

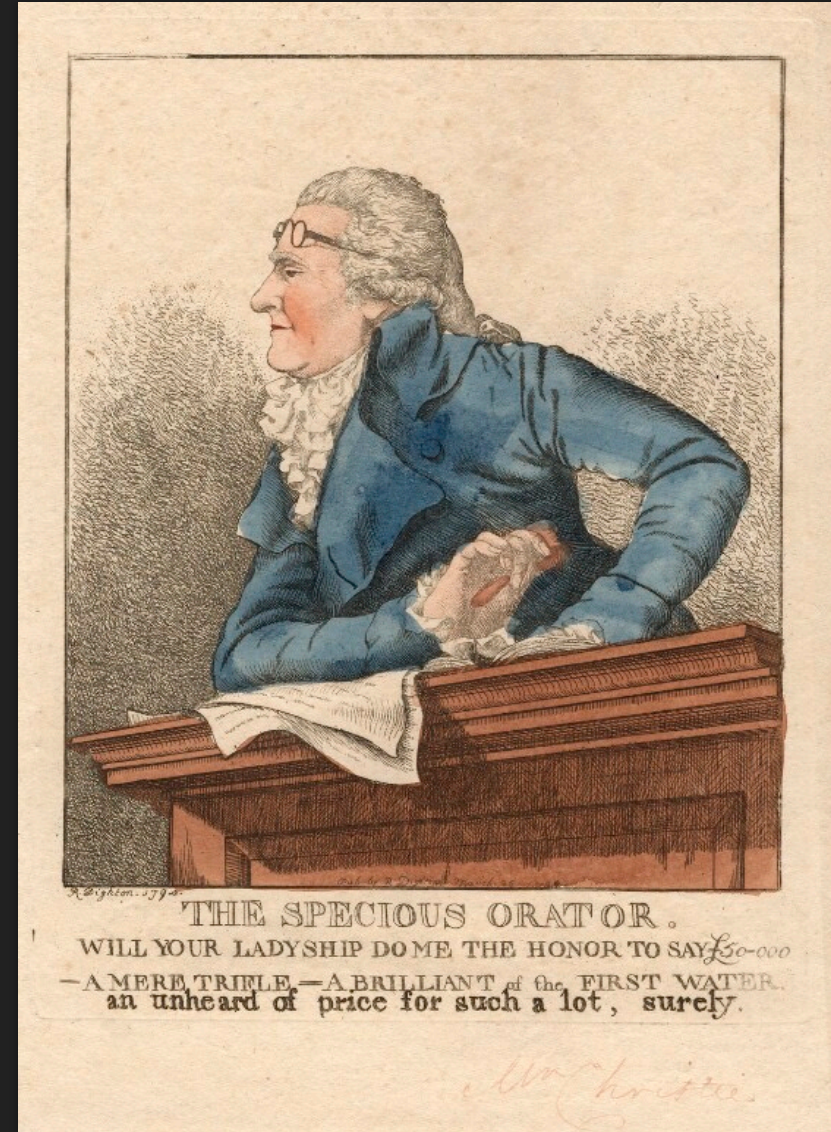
# London calling from the auction world

A methodological quest throughout eighteenth-century London auction advertisements

