

Topic Modeling Murder Trials of the Old Bailey Sessions Papers

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On Topic Modeling

Topic modeling tools...

- find patterns and co-occurrences of words
- extrapolate backwards from a collection of documents to infer the discourses (Ted Underwood)

Methodology

- Build corpus of texts with Old Bailey Online (oldbaileyonline.org)
[1288 documents]
- Scrub TEI encoding to create plain-text files
- Run in topic modeling program
- Determine best number of topics for coherency
- Read topics and closely read related documents

Scrubbing Options

- Remove All Punctuation
- Make Lowercase
- Remove Digits
- Remove Tags

Additional Options

Stopwords

Lemmas

Consolidations

Special Characters

Default

[View Pre-Defined Rule Sets](#)

or

Enter special characters...

[Upload File](#)

[Preview Scrubbing](#)

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[Download Scrubbed Files](#)

t16750115-1.xml Preview

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</interp> <interp inst="t16750115-1" type="year" value="1675"></interp> <interp inst="t16750115-1" type="uri" value="sessionsPapers/16750115">
</interp> <interp inst="t16750115-1" type="date" value="16750115"></interp> <join result="criminalCharge" id="t16750115-1-off3-c1"
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</persName> of the Parish of <placeName id="t16750115-1-defloc1">St. Martins in ... have before told you, she was at last Cleared by the Jury who juded
her not to be of sound mind before, and at the time of doing the fact, and therefore brought her in <rs id="t16750115-1-verdict4"
type="verdictDescription"> <interp inst="t16750115-1-verdict4" type="verdictCategory" value="notGuilty"></interp> <interp inst="t16750115-1-
verdict4" type="verdictSubcategory" value="nonComposMentis"></interp> not Guilty </rs>.</p> </div1>
```

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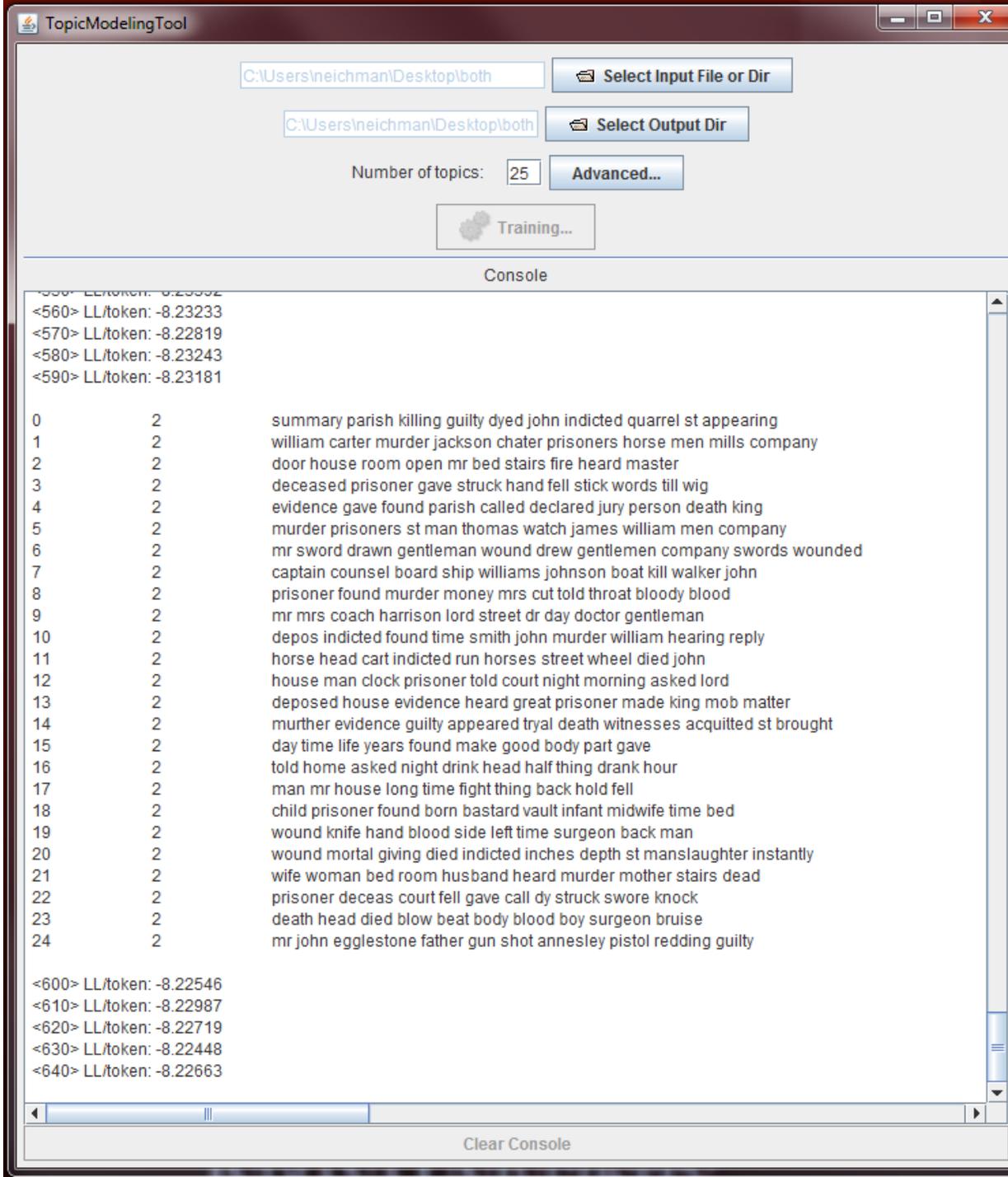
t16750115-1.xml Preview

