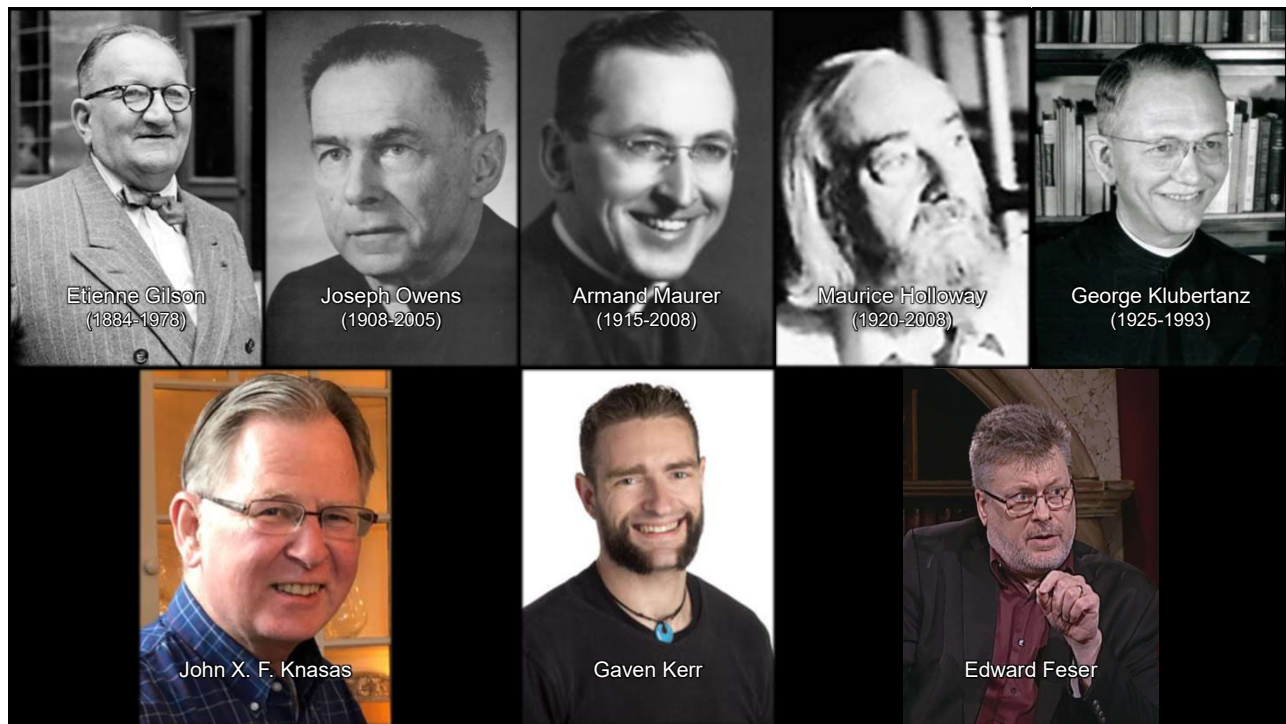








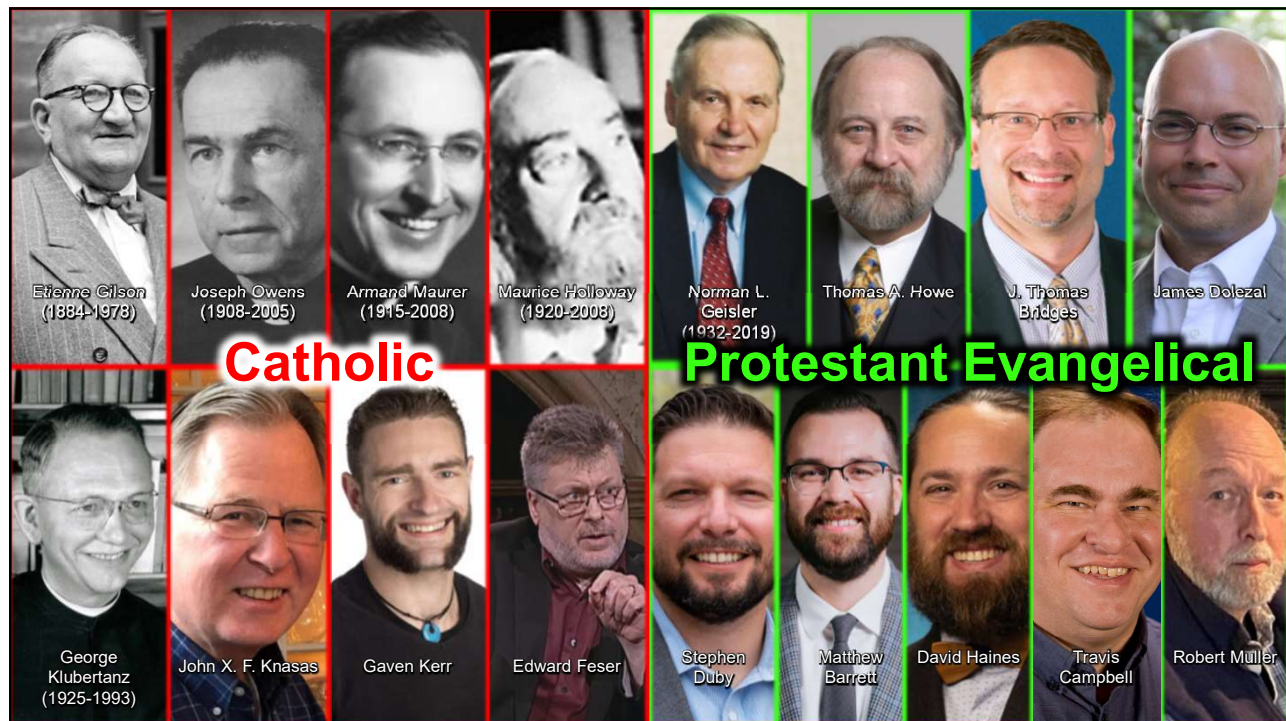






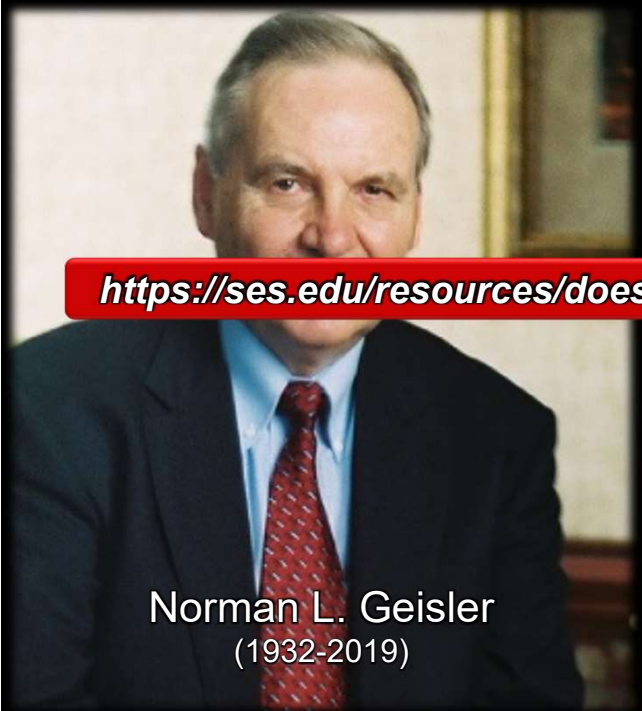












**Norman L. Geisler**  
(1932-2019)

<https://ses.edu/resources/does-thomism-lead-to-catholicism/>

**Southern Evangelical Seminary**

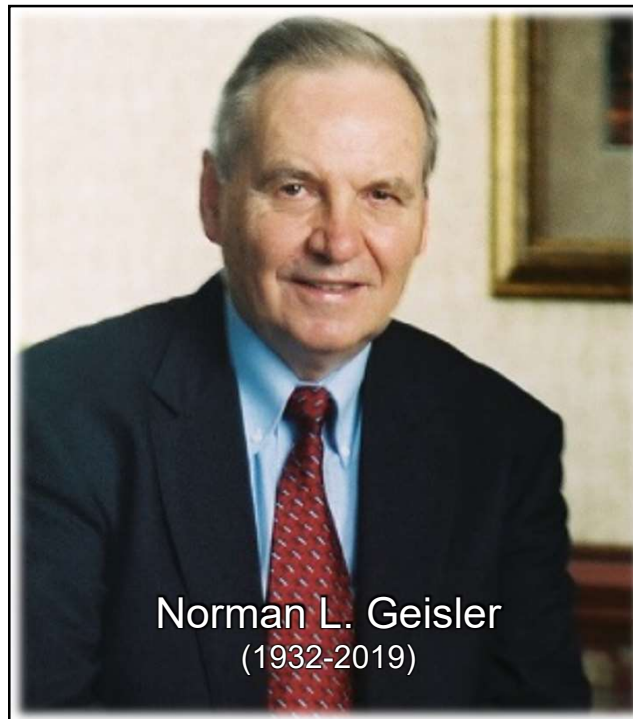
**DOES THOMISM LEAD TO CATHOLICISM?**

**What is 'Thomism' and Why Does It Matter Now?**

While there are different definitions of Thomism depending on whom you ask, as it relates to Southern Evangelical Seminary, Thomism or "Thomistic thinking" simply refers to the general agreement with the basic metaphysics, epistemology, and natural theology of the fourteenth century Christian philosopher and theologian Thomas Aquinas. This is certainly one thing that makes SES unique as our co-founder Dr. Norman Geisler intentionally wove his Thomistic thinking throughout our integrated approach to theology, philosophy, and apologetics.

As such, our Thomistic thinking largely forms the foundation from which we do natural theology and much of our philosophical apologetics. In addition, it provides a very strong supportive structure for natural law, hermeneutics, and more which enables us to coherently speak truth to the cultural issues we face today. As Dr. Geisler has said,