# One of the specious orators...

- “Your ladyship”
- Engaging in the Empire of Things

*James Christie, “The specious orator”, 1794*



# One of the specious orators...

**To be Sold by AUCTION**  
By Mr. C O C K,  
On Tuesday and Wednesday next, the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> instant,  
**THE HOUSHOLD FURNITURE,**  
PICTURES, PLATE, CHINA, and CURIOSITIES, of  
WILLIAM POWLETT, Esq; decas'd: at his late Dwelling House  
in *Paradise-Row, Chelsea*; consisting of *fine carv'd Mahogany and other  
Chairs; Marble and Mahogany Tables; Chimney-Glasses and Sconces, in  
gilt and other Frames; curious Manchineel Dressing-Tables, with Toilets  
complete; fine old Japan Desks, Cabinets, and Scrutores; two exceeding  
good Clocks by Tompion; a Harpsichord by Player; great Variety of Snuff-  
Boxes, in Gold, Silver, Agate, &c. also of Brilliant and other Rings;  
Silver and Copper Medals and Coins; a Chamber-Horse complete, and  
other Effects.*  
The said Goods will be exhibited to publick View on Friday next, and  
every Day after (Sunday excepted) till the Time of Sale, which will begin  
each Day at Half an Hour after Eleven.  
Catalogues will be deliver'd gratis Tomorrow, at his late Dwelling House  
in *Paradise-Row, Chelsea, aforesaid;* and at Mr. COCK's, in the Great  
Piazza, Covent-Garden.

*Daily Advertiser, 1 June 1743*

**SUPERB** HOUSEHOLD FURNITURE, LINEN,  
CHINA, &c.—By Mr. CHRISTIE,  
At the Great Rooms, Dean-street, Soho, THIS and Five fol-  
lowing Days, precisely at 12 o'clock,  
**A**LL the **Elegant** HOUSEHOLD FURNI-  
TURE, China, Prints, &c. the Effects of Captain WIL-  
LIAM SUNDERLAND, gone to the West Indies, removed from  
Bloomsbury-square.  
Comprising **large and superb four-post bed-heads**, with gilt and  
japanned cornices and window curtains to match, **excellent** goose  
and down beds, field bedsteads and furnitures, and excellent  
Bedding, beautiful Persia, Brussels, and Turkey pattern carpets,  
sideboards with cellarets, sets of dining tables to join, secre-  
taries and book-cases, double and single commodes, **mahogany**  
wardrobes, dining, card and Pembroke tables, elegant lusters,  
**beautiful** inlaid ladies' dressing tables, a table service of 150  
pieces; tea and coffee equipages, a beautiful collection of prints  
in burnished gold frames, a wardrobe of table and bed linen  
**a general assemblage of elegant furniture, well worth the attention  
of those who want to furnish.** May be viewed and Catalogues had.  
N. B. Goods intended for the country immediately packed.

*Morning Chronicle, 31 October 1796*

# Corpus

Overview of sampled newspapers and advertisement pages they contained for all sample periods

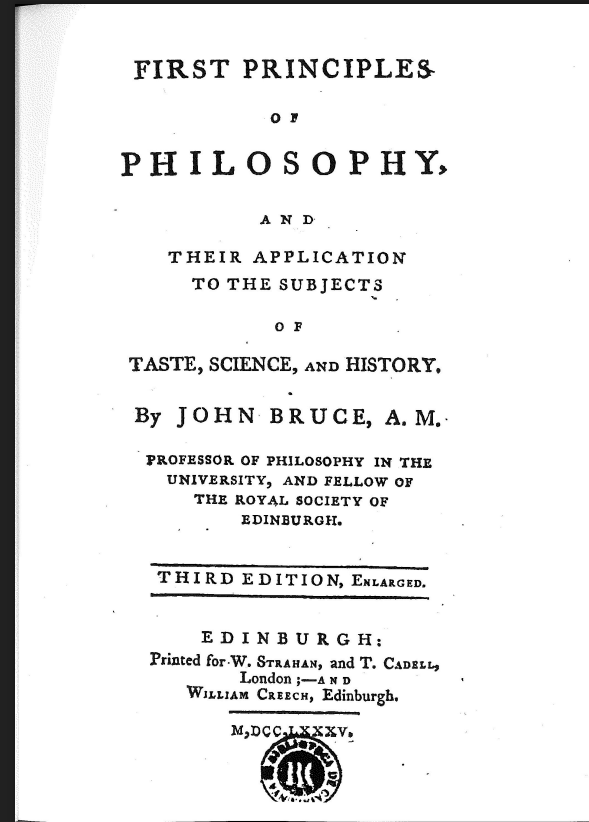
	Daily Advertiser	Morning Chronicle	Daily Post	London Daily Post & General Advertiser	Public Ledger & Daily Advertiser	Total number of advertisement pages
<b>SP1 1742–1743</b>	583	/	513	260	/	1.356
<b>SP2 1773</b>	763	323	/	/	/	1.086
<b>SP3 1799–1800</b>	630	778	/	/	/	1.408
<b>SP4 1828–1829</b>	/	625	/	/	701	1.326
<b>Total number per newspaper</b>	1.976	1.726	513	260	701	5.176

