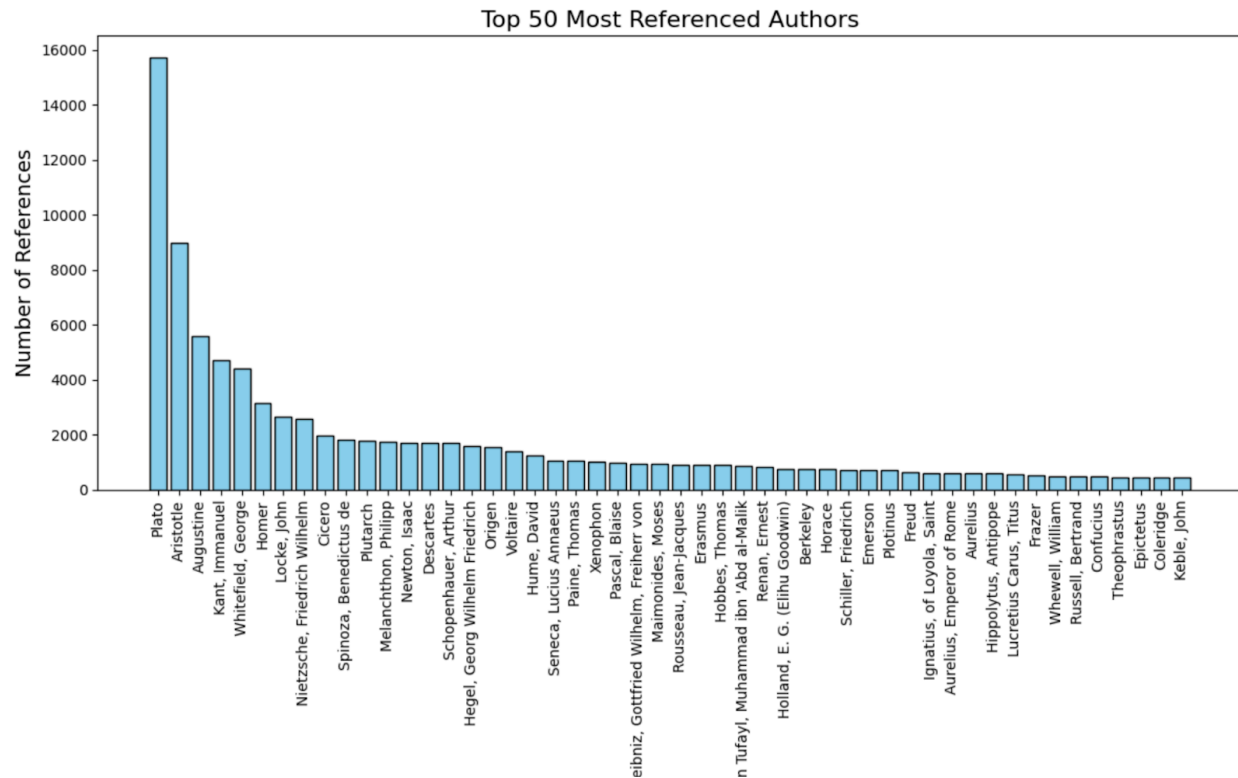
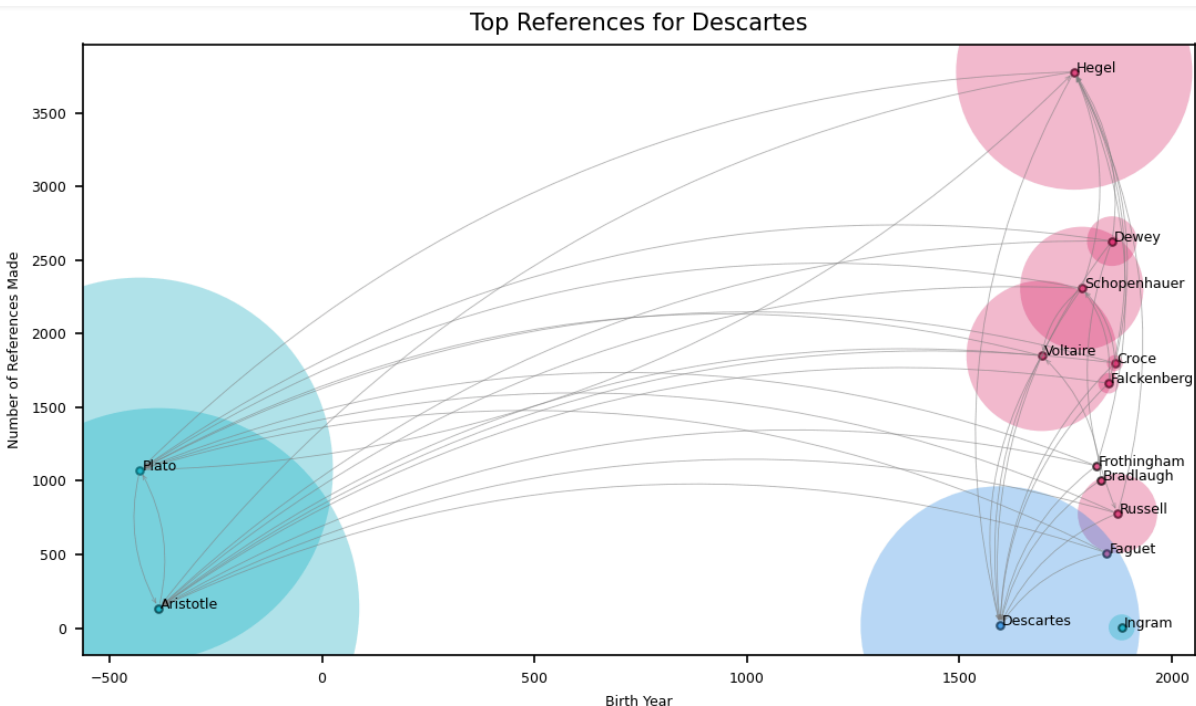
