



# Looking at Whores - The challenge of lexicography in the 17th century

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# Introduction

- What to look for?
- What words were used?
- In focus – *whore*

# Looking up

- Looking up – the OED
- Looking up – Chambers
- Looking up – Specific texts
- Looking up – the historian

Key:

\* In OED                      Underlined – thought to be rare

† In Chambers

ape-gentlewoman, commodities<sup>†</sup>, courtesan<sup>\*</sup>, Covent Garden ladies<sup>†</sup>, crack, daughters of sodom, doves of Venus, girls of pleasure<sup>†</sup>, harlot<sup>\*†</sup>, hydra, jade, jilt<sup>\*†</sup>, kind woman, lewd / wicked / abominable / debauched / disorderly person<sup>\*</sup> or woman, miss<sup>\*†</sup>, monster<sup>\*</sup>, nightwalker<sup>\*†</sup>, nocturnal privateers, nymph<sup>\*†</sup>, pirates of the night<sup>\*</sup>, prostitute<sup>\*</sup>, punk<sup>\*†</sup>, quean<sup>\*†</sup>, she-friend<sup>\*</sup>, strumpet<sup>\*</sup>, the sisterhood, traffic<sup>\*†</sup>, trull<sup>\*†</sup>, wanton ladies, whore<sup>\*†</sup>, woman of iniquity, woman of the town<sup>\*</sup>

	1600-1609	1610-1619	1620-1629	1630-1639	1640-1649	1650-1659	1660-1669	1670-1679	1680-1689	1690-1699
<b>courtesan</b>	129	93	67	82	51	110	<u>131</u>	112	99	99
<b>courtesans</b>	99	90	59	75	58	<u>108</u>	99	165	121	133
<b>harlot</b>	601	735	462	520	686	<u>1398</u>	774	628	655	505
<b>harlots</b>	272	380	309	293	403	<u>850</u>	503	527	408	349
<b>jade</b>	<u>292</u>	177	130	144	149	154	147	159	270	207
<b>jades</b>	10	2	3	31	33	50	60	54	<u>89</u>	46
<b>jilt</b>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	37	75	<u>143</u>
<b>jilts</b>	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	7	19	<u>36</u>
<b>nightwalker</b>	3	2	6	6	2	4	<u>9</u>	1	1	1
<b>nightwalkers</b>	5	2	4	6	6	<u>16</u>	7	2	6	1
<b>prostitute</b>	73	102	83	120	160	262	205	198	<u>327</u>	300
<b>prostitutes</b>	1	7	5	22	32	36	23	41	41	<u>65</u>
<b>punk</b>	31	54	24	29	19	28	31	49	<u>79</u>	56
<b>punks</b>	8	5	1	7	11	14	6	11	<u>25</u>	19
<b>quean</b>	8	2	2	9	23	49	91	<u>101</u>	60	38
<b>queans</b>	39	<u>48</u>	32	40	28	4	0	0	0	0
<b>strumpet</b>	268	294	218	<u>351</u>	253	421	228	204	285	218
<b>strumpets</b>	93	<u>145</u>	60	125	72	137	74	74	116	106
<b>trull</b>	41	28	22	37	38	52	19	31	<u>54</u>	19
<b>trulls</b>	12	13	4	16	<u>18</u>	10	6	9	17	7
<b>whore</b>	981	1213	1084	1129	2134	<u>2883</u>	2167	1977	2552	1652
<b>whores</b>	256	287	299	409	440	638	488	580	<u>829</u>	578
<b>Peaks</b>	1	2	0	1	1	5	2	1	6	3