## Furniture manuals

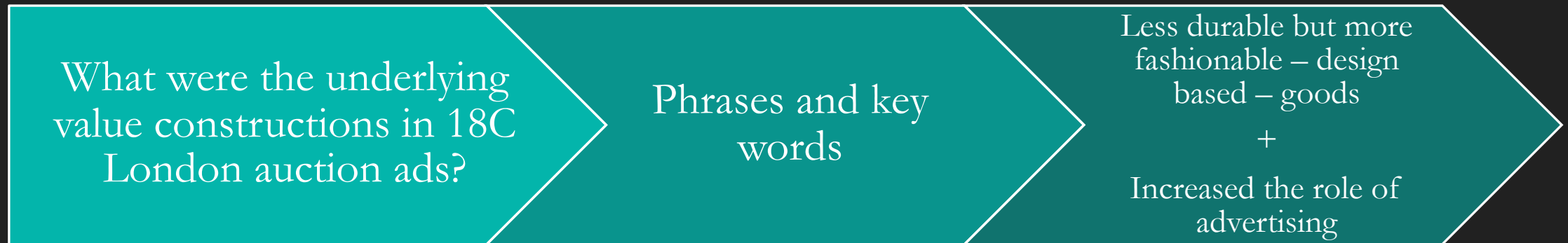


*"Chinese Sopha" by Thomas Chippendale*

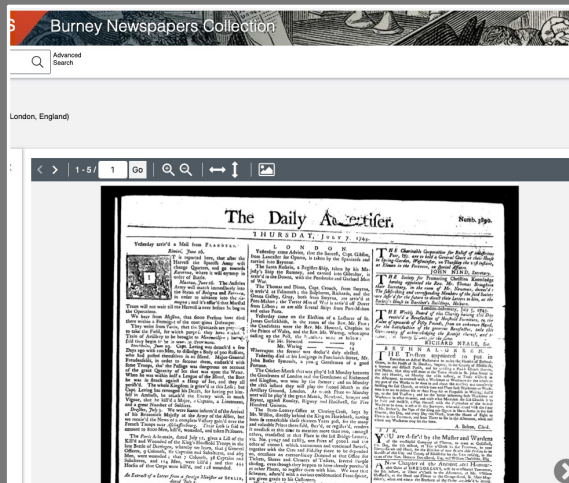
## Philosophical treatises



# Research question and hypothesis



# Workflow source material



Peruse newspapers

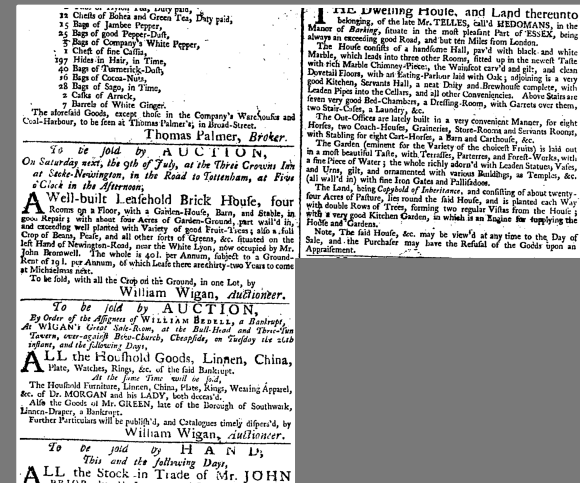
Burney collection (SP1-3)

