Mapping a Citational Universe: A GDA of Literary Dissertation Bibliographies

Bo G Ekelund¹ ²  *, Mikael Börjesson¹ ³

1. Sociology of Education and Culture, Uppsala University
2. Department of English, Stockholm University
3. Second affiliation of author B

* Contact author: bo.ekelund@english.su.se

Keywords: Geometric Data Analysis, Literary studies, Bibliographies, reception of modern theory

In a study of the symbolic reproduction of non-Swedish works of literature, criticism and theory within the Swedish field of literary studies and criticism, the bibliographies of literary Ph.D. dissertations defended between 1980 and 2005 are analyzed in order to reveal the complex pattern of reception of non-domestic theory and criticism in the Swedish field of literary studies. For this analysis, the “citational universe” of the bibliographies is subjected to Geometric Data Analysis (Le Roux and Rouanet, 2004), and in particular specific Multiple Correspondence Analysis. Starting with a total of nearly two hundred thousand bibliographical posts from 680 dissertations, we narrowed down the data by first removing the primary sources, comprising roughly a fifth of all references. Of the fifty thousand individual authors cited among the secondary sources, we then selected those individuals who were cited at least five times and in at least two dissertations. It is these “frequently cited critics” and in particular the 2283 non-Swedish critics among them that were coded in order to bring out the space of critical choices made by Swedish doctoral students in this period.

Our analysis of this particular “citation culture” (cf. Wouters) gives us a preliminary view of the network of mediations, translations and intellectual flows that makes possible the production and reproduction of “Swedish” literary life. It also gives a view of the world system of literary theory, as seen from a semi-peripheral national field.

References
