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Oxford DICTIONARY OF ALLUSIONS

牛津典故词典

上海外语教育出版社
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Oxford New York
OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS

图书在版编目（CIP）数据

牛津典故词典 /(英) 迪拉亨特 (Delahunty, A.)等编.
—上海：上海外语教育出版社，2007
（牛津英语百科分类词典系列）
ISBN 978-7-5446-0070-5

Ⅰ.牛… Ⅱ.迪… Ⅲ.典故—世界—词典—英文
Ⅳ. H033 -61

中国版本图书馆CIP数据核字（2006）第042683号
图字：09-1999-311号

出版发行：上海外语教育出版社
（上海外国语大学内） 邮编：200083
电　　话：021-65425300（总机）
电子邮箱：bookinfo@sflep.com.cn
网　　址：http://www.sflep.com.cn　http://www.sflep.com
责任编辑：张春明

印　　刷：常熟市人民印刷厂
经　　销：新华书店上海发行所
开　　本：850×1092　1/32　印张 14.75　字数 572千字
版　　次：2007年1月第1版　2007年1月第1次印刷
印　　数：2 100 册

书　　号：ISBN978-7-5446-0070-5 / H · 0026
定　　价：24.00 元

Oxford University Press, Great Clarendon Street, Oxford OX2 6DP

Oxford is a registered trade mark of Oxford University Press

First published 2001
First published as an Oxford University Press paperback 2003

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data
Data available

Library of Congress Cataloguing in Publication Data
Data available
ISBN 0 - 19 - 860682 - 6

Published by permission of the Oxford University Press

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出 版 说 明

随着改革开放的不断深入以及国际交流的日趋广泛，外语学习已经不仅仅局限于语言技能的培养。通过英语获取专业知识、提高专业水平、跟踪学科的最新发展已经成为时代的要求。因此，目前国内急需一批用英语编纂的专业词典。

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该系列词典可作为大专院校各专业的学生以及专业技术人员学习专业知识、提高专业英语能力的参考书。

本社编辑部

Introduction

An allusion may be defined as the mention of the name of a real person, historical event, or literary character which is not simply a straightforward reference (as in 'Hercules was an ancient Greek hero') but which conjures up some extra meaning, embodying some quality or characteristic for which the word has come to stand. So, we can describe a miser as a Scrooge, a strong man as a Hercules, a beautiful woman as a Venus. *The Oxford Dictionary of Allusions* aims to identify and explain many such allusions used in English and to illustrate their use by quotations from a variety of literary works and other texts. In the style of a thesaurus the entries are grouped thematically under such headings as **Anger**, **Change**, **Dreams**, **Explorers**, and **Revenge**.

Writers use allusions in a variety of ways. They can be used as a kind of shorthand, evoking instantly a complex human experience embedded within a story or dramatic event. For example, in this passage from *Jude the Obscure*,

> Arabella ascended the stairs, softly opened the door of the first bedroom, and peeped in. Finding that her shorn Samson was asleep she entered to the bedside and started regarding him.

Thomas Hardy's phrase 'shorn Samson' succinctly expresses Arabella's quiet triumph at finally having Jude in her power. Allusions can convey powerful visual images, as Robertson Davies does in his reference to the tangled limbs and snakes of the classical statue of Laocoön (described in the theme **Struggle**) in *Leaven of Malice*:

> 'And seeing it's you, I'll give you a hint: the way the string's tied, you can get loose at once if he lies down flat and you crawl right up over his head; then the string drops off without untying the knots. Bye now.' And she was off to encourage other strugglers, who lay in Laocoön groups about the floor.

It is often possible to pack more meaning into a well-chosen allusion than into a roughly equivalent descriptive term from the general language either because an allusion can carry some of the connotations of the whole story from which it is drawn, or because an individual's name can be associated with more than one characteristic. Some authors can even use a multiplicity of allusive terms to entertaining effect, as in this quotation from *The Scold's Bridle* by Minette Walters:

> I watched Duncan clipping his hedge this afternoon and could barely remember the handsome man he was. If I had been a charitable woman, I would have married him forty years ago and saved him from himself and Violet. She

> has turned my Romeo into a sad-eyed Billy Bunter who blinks his passions quietly when no one's looking. Oh, that his too, too solid flesh should melt. At twenty, he had the body of Michelangelo's David, now he resembles an entire family group by Henry Moore.

The majority of allusions in English derive from classical mythology and the Bible, particularly the Old Testament. These ancient stories—the Wooden Horse of Troy, the protracted return home of Odysseus, David and Goliath, the banishment of Adam and Eve from the Garden of Eden—remain very much alive in our collective consciousness. Other fertile sources include folklore and legend (for example, Robin Hood, Lancelot, and Faust); Shakespeare (Romeo, Othello, and Lady Macbeth); Dickens (Micawber, Scrooge, and Pecksniff); the visual style of great artists (Rembrandt and Modigliani); and children's stories (Cinderella, Pinocchio, and Eeyore). The modern visual media of cinema, television and cartoons are also represented in the book (Orphan Annie, Superman, and Jurassic Park). Some individual works, such as *Gulliver's Travels*, *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, and *The Pilgrim's Progress*, are particularly rich sources of characters and situations subsequently used as allusions.