The first of these was a Woman of the Parish of St. Martins in the fields , a Married Woman , and one whose Husband is accounted a Person of good repute, and credit, and with him she lived, to the seeming of those that know them, contentedly and well, ... of Justice, and at this Sessions tryed for her Life, as I have before told you, she was at last Cleared by the Jury who juded her not to be of sound mind before, and at the time of doing the fact, and therefore brought her in not Guilty .

t16760114-11.xml Preview

Another was tried for Murther , who happened into a house in Black fryers with a young man : After breakfast was ended, they had a few quarrelsome words; he that was kill'd affronted the other both in words and blows, and not being satisfi'd with that, urged him to ... acquitted . Readers, what can subdue, what can asswage The bloody hands of men this sinful age? A servent Prayer from a religious heart: These and far greater Judgments can divert. Then labour hard for such a frame as this, By which you Heav'n may gain, and Hell may miss.

t16760117-3.xml Preview



Topics

1 gentleman coffee gentlemen cane capt duke room body house immediately bid answer lord coach swords
2 constable water brought clock hole persons liquor time prisoners william people ten beadle malpas gave
3 house clark wood time young lane carr martin brought captain gate blare pitts campbel return
4 prisoner richardson carpenter wilson ladder hold gyles person brought fellow design skerret davison make servants
5 man hill body justice wright street clothes shirt cry john tower put day arm constable
6 gave called witnesses sides edward court produced witness language died guilty abused hearing gent person
7 shop door heard thomas cellar open great kill till noise work window vaughan hard weeks
8 time brother person great left give make fact likewise part late reason unhappy heart pulled
9 wound inches inch depth breadth instantly length left died indicted breast deep guilty quarter giving
10 prisoner amp eyes assault held work mortal feloniously iron make left part god giving lay
11 years gave girl apothecary day till stomach age parish time afternoon violent ill complain sister
12 master council fire servant elizabeth street kelly mr house maid fellow burnt isaac chamber day
13 mrs prisoner ann tankard bloody duncomb linen blood found chambers council kerrel shift murder sarah
