

Oleksandr Kulyk

# A Brief Introduction to ANALYTIC PHILOSOPHY



**Oleksandr Kulyk**

**A Brief Introduction to  
Analytic Philosophy**

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This brief introduction is for people who want to know the leading approaches to philosophy in the twentieth century in English-speaking countries but do not have much time to study them. The book contains texts of lectures and quizzes with explained answers.

By the end of this book, you will understand what analysis is and how to practice it in a philosophical way. Moreover, you will be able to talk confidently about some of the great ideas of such philosophers as L. Wittgenstein, B. Russell, G. E. Moore, A. Ayer, J. Austin, W. V. O. Quine, P. F. Strawson, and more.

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Це видання розраховане на читачів, які бажають отримати уявлення про основні теорії аналітичної філософії.

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## PREFACE

Welcome to the Introduction to Analytic Philosophy course. We will learn the leading approaches to philosophy in the twentieth century in the UK and the USA.

My name is Oleksandr Kulyk. I am a professor of philosophy. I have taught philosophy courses at universities for 15 years, and analytic philosophy is one of my favorite subjects to teach. I truly believe learning analytic philosophy helps students practice logical consistency and clearly articulated reasoning.

By the end of this course, you will understand what analysis is and how to practice it in a philosophical way. Moreover, you will be able to talk confidently about some of the great ideas of such philosophers as Ludwig Wittgenstein, Bertrand Russell, George Moore, Alfred Ayer, John Austin, Willard Van Orman Quine, Peter Strawson, and more.

This course contains lectures and philosophical texts, and every section is followed by a quiz to make sure you understand the essentials.

## Section 1

### **COURSE DESCRIPTION**

Let me tell you a little bit about what my course will be like.

The course is divided into eight sections. The first one introduces the course content. The second explains the characteristic features of analysis and analytic philosophy. Then we learn about the thoughts of early analysts and the doctrines of different phases in the development of analytic philosophy, such as logical atomism, logical positivism, linguistic philosophy, and late-twentieth-century analytic philosophy. The last section is a summary of the course.

For each section of the course, there is a short lecture that you can read at your own pace. There will also be three assigned readings, which I highly recommend you complete because you will get a lot more out of the course and lectures if you read the works of the philosophers that I talk about. I have included an article by Moore and parts of books by Wittgenstein and Ayer. You will find links to these readings in the third, fourth, and fifth sections, respectively.

Moreover, there are multiple choice quizzes at the end of the majority of the sections. Three of them are about the content of the assigned readings. There are also other quizzes designed to help you distill the information covered in the lectures.

The course finishes with a final exam in the form of a multiple-choice quiz that contains ten questions. You will also be provided with information on how to continue studying this subject should you wish to.

## Section 2

### WHAT IS ANALYTIC PHILOSOPHY?

*At the end of this section, you will be able to*

- explain what analysis is,
- talk confidently about three characteristic features of analytic philosophy, and
- list five phases in the development of analytic philosophy.

This is the introductory lecture to the analytic philosophy course. I will try to give you key information about the characteristic features of analytic philosophy and the differences between it and continental philosophy.

To start with, I want to tell you that analytic philosophy is the leading approach to philosophy in the twentieth century in such English-speaking countries as Great Britain and the USA.

There are many analytic philosophers among the prominent thinkers of the twentieth century. Open any book on the history of Western philosophy and you will encounter the names of analytic philosophers such as Russell, Wittgenstein, Austin, Moore, and Quine.

Analytic philosophy differs significantly from other traditions of Western philosophy. And when we say “continental philosophy,” we mean all of twentieth-century Europe’s philosophical schools with the exception of analytic philosophy.

Analytic philosophy is not solely an Anglophone-country phenomenon. Ludwig Wittgenstein, one of the most important analytic philosophers, was Austrian. He wrote his famous philosophical writings in German. And so did Gottlob Frege and members of the Vienna circle, whose ideas were highly important for analytic philosophy. Moreover, we know that there are proponents of analytic philosophy in many European countries, such as Poland and Scandinavian countries.

Thus, although the geographical factor and the factor of language contribute significantly to the distinction between analytic philosophy and continental philosophy, the differences between the philosophical matters that the two tendencies concern themselves with are more dominant. Let us focus on those significant details now.

Analytic philosophy and continental philosophy are significantly different in methodological terms. Continental philosophy primarily addresses large questions in a synthetic or integrative way, whereas analytic philosophy is concerned with analysis. Analytic philosophy actually derives its name from analysis. Analytic philosophers think that, if you want to understand something, you need to research its building blocks.

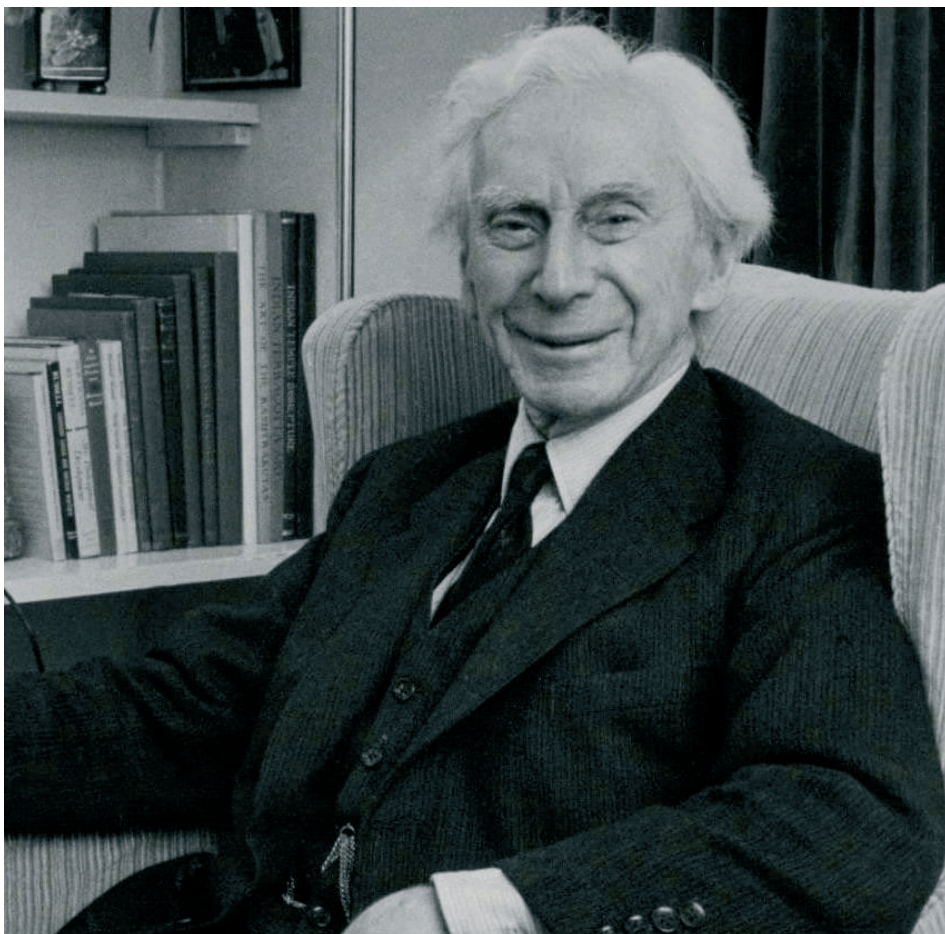
So what is analysis? It is a method of seeking to understand a subject matter by becoming aware of its composition. Undoubtedly, many philosophical traditions apply analysis. However, the methodological program of analytic philosophy has some distinguishing features. First, the thinkers of analytic philosophy do not apply all forms of analysis; rather, they primarily apply logical and linguistic analysis. Second, they do not think that it is necessary to use other methods that are popular within the framework of continental philosophy.

There is also a difference between analytic philosophy and continental philosophy when it comes to understanding the proper approach to constructing philosophical reflections. Analytic philosophers not only interpret philosophizing as a process of constructing theoretical reasoning as rational, logically consistent, and clearly and rigorously argued but also practice it in this way. That is why many researchers emphasize that analytic philosophy is a particular style of philosophizing that differs from the styles of continental philosophy. Compare Russell's and Derrida's styles of philosophizing, for example. They are dramatically different. These very peculiarities of philosophizing have enabled analytic philosophy to be a problem-solving activity.

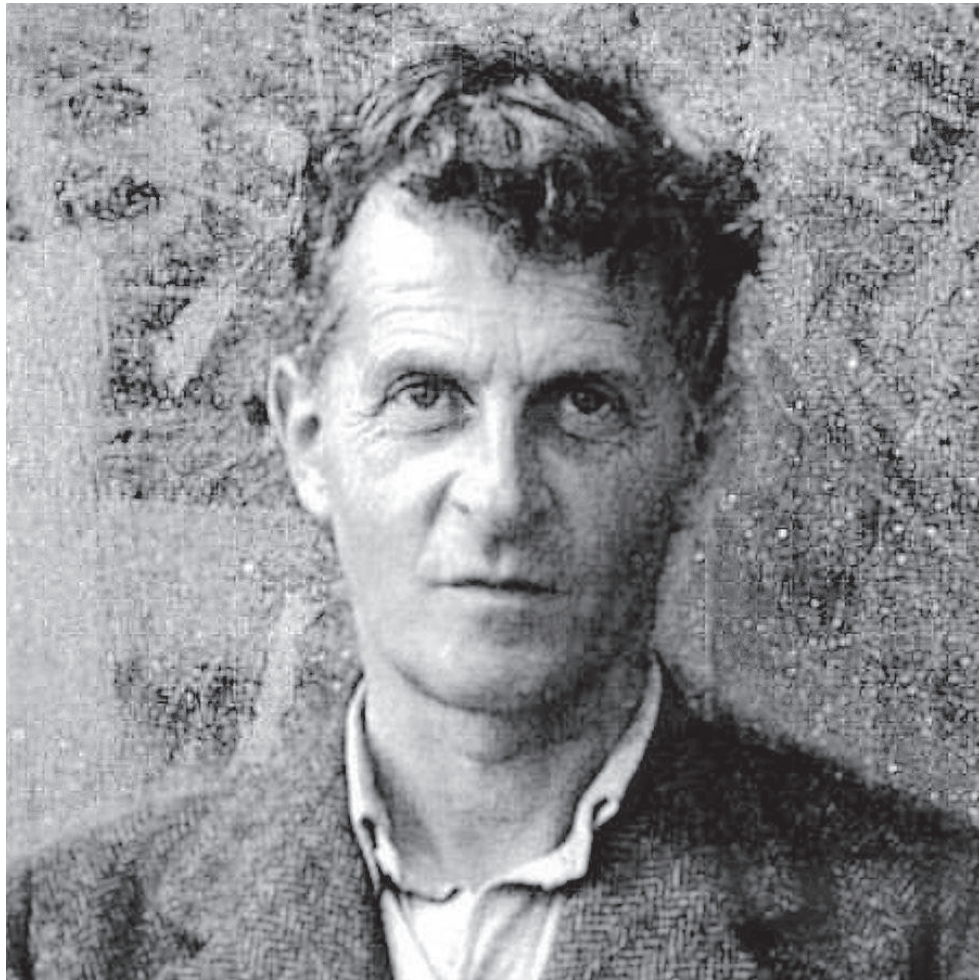




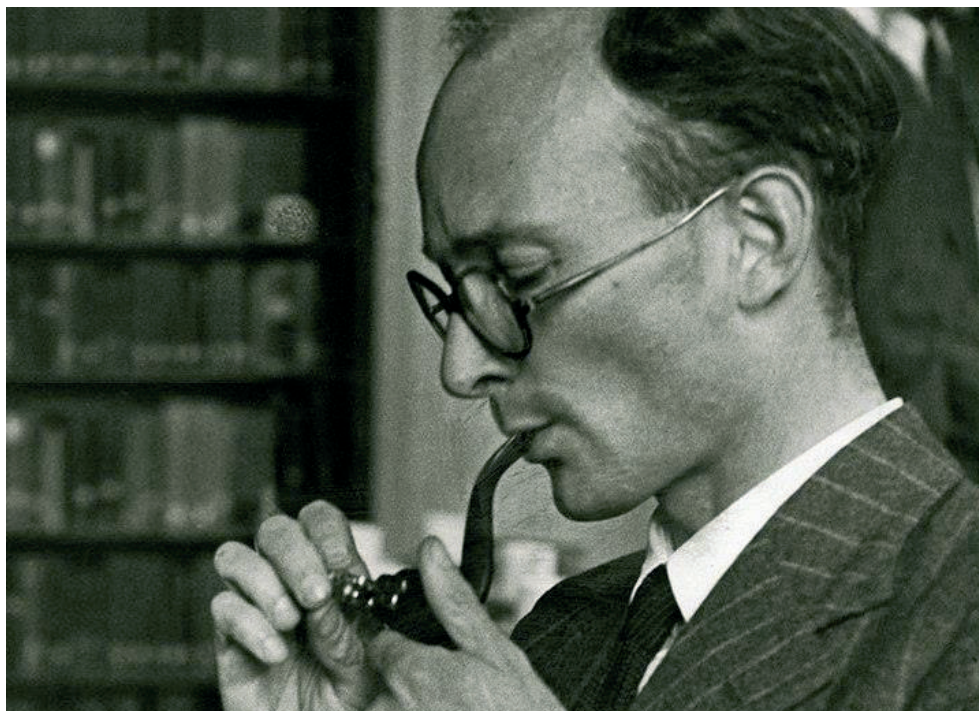
**George Edward Moore (1873–1958)**



**Bertrand Russell (1872–1970)**



**Ludwig Wittgenstein (1889–1951)**



**John Langshaw Austin (1911–1960)**



**Willard Van Orman Quine (1908–2000)**

Another distinguishing feature is the analytic philosophers' specific view on the history of philosophy.

