

2202235 Reading and Analysis for the Studying of English Literature  
Semester II, 2016  
Thursday, March 9, 2017  
Handout: Literary Explorations

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. Go to a good reference with etymological information like the twenty-volume *Oxford English Dictionary (OED)*, Ayto's and Funk's *Word Origins*, or Hoad's *Concise Oxford Dictionary of English Etymology* and look up some of these words: consider, serve, poet, present, patience, prevent, state. Do you think the root meaning of the words is at play here? Explain using one or two examples of the cases you have looked up.
2. Oftentimes names are part of a work's play with meanings. Look up Victor, Ruth, Simone, Andrew, Henry and other names you are curious about in Hanks and Hodges, *A Dictionary of First Names* or in another dictionary with etymological information. Make note of them and see if there is any significance in the meaning of the names that is relevant to the works we are reading.
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 its definitions or in *NTC's Dictionary of Changes in Meaning* and decide if they mean something else to Milton and Shakespeare, and the readers of their time.

owe

meat

abandon

addict

broadcast

cute

fantastic

nice

promiscuous

punk

soft

chide

exact

talent

fond

state

mild

post

wait

awful

lord

girl

liberty

fast

explode

4. Go to a good collection of slang like the *Chambers Slang Dictionary*, Richard Spears' *NTC's Dictionary of American Slang and Colloquial Expressions*, or Eric Partridge's various dictionaries of slang and look up some slang words that you have heard and a few of the following: fresh, square, L seven, ankle-biter, boss, cop a breeze, Brody, boss. Write down the definition of a slang word that you would like to share in class.
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. In a dictionary that defines Latin or foreign phrases, find out what *carpe diem* means. Do you think Dylan Thomas was thinking of this phrase in the line "Wild men who caught and sang the sun in flight"?
7. Browse through the reference section for a volume that interests you. Write down information that you learned from that volume that you would like to share in class.