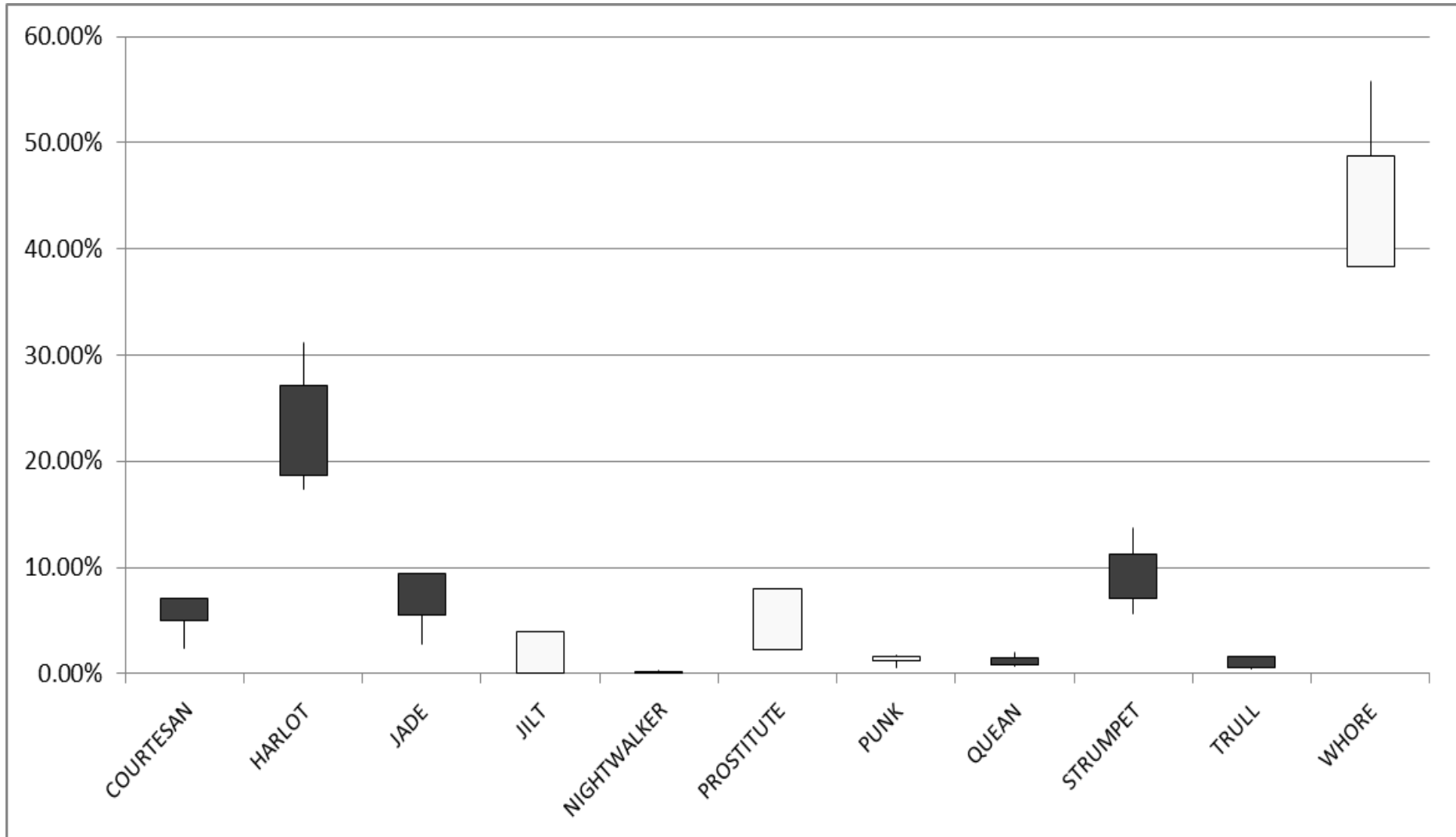
# Visualizing

- Are there ways to visualize this better?
- Also, what about proportions of mention, rather than raw frequencies of mention?

# Candlestick plots

- Japanese commodity dealing
- Visualization of commodity trading trends
- If the opening frequency is above the closing frequency then a filled candlestick is shown (top opening, bottom closing)
- Closing frequency above opening frequency, hollow candlestick (top closing, bottom opening)
- Lines above and below '*wicks*' represent high and low points.

- Hollow ↑ (opening bottom)
- Solid ↓ (closing bottom)





Decade	Semantic fields attached to WHORE
00s	Criminality (1), Gender identity (1), Insult (2), Location (1), Near synonym (2), Purchase (3), Relative (1), Religious (23), Undesirable characteristic (3)
10s	Acting (3), Controllers (2), Criminality (2), Gender identity (2), Honesty (1), Insult (1), Near synonym (1), Purchase (1), Relative (1), Religious (20), Undesirable characteristic (1)
20s	Acting (4), Controllers (1), Criminality (3), Gender identity (1), Honesty (1), Insult (2), Purchase (2), Relative (4), Religious (23), Undesirable characteristic (2)
30s	Age (1), Acting (1), Controllers (3), Criminality (4), Gender identity (2), Honesty (1), Insult (2), Near synonym (3), Purchase (2), Relative (2), Religious (7), Title (1), Undesirable characteristic (3)
40s	Acting (2), Controllers (4), Criminality (4), Gender identity (1), Honesty (1), Insult (1), Near synonym (3), Purchase (3), Relative (2), Religious (41), Undesirable characteristic (3)
50s	Acting (3), Controllers (1), Criminality (3), Disease (1), Gender identity (1), Honesty (1), Illegitimacy (1), Insult (3), Intercourse (1), Location (1), Matrimony (2), Near synonym (3), Purchase (2), Relative (2), Religious (55), Undesirable characteristic (5)
60s	Age (1), Acting (2), Controllers (2), Criminality (4), Disease (2), Falsehood (1), Gender identity (1), Honesty (1), Insult (3), Matrimony (1), Metaphor (1), Near synonym (2), Pity (1), Purchase (2), Relative (2), Religious (38), Similie (1), Undesirable characteristic (2)
70s	Age (1), Acting (1), Controllers (2), Criminality (2), Disease (1), Gender identity (2), Honesty (1), Illegitimacy (1), Insult (2), Near synonym (2), Pity (1), Purchase (1), Relative (3), Religious (31), Title (3), Undesirable characteristic (2)
80s	Age (2), Allow (1), Acting (4), Controllers (2), Criminality (4), Exclamation (1), Falsehood (1), Gender identity (2), Honesty (1), Illegitimacy (1), Insult (4), Know (1), Location (1), Near synonym (1), Pity (1), Profession (1), Purchase (3), Relative (2), Religious (30), Title (2), Undesirable characteristic (1)
90s	Age (1), Acting (6), Controllers (6), Criminality (6), Gender identity (2), Honesty (1), Insult (8), Punishment (2), Purchase (4), Relative (2), Religious (27), Similie (1), Title (1)