Both continental and analytic philosophers consider Plato, Descartes, Aristotle, Locke, Berkeley, Hume, and Kant to be prominent thinkers. However, proponents of analytic philosophy do not agree with their continental colleagues that, for example, the theories of Hegel, Nietzsche, and Husserl are important for philosophical knowledge.

According to many analytic philosophers, Gottlob Frege was chronologically the first important philosopher after Kant's times. Frege's theories were little regarded by continental philosophy, but he became the principal progenitor of analytic philosophy. As Professor Aloysius Martinich says, Gottlob Frege "introduced new standards of rigor that made their way into analytic philosophy."<sup>1</sup> Moreover, Michael Dummett calls Gottlob Frege "the grandfather of analytical philosophy."<sup>2</sup>

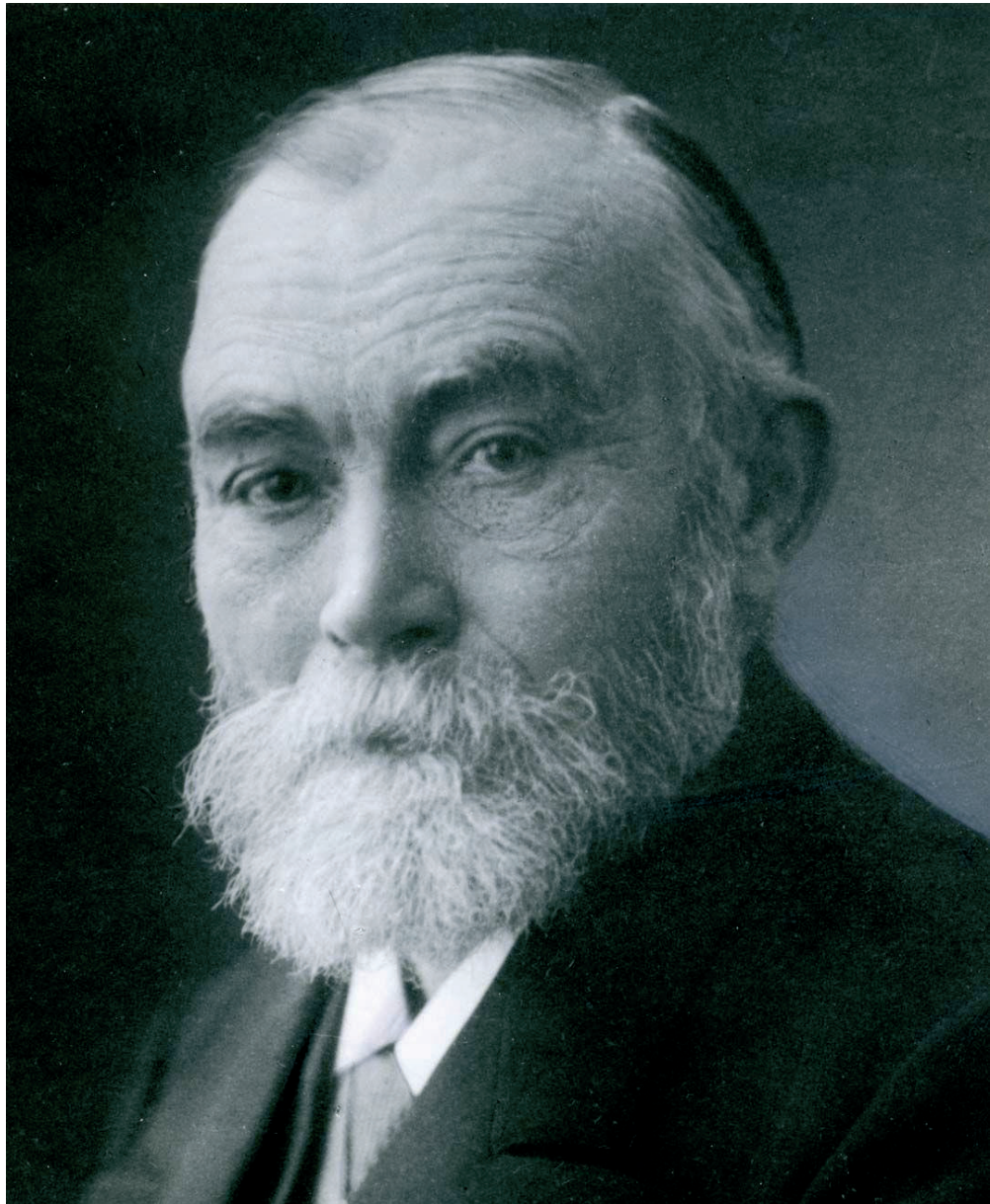
Frege is one of the most profound logicians and philosophers of mathematics. He was born in 1848 and died in 1925. His ideas were extremely important for analytic philosophy. An example was his thought that the theory of

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<sup>1</sup> Martinich, A. P. (2001). Introduction. In Martinich, A. P. & Sosa, D. (Eds.), *A Companion to Analytic Philosophy* (pp. 1–5). Malden: Blackwell Publishers.

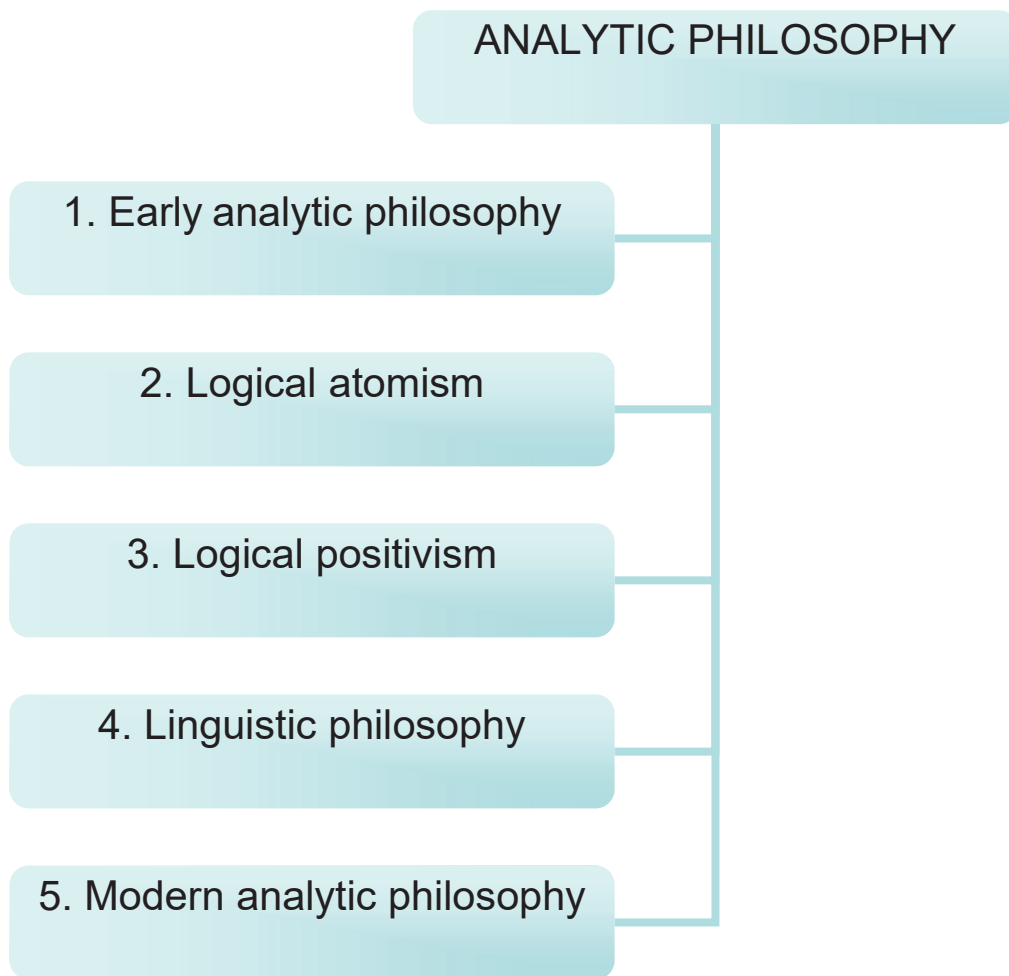
<sup>2</sup> Dummett, M. (1994). *Origins of Analytical Philosophy*. Harvard University Press.

meaning could be the foundation of all philosophical investigation.



**Gottlob Frege (1848–1925)**

I can list five phases in the development of analytic philosophy: early analytic philosophy, logical atomism, logical positivism, the phase of linguistic philosophy, and modern analytic philosophy. I will tell you about each of these phases.



## Quiz 1

Choose the best option: A, B, C, or D.

**1. The countries where analytic philosophy was the leading approach to philosophy in the twentieth century**

- A. Germany and France
- B. Great Britain and the USA
- C. All countries of Europe
- D. All countries of the world

**2. The thinkers who belong to the approach of analytic philosophy**

- A. B. Russell and L. Wittgenstein
- B. G. Hegel and F. Bradley
- C. E. Husserl and M. Heidegger
- D. Thales and Socrates

**3. The principal progenitor of analytic philosophy**

- A. J.-P. Sartre
- B. G. Frege
- C. W. V. O. Quine
- D. J. L. Austin

**4. The forms of analysis which are primarily applied by analytic philosophers**

- A. Logical and linguistic analysis
- B. Medical and chemical analysis
- C. Different forms of historical analysis

**5. Number of phases in the development of analytic philosophy**

- A. 2 phases
- B. 5 phases

## Answers to Quiz 1

1.

A: Incorrect: Analytic philosophy was never popular in Germany and France. These countries have their own strong philosophical traditions.

B: Correct.

C: Incorrect: Analytic philosophy was never dominant in majority of European countries, including France, Germany, Italy, and Spain.

D: Incorrect: Analytic philosophy has only a few proponents in Asia, Africa, South America, and the large part of European countries. It is popular primarily in English-speaking countries such as Great Britain, the USA, Canada, Australia, and others.

2.

A: Correct.

B: Incorrect: Both Hegel and Bradley were proponents of absolute idealism. Their philosophy was the object of analytic philosophers' criticism.

C: Incorrect: Husserl and Heidegger were thinkers of continental philosophy.

D: Incorrect: Thales and Socrates were ancient thinkers. Although many thinkers in the history of thought apply analysis, analytic philosophy as a specific approach to philosophy that appears in the end of nineteenth century or in the beginning of the twentieth century, according to different opinions.



**3**

A: Incorrect: French existentialist Sartre has no relation to analytic philosophy.

B: Correct.

C: Incorrect: W. V. O. Quine is an analytic philosopher, but he was a thinker who has predecessors in the analytic approach to philosophy.

D: Incorrect: Austin appears as an analytic thinker when analytic philosophy already existed.

**4**

A: Correct.

B: Incorrect: Neither medical nor chemical analysis is a philosophical method.

C: Incorrect: Analytic philosophers usually do not pay attention to historical aspects in their analysis.

**5**

A: Incorrect: There are such phases in the development of analytic philosophy as early analytic philosophy, logical atomism, logical positivism, the phase of linguistic philosophy, and modern analytic philosophy.

B: Correct.

### Section 3

## THE APPEARANCE OF ANALYTIC PHILOSOPHY

*At the end of this section, you will be able to*

- explain reasons of the appearance of analytic philosophy,
- talk confidently about G. Moore's criticism of idealism and his apology for the ordinary meanings of words, and
- describe the main features of B. Russell's criticism of monism.

Arguably, analytic philosophy appeared to be a kind of intellectual protest against the lack of rigor and logical accuracy in the theories of dominant schools of European philosophy at the end of the nineteenth century.

There are different opinions about the date of the appearance of analytic philosophy. For example, Anthony Quinton wrote that analytic philosophy began with Wittgenstein's arrival at Cambridge in 1912 to study with Russell,<sup>3</sup> while Professor Peter Simons selected 1899 as the starting point in his chronology of the rift between continental philosophy and analytic philosophy.<sup>4</sup>

In his autobiographical book *My Philosophical Development*, Bertrand Russell wrote that toward the end of 1898, he and George Moore "rebelled against" the theories of such philosophers as Hegel and Bradley.<sup>5</sup> For those who do not know, Bradley was the leader of English neo-Hegelianism of those years.

