

2202235 Reading and Analysis for the Studying of English Literature
Semester II, 2014
Thursday, January 15, 2015
Handout: Exploring Library Collections

1. Milton's Latin (and Greek) learning and that of his educated circle of readers makes for frequent etymological resonance in literary works where the writer makes use of a word's original meaning in the Latin or Greek roots as well as the current meaning. But this is by no means exclusive to Milton and his time. Go to a good reference with etymological information like the twenty-volume *Oxford English Dictionary (OED)*, Ayto's and Funk's *Word Origins*, and Hoad's *Concise Oxford Dictionary of English Etymology* and look up the words *amortize*, *doctor*, and *therapist* from Beber's *Misreadings*. Do you think the root meaning of the words is at play here? Explain.
2. Oftentimes names are part of a work's play with meanings. Look up *Ruth* and *Simone* in Hanks and Hodges, *A Dictionary of First Names* or in another dictionary with etymological information. Can you see any significance in the meaning of the names that is relevant to the story?
3. Language changes over time and the sense of words in the seventeenth century may be different from what we know today. Look up at least three of these words in the *OED* which includes obsolete meanings by century in the definitions or in *NTC's Dictionary of Changes in Meaning* and decide if they mean something else to Milton and the readers of his time.
meat
abandon
addict
broadcast
cute
fantastic
nice
promiscuous
punk
soft
state
patience
chide
exact
talent
state
talent
liberty
4. Go to a good collection of slang like the *Chambers Slang Dictionary* or Eric Partridge's various dictionaries of slang and look up some slang words that you have heard and those in our reading like *fresh*, *L seven*, and *Romeo*. Write down a definition that you like.

5. In a dictionary of theatrical terms, look up the word *pong* and *narrator*. How does the meaning of the latter differ from the sense for fiction?

6. Language changes over time and the sense of words in the seventeenth century may be different from what we know today. Look up at least three of these words in *NTC's Dictionary of Changes in Meaning* and decide if they may mean something else to Milton and the readers of his time.

wait

awful

fond

post

mild

prevent

lord

girl

fast

explode