

The John Ford Editorial Project

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(2) The Concordance

This, the first concordance to Ford, will allow study of his language from the perspectives of authorship attribution studies and historical linguistics. Given that Ford's canon, like that of every notable English dramatist working between 1576 and 1642 (with the exception of Lyly), includes co-authored works, a concordance is an indispensable tool for defining and distinguishing individual linguistic usage. In addition, given the exciting development of historical language study over the last few decades, with the emergence of corpus linguistics, a properly prepared concordance (marked up in the appropriate manner) will prove invaluable. Ford's language use reflects both his native origins (Devonshire) and his absorption of London idiolects (the Inns of Court; the coterie language of the private theatres, with their restricted audiences and distinct sensibility), all of which can be studied using this tool.

An electronic concordance is appropriate for reasons of:

(i) *Cost*. Since any concordance takes up approximately eight or ten times more space than the texts analysed, the costs of print publication are prohibitive for anything other than a small canon.

(ii) *Scope*. An electronic concordance can be inclusive, so overcoming a principal deficiency of printed concordances, which have to omit the most frequently-used words for reasons of space. (The one-volume *Harvard Shakespeare Concordance* leaves out the 43 most frequently used words; the *Cornell Marlowe* (1982) omits six.) But these 'function words' are a key element in modern, quantitative authorship studies.

(iii) *Flexibility*. An electronic concordance permits quick and easy searching and comparison of linguistic usage. In due course it is hoped to provide the concordance in more than one format, further enhancing its flexibility.

(iv) *Alphabetization*. The main drawback of old-spelling concordances, such as the *Cornell Marlowe*, is that a word can appear at several different places in the alphabet, depending on the vagaries of Early Modern spelling. We will overcome this by providing a lemma for each word in its accepted spelling.

(v) *Citations and Referencing*. Citations under each lemma will be arranged chronologically and will also identify genre (poetry, prose, drama). In drama the speaker of every line will also be identified, permitting linguistic analysis according to their gender and social status.

(vi) *Homographs*. We also plan to distinguish homographs (e. g., the various senses of 'light', 'fair', 'well') by providing separate lemmas, indicating grammatical categories and/or adding brief definitions.

(vi) *Web publication*. The advantages of web publication for a concordance embrace many of the above points and others besides. A traditional concordance may be thought of as naturally hyperlinked text, since every entry in a concordance comes with a reference pointing to a particular location in another text, the original work. As such, concordances are natural candidates for implementation on the web. See R.J.C.Watt's JISC JTAP Report no. 025 on web concordances,

www.jisc.ac.uk/media/documents/programmes/jtap/jtap025.pdf .