"As a matter of fact, I find Aquinas's philosophy to be a helpful prolegomena for evangelical theology. After all, Aquinas defended metaphysical realism, the correspondence view of truth, propositional revelation, classical apologetics, and classical theism—all of which are helpful to defending the evangelical positions. Indeed, one has to search hard, if not in vain, to find an evangelical philosopher who can match Aquinas in these areas."



## DOES THOMISM LEAD TO CATHOLICISM?

By Norman L. Geisler

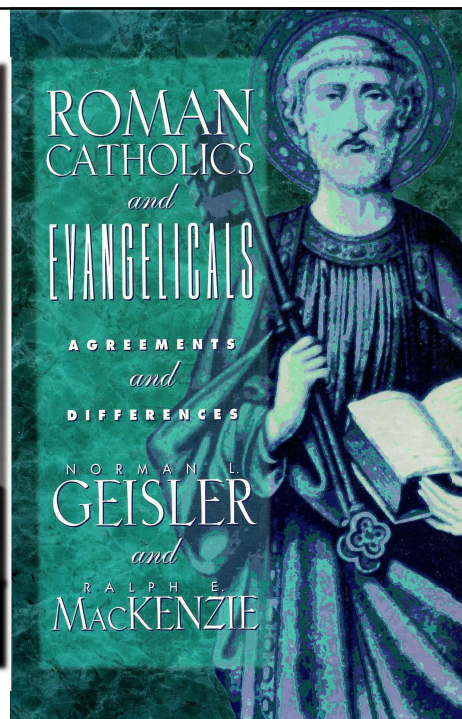
Thomas Aquinas, the great philosopher and theologian, was a Roman Catholic. And there are a growing number of non-Catholic scholars who have become Thomists. And some of these have become Roman Catholic. Is there a logical connection? Does Thomism lead to Catholicism? It is natural that one would want to examine this connection.

### The Reason Some Non-Catholic Thomists become Roman Catholic

There are a variety of reasons why non-Catholics become Roman Catholic. Let's examine some of them. There is the appeal of antiquity, unity, continuity, beauty, fraternity (or paternity), intellectuality, and a desire for certainty (see Geisler, *Is Rome the True Church?* chap. 8). Any one or more of these appeal to some evangelicals. It is noteworthy that none of these or combination of them is a valid test for truth.

Few evangelicals become Catholic because they became convinced by the study of Scripture that Rome is the true Church. Hardly anyone reasons his way to Rome purely by an objective study of the evidence. For example, one recent convert to Catholicism wrote, "My family is Catholic. They wanted me to return, and the Bible says we should honor our parents!" It is clear that none of these reasons is a good test for the truth of a religion for by the same logic one could argue for becoming a Hindu, Buddhist, or even an atheist, if their family belonged to that group. Or, one could become Eastern Orthodox, if he was looking for a tradition older than his.

We have weighed the many reasons some evangelicals have become Catholic (in *Is Rome the True Church?*), and almost no one said it was because their study of Thomistic philosophy led them there. As for the appeal of the intellectual tradition in Catholicism, I have a Ph.D. in philosophy from a Catholic (Jesuit) institution and have never once been tempted to become a Roman Catholic. I have used my scholarly training in both traditions to compare them (see







Richard Bennett  
(1938-2019)