14 horse cart horses wheel driving stop street head john road dray accident run misfortune riding
15 broke mob george hand thomas king fellow thrown back threw till indicted bear health james

[Sample screenshot of topic modeling tool output]

Cold Murder and Drinking

18 DRINK DRANK PRISONER PINT GIVE MRS HALF BEER PUT MADE WINE PAIN POT GAVE ST

31 PRISONER MATTER BELLY PAY PENCE FOUND DRUNK MAN DAMN BODY QUARREL FELL YARD CUT

Thomas Clements, late of the Parish of St Clement-Danes, Butcher, was indicted for that he not having the Fear of God before his Eyes, but being moved and seduced by the Instigation of the Devil, on the Twenty-second of February, in and upon William Warner did make an Assault, and a certain Knife, made of Iron and Steel, val. 6 d. which he the said Clements had and held in his Right-Hand, towards the said Warner , did cast and throw, and him the said Warner , with the Knife so cast and thrown, on the left side of the Belly, under the Ribs, feloniously, wilfully, and of his Malice aforethought did strike; giving to him (the said Warner). with the Knife as aforesaid, on the left Side of the Belly, under the Rib...

Manslaughter

- 1 GENTLEMAN COFFEE CANE CAPT DUKE ROOM BODY HOUSE IMMEDIATELY BID ANSWER LORD COACH SWORDS
- 25 WOUND DREW SWORDS QUARREL DEFENCE MORTAL RECEIVED KILLED DRAWN GIVING MANSLAUGHTER RAPIER EVIDENCE
- 77 DECEASED MANSLAUGHTER WORDS MALICE FRIENDS MORTAL GUILTY INDICTED BRANDING GOOD DIED FOUGHT RECEIVED

Andrian Scroop was Indicted for committing Murther on the Body of William Best, at a certain Tavern in Kings-street Westminster, the circumstances as they were sworn in Court, are as follows, that the deceased and the Prisoner being at the said Tavern in the Evening, some violent Fudes arose between them, whereupon they both went out, which the rest of the Company observing, followed them, the better to prevent and hinder them from injuring each other, so that by the mediation of some Gentlemen, they seemingly were pacified, and did return to the same place, where the Prisoner acknowledged his sorrow for some unadvized words he had thrown out in Passion, but not having long renewed that Friendship, ere a greater contest arose, upon which the deceased threw two several Tankards at