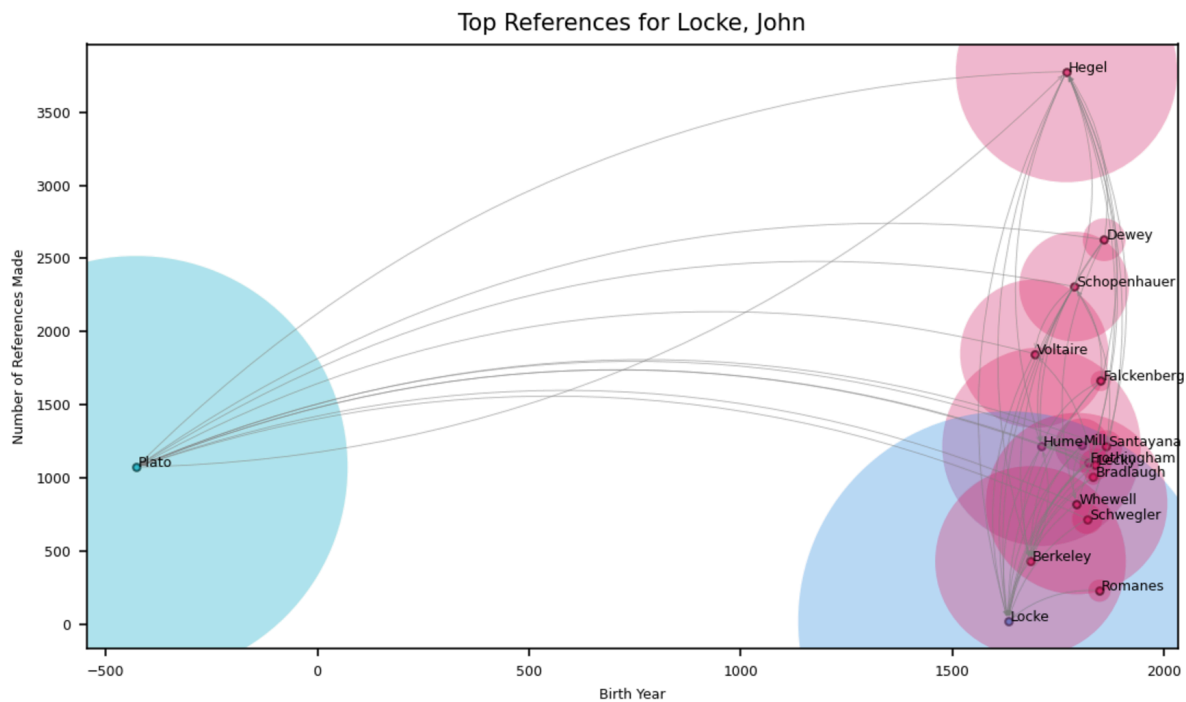