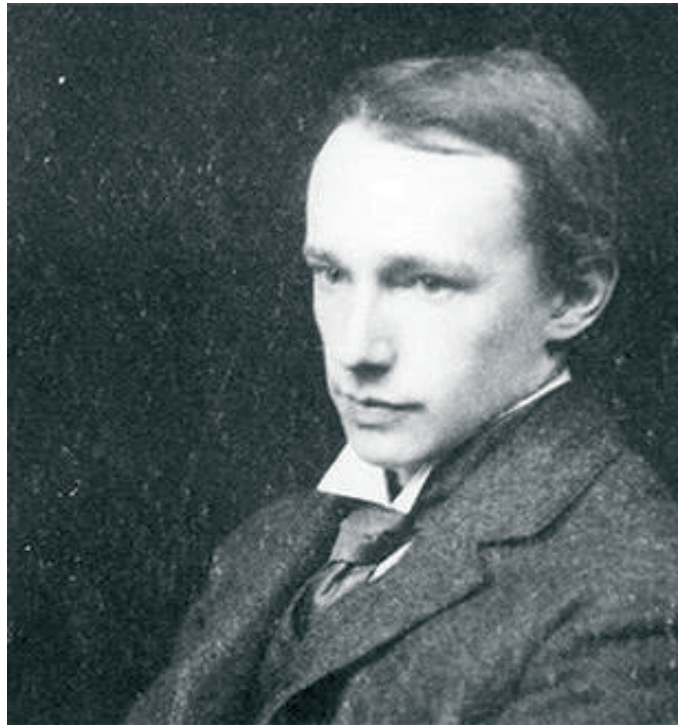
Both Russell and Moore broke demonstratively away from the dominant philosophical schools of their time. They aimed to reform philosophy, trying to elaborate a sound way of obtaining true philosophical knowledge.

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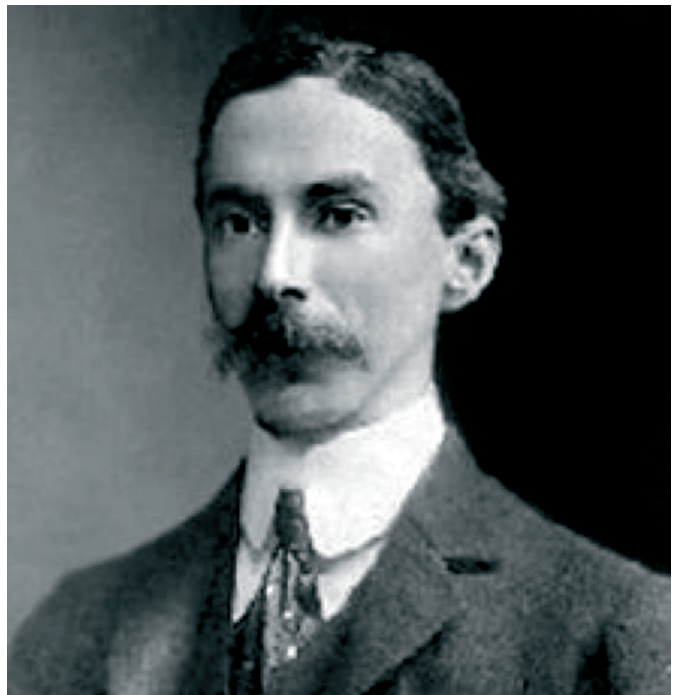
<sup>3</sup> Quinton, A. (1995). Analytic philosophy. In Honderich, T. (Ed.), *The Oxford Companion to Philosophy* (pp. 28–30). Oxford: OUP.

<sup>4</sup> Simons, P. (2010). Whose Fault? The Origins and Evitability of the Analytic–Continental Rift. In *International Journal of Philosophical Studies*, 9(3). (pp. 295–311).

<sup>5</sup> Russell, B. (1995). *My Philosophical Development*. Psychology Press.



**G. E. Moore at the End of  
the Nineteenth Century**

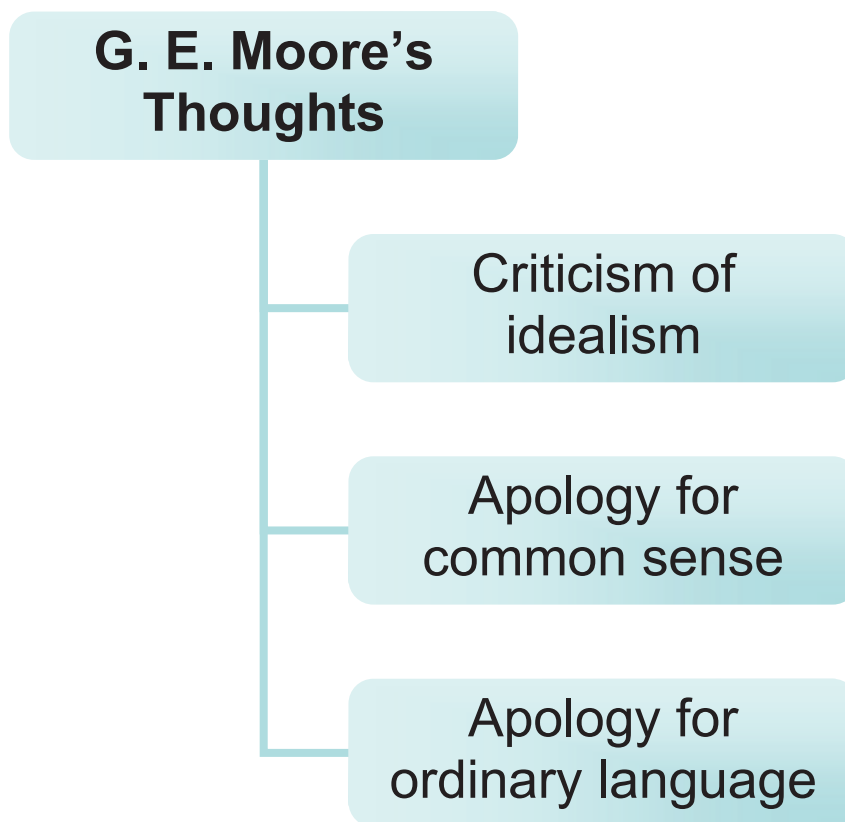


**B. Russell in the Beginning  
of the Twentieth Century**

In the early phase of analytic philosophy, we see George Edward Moore's criticism of idealism<sup>6</sup> as well as his apology for common sense and for the ordinary meanings of words.

Moore criticizes metaphysicians for ignoring words' literal meanings. He says that their philosophical sentences are examples of different types of mistakes.

Moore believes that our everyday language is more suitable for correct thinking than the sophisticated language of metaphysicians.



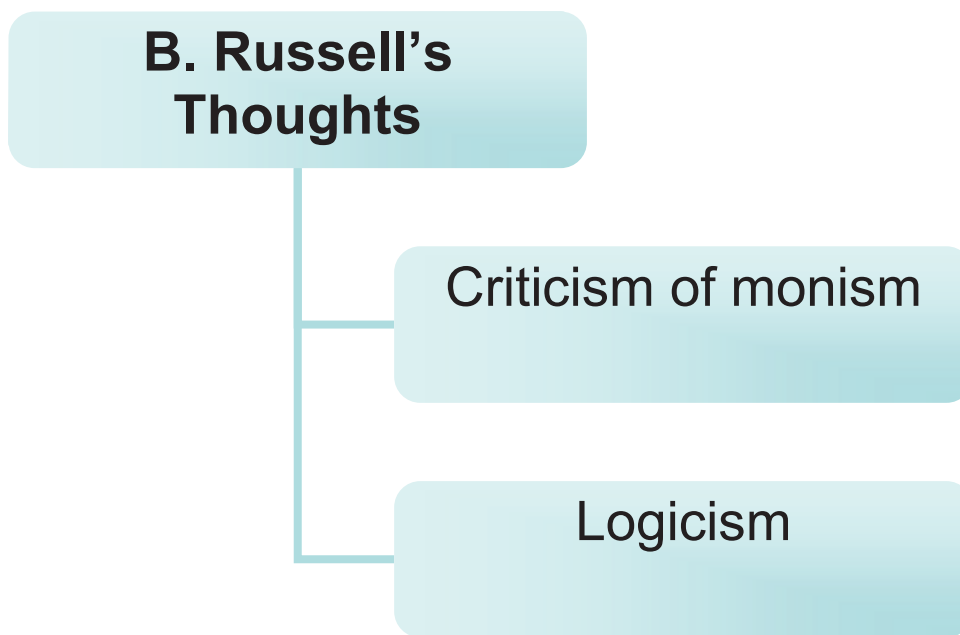
Another important component of the first phase of the development of analytic philosophy is Russell's criticism of the monism<sup>7</sup> of previous philosophy. He argues that the idea of monism is logically irrelevant and is based on logical error. One of his arguments against monism is the idea that it is false because of its unacceptable consequences for logic and mathematics.

---

<sup>6</sup> "Idealism is a metaphysical theory about the nature of reality, and thus presupposes a distinction between appearance and reality, drawn in an other than common-sense way." (Honderich, T. [Ed.], *The Oxford Companion to Philosophy*. Oxford: OUP.)

<sup>7</sup> "Existence monism targets concrete objects and counts by individual token. It holds that exactly one concrete object token exists (the One)." (Schaffer, J. Monism. In *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*.)

I want to stress that, in his earliest papers, Russell studies the problems of logic and the foundations of mathematics. He contributes significantly to this phase through his logicism.<sup>8</sup> He argues that mathematical truths can be translated into truths of pure logic. Regarding this point, Russell's views are close to Frege's ideas. Russell uses the results of his research in the area of logic to address different philosophical problems.



The early analysts, Russell and Moore, succeed in their criticism of the ideas of previous philosophical schools. Neo-Hegelian idealism starts to lose popularity in Great Britain mainly because their efforts.

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<sup>8</sup> "The goal of logicism is to provide solutions to problems in the philosophy of mathematics, by reducing mathematics, or some of its branches, to logic." (Honderich, T. [Ed.], *The Oxford Companion to Philosophy*. Oxford: OUP.)

## Quiz 2

Choose the best option: A, B, or C.

**1. The names of philosophers against whose theories B. Russell and G. Moore rebelled in 1898**

- A. G. Hegel and F. Bradley
- B. M. Heidegger and A. Camus
- C. G. Frege and L. Wittgenstein

**2. The object of G. E. Moore's criticism**

- A. Common sense
- B. Idealism
- C. The ordinary meanings of words

**3. The idea that was characterized by B. Russell as a logically irrelevant thought**

- A. The idea of logicism
- B. The idea of analysis
- C. The idea of monism

**4. The definition of logicism**

- A. A theory that mathematical truths can be translated into truths of pure logic
- B. A theory that our everyday language is more suitable for correct thinking than the sophisticated language of metaphysicians

**5. The name of the doctrine that starts to lose popularity in Great Britain mainly because of early analysts' efforts**

- A. Logical positivism
- B. Neo-Hegelian idealism

## Answers to Quiz 2

1

A: Correct: In his autobiographical book *My Philosophical Development*, Bertrand Russell wrote about this.

B: Incorrect: In 1898, B. Russell and G. Moore know nothing about such continental philosophers of the twentieth century as M. Heidegger and A. Camus.

C: Incorrect: Russell had views which were close to Frege's ideas. Also, Russell knew about Wittgenstein only in 1912, and their views were close then.

2

A: Incorrect option: G. Moore is famous for his apology for common sense.

B: Correct: You can find an example of this criticism in Moore's article "The Refutation of Idealism."

C: Incorrect: Moore criticizes metaphysicians for ignoring words' literal meanings. He believes that our everyday language is more suitable for correct thinking than the sophisticated language of metaphysicians.

3

A: Incorrect: Russell argues that mathematical truths can be translated into truths of pure logic. So he was a proponent of the logicism doctrine.

B: Incorrect: Russell is one of the founders of analytic philosophy that is based on applying analysis.

C: Correct.

**4**

A: Correct.

B: Incorrect: This definition refers not to logicism, but to apology for ordinary language.

**5**

A: Incorrect: Logical positivism started to lose popularity much later than the phase of early analytic philosophy finished, and it happened without any connections with efforts of early analysts.

B: Correct.



## Reading

I highly recommend you to read G. E. Moore's article "The Refutation of Idealism" in the framework of learning "The Appearance of Analytic Philosophy" section.

You can find this article, for example, at the Project Gutenberg web page, where the books may be freely used. This article is at pages 2–30 of the book at the following link:

<http://www.gutenberg.org/files/50141/50141-h/50141-h.htm>

After reading this paper, you can go to the quiz.

### Quiz 3

Read G. E. Moore's sentences in the quiz and think of the word that best fits each gap.