	0	10	20	30	40	50	60	70	80	90		Nature of Collocates
Criminality	1	2	3	4	4	2	4	2	4	6	10	Consistent
Gender identity	1	2	1	2	1	1	1	2	2	2	10	Consistent
Insult	2	1	2	2	1	3	3	5	4	8	10	Consistent
Purchase	3	1	2	2	3	2	2	1	3	4	10	Consistent
Relative	1	1	4	2	2	2	2	5	2	2	10	Consistent
Religious	23	20	23	7	41	55	38	31	30	27	10	Consistent
Acting	0	3	4	1	2	3	2	1	4	6	9	Consistent
Controllers	0	2	1	3	4	1	2	2	2	6	9	Consistent
Honesty	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	9	Consistent
Undesirable characteristic	3	1	2	3	3	5	2	2	1	0	9	Consistent
Near synonym	2	1	0	3	3	3	2	2	1	0	8	Consistent
Age	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	1	2	1	5	Transient/ Initiation
Title	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	3	2	1	4	Transient/ Initiation
Disease	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	1	0	0	3	Initiation and Transience
Illegitimacy	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	1	0	3	Transient
Location	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	3	Transient
Pity	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	3	Initiation and Transient
Similie	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	1	3	Transient/ Initiation
Falsehood	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	2	Transient
Matrimony	0	0	0	0	0	2	1	0	0	0	2	Transient
Adultery	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	Transient
Allow	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	Transient
Client	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	Transient
Exclamation	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	Transient
Know	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	Transient
Intercourse	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	Transient
Metaphor	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	Transient
Profession	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	Transient
Punishment	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	1	Transient

# Fields

- Purchase – HIRE, PRICE, KEEP
- ‘keep their whores , under a yearly rent’
- ‘keep a Whore, paying only Ten Shillings and Six Pence’
- ‘Must chain her , or she 'll trade with forty more’

# Criminality

- criminals (KNAVE, THIEF, ROGUE)
- criminal processes (STEAL)
- KNAVE - criminality
- ROGUE – criminality and begging
- *beggars, runnagate, vagabond and vagrant*

# Gender identity

- *woman, her, she*
- ‘The Court would make her either a fool or whore’
- *she + BE + a +whore*
- ‘my wife cuckolds me, she is a whore, a whore, a whore’
- ‘she is a Whore and her child a bastard’
- ‘Go tell thy mistress Whore, she is a Whore’

# Playing and Making

- PLAY V MAKE
- ‘for gain to play the whore’
- ‘some forced are, By being poor and very bare , To play the Whore or Thief’
- ‘And what do many fair Ladies do, but play the Whores with themselves, and commit Uncleanness’
- To make a whore of my daughter, is no hurt to me’
- ‘That Thief has sold her then into some Bawdihouse. Was this your project for her education, To steal my child to make a whore of her ?’

# Controllers

- Transient collocates: PANDER, WHOREMONGER and PIMP
- PIMP per decade, normalised per ten million words: 1.7 (00s), 6.1 (10s), 1.4 (20s), 6.9 (30s), 16.3 (40s), 7.3 (50s), 15.8 (60s), 14.8 (70s), 22.3 (80s), 24.8 (90s)
- Consistent collocation: BAWD
- *broker, brokers, procurers, wenches, courtesans, harlots, harlots, prostitute, punk, strumpet, parasites, ruffians, fornicators, harbouring, bridewell, carted, midwife*

# Undesirable characteristics

- *arrant, impudent, painted, swear*
- *base, crafty, filthy, lust, notorious, shameless*
- *drink, lewd, drunk*
- *common - common WHORE*
- *common WHORE collocates with criminals (pick-pockets), beggars (wanderers), those controlling or facilitating the sex trade (bawds) and others engaged in the same activities (harlot, prostitute)*
- 'A Prostitute or Common Whore, IS a Creature in the form and shape of our mother Eve, but of far more impudence , for as Eve desired to hide her nakedness , this covets to discover it, making a Trade of lust , and a pastime of incontinence . A painted Isabell peeping out at her polluted windows , with a nod or beckon to allure the simple ; and shamelessly saluting those she ne'er saw; and may be compared to a Jakes, which every rogue uses for necessity, and then abhors it'



# Conclusion

- Approach the study of words in the past with caution
- Dictionaries are a partial guide – in both senses of the word
- Other academics with relevant expertise may prove helpful
- The corpus can reveal long term patterns
- Some of these are new to us – collocation is far from being fixed in public discourse