Citation Power Law Distribution, Footnotes to Plato:



Plato and Aristotle account for around 25% of the total references in the database. While their influence is well-known, it's likely that the degree of their impact may be even greater than most people's intuitions. In comparison to the wealth disparity—another power law that's consistently underestimated in surveys—the top two richest people have around 6% of the wealth of the top 500 richest people. For over 60% of people in our dataset, they are both one of the top 5 most referenced. For 60% of people in our dataset, if you choose to look at the most referenced person that they referenced, you will eventually find your way back to Plato.

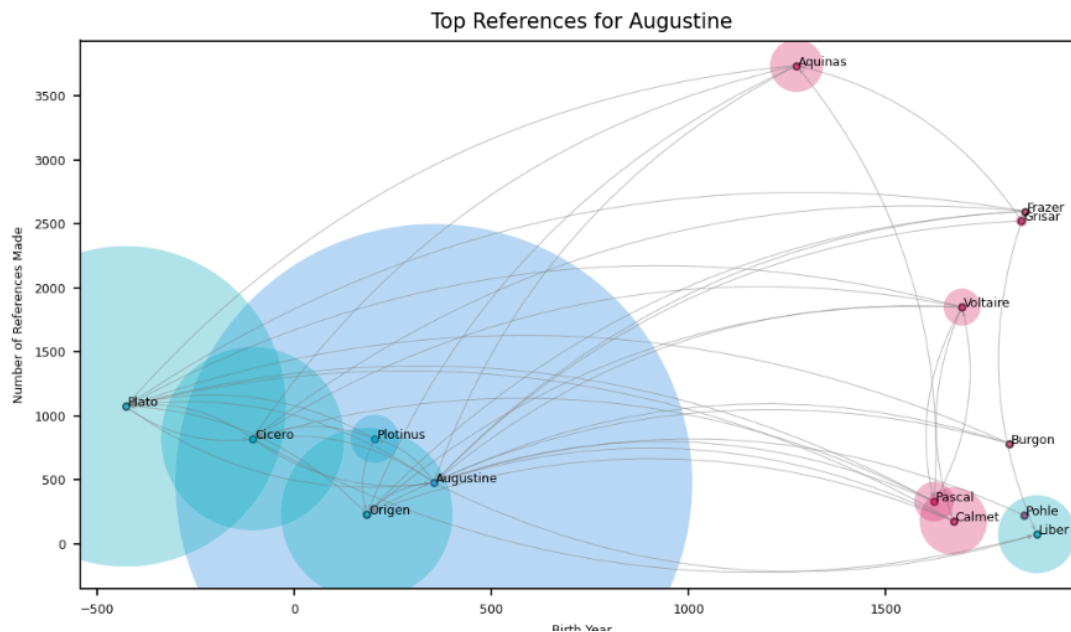
Sharing a Lineage, The Enlightenment Philosophers:



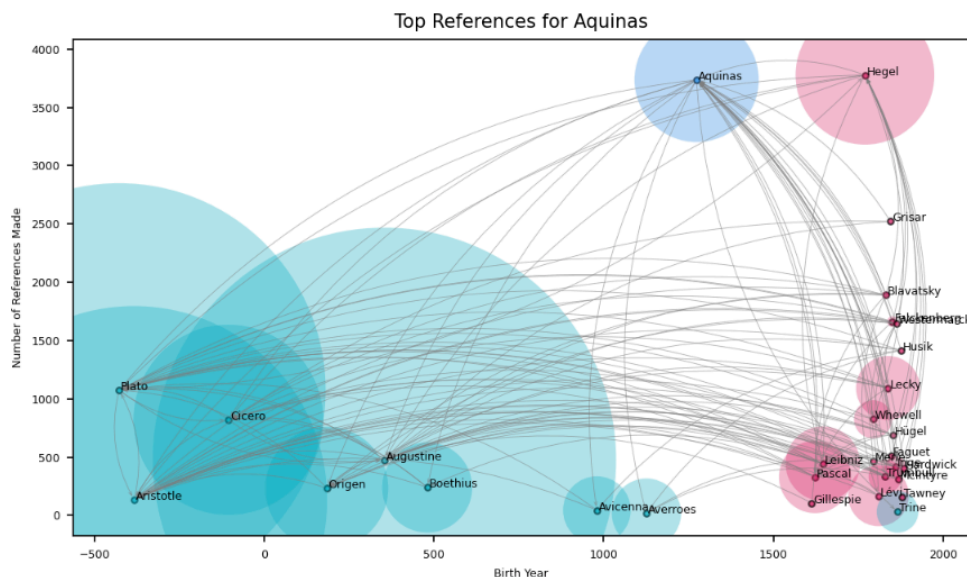
Prominent Enlightenment philosophers offer a more detailed view on Plato and Aristotle's influence. Thinkers like Descartes, Leibniz, Kant, or Locke most often reference other prominent philosophers of their era and close contemporaries. With occasional exceptions, Enlightenment philosophers do not heavily reference people outside of their immediate contemporaries—with the exception, of course, of Plato and Aristotle. Often, this leads our visualization tool to have

two clusters when selecting European philosophers—one of philosophers around 1500-1900, and another cluster back at 300 BCE with Plato, Aristotle, and occasionally a small handful of others like Homer, Cicero, or Plutarch. This is so common, in fact, that the next version of our tool will include a feature to disclude chosen people, as the universal presence of Plato and Aristotle made it difficult to observe other networks in more detail.

