

# Textual Analysis and Conceptual Cartography

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# An initial intuition

Performing some textual analysis methods seems to give you knowledge about concepts that looks something like  
**conceptual analysis**

# An initial intuition

We can trace the gradual modification of a concept (like the concept of ether in Newton's thought), where it is possible to give plausible conceptual grounds ("reasons") for the modification's having occurred the way it did. The "pattern" here is a relation between ideas or can somehow be associated with such a relation. The techniques are those of conceptual analysis. (McMullin 1970, p. 50)

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...right?

# Some worries

- Documents are **mixtures** of topics
- Often we want to analyze concepts that are **tacit knowledge** for practitioners
- Topic interpretation can require **complex, specialist knowledge**

# Toward cartography

What we get from turning to digital philosophy is more like **relational information** about concepts: both their links with one another and their links with other, nearby concepts in philosophy and science.

# A cartography in taxonomy

We learn things like:

- How does disagreement relate to fields of study, or to taxa, or to methodological choices?
- Are conceptual disagreements related to epistemic value judgments, or to pejorative language?



# A cartography in taxonomy

We **don't** learn things like “what concepts of species are being (explicitly or implicitly) used in this literature?”  
**That** sense of conceptual analysis is impossible.

# Why?

The ways in which digital tools **transform** our texts is exactly the kind of **reduction** that we engage in when we pick out important features for mapping.

# Open questions

1. How can we evaluate whether we have a **good map**?
2. Are we just becoming bad, amateur sociologists of science?
3. How is cartography (paradigmatically descriptive) related to other (esp. normative) parts of philosophy of science?

# Questions?

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