BN4 (SP4)



Select ads

Only download pages with ads



Convert and crop

Only auction ads left

# Workflow source material



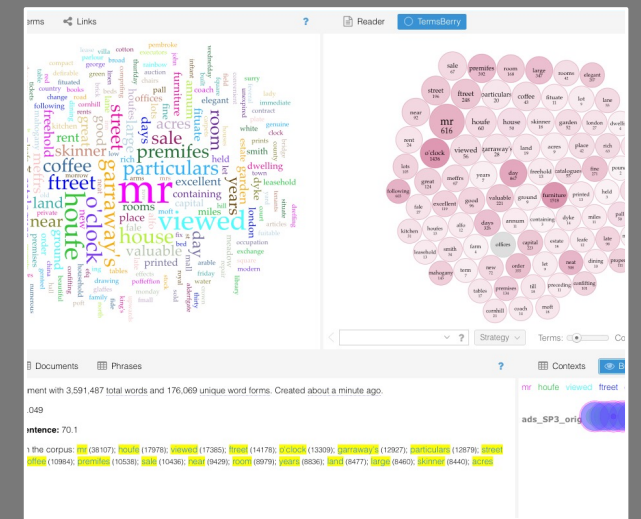
Transkribus

Trained model

```
G and FORRISTER, \ At their Repository, the Bell Inn, Wood-Street, Shearffide, Tomorrow, \ Pair of  
ft-Chariot; also a Pair of grey Geldings, \ go quiet in Harnets; also fundry good usefull Coach,  
Number of Road and Post-Chaise) Geldings, Mares, Hacks, and fundry Carriages. \ To be viewed,  
SALIMORE, \ At his Repository in Blackman-Street, Southwark, next Monday, at Twelve, \ GUNDRY Pa  
si; some strong Chaise Geldings; with a Number of Cart, Machine, and Post Chaise Geldings, Mare  
an, and a Light Cart almost as good as new, \  
e. Wial, had; \  
ARIES of JAMES WAST, Efq. \ DECEASED, will be published on WEDNESDAY next, and may be YHEN \ had  
NGFORDS, \ On the PREMISES, Tomorrow, and Monday next. \ HE GENUINE HOUSEHOLD FURNITURE, \ PICTURE  
cupation of the Right Hon, Lord Chief Justice De Grey, the Property of \  
County of Middlesex. \ To be viewed till the Sale, which will begin at Half past Eleven. \ Catal  
rg-Garden. \ To be Sold by Auction by Mr. LANGFORDS, \ At their Houfe in the Great Piazza, Cover  
