
0. The Project

It is now time to apply distant reading methods to the history of philosophy.

1. The question

Received view: the influence of Wittgenstein’s philosophy has been declining in last decades (Hacker 1996, Tripodi 2009)

Is it possible to measure the decline?

Distant reading methods: correcting, enriching, improving the traditional interpretation.

2. The result

ASI: an average value, taking into account both the academic rank and the ranking of the department.

Wittgenstein theses have a lower ASI than analytic theses.

3. An explanation

Why does analytic philosophy have a better ASI:

- because of its science-oriented philosophical style and metaphilosophy (see slide below on the left)
- because it behaves as normal science (see slide below on the right)

4. A hypothesis

The lower ASI of Wittgenstein dissertations came first; their decline in number came after. This time lag suggests that the primary cause of the decline lies with mechanisms of academic recruitment, rather than in an autonomous change of the Zeitgeist.

5. For discussion

Question-driven vs. methods-driven approach.

Engineering the procedures used to collect data concerning the academic careers (see Section 2).

Data-driven vs. interpretation-driven approach.

Pattern recognition: the problem of validation.

Visualization software for the history of philosophy.