1. **"We have, in every sensation, two distinct elements, one which I call . . . and another which I call the object of consciousness."**

- A. idea
- B. consciousness
- C. spirit
- D. body

2. **"Modern . . . , if it asserts any general conclusion about the universe at all, asserts that it is *spiritual*."**

- A. analytic philosophy
- B. logicism
- C. idealism
- D. positivism

3. **"I do not propose to dispute that 'Reality is spiritual;' I do not deny that there may be reasons for thinking that it is: but I do propose to show that one reason upon which, to the best of my judgment, all other arguments ever used by Idealists depend is . . . ."**

- A. false
- B. true

4. **"If anyone tells us that the existence of blue is the same thing as the existence of the sensation of blue he . . . . , for he asserts *either* that blue is the same thing as blue together with consciousness, *or* that it is the same thing as consciousness alone."**

- A. does not make a mistake
- B. makes a mistake and a self-contradictory mistake

**5. “The question requiring to be asked about material things is not: What reason have we for supposing that anything exists *corresponding* to our sensations? but: . . .”**

- A. What reason have we for supposing that material things do not exist, since their existence has precisely the same evidence as that of our sensations?
- B. What can I know?
- C. What may I hope?
- D. What should I do?

### Answers to the Quiz 3

**1**

B: Correct.

**2**

C: Correct.

**3**

A: Correct.

**4**

B: Correct.

**5**

A: Correct.

## Section 4

### LOGICAL ATOMISM

*At the end of this section, you will be able to*

- explain what logical analysis is,
- use Russell's definition of a fact, and
- list L. Wittgenstein's early understanding of the terms "world," "thought," and "proposition."

With Ludwig Wittgenstein's thoughts and Bertrand Russell's new ideas, the next phase in the development of analytic philosophy starts. I mean the phase of logical atomism.

In the foreword to his lectures in *The Philosophy of Logical Atomism*, Bertrand Russell writes that these lectures are "very largely concerned with explaining certain ideas which I learnt from my friend and former pupil, Ludwig Wittgenstein."<sup>9</sup> I want to clarify this. From 1912 to 1914, Russell and Wittgenstein actively discuss some important philosophical ideas, and the results of this collaboration are published later. In 1914, Russell publishes *Our Knowledge of the External World*, and then *The Philosophy of Logical Atomism* appears in 1918. Wittgenstein's TLP<sup>10</sup> is published first in German in 1921 and then in English in 1922. I should note that, in the preface to his treatise, Wittgenstein mentions that not only Russell's writings but also "the great works of Frege" stimulated his own thoughts.

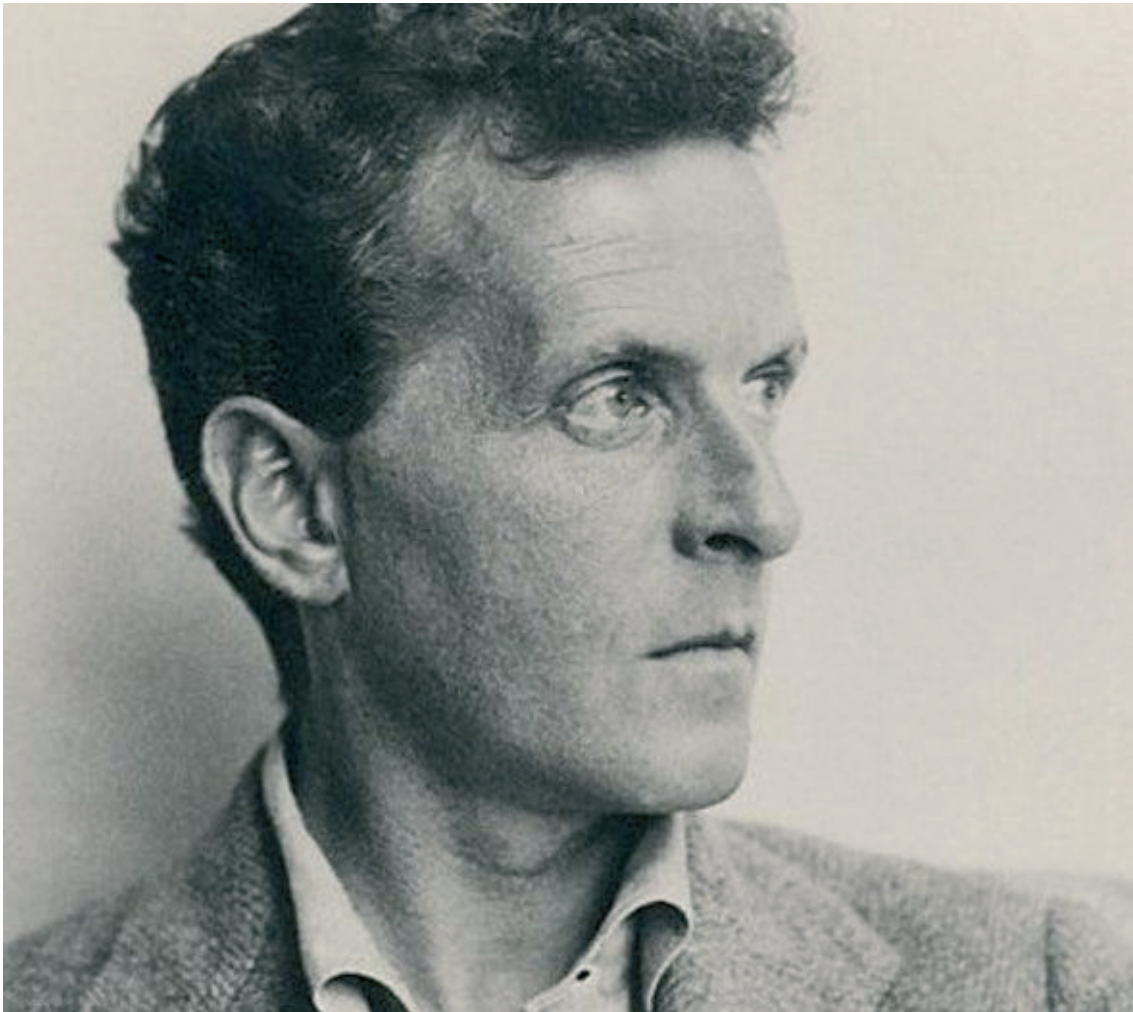
Russell and Wittgenstein believe that the analysis of the nature of representation and logic relations opens the way to understanding major philosophical problems in the area of epistemology and metaphysics.

Russell explains the term "logical atomism" in the following words: "The reason that I call my doctrine logical atomism is because the atoms that I wish to arrive at as the sort of last residue in analysis are logical atoms and not

<sup>9</sup> Russell, B.(1956). *The Philosophy of Logical Atomism*. In *Logic and Knowledge* (ed. by R. C. Marsh). Allen & Unwin.

<sup>10</sup> Wittgenstein's the *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* widely abbreviated as TLP.

physical atoms. Some of them will be what I call ‘particulars’—such things as little patches of colour or sounds, momentary things—and some of them will be predicates or relations and so on.”<sup>11</sup> Russell names the process of discovering these atoms “logical analysis.”



## Ludwig Wittgenstein

According to the first translation of the beginning of Wittgenstein’s treatise, this philosopher argues that the world is everything that is the case, that a fact is the existence of atomic facts, that a thought is a logical picture of facts, that a thought is a significant proposition, that propositions are truth-functions of elementary propositions, and so on.

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<sup>11</sup> Russell, B.(1956). The Philosophy of Logical Atomism. In *Logic and Knowledge* (ed. by R. C. Marsh). Allen & Unwin.

Russell writes “that the world contains facts, which are what they are whatever we may choose to think about them, and that there are also beliefs, which have reference to facts, and by reference to facts are either true or false.” According to Russell, a fact is “the kind of thing that makes a proposition true or false.” For example, the proposition “It is raining” is true in a certain condition of weather, so this condition of weather is the fact.

### Quiz 4

Choose the best option: A, B, or C.

**1. The philosopher who created the logical atomism theory together with Bertrand Russell**

- A. W. V. O. Quine
- B. J. L. Austin
- C. L. Wittgenstein

**2. Ludwig Wittgenstein's interpretation of the nature of a thought, according to his TLP**

- A. A thought is a logical picture of facts.
- B. A thought is everything that is the case.

**3. "The kind of thing that makes a proposition true or false," according to Russell, is**

- A. logic
- B. a fact

**4. The year when Bertrand Russell published *The Philosophy of Logical Atomism***

- A. 1918
- B. 1921
- C. 1903

**5. The book in which L. Wittgenstein set out his version of logical atomism**

- A. *Philosophical Investigations*
- B. *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*



### Answers to Quiz 4

1

A: Incorrect: W. V. O. Quine influenced analytic philosophy on the second part of the twentieth century, not on the logical atomism phase.

B: Incorrect: J. L. Austin is a representative of the phase of linguistic philosophy that was after the logical atomism phase.

C: Correct.

2

A: Correct.

B: Incorrect: In TLP, Wittgenstein uses the words “is everything that is the case” to define the world.

3

A: Incorrect: According to Russell, a fact makes a proposition true or false.

B: Correct.

4

A: Correct.

B: Incorrect: Russell published *The Philosophy of Logical Atomism* before Wittgenstein’s TLP that was published in 1921.

C: Incorrect: Russell's *The Philosophy of Logical Atomism* is one of the works of the logical atomism phase. This phase started not earlier than 1912.

**5**

A: Incorrect: The book *Philosophical Investigations* expresses Wittgenstein's views on the linguistic philosophy period, not on logical atomism.

B: Correct.

## Reading

I recommend you continue learning logical atomism by reading the seven pages of the beginning of L. Wittgenstein's *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*.

You can find this book, for example, at the Project Gutenberg web page. The pages I recommend you read are 23–30 at the following link:

<http://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/5740>

After reading this part of TLP, you can go to the quiz.

## Quiz 5

Read the seven pages of the TLP beginning and answer the following quiz, choosing Wittgenstein's thoughts among the options.

### 1. What is the world?

- A. the planet Earth and all life on it
- B. things
- C. the totality of facts, not of things
- C. the whole of the physical Universe

### 2. What is an atomic fact?

- A. something that is postulated to be correct
- B. a combination of objects
- C. a piece of information that is known to be true
- D. a repeatable careful observation or measurement

### 3. What do objects contain?

- A. all states of affairs
- B. the possibility of all states of affairs
- C. facts
- D. things

### 4. What do objects form?

- A. the substance of the world
- B. time
- C. space
- D. subjects

### 5. What does Wittgenstein's term "picture" mean?

- A. a model of reality

- B. a combination of objects
- C. reality
- D. the idea of an object

## Answers to Quiz 5

**1**

C: Correct.

**2**

B: Correct.

**3**

B: Correct.

**4**

A: Correct.

**5**

A: Correct.

## Section 5

### LOGICAL POSITIVISM

*At the end of this section, you will be able to*

- use logical positivism's criterion of meaningfulness,
- describe the main ideas of A. Ayer about the purpose of philosophy, and
- compare the analytic philosophy of logical atomism and logical positivism.

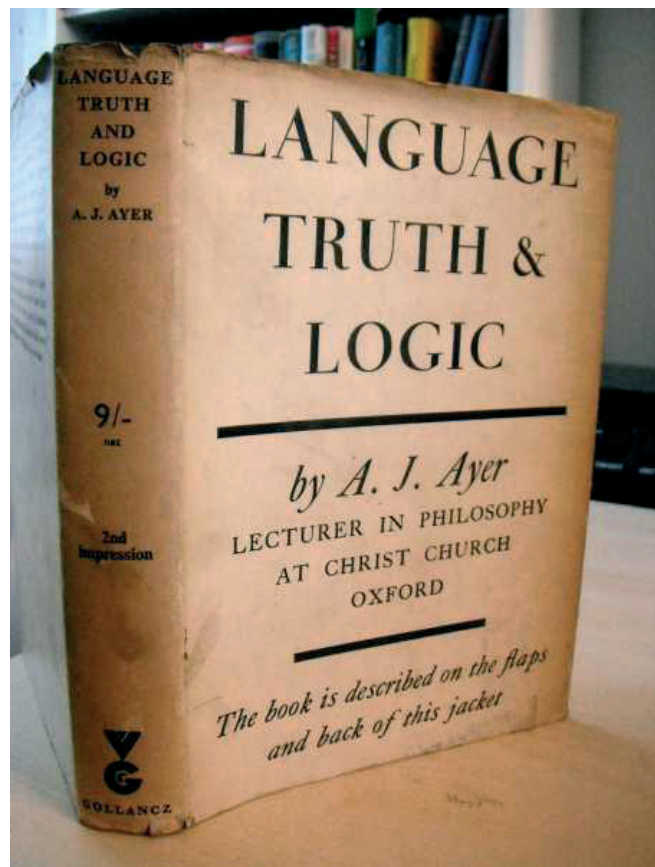
In the second and third decades of the twentieth century, theories of analytic philosophy came to dominate philosophy in Great Britain. Moreover, in this period, adherents were found on the continent, for example, in Austria, the Vienna Circle. This is when the third phase in the development of analytic philosophy started. It is the logical positivism phase.

The Vienna Circle is founded by Moritz Schlick. Among its members are R. Carnap and other prominent thinkers. Logical positivists try to reconceptualize empiricism. Some of them think that Wittgenstein's and Russell's theories will help them in this way. The Vienna Circle's members offer the idea that verifiability in experience is the criterion of meaningfulness. According to positivists, it is crucial to understand that all metaphysical sentences are meaningless.