infant, and the following E ping, \ COLLECTION of PRIN TS and DRAWINGS of \  
ot-Street, BATH, deceased. \ Amongst which are several ORIGINALS by the VANDEVELDES. \ They may b  
 \ will begin each Evening at Six o'Clock. \ Catalogues may then be had at Mess. Langfords afore  
NEORNE, \ At their houfe in the Great Piazza, Covent-Garden, on Wednesday the 13th \ Infant, by  
 \ T, late of BATH, deceased. \ Mr. SAMUEL SCOT \ Univerfally esteemed for his Sea-Pieces, Ship  
ale, which begins at Twelve. \ Catalogues may then be had at Mess. Langfords aforefaid. \  
ANGFORDS, \ On the PREMISES, on Saturday the 6th of FEBRUARY, at One o'Clock, \ ISSIIONESS, \ (unle  
 \ HE Large, Elegant, and Commodious New-buill \  
Situat in New Grafton-Street, Berkeley-Square. \ The Premises are built on an approved Plan; t  
nce; the Staircases are of Stone, and the prin- cial one fully adorned; the offices are nume  
fes, may be viewed in a few Days; where Particulars may be had, \ and at Mess. Langfords, in Cove  
gfigious of treating by private to the Adigness. \ To be berepon by Sold tin Lettd by Publish  
the 6th of January \ inf, at the White Hart Inn, in Lancaster, pursuant to an Act of Parli- \ V  
BENISON, \ Efq. deceased, being the Manor of Bston, in Kendal, in the County of Westmorland, a  