Saint Augustine of Hippo & Saint Thomas Aquinas: Reviving Aristotle

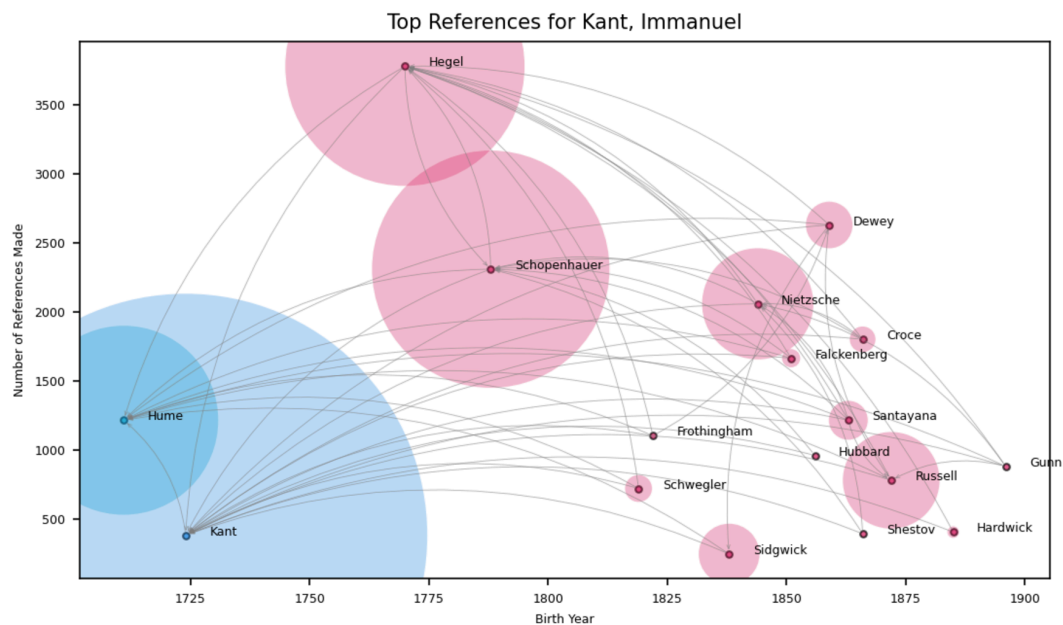
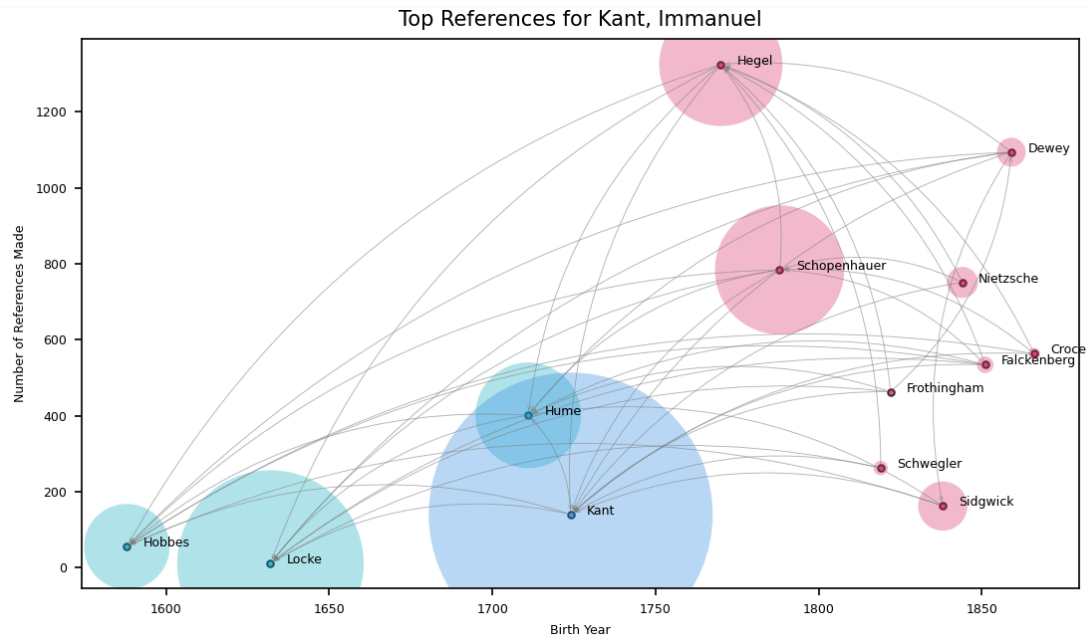