Nonetheless, some ideas of logical positivism are rejections of Wittgenstein's or Russell's ideas. A good example is the thought that language is not pictorial but conventional. This thought contradicts Wittgenstein's early ideas.

Let's move on to the thoughts of Alfred Ayer, the most famous proponent of logical positivism in the English-speaking world.

In the preface to the first edition of his *Language, Truth and Logic*, which is published in 1936, Alfred Ayer notes that the views he puts forward in the book derive from the doctrines of Russell and Wittgenstein and that the philosophers of the Vienna Circle are those with whom he is in closest agreement. It is necessary to state that Ayer writes his book after returning to Oxford from the University of



**Alfred Ayer wrote his treatise at the age of 26.**



Vienna, where he spent a year studying with Moritz Schlick in 1933.

In his treatise, Ayer emphasizes that it is necessary to understand the purpose and method of philosophy correctly. He argues that many metaphysical utterances are due to the commission of logical errors. He criticizes the metaphysical thesis that philosophy affords us knowledge of a reality that transcends the world of science and common sense. Ayer states that philosophy, as he understands it, can be entirely independent of metaphysics.

Ayer also writes about verifiability as the criterion for testing the genuineness of apparent statements of fact. Let me give you his explanation of this criterion: “We say that a sentence is factually significant to any given person, if, and only if, he knows how to verify the proposition which it purports to express—that is, if he knows what observations would lead him, under certain conditions, to accept the proposition as being true, or reject it as being false.”<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Ayer, A. (1971). *Language, Truth and Logic*. Penguin Books.

**Quiz 6**

Choose the best option: A, B, or C.

**1. The doctrine that logical positivists try to reconceptualize**

- A. Monism
- B. Empiricism

**2. What are all metaphysical sentences, according to positivists**

- A. They are meaningless.
- B. They are meaningful.

**3. A. Ayer thinks that philosophy can be entirely independent of this traditional philosophical area**

- A. The area of metaphysics
- B. The area of epistemology
- C. The area of logic

**4. A. Ayer's opinion about the thesis that philosophy affords us knowledge of a reality that transcends the world of science and common sense**

- A. A. Ayer thinks that this thesis is correct.
- B. A. Ayer thinks that this thesis is wrong.

**5. The thought that was offered by the Vienna Circle's members**

- A. The cleavage between analytic and synthetic truths is only ill-founded dogma.
- B. Verifiability in experience is the criterion of meaningfulness.
- C. Language is not conventional but pictorial.

## Answers to Quiz 6

**1**

A: Incorrect: Logical positivists try to reconceptualize empiricism.

B: Correct.

**2**

A: Correct.

B: Incorrect: Logical positivists criticize metaphysicians for the meaninglessness of their sentences.

**3**

A: Correct.

B: Incorrect: Ayer thinks that the area that studies cognition and the nature of knowledge is important for philosophy.

C: Incorrect: Ayer believes that logic is highly important for philosophy.

**4**

A: Incorrect: Ayer states that this metaphysical thesis is entirely meaningless.

B: Correct.

**5**

A: Incorrect: This thought was expressed by W. V. O. Quine, not by the Vienna Circle's members.

B: Correct.

C: Incorrect: The early Wittgenstein's thought that language is pictorial was criticized by the Vienna Circle's members.

## Reading

You can continue learning logical positivism by reading the chapter “The Function of Philosophy” of Alfred Ayer’s *Language, Truth and Logic*.

You can find this book, for example, at the Internet Archive web page. The pages I recommend you to read are 30–46 at the following link:

<https://archive.org/details/AlfredAyer/page/n29>

After reading this part of Ayer’s treatise, you can go to the quiz.

### Quiz 7

Read the chapter “The Function of Philosophy” of Alfred Ayer’s *Language, Truth and Logic* and think of the word that best fits each gap in the following sentences of this philosopher in the quiz.

**1. “A philosopher has . . . to despise the beliefs of common sense.”**

- A. no right
- B. the right

**2. “The majority of those who are commonly supposed to have been great philosophers were primarily . . .”**

- A. not metaphysicians but analysts
- B. not analysts but metaphysicians

**3. “It is advisable to stress the point that philosophy, as we understand it, is wholly independent of . . .”**

- A. analysis
- B. metaphysics
- C. common sense

**4. “The propositions of philosophy are . . . in character—that is, they do not describe the behaviour of physical, or even mental, objects; they express definitions, or the formal consequences of definitions.”**

- A. not linguistic, but factual
- B. not factual, but linguistic

**5. “We may say that philosophy is a department of . . .”**

- A. mathematics
- B. history
- C. logic

## Answers to Quiz 7

**1**

A: Correct.

**2**

A: Correct.

**3**

B: Correct.

**4**

B: Correct.

**5**

C: Correct.

## Section 6

### LINGUISTIC PHILOSOPHY

*At the end of this section, you will be able to*

- differ thoughts of the early and the later Wittgenstein's philosophy,
- define linguistic philosophy, and
- use J. Austin's interpretation of knowledge.

The appearance of linguistic philosophy is the next significant event in the development of analytic philosophy. It is important not to confuse the terms “linguistic philosophy” and “philosophy of language.” John Searle clearly describes the difference between them in the following passage: “The philosophy of language is the attempt to give an account of certain very general features of the structure, use, and functioning of language. Linguistic philosophy is the attempt to solve philosophical problems by using linguistic methods.”<sup>13</sup>

The later Wittgenstein starts the phase of linguistic philosophy. At this point, I want to highlight the fact that there are two periods in Wittgenstein's philosophy. Between 1929 and 1932, his philosophical ideas undergo crucial changes.

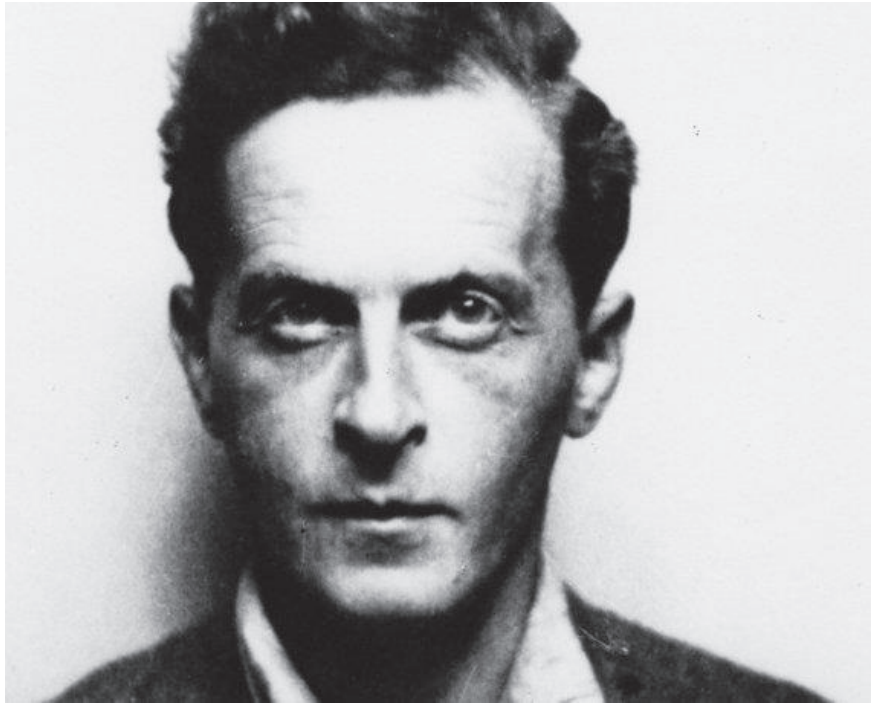
The early Wittgenstein tries to engage in “the logical clarification of thoughts” by analyzing the formal structure that is hidden by ordinary language; however, the later Wittgenstein tries to solve philosophical issues by using linguistic analysis, analyzing the practical use of ordinary language and the aims and functions of different words.

Wittgenstein focuses on the analysis of the use of language. So he concerns himself with linguistic matters. In his *Philosophical Investigations*, the following phrase appears: “Every sign by itself seems dead. What gives it life?—In use it is alive. Is life breathed into it there?—Or is the use its life?”<sup>14</sup>

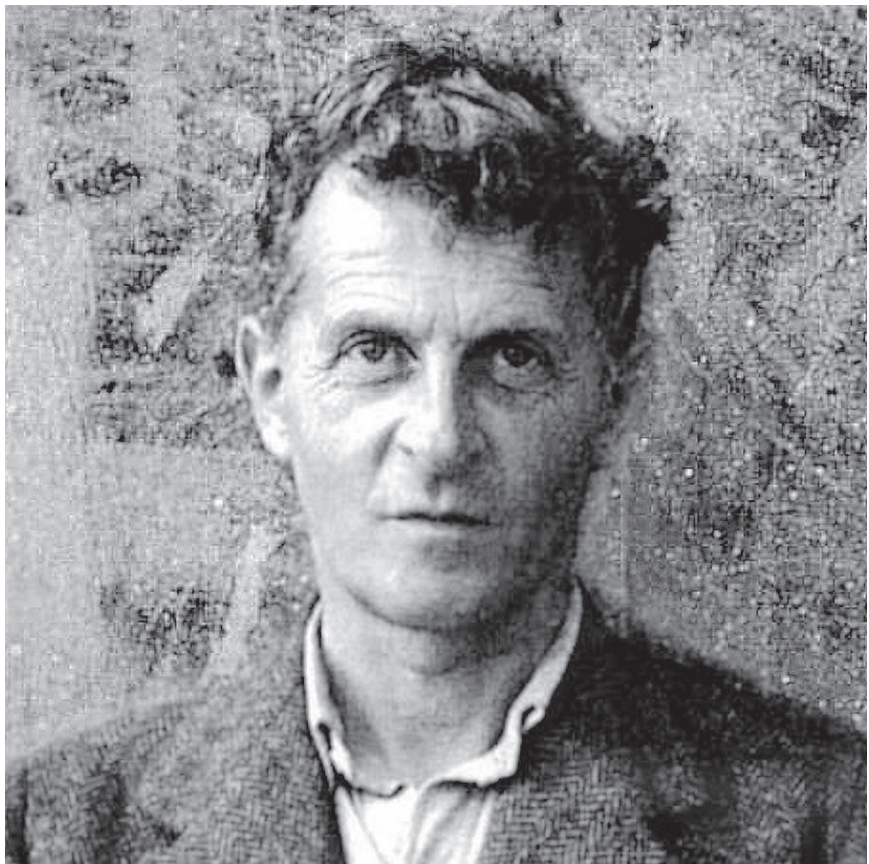
<sup>13</sup> Searle J. (2001). J. L. Austin. In Martinich, A. P. & Sosa, D. (Eds.), *A Companion to Analytic Philosophy* (pp. 218–230). Malden: Blackwell Publishers.

<sup>14</sup> Wittgenstein, L. (1953). *Philosophical Investigations*. Macmillan Publishing Company.