fituate in Whittington, in the County of Lancaster, and Lunn Holme, \ is the Parifh of Thornto  
in the Town of Lancaster, and a Parcel of Woodland at Gaton, near Lancaster; all which Effates  
ll, in the County of Lancaster, Efq. \ The First Day's Sale, Monday the 4th of January, will be  
BTON, \ The Second Day's Sale, Tuesday the 5th of January, the Manor of Burton, \ and the Effate  
6th of January, the Refidue of the remifas, being the Effates called Weft-Hall and Lunn Holme  
Bewick at Harby; or to Mess. Coulthard and Wildman, in Lincolns- Ten \ London \ To be Sold
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Export .txt

Delete nonsense words



Voyant

First exploration

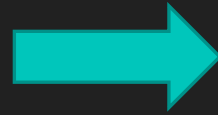




- Distributional thesis
  - *Smurf Language Principle*
- 1 model per sample period
  - Neighbour analysis
- Plot and compare models
  - Last SP as base model

# Methodology

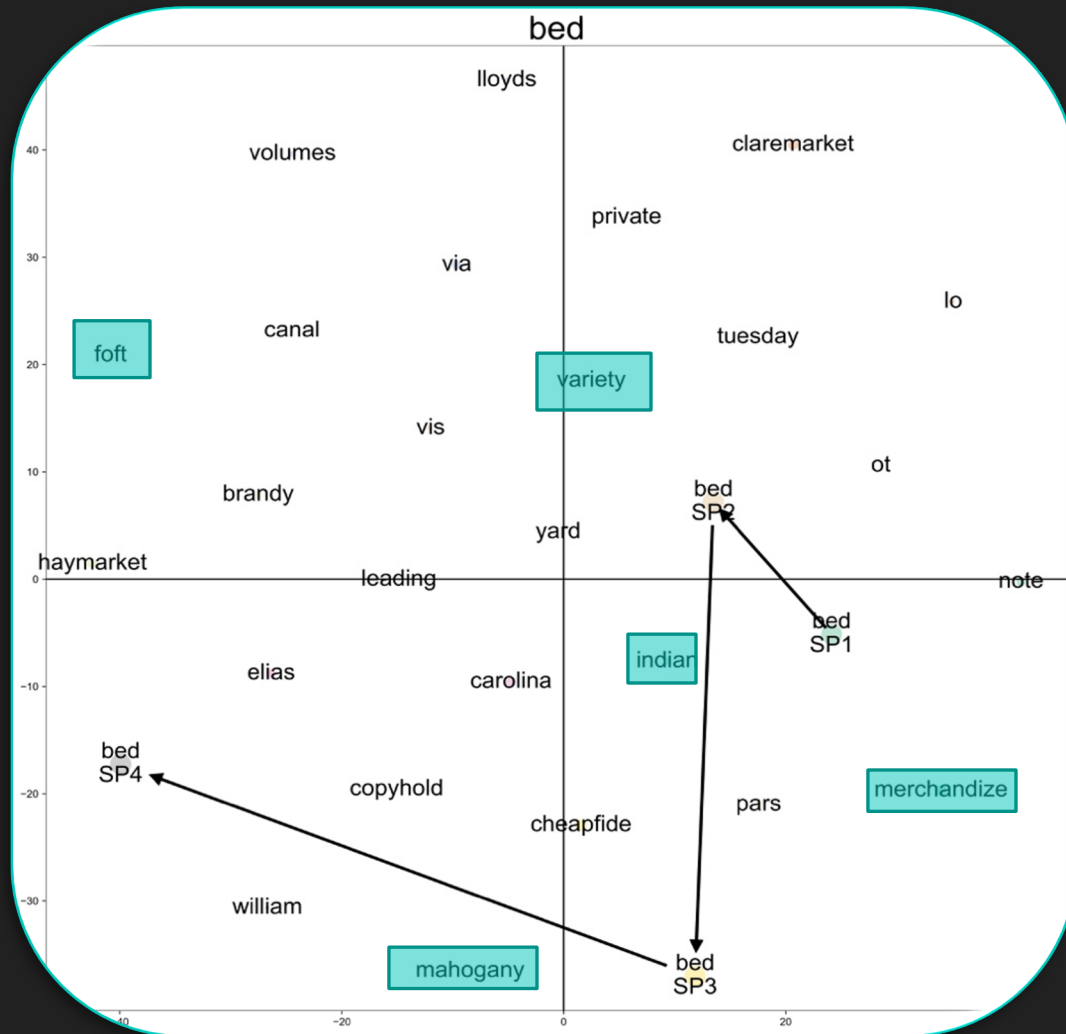
- Digital text analysis
  - Word embeddings
- ‘close reading’
  - Sources
  - Dictionaries, treatises...



- Embedding the word embeddings
- Recogito
  - Standardise spelling & relationships
  - Annotator agreement principle