Saint Augustine of Hippo, the Christian theologian and scholar, also has a much larger influence, especially compared to his milder prominence among academic philosophers. Our graph gives evidence for his role as a bridge—being one of the few authors in our dataset who lived around 300 BCE. He does not often reference Aristotle—we counted more citations of Homer, Plato, Cicero, Plutarch and Plotinus from him.



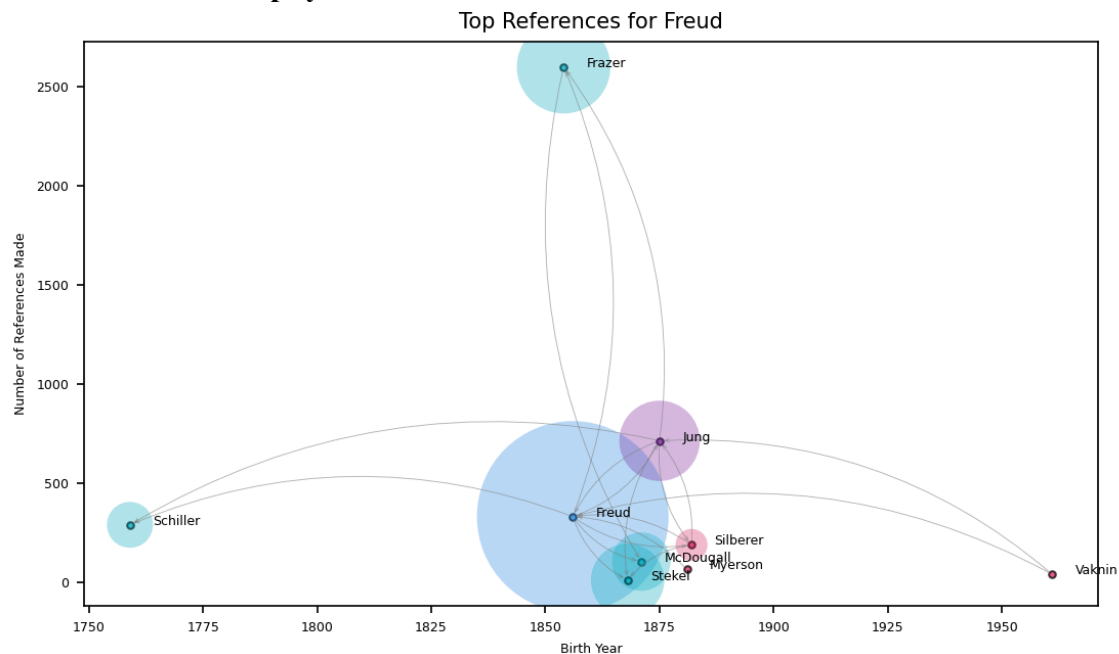
Saint Thomas Aquinas, however, commonly references both Augustine and Aristotle, and is also commonly referenced by European philosophers; this aligns with the general understanding that Aquinas acted as a ‘synthesizer’ between Aristotelian and Christian ideas.

Kant's Enduring Influence:

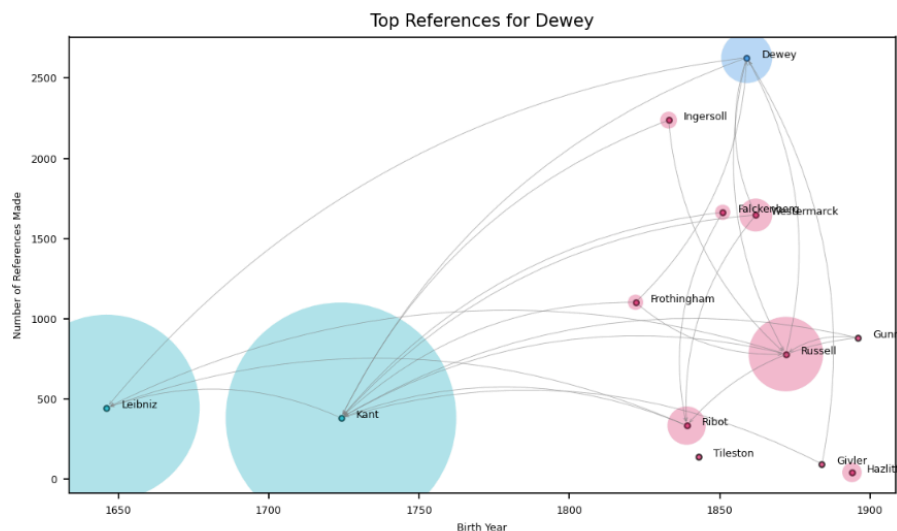


Kant, despite his works being incredibly inaccessible to average readers, has an incredible influence. Most people who know of Kant—including many with a bachelor's degree in philosophy—know him most by his contributions to ethical philosophy. However, in our preliminary attempts to classify references by topic, our data suggests that his ideas in metaphysics, logic, and epistemology may be even more influential, at least to other famous thinkers

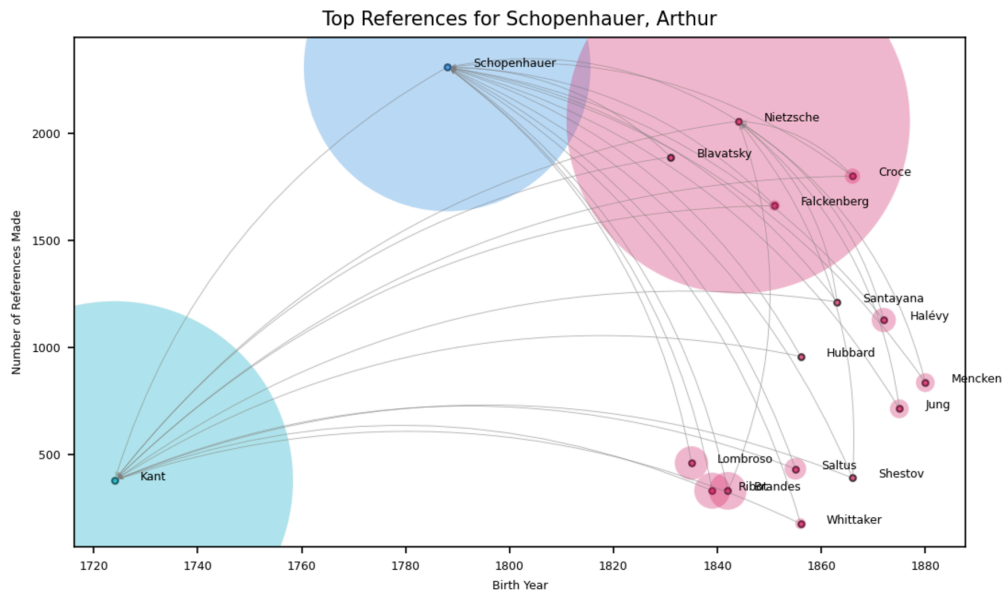
The Children of Philosophy:



The citation network of Freud looks notably different than previous philosophers, which likely reflects how his ideas branched off from the traditional philosophical conversation into a new discipline. While he does occasionally reference the major thinkers, he is more likely to reference lesser-known contemporaries, like Frazer, Stekel, or McDougall. Freud and Jung are one of the few people who most frequently cite each other, which appears to be a surprisingly rare phenomena. Some writers who most frequently referenced Freud also appeared less likely to commonly reference the canonical philosophers, and if our dataset included books classified as purely ‘psychology,’ this would be even more common.