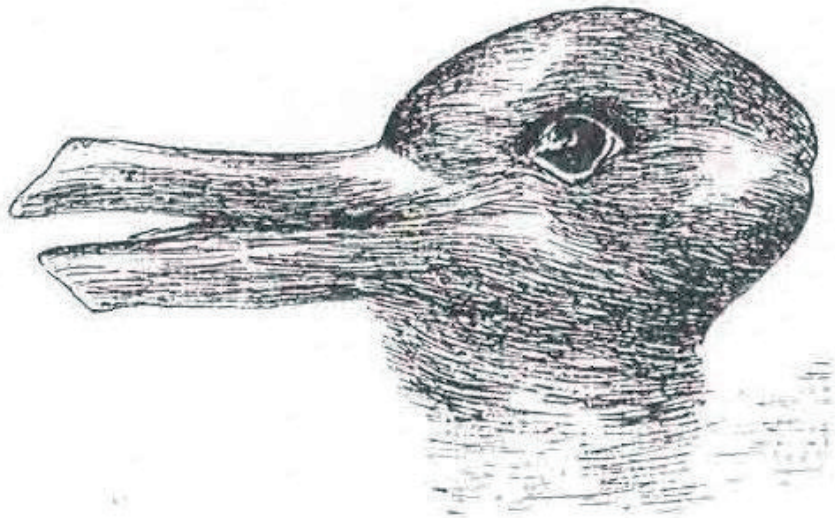


**The Early Wittgenstein**



**The Later Wittgenstein**

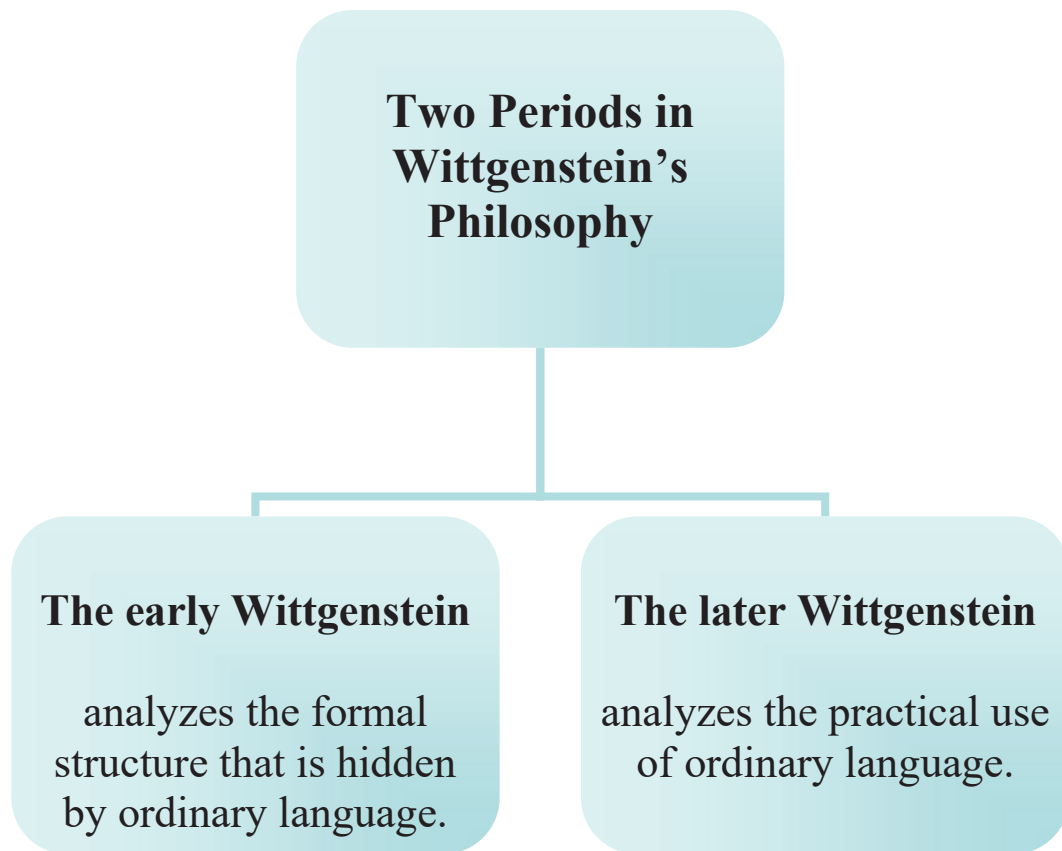
For example, Wittgenstein analyzes the practices by means of which children learn their native language. He discusses the duck-rabbit figure, which can be seen either as a rabbit's head or as a duck's. He discusses this figure, writing that it is necessary to distinguish between the "continuous seeing" of an aspect and the "dawning" of an aspect. Also, he addresses the grammar of the word "know" and the criteria which we accept for the terms "fitting," "being able to," and "understanding." Moreover, he distinguishes "surface grammar" from "depth grammar" in the use of words. In addition, he shows the differences in grammar between the verbs "to mean" and "to think." Wittgenstein introduces the term "language-game," seeking to stress "the fact that the speaking of language is part of an activity, or of a form of life."



### The Duck-Rabbit Figure

In the process of analyzing these kinds of language use, Wittgenstein strives to clarify the philosophical concepts of meaning, thinking, and understanding. He poses such questions as "Why does man think?" and "What is thinking?" His answers to these questions are unusual. For instance, he concludes that "It is correct to say, 'I know what you

are thinking,' and wrong to say, 'I know what I am thinking.'"<sup>15</sup> So one can know what someone else is thinking, not what he himself or she herself is thinking. Wittgenstein notes regarding these words that they are "a whole cloud of philosophy condensed into a drop of grammar."



Wittgenstein criticizes philosophers for their sophisticated use of language structures. He writes, "When philosophers use a word—'knowledge,' 'being,' 'object,' 'I,' 'proposition,' 'name'—and try to grasp the essence of the thing, one must always ask oneself: is the word ever actually used in this way in the language-game which is its original home?—What we do is to bring words back from their metaphysical to their everyday use."<sup>16</sup> In their concern regarding ordinary language, the later Wittgenstein's theories have some affinity with Moore's ideas.

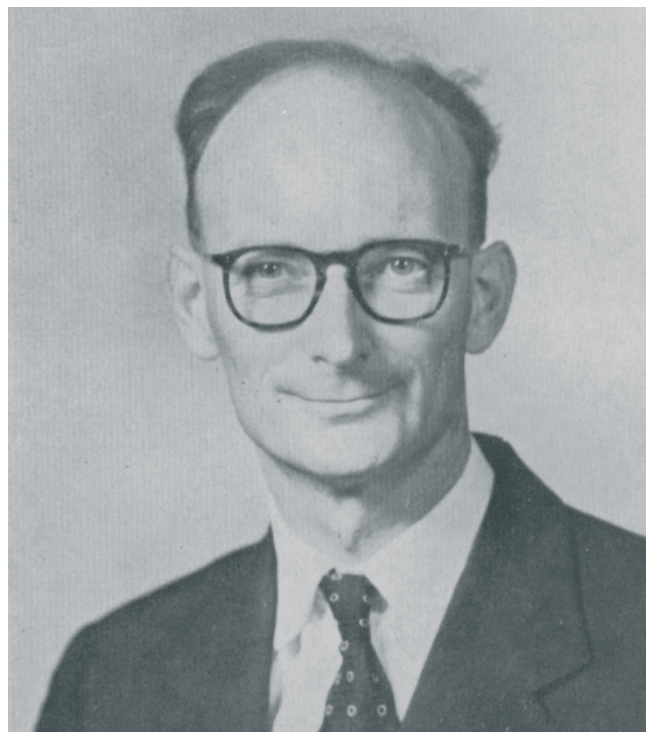
<sup>15</sup> Wittgenstein, L. (1953). *Philosophical Investigations*. Macmillan Publishing Company.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*

As I mentioned before, Moore criticizes sophisticated philosophical theories and offers the idea that ordinary language and commonly held beliefs are not defective. He believes that we have many obviously true thoughts about the world and us, and he uses the term “truisms” to refer to these thoughts.

In his paper, “A Defence of Common Sense,” which is published in 1925, George Moore lists such truisms as “There exists at present a living human body, which is my body. This body was born at a certain time in the past, and has existed continuously ever since, though not without undergoing changes . . .”<sup>17</sup>

The later Wittgenstein’s ideas of linguistic philosophy are developed by some British philosophers, such as John Langshaw Austin. Austin and Wittgenstein believe that thinking about the ordinary use of expressions by means of linguistics is important for philosophical conclusions.



**John Langshaw Austin**

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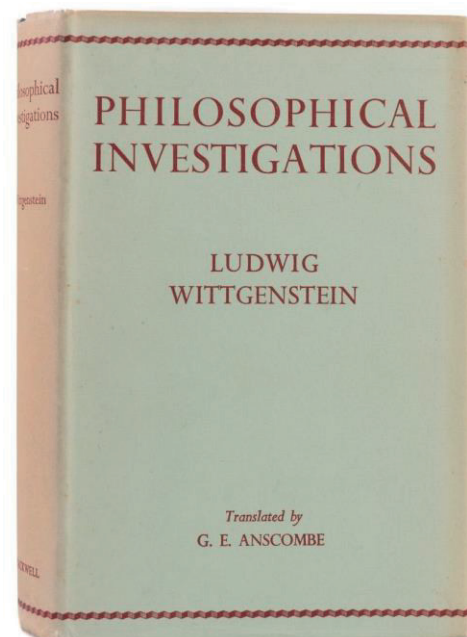
<sup>17</sup> Moore, G. E. (1990). A Defence of Common Sense. In Ammerman, R. (Ed.), *Classics of Analytic Philosophy* (pp. 47–67). Hackett.

John Austin holds that analyzing the expressions we use to describe the world can help us learn a great deal about the world. Just like Wittgenstein, he states that a lot of the claims philosophers make are results of their mistakes in the ordinary use of expressions.

In 1946, Austin published his paper “Other Minds,” in which he analyzes the use of the phrase “I know.” In part, he writes that when one says “I know,” he is indicating that he is in a position to assert that such and such is the case in circumstances where it is necessary to resolve a doubt.<sup>18</sup> Thus, John Austin provides a new interpretation of knowledge.

Let me remind you that continental philosophy traditionally interprets knowledge as a state of mind and a special kind of awareness of things. But John Austin concludes that one can ascribe knowledge to somebody only when certain behavioral conditions are satisfied.

A significant event in the development of analytic philosophy is the posthumous publishing of Wittgenstein’s second book, *Philosophical Investigations*, in 1953. This book expresses his thoughts on linguistic philosophy.



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<sup>18</sup> Austin, J. L. (1961). *Other Minds*. Oxford University Press.

Linguistic philosophy was dominant in English-speaking philosophy from 1945 to 1960. After this period, no doctrine dominated in analytic philosophy.

## Quiz 8

Choose the best option: A, B, or C.

### 1. A definition of linguistic philosophy

- A. "It is the attempt to solve philosophical problems by using linguistic methods."
- B. "It is the attempt to give an account of certain very general features of the structure, use, and functioning of language."

### 2. The characteristic feature of the later period in L. Wittgenstein's philosophy

- A. L. Wittgenstein tries to engage in "the logical clarification of thoughts" by analyzing the formal structure that is hidden by ordinary language.
- B. L. Wittgenstein tries to solve philosophical issues by using linguistic analysis, analyzing the practical use of ordinary language and the aims and functions of different words.

### 3. The book that expresses L. Wittgenstein's thoughts on linguistic philosophy

- A. *Philosophical Investigations*
- B. *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*

### 4. The issue that was researched by J. L. Austin in his paper "Other Minds"

- A. The duck-rabbit figure
- B. The criteria which we accept for the terms "fitting," "being able to," and "understanding"
- C. The nature of knowledge

**5. The phrase that, according to John Austin, one says when he or she is indicating that he is in a position to assert that such and such is the case in circumstances where it is necessary to resolve a doubt**

- A. The phrase "I know"
- B. The phrase "I think"



## Answers to Quiz 8

**1**

A: Correct.

B: Incorrect: This is John Searle's definition of the philosophy of language.

**2**

A: Incorrect: It is the characteristic feature of the early period in L. Wittgenstein's philosophy.

B: Correct.

**3**

A: Correct.

B: Incorrect: The TLP is the book that was written by Wittgenstein in the logical atomism period of his philosophy.

**4**

A: Incorrect: The duck-rabbit figure was considered in Wittgenstein's *Philosophical Investigations*.

B: Incorrect: These criteria were addressed in Wittgenstein's *Philosophical Investigations*.

C: Correct.

**5**

A: Correct. This is John Austin's interpretation of knowledge.

B: Incorrect.

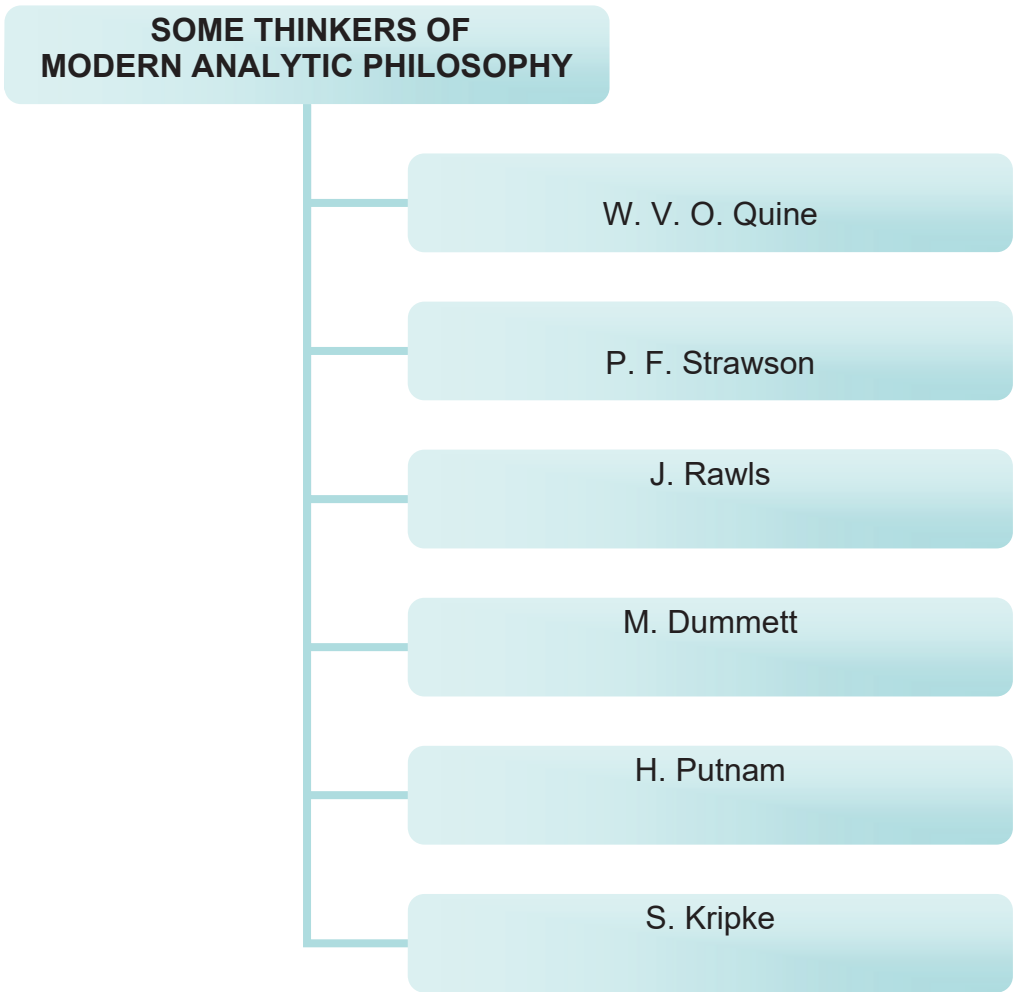
Section 7

**ANALYTIC PHILOSOPHY OF THE SECOND PART OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY**

*At the end of this section, you will be able to*

- express the ideas of W. V. O. Quine about analytic and synthetic truths,
- define descriptive and revisionary metaphysics, and
- describe the characteristic features of modern analytic philosophy.