- Cleaner and more structured
- Basic word statistics and word order

# Some examples: Bed

*Scatterplot of “bed” in London auction advertisements 1742–1829*



- Clutter
- Repetitive nature of ads
- 500 most frequent words

# Some examples: Bed

Bed	1742–1743	1773	1799–1800	1828–1829
	blue	bedstead	sleeping	bedchamber
	settee	canopy	bedchambers	airy
	worsted			
	damask	cotton	servants	sleeping
	silk damask	check	closets	spacious
	yellow	blue	bed hangings	dressing room

*Frequently occurring neighbors of “bed” in London auction advertisements 1742–1829*

# Some examples: Excellent

Excellent	1742–1743	1773	1799–1800	1828–1829	Furniture manuals
	wine	perfect	goods	superior	ancient
	Malaga	completely	incomplete	goods	genteel
	port	goods	perfect	elegant	distinction
	burgundy	assemblage	elegant	complete	novelty
	butt	style	complete	perfect	purposes

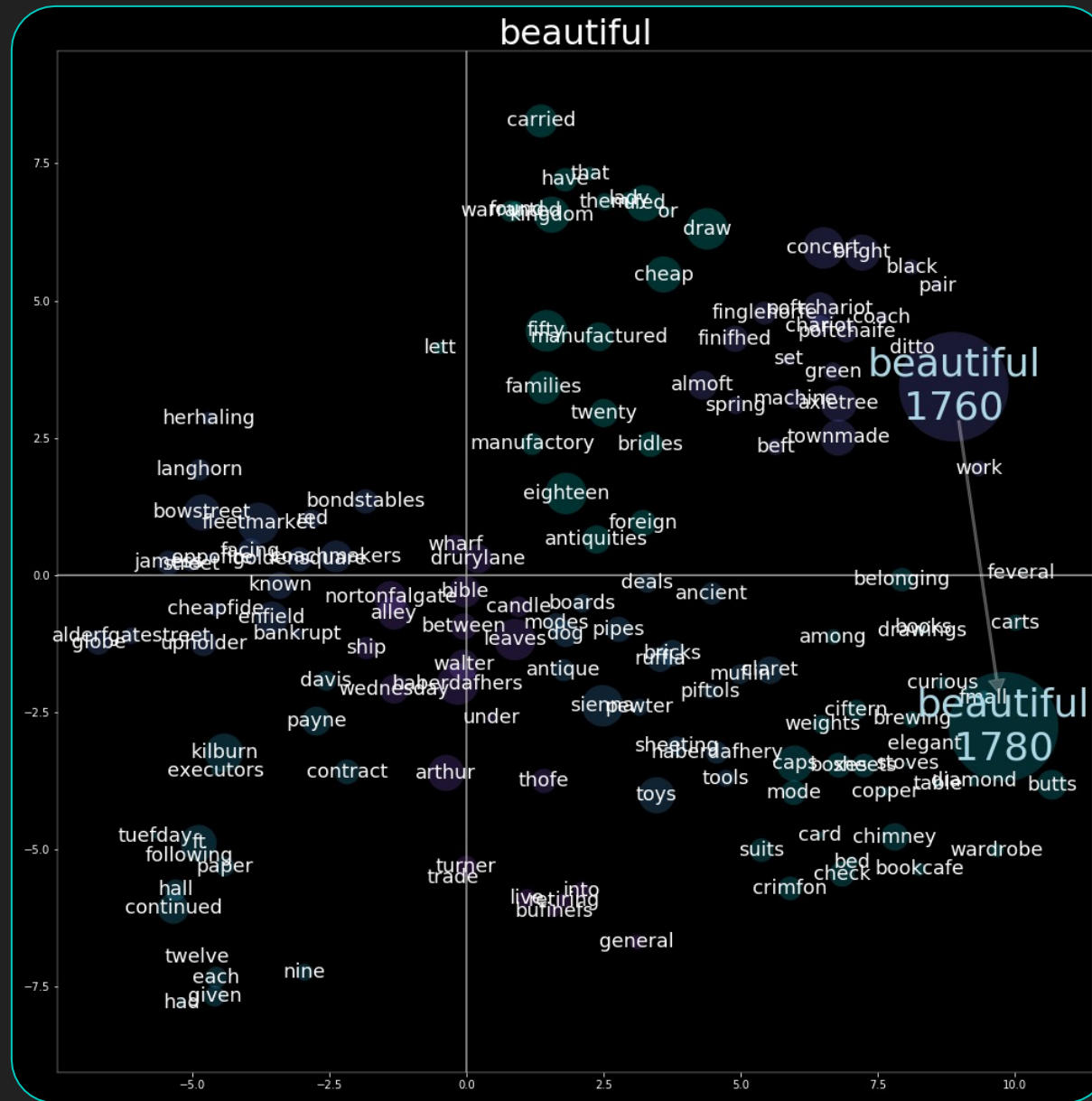
*Frequently occurring neighbors of “excellent” in London auction advertisements 1742–1829*

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	Malaga	completely	incomplete	goods	genteel
	port	goods	perfect	elegant	distinction
	burgundy	assemblage	elegant	complete	novelty
	butt	style	complete	perfect	purposes

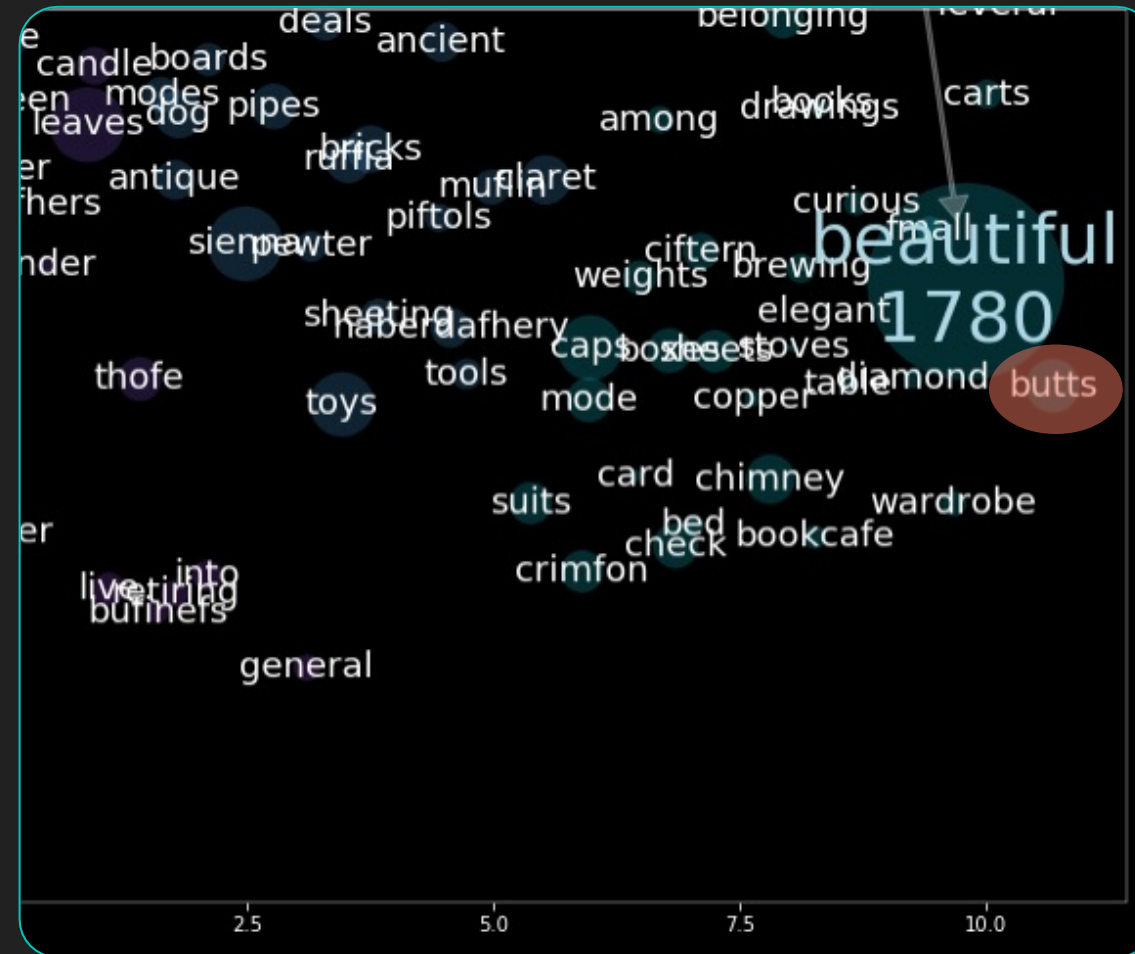