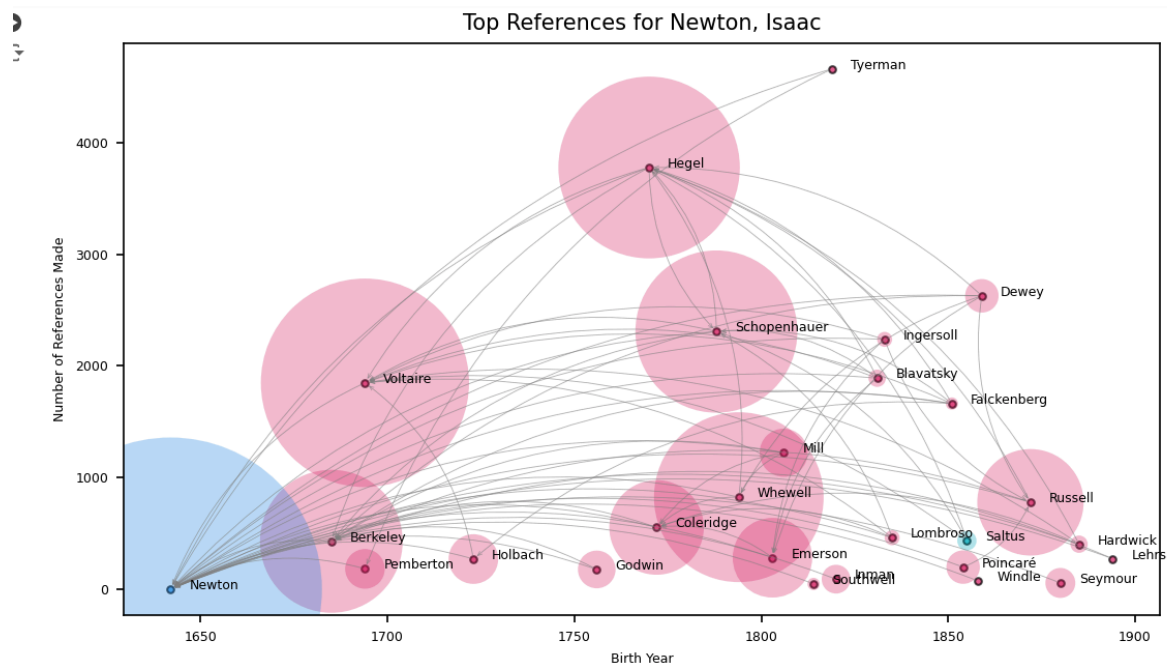


Tolstoy and Dewey show analogous patterns in their citation network. They both reference the canonical thinkers somewhat more so than Freud, but they also both receive disproportionate references from writers who do not often reference the canonical thinkers. Tolstoy, considered far more of a novelist than a traditional philosopher, is more likely to be cited by writers who engage less with the canonical philosophers and more with contemporary writers. Likewise, Dewey appears to be more likely to be cited by educational reformers who—given the fact they are in our dataset—are somewhat adjacent to philosophy, but who also cite the canonical philosophers considerably less.



