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Guidance on using database 'Rhyme words in English lyric 1300-1579'

Google sheets

For an introduction to using Google Sheets, see

<https://support.google.com/a/users/answer/9282959?hl=en>. 'Tips to analyze your data' is particularly relevant.

Nature and location of information

This database contains full information about all of the instances of each rhyme-word and all of the poems in which they appear. The sheets which contain maximum information are respectively '**Rhymes**' and '**Poem**'. These have been amalgamated into the sheet '**RhymesAndPoems**'. The data in all of them can be narrowed down by use of filters. To apply a filter to a column choose 'Create filter view' from the 'Data' menu, then click on the symbol which appears next to the column heading. You can then sort the rows by organising this column alphabetically, or choose the item(s) you want in this column from a drop-down menu. All rows which do not contain the specified term in the relevant column will then be filtered out. For an example of how to use filters see '**Locating data outside the pre-written searches; using filters**' below.

In 'Rhymes' and 'RhymesAndPoems', members of each rhyming group in each poem are designated Word 1, Word 2 etc.. (The numbering is arbitrary.) Some poems have rhyme-groups containing more than 15 members, so processing these large sheets manually can be time-consuming because the information about each member of the group appears in a separate cluster of columns, and all of the clusters need to be factored in to any overall analysis; there isn't one column in these sheets which contains every rhyme-word. Looking at NIMEV 3626 (a ballade by Charles d'Orléans) in 'RhymesAndPoems', for instance, there are 18 words in the b-group rhyming on the syllable '-ure'. Word 1, 'creature' and its line number, its position in the rhyme-scheme, etymology and part of speech occupies columns D-J. Word 2,

'metre', occupies columns K-Q, and so on. This means that to gather information about the parts of speech Charles uses as rhyme-words, you would need to factor in the information in columns E and L, plus the equivalents for all the other 16 rhyme-words in the group.

Pre-written searches (green tabs)

This resource contains a number of pre-written searches which were designed to target the information I most needed for my specific project, and these cut through the data and integrate and present it clearly. Unfortunately we cannot write any further searches or make any changes other than minor corrections, so if the existing ones don't match your needs perfectly, you may need to work manually with the data, filtering it as needed, or download it into a format within which you can develop further searches. The three sheets mentioned above will be your starting point.

'Word-occurrences'

'Word Occurrences' answers the question 'What rhyme-words are used in this corpus as a whole?'. It gives the full list of the rhyme-words used, ordered by frequency on the left, and alphabetically in the centre. The list can be searched by Index to narrow down the results by date.

'Words in Poems'

'Words in Poems' allows you to search for a specified rhyme-word, and to restrict the search by Index or by Author. It provides information about each poem in which the rhyme-word appears.

'Which Words Rhyme'

The tab 'Which Words Rhyme', like 'Rhymes', contains full information about all of the rhyme-words and is organised by poem. Unlike 'Rhymes', however, it allows you to search for a particular rhyme-word and then scroll across to see what it rhymes with, and you can narrow down your search either by Index (a proxy for date) or by author. If you are interested, say, in what Surrey uses as a rhyme for 'man', this is the tab to use. It is useful because it turns up all Surrey's uses of 'man' as a rhyme-word irrespective of whether the word was initially classified as 'Word 1' or 'Word 2'. In this case, there is only one result, and 'man' is Word 2, with 'can' as Word 1.

'Rhyme counts'

'Rhyme counts' gives an overview of what words a specified word rhymes with, and how many instances of that rhyme there are. The results can be limited by Index. If you enter 'before' in the search box, and specify the Index EP, for instance, you will get the list 'door, evermore, lore, more, shore, sore, store, therefore', each used once except for 'more', which is used 6 times. Results from this search may suggest tempting avenues which can then be explored further in the sheets 'Rhymes', 'Which Words Rhyme' or 'RhymesAndPoems', which will give contexts for these uses.

Other tabs

The following tabs contain fixed summaries of the key categories of information in the database: **Author, Collection, Etymology, Form, Index, Part of Speech, Period, Poem Language, Scheme, and Source Language**. These sheets cannot be searched further; they simply give an overview of the categories used and the figures relating to them. 'Form', e.g., contains a list of the poetic forms used in the corpus together with the number of poems which use each one, so the list opens 'Couplets - 76'. Within the 'Form' tab, it isn't possible to move from this summary to a list of the poems which use couplets. This information needs to be reached via a different route such as filtering the sheets 'Poem' or 'RhymesAndPoems' as described below.

Locating data outside the pre-written searches; using filters

If you wanted to pursue questions about the relationship between particular poetic forms and whether certain rhymes are characteristic of those forms, the best approach would be to go to the sheet 'RhymesAndPoems', and scroll across to column ES. Apply a filter to this column by choosing 'Create filter view' from the 'Data' menu, then clicking on the symbol which appears next to the column heading. You can then sort by form alphabetically, or choose the form you are interested in from a drop-down menu (I would recommend clearing the list then ticking the relevant items). You will then be able to see all the poems written in the relevant form. Then scroll back to the left to look at the rhyme-words and groups in use. The same approach could be used to examine rhymes from a particular MS, or with a particular source-language.

If you are interested in the grammatical status of rhyme-words, the 'Part of speech' tab gives a list on the left of the grammatical categories used, while the list on the right indicates how many rhyme-words fall into each category. NB. This number relates to tokens, not types. Each unique rhyme-word is a type; each type can be used multiple times, and each of those usages is a token, so there are many more tokens than types. In this basic summary sheet, the list on the right shows there are 1651 adjectives, but with no indication of which words in which poems this number refers to.

To drill a little more deeply into the data about parts of speech and get an overview of which parts of speech occur in which poems, the simplest approach is to go to the tab 'Word Occurrences' and scroll across to columns O-X. This is a list of all the rhyme tokens in the corpus together with the identity of the poem in which each appears. You can filter the part of speech column alphabetically, or use a filter to weed out all but the particular part of speech you are interested in. (NB. The first two blocks (yellow and green) on the 'Word Occurrences' sheet refer to types, not tokens. They list the unique rhyme-words and indicate the number of times each is used.)

The same approach can be followed to explore etymology of words (also recorded in 'Word Occurrences'), and in both cases you can subsequently develop your analysis of whether parts of speech or words from a particular language tend to rhyme with each other by analysing the data in the sheets 'Which Words Rhyme' or 'RhymesAndPoems'. (This will require quite a bit of interpretation of the data presented because of the large rhyme-groups in some poems.)

Changing data

You should be able to carry out searches and filter views in this resource, but you shouldn't be able to change any of the data. (If you spot anything you think is wrong, or if you are able to cast any light on fields we have marked '?', please let me know and I will make changes as appropriate.) I have done my best to put restrictions in place to prevent changes being made while still allowing for searching, but if you happen on a way round this and realise you have made changes, please contact me and I will reset the spreadsheet to the original version.

Additional information collected

I initially collected information about the number of syllables and the orthography of each rhyme-word, but as it turned out that I didn't need this information for my project I didn't make any checks on it, so it is unreliable and inconsistent. Because of this I haven't included it in this version of the database which is why some columns are blank and/or hidden. However, if you would find it useful as an informal starting point, please email me.

Contact details

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