*Frequently occurring neighbors of “excellent” in London auction advertisements 1742–1829*

# Mind the but(t)s...



*Scatterplot of the semantic shift of 'beautiful' in the Daily Advertiser of 1760 vs. 1780*

# Mind the but(t)s...



*Scatterplot of the semantic shift of 'beautiful' in the Daily Advertiser of 1760 vs. 1780*



# Mind the but(t)s...

- "A large cask used to store liquids, typically varying in capacity from 108 to 140 gallons (approx. 491 to 637 litres)" (Oxford English Dictionary)

To be SOLD by PRIVATE CONTRACT,  
By Mr. WILLIAMS,  
**A** Valuable LEASEHOLD ESTATE, most  
delightfully situate in Marshall-street, St. George's  
Fields, Surry: consisting of Six neat Brick Dwelling-Houses,  
with Gardens, Fore Courts, and Lead Pump to each House,  
in the Occupations of Messrs. Pearce, Clark, Watson, and  
other Tenants at Will, No. 13, 14, 15, 16, 17 and 35,  
amounting to 79l. 13s. per Annum, subject to a small  
Ground Rent of 2l. 5s. each, held for a Term of 60 Years  
at Midsummer Day last.  
May be viewed by Leave of the Tenants; and Particulars  
to be had of Mr. Williams, Appraiser and Auctioneer,  
Lambeth Butts.

*E. Johnson's British Gazette and Sunday Monitor, Sunday  
November 9<sup>th</sup>, 1788*