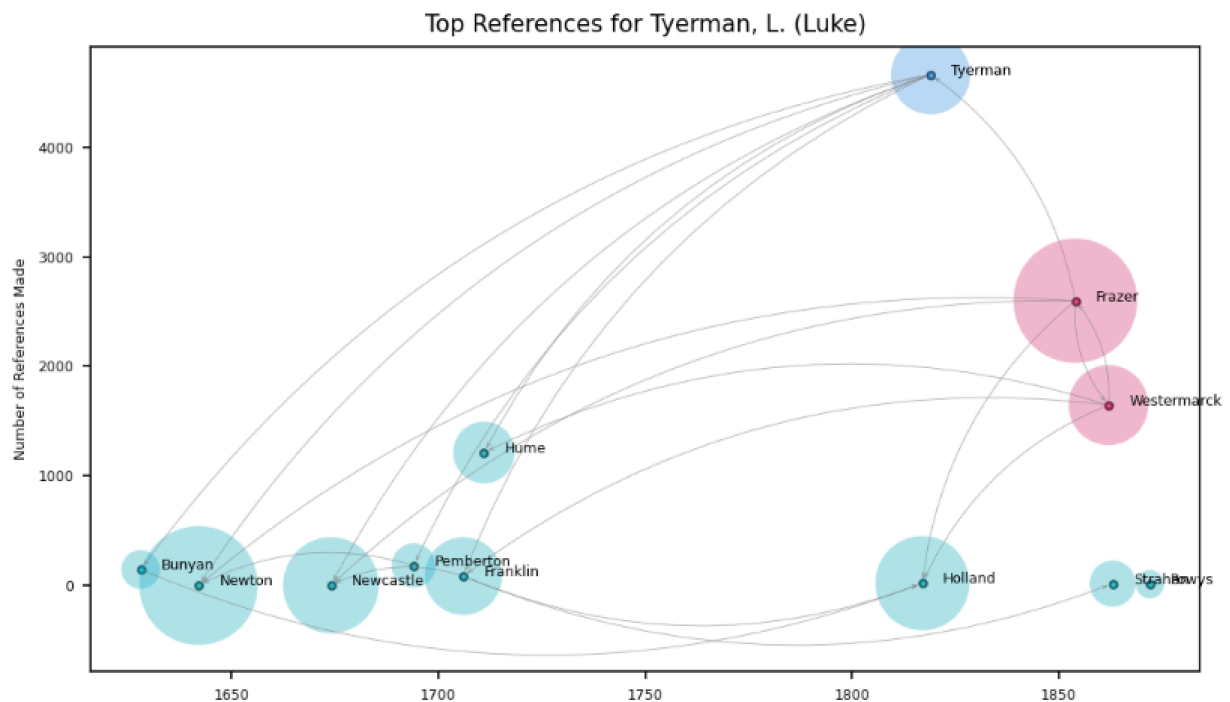
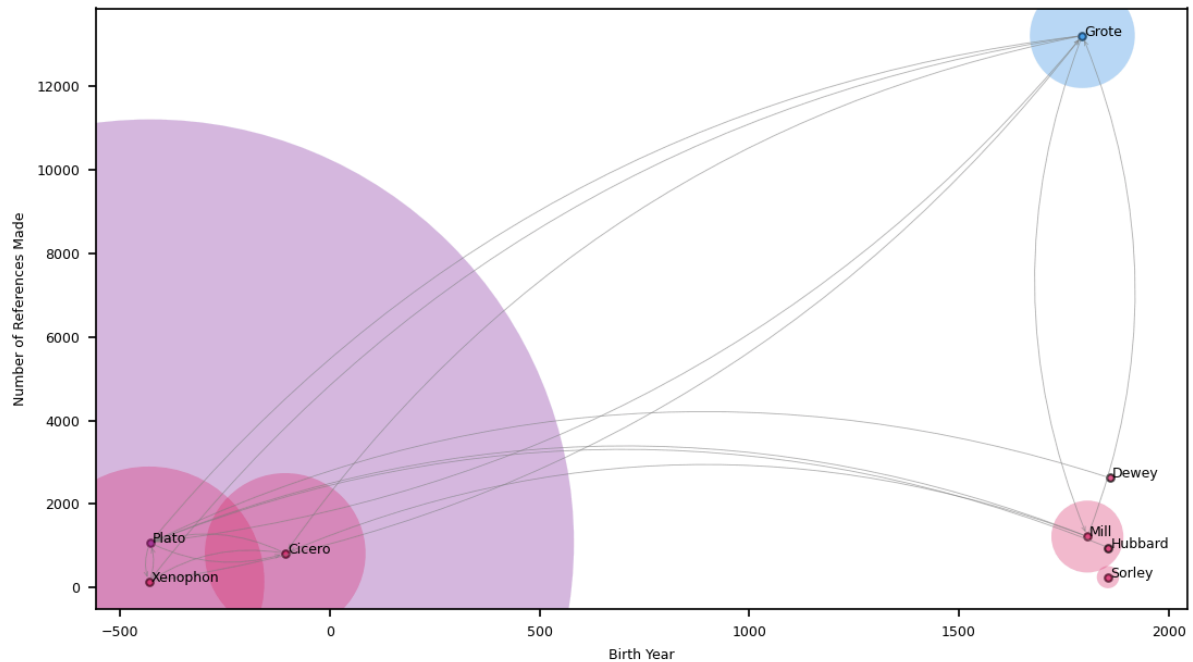
This is in sharp contrast to thinkers who are known most prominently as purely philosophers, such as Schopenhauer, Nietzsche, or Hegel; people who frequently cite them also frequently cite other canonical philosophers, staying more in the community.

The Giant Shoulders of Newton



Similar to Freud, Dewey, and Tolstoy, Isaac Newton also received more references from writers less engaged with the main branch of philosophy, though his unique level of influences gives his citation network unique properties. Newton has published works which engage with Plato and Aristotle, though these writings are not commonly studied, and none of these appeared in our dataset. As a result, Newton has only two outgoing references, but is frequently referenced by major philosophers who came after him. Anyone who wanted to write about metaphysics, of course, must address the ideas of the most powerful scientific model of their time.

The Historian's Role:



The historian also occupies a unique role in the network. George Grote, an 18th century English historian, makes the most references of anyone in our dataset; we can reasonably conclude that this is the result of the fact that his published works center around documenting the lives of philosophers.

He is also one of the few people who are most frequently cited by the published works of ancient philosophers such as Plato and Aristotle. These citations toward Grote are, of course, not from Plato and Aristotle themselves, but from introductions and editors notes within their published works. This is an example of ‘noise’ that we plan to filter out in future interactions of our tool, but for the time being, it does show his outsized influence in shaping our historical understanding of those philosophers.

The historian Luke Tyerman has a similar structure to his citation network; like Grote, he makes far more outgoing citations relative to the citations he receives; though, unlike Grote, his works tend to cover lesser known figures in our data, such as John Wesley, Samuel Wesley, and George Whitefield. George Whitefield’s status as the fifth most cited writer in figure 1 is a result of Tyerman’s biographies about Whitefield, which have given him a disproportionate number of citations relative to his influence.