the Prisoner, and with the later-hit him on the head; whereupon in great disgust he leaves the Room, but the deceased following him, he drew his Sword, and in the dark run him in under the left Pap, so that it entering about five inches, it proved mortal, yet after that the Prisoner being disarmed by the Company to part the Fray, caught the deceased by the Nose with his Teeth; all which was acted on the second of December, yet-Best deceased not till about five weeks after, therefore no malice being proved, it was found Manslaughter

Infanticide

- 28 CHILD BORN BASTARD VAULT MIDWIFE INFANT TIME MALE FEMALE DELIVERED BED ALIVE ELIZABETH VIOLENCE MARKS
- 32 COURT MURDER MARY INDICTED ANN JOHNSON MAID LL SWEAR JOHN SUNDAY CLOTHES WITNESSES BROUGHT SPOKE

A woman , whose age might have promised more Chastity and prudence, being privately delivered of a Bastard-childe, made shift, by her wickedness, to deprive the poor Infant of that life she had contributed to by her wantonness . She pretended it came by its untimely end, by falling from her body on the floor whilst she unhumanely went from the bed towards the door; but she concealing it above a week under her Pillow, the Law justly Condemn'd her as a wilful Murtheress

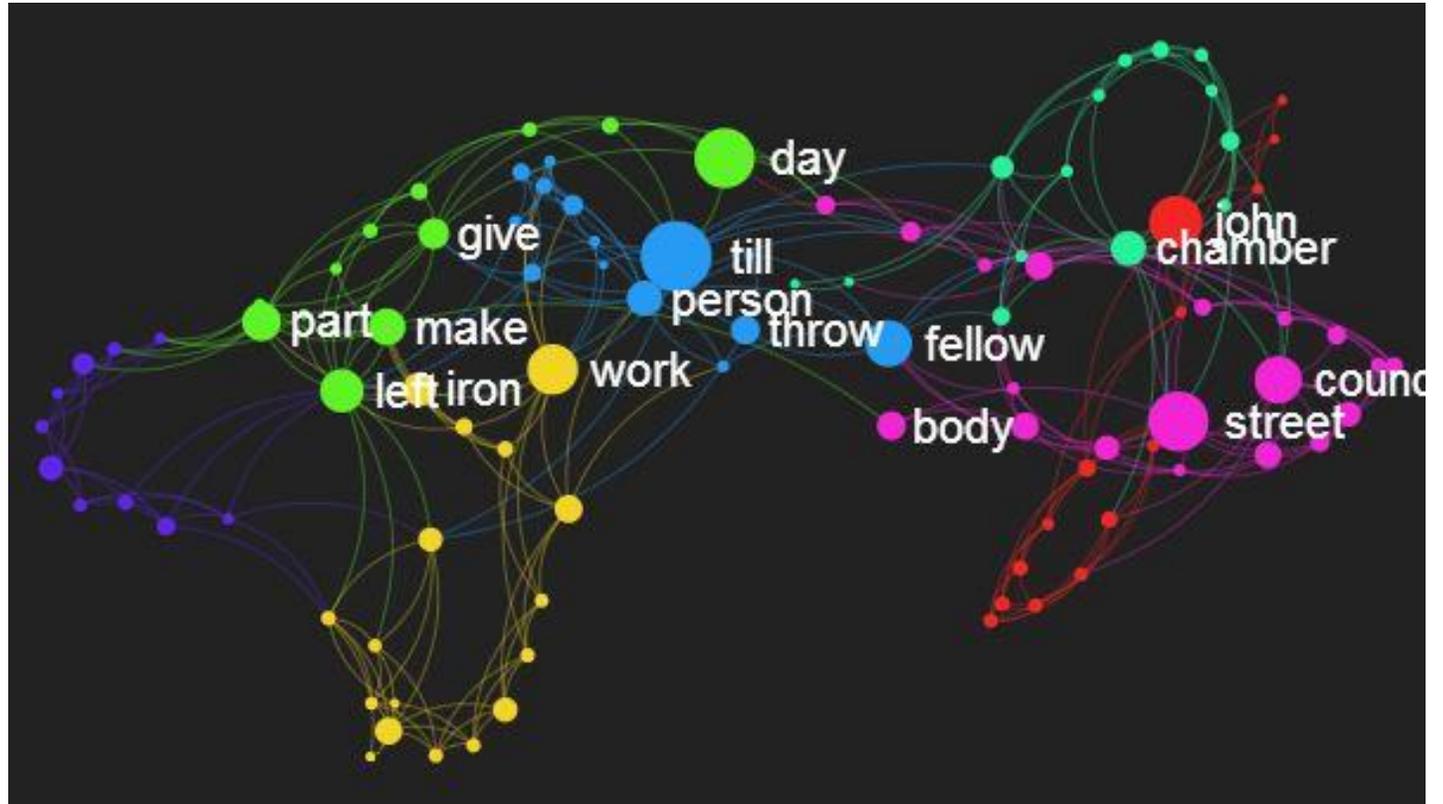
Weapons

- 87 PISTOL SHOT CHARGED BULLET WOUND GUN PIECE SHOOT POWDER SHOOTING ROBERT FOSTER MUSQUET DISCHARGED
- 32 COURT MURDER MARY INDICTED ANN JOHNSON MAID SWEAR JOHN SUNDAY CLOTHES WITNESSES BROUGHT SPOKE
- 19 KNIFE WOUND HAND BLOOD SIDE SURGEON STAB MURDER BACK TIME WORDS STABBED IMMEDIATELY CUT BREAST

Peter Noakes, of St. Martin's in the Field, was indicted for the Murder of William Turner. Gent, by discharging a Pistol loaden with Powder and Bullets, against the right Part of his Head, near the right Ear, and thereby giving him one mortal Wound of the breath of 1 Inch, and depth of 8 Inches, of which he instantly dy'd, on the 7th of this Instant January. He was a second time indicted on the Coroner's inquisition for the said Murder...

Next steps...

- Revise topic modeling to add weights for various elements
- Conduct close readings
- Create network visualization to illustrate connections between the topics



Thank you!