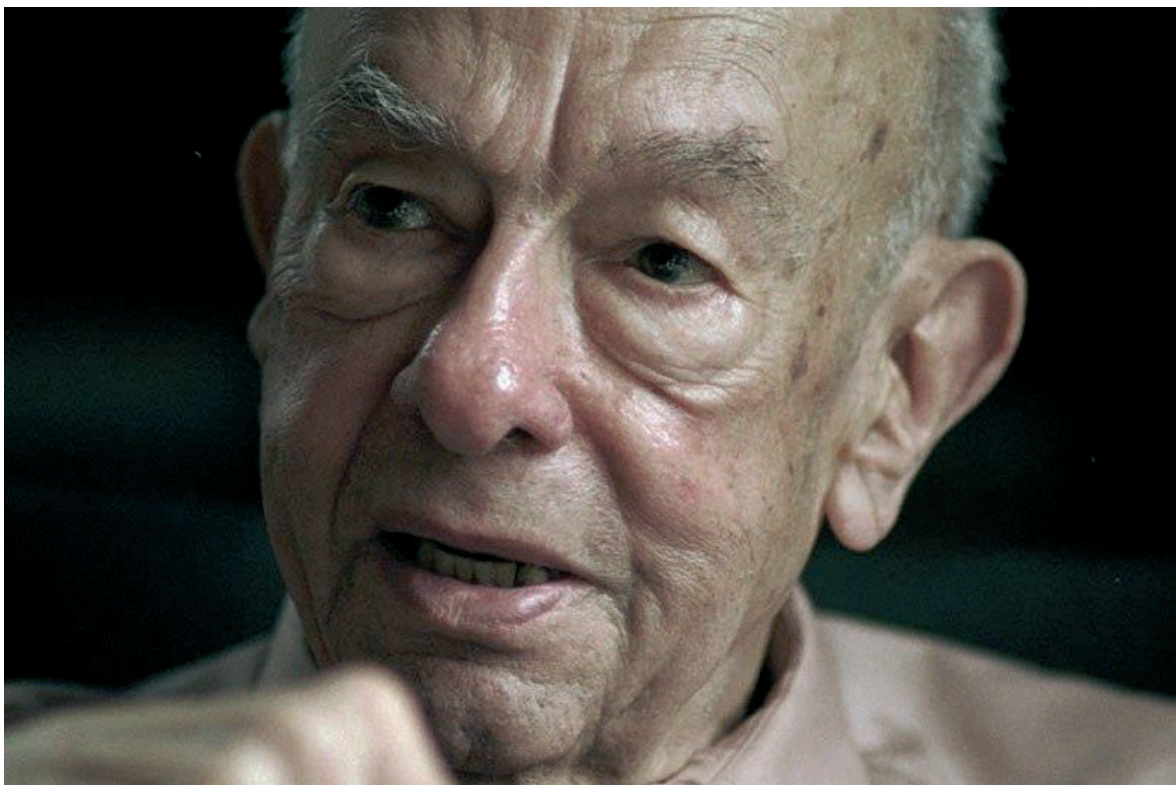
Modern analytic philosophy is characterized by large varieties in ideas, although it keeps some traditions of previous phases of its development. Researchers talk about the “analytic spirit” of many English-speaking thinkers of the second part of the twentieth century.



Antony Quinton characterizes this analytic spirit with the following words: They “think and write in the analytic spirit, respectful of science, both as a paradigm of reasonable belief and in conformity with its argumentative rigour, its clarity, and its determination to be objective.”<sup>19</sup>

There are many significant thinkers in analytic philosophy in the second part of the twentieth century. I will tell you about two of them, Quine and Strawson.

In his 1951 essay “Two Dogmas of Empiricism,” US philosopher Willard Van Orman Quine argues that the cleavage between analytic and synthetic truths is only ill-founded dogma.



**Willard Van Orman Quine**

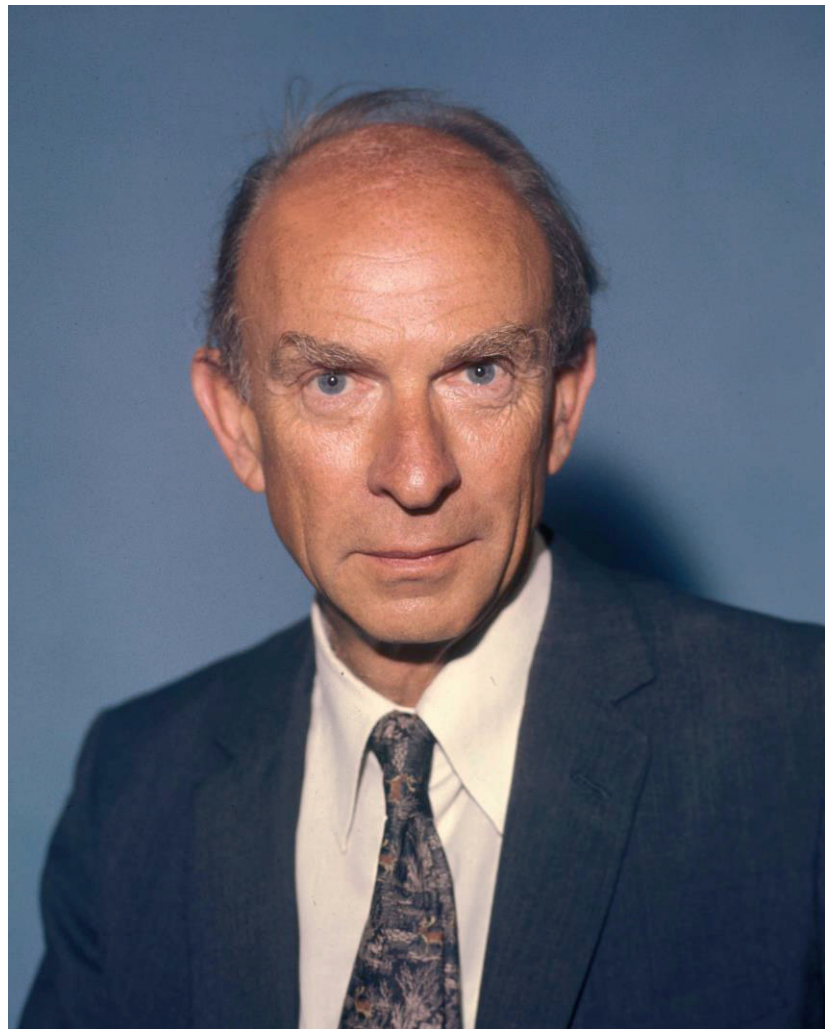
Quine considers that there is no sufficient distinction between truths that are grounded in meanings independent of matters of fact (that is, analytic truths) and truths that are grounded in fact (that is, synthetic truths).

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<sup>19</sup> Quinton, A. (1995). Analytic Philosophy. In Honderich, T. (Ed.), *The Oxford Companion to Philosophy* (pp. 28–30). Oxford: OUP.

Also, in *Two Dogmas of Empiricism*, W. V. O. Quine challenges reductionism. What is reductionism? It is the belief that each meaningful statement is equivalent to some logical construct on terms that refer to immediate experience.

I must remind you that reductionism and the analytic-synthetic distinction are central doctrines of logical positivism. So in the second part of the twentieth century, we see serious criticism of the traditional foundations of positivism by analytic philosophers.

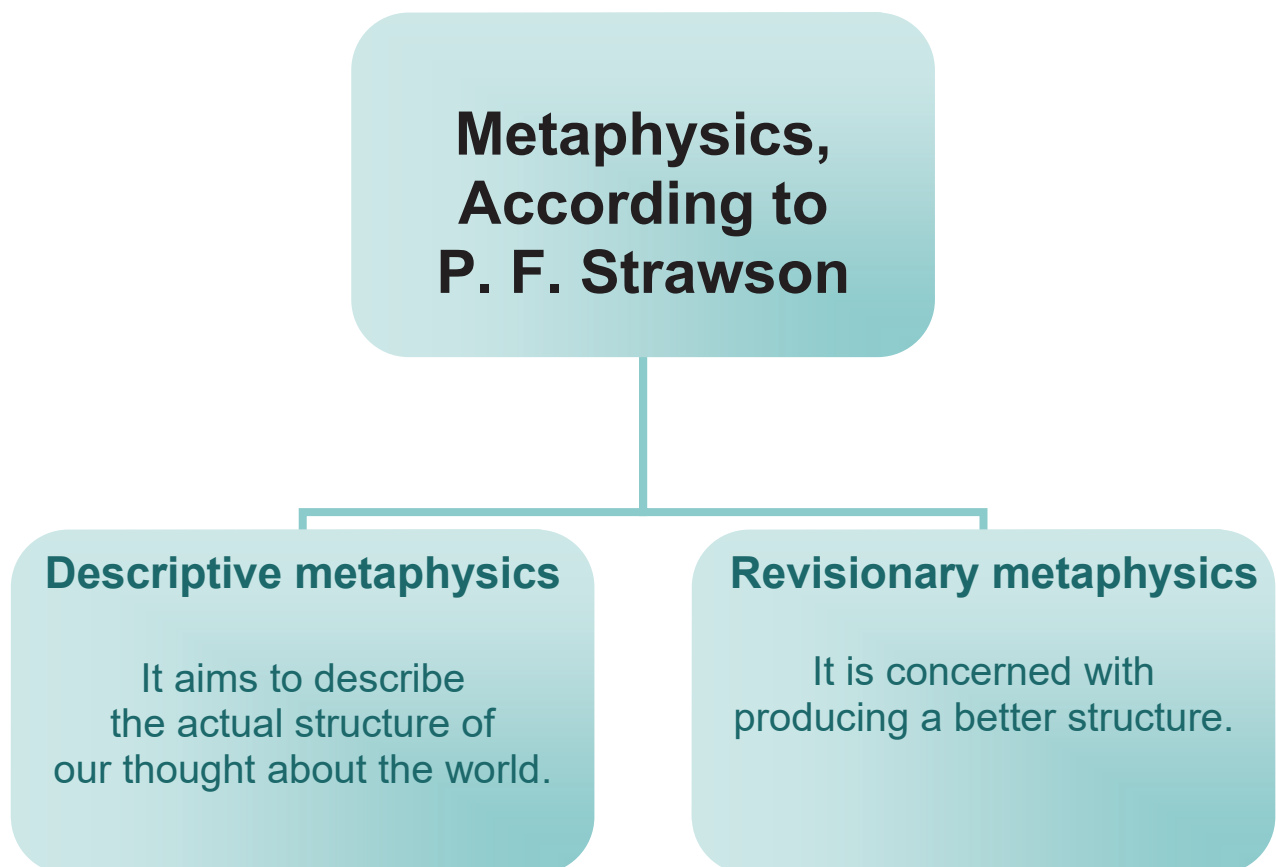


**Peter Frederick Strawson  
(1919–2006)**

Another new idea within the framework of analytic philosophy is represented by English philosopher Peter Frederick Strawson. In his work *Individuals*, which was

published in 1959, he distinguishes between “revisionary” and “descriptive” metaphysics.

