

THE BUFFALO

Black in blazonry means prudence; and niger, unpropitious. Might hematite—black, compactly incurved horns on bison have significance? The soot-brown tail-tuft on a kind of lion—

tail; what would that express? And Josh Steuart Curry's Ajax pulling grass—no ring in his nose—two birds standing on the back?

The modern ox does not look like the Augsburg ox's portrait. Yes, the great extinct wild Aurochs was a beast to paint, with stripe and six-foot horn-spread—decreased to Siamese-cat-

Brown Swiss size or zebu-shape, with white plush dewlap and warm-blooded hump; to red-skinned Hereford or to piebald Holstein. Yet some would say the sparse-haired buffalo has met human notions best—

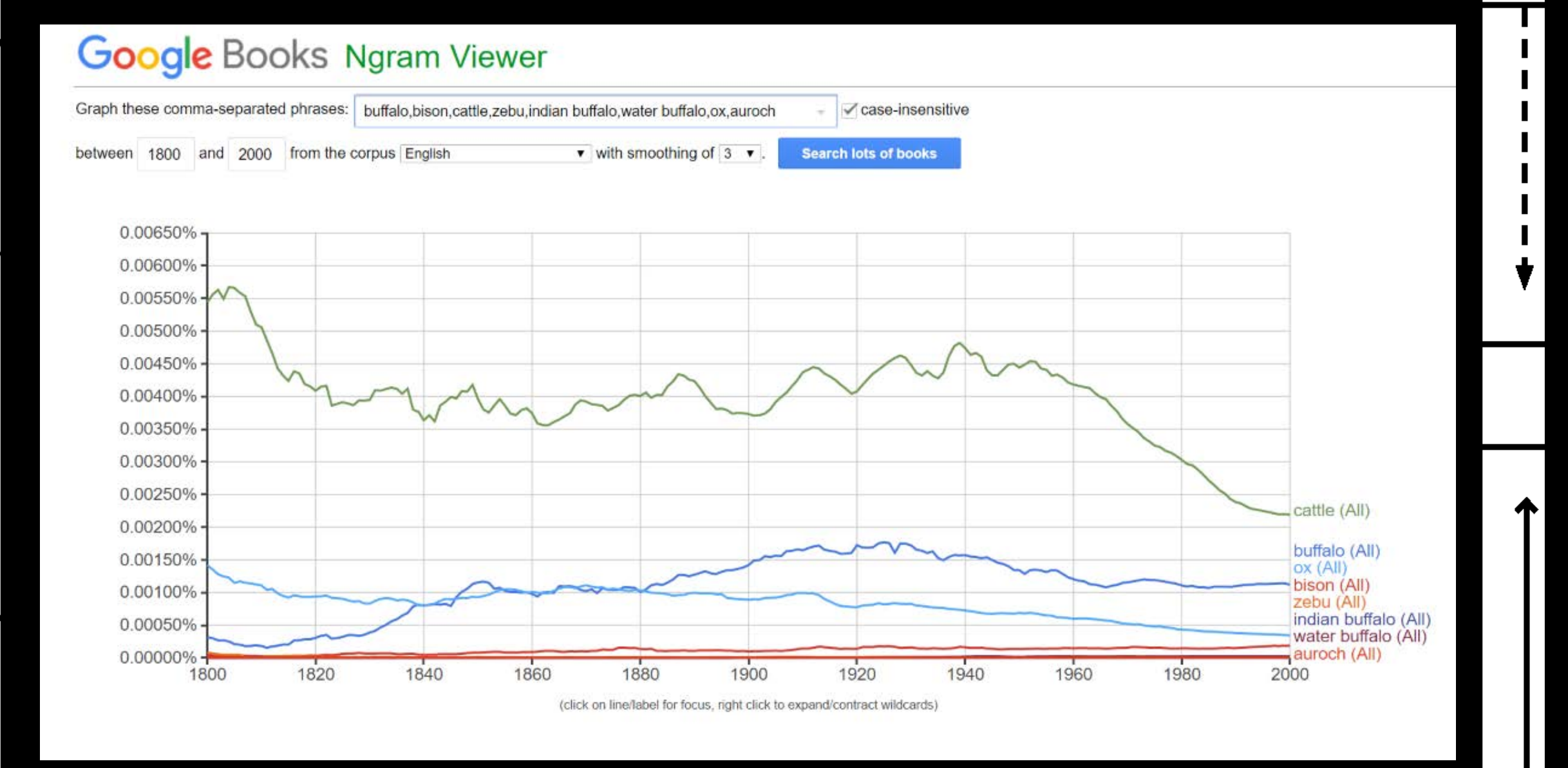
unlike the elephant, both jewel and jeweller in the hairs that he wears—no white-nosed Vermont ox yoked with its twin to haul the maple-sap, up to their knees in snow; no freakishly

Over-Drove Ox drawn by Rowlandson, but the Indian buffalo, albino-footed, standing in a mud-lake with a day's work to do. No white Christian heathen, way-laid by the Buddha,

serves him so well as the buffalo—as mettlesome as if check-reined—free neck stretching out, and snake tail in a half-twist on the flank; nor will so cheerfully assist the Sage sitting with

feet at the same side, to dismount at the shrine; nor are there any ivory tusks like those two horns which when a tiger coughs, are lowered fiercely and convert the fur to harmless rubbish.

The Indian buffalo, led by bare-legged herd-boys to a hay hut where they stable it, need not fear comparison with bison, with the twins, indeed with any of ox ancestry.



1 TYPE YOUR INPUT

2. SEE THE RESULT

"The Buffalo" by Marianne Moore
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tail; what would that express?

▶ RUN

Clean copy of "The Buffalo" by Marianne Moore. *The Complete Poems of Marianne Moore*, 1982.

An initial read-through of the poem: begs the question: **What does this mean?** Subsequent research and analysis is necessary...

Annotation map of "The Buffalo".

To derive meaning from the poem, it was necessary to hand-trace through the poem and map out various allusions to mythology, art, types of ungulates (i.e. hoofed mammals), and the like. Making sense of Moore's use of distinctions — *this*, not *that* — led to a greater understanding of the poem's breadth and significance.

Above: Graphing Using Google Books N-Gram Viewer

This graph demonstrates the frequency of various ungulates over time in English fiction from the years 1800-2000.

Below: Summarizer Algorithm via *Algorithmia.com*

An example of a natural language processing (NLP) algorithm called a *summarizer*. This implementation of a summarizer cut down "The Buffalo" to ten lines. Using the summarizer brings forth interesting questions such as the significance of whitespace: How could one account for the sometimes ambiguous, yet often important role of whitespace in poetry like "The Buffalo"?