He writes, “Descriptive metaphysics is content to describe the actual structure of our thought about the world, revisionary metaphysics is concerned to produce a better structure.”<sup>20</sup>



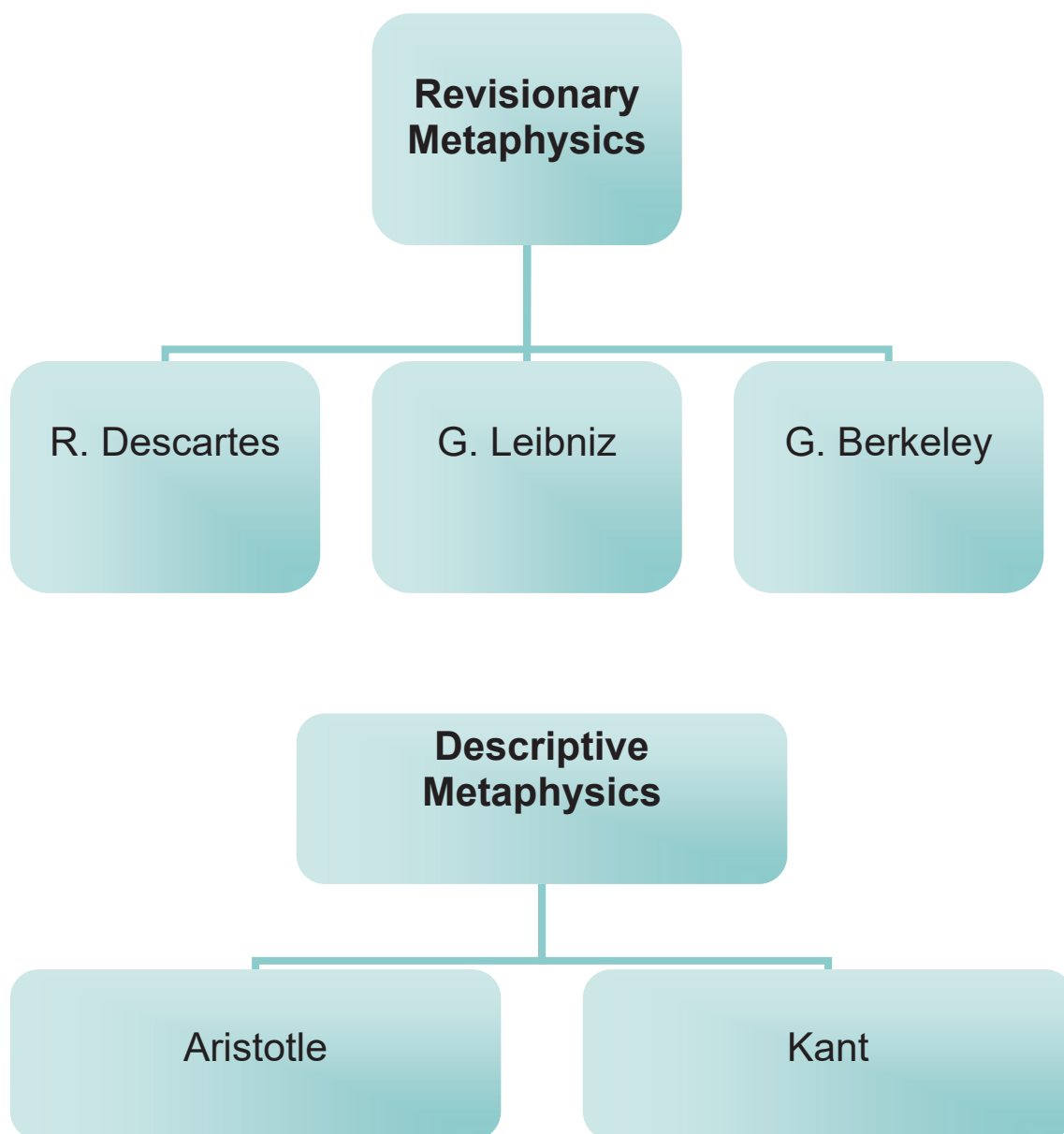
Strawson argues that Descartes, Leibniz, and Berkeley produced different forms of revisionary metaphysics, while Aristotle and Kant were philosophers who offered descriptive metaphysics.

It is interesting that Strawson believes that descriptive metaphysics differs from “what is called philosophical, or logical, or conceptual analysis” only in scope and generality and does not differ in the kind of intention.

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<sup>20</sup> Strawson, P. F. (1959). *Individuals: An Essay in Descriptive Metaphysics*. London: Methuen.

I want to stress that, in the framework of modern analytic philosophy, interest in metaphysics grows.



### Quiz 9

Choose the best option: A or B.

**1. The characteristic feature of many English-speaking thinkers of the second part of the twentieth century**

- A. "They think and write in the analytic spirit."
- B. "They think and write in the synthetic spirit."

**2. A philosopher who argues that there is no sufficient distinction between analytic and synthetic truths**

- A. W. V. O. Quine
- B. A. Ayer

**3. The kind of metaphysics that "is content to describe the actual structure of our thought about the world," according to P. Strawson**

- A. Revisionary metaphysics
- B. Descriptive metaphysics

**4. The kind of metaphysics that differs from logical analysis only in scope and generality, according to P. Strawson**

- A. Descriptive metaphysics
- B. Revisionary metaphysics

**5. The name of the philosopher who criticizes reductionism**

- A. M. Schlick
- B. W. V. O. Quine

## Answers to Quiz 9

1

A: Correct.

B: Incorrect: A. Quinton and other researchers emphasize that many modern English-speaking thinkers continue to use an analytic approach to philosophy.

2

A: Correct.

B: Incorrect: A. Ayer and other logical positivists consider the distinction between analytic and synthetic truths as the important one for their philosophy.

3

A: Incorrect: P. Strawson uses these words for characterizing descriptive metaphysics.

B: Correct.

4

A: Correct.

B: Incorrect: P. Strawson considers that descriptive metaphysics differs from logical analysis only in scope and generality.



**5**

A: Incorrect: The members of the Vienna Circle were proponents of the idea that each meaningful statement is equivalent to some logical construct on terms that refer to immediate experience.

B: Correct.

## Section 8

### THE KEY POINTS OF THE COURSE

I hope that this brief introduction to analytic philosophy has given you a general impression of this philosophical approach and its development.

I want to finish by repeating the key points of my course.

In the twentieth century, analytic philosophy was the leading approach to philosophy in Great Britain and the USA.

Although the geographical factor and the factor of language play an important role in the distinction between continental philosophy and analytic philosophy, the differences between the philosophical matters that the two tendencies concern themselves with are more dominant.

Continental philosophy primarily addresses large questions in a synthetic way, whereas analytic philosophy is concerned with analysis.

Analysis is a method of seeking to understand the subject matter by becoming aware of its composition. Analytic philosophers think that, if you want to understand something, you need to research its building blocks.

Despite the fact that many philosophical traditions apply analysis, the methodological program of analytic philosophy has some distinguishing features. Thinkers of analytic philosophy apply logical and linguistic analysis, and they do not think it is necessary to use other methods that are popular within the framework of continental philosophy.

In addition, not only do analytic philosophers interpret philosophizing as a process of constructing theoretical reasoning as rational, logically consistent, and rigorously and clearly argued, but also they practice it in this way. These very peculiarities of philosophizing have enabled analytic philosophy to be a problem-solving activity.

Finally, I have said that the development of analytic philosophy took place in five phases: early analytic philosophy, logical atomism, logical positivism, the phase of linguistic philosophy, and modern analytic philosophy.

In the early phase of analytic philosophy, we see George Moore's criticism of idealism as well as his apology for common sense and for the ordinary meanings of words. Another important component of this phase is Russell's criticism of the monism of previous philosophy.

With Ludwig Wittgenstein's thoughts and Bertrand Russell's new ideas, the phase of logical atomism begins. These philosophers believe that the analysis of the nature of representation and logic relations opens the way to understanding major philosophical problems.

Alfred Ayer and other logical positivists try to reconceptualize empiricism. They offer the idea that verifiability in experience is the criterion of meaningfulness.

Linguistic philosophy is the attempt to solve philosophical problems using linguistic methods. The later Wittgenstein starts this phase. His ideas are developed by some British philosophers, such as John Austin.

Researchers talk about the "analytic spirit" of many English-speaking thinkers of the second part of the twentieth century. There are many significant thinkers in modern analytic philosophy like W. V. O. Quine and P. F. Strawson.

**FINAL EXAM**

Choose the best option: A, B, or C.

**1. The thinkers who belong to the approach of analytic philosophy**

- A. S. Kierkegaard and F. Nietzsche
- B. H.-G. Gadamer and M. Foucault
- C. J. L. Austin and W. V. O. Quine

**2. The author of the book *Individuals***

- A. Hilary Putnam
- B. P. F. Strawson
- C. John Rawls

**3. One of Russell's arguments against monism**

- A. Monism is false because of its unacceptable consequences for logic and mathematics.
- B. Monism is false because of its unacceptable consequences for art and history.

**4. What "the logical picture of the facts" is, according to Wittgenstein's TLP**

- A. The thought
- B. Philosophy

**5. A. Ayer's thoughts about the characteristic feature of philosophizing activity**

- A. A. Ayer thinks that the activity of philosophizing is essentially analytic.
- B. A. Ayer thinks that the activity of philosophizing is essentially metaphysical.

**6. The paper that was written by G. E. Moore**

- A. "The Refutation of Idealism"
- B. "Other Minds"
- C. "On Denoting"

**7. The second phase in the development of analytic philosophy**

- A. Linguistic philosophy
- B. Modern analytic philosophy
- C. Logical atomism

**8. The term that was introduced by L. Wittgenstein to stress "the fact that the speaking of language is part of an activity, or of a form of life"**

- A. Picture
- B. Language-game

**9. The term that was used by G. E. Moore to refer to obviously true thoughts about the world and us**

- A. Atoms
- B. Truisms

**10. The author of the essay "Two Dogmas of Empiricism"**

- A. P. F. Strawson
- B. W. V. O. Quine

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## Answers to the Final Exam Questions

**1**

A: Incorrect: S. Kierkegaard and F. Nietzsche are representatives of continental philosophy.

B: Incorrect: H.-G. Gadamer and M. Foucault are representatives of continental philosophy.

C: Correct.

**2**

A: Incorrect.

B: Correct: P. F. Strawson wrote it in 1959.

C: Incorrect.

**3**

A: Correct.

B: Incorrect: Russell created his arguments against monism in the period when he was addressing problems of logic and mathematics.

**4**

A: Correct.

B: Incorrect: In Wittgenstein's TLP, there is a phrase "The logical picture of the facts is the thought."

**5**

A: Correct.

B: Incorrect: Ayer states that philosophy, as he understands it, can be entirely independent of metaphysics.

**6**

A: Correct.

B: Incorrect: "Other Minds" was written by John Austin.

C: Incorrect: "On Denoting" was written by B. Russell.

**7**

A: Incorrect: Linguistic philosophy appears after such phases in the development of analytic philosophy as early analytic philosophy, logical atomism, and logical positivism.

B: Incorrect: Modern analytic philosophy is the last phase in the development of analytic philosophy that contains five phases.

C: Correct.

**8**

A: Incorrect: L. Wittgenstein uses the term "language-game" to stress "the fact that the speaking of language is part of an activity, or of a form of life."

B: Correct.

**9**

A: Incorrect: G. E. Moore uses the term “truisms” to refer to obviously true thoughts about the world and us.

B: Correct.

**10**

A: Incorrect: *Two Dogmas of Empiricism* was written by W. V. O. Quine.

B: Correct.



## FURTHER READING

If you want to continue learning the subject, you can read the following sources which I recommend. The articles and books will expand your knowledge about each topic of my course.

### Section 2. What Is Analytic Philosophy?

Beaney, M. (2018). Analysis. In *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. Retrieved from <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/sum2018/entries/analysis/>.

Preston, A. (2019). Analytic Philosophy. In *The Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. Retrieved from <https://www.iep.utm.edu/analytic/>.

Martinich, A. P. (2001). Introduction. In Martinich, A. P. & Sosa, D. (Eds.), *A Companion to Analytic Philosophy* (pp. 1–5). Malden: Blackwell Publishers.

Glock, H.-J. (2008). *What is Analytic Philosophy?* Cambridge University Press.

Critchley, S. (2008). What is Continental Philosophy? *International Journal of Philosophical Studies*, 5(3), 347–363.

### Section 3. The Appearance of Analytic Philosophy

Baldwin, T. (2018). George Edward Moore. In *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. Retrieved from <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/sum2018/entries/moore/>.

Russell, B. (1995). *My Philosophical Development*. Psychology Press.

Baldwin, T. (2001). Bertrand Russell. In Martinich, A. P. & Sosa, D. (Eds.), *A Companion to Analytic Philosophy* (pp. 21–44). Malden: Blackwell Publishers.

Dummett, M. (1994). *Origins of Analytical Philosophy*. Harvard University Press.

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Oleksandr Kulyk has a PhD in philosophy and is an author of four books. He has taught philosophy courses at universities for 15 years, and analytic philosophy is one of his favorite subjects to teach. He truly believes learning analytic philosophy helps students practice logical consistency and clearly articulated reasoning.

This brief introduction is for people who want to know the leading approaches to philosophy in the twentieth century in English-speaking countries but do not have much time to study them. The book contains texts of lectures and quizzes with explained answers.

By the end of this book, you will understand what analysis is and how to practice it in a philosophical way. Moreover, you will be able to talk confidently about some of the great ideas of such philosophers as L. Wittgenstein, B. Russell, G. E. Moore, A. Ayer, J. Austin, W. V. O. Quine, P. F. Strawson, and more.