The book is largely based on the evidence of the quotations collected as its source material. Its thematic structure evolved during the writing as it became clear how individual entries clustered together in concept. As a result, the themes vary in treatment and coverage. Some strongly supported themes do not have opposing counterparts. There are several instances of **Betrayal** but no examples of pure loyalty, the nearest equivalent being **Friendship**. While **Deserted Places** are included here, busy or bustling places are not. There are several examples of **Arrogance and Pomposity** but few of **Humility**, and none at all of modesty. The theme **Curse** accounts for unlucky individuals, but there seem to be no archetypal allusions for someone who is very lucky. Many themes reflect the stereotypes entrenched in our culture over the centuries. All three of the adulterers in the theme **Adultery** (Emma Bovary, Anna Karenina, and Hester Prynne) are women; **Courage** is illustrated entirely by males; while the theme **Grief and Sorrow** is expressed only by female figures such as Niobe and Rachel. Some of the themes are illustrated entirely or mainly from classical sources while others are more modern. Entries in the theme **Fertility**, for example, are mythological; in both **Avarice** and **Despair** they are biblical; whilst in **Comedy and Humour** they tend to be more recent in origin. **Guilt** is almost entirely exemplified by biblical characters, with no allusions from classical sources, while **Punishment** includes

Prometheus, Sisyphus, and Tantalus, as well as Adam and Eve and Jezebel.

The themes vary considerably in length. Some are quite extensive, usually those which deal with a broad semantic area such as **Goodness**. Others, such as **Disclosure**, are much shorter, often because they deal with a relatively narrower concept, though the paucity of entries at **Cowardice** is curious.

In some themes, one individual provides the most typical or powerful instance of the concept being illustrated. Judas is by far the most frequently cited exponent of betrayal. Narcissus stands so strongly for excessive self-adulation that his name has given us the term we use for this characteristic in the general language. In other cases, allusions have changed their meaning over time. Solomon used to represent not only wisdom but also fabulous wealth, and Midas was remembered not only for his golden gift but also for his ass's ears (see the theme **Disclosure**, at which this story is recounted). Occasionally, the character who most typically represents a characteristic changes over time. For instance, in the nineteenth century Jack Sheppard represented the archetype of the person who successfully escaped. In the twentieth century he was replaced by Houdini (see the theme **Escape and Survival**).

Some individual characters or stories allude not just to one characteristic or concept but to several, and as a consequence appear in several different themes. Don Quixote, for example, is associated with thinness, insanity, illusion, and idealism, and is found under each of these themes. Other characters from *Don Quixote de la Mancha*, such as Rosinante and Sancho Panza, also appear (in **Horses** and **Friendship** respectively). For convenience, and to avoid undue repetition, in such cases a full account of the whole story or event has been given as a special boxed entry. Cross-references to a special entry are given in the entries for characters or events taken from the relevant story.

The themes and special entries appear in alphabetical order, and a list of each is given at the beginning of the book. In addition, there is a full index of entries at the end of the book showing under which theme or themes a particular entry is to be found. Closely related themes are cross-referred to each other enabling the reader to compare linked or overlapping semantic areas. For example, at **Abundance and Plenty** there are cross-references to **Fertility** and **Idyllic Places**.

This book is based on a database of quotations gleaned from an extensive and diverse reading programme and the authors would

like to thank the following readers who contributed generously to the task: Kendall Clarke, Ian Clarke, Robert Grout, Ruth Loshak, Duncan Marshall, Camilla Sherwood, Peggy Tout, and Brigit Viney. In particular, we would like to thank Jane McArthur for her substantial contribution. Special additional thanks are due to Mark Grout for his support.

We would also like to thank the staff of Oxford University Press. The book has passed through a number of hands at OUP: Rob Scriven, Kendall Clarke, Kate Wandless, Susie Dent, Vicki Rodger, Alysoun Owen, and Helen Cox have all been involved at different stages. Their support and encouragement have been greatly appreciated. We are particularly grateful to Elizabeth Knowles, from whose advice and detailed attention to successive drafts of the text the book has greatly benefited.

List of Themes

牛津英语百科分类词典系列书目

1. 牛津芭蕾词典 *Oxford Dictionary of Ballet*
2. 牛津标准英语词典 *Oxford Dictionary of the King's English*
3. 牛津地理学词典 *Oxford Dictionary of Geography*
4. 牛津地球科学词典 *Oxford Dictionary of Earth Sciences*
5. 牛津典故词典 *Oxford Dictionary of Allusions*
6. 牛津动物学词典 *Oxford Dictionary of Zoology*
7. 牛津 20 世纪艺术词典 *Oxford Dictionary of 20th-Century Art*
8. 牛津 20 世纪英语诗歌词典 *Oxford Companion to 20th-Century Poetry*
9. 牛津法律词典 *Oxford Dictionary of Law*
10. 牛津古典文学词典 *Oxford Dictionary of Classical Literature*
11. 牛津计算机词典 *Oxford Dictionary of Computing*
12. 牛津简明英语词汇扩展词典 *Oxford Better Wordpower*
13. 牛津简明英语语言词典 *Oxford Concise Companion to the English Language*
14. 牛津金融与银行词典 *Oxford Dictionary of Finance and Banking*
15. 牛津经济学词典 *Oxford Dictionary of Economics*
16. 牛津科学词典 *Oxford Dictionary of Science*
17. 牛津科学家词典 *Oxford Dictionary of Scientists*
18. 牛津会计词典 *Oxford Dictionary of Accounting*
19. 牛津历史事件词典 *Oxford Dictionary of Dates*
20. 牛津商务词典 *Oxford Dictionary of Business*
21. 牛津生态学词典 *Oxford Dictionary of Ecology*
22. 牛津食品与营养词典 *Oxford Dictionary of Food and Nutrition*
23. 牛津数学词典 *Oxford Concise Dictionary of Mathematics*
24. 牛津缩略语词典 *Oxford Dictionary of Abbreviations*
25. 牛津天文学词典 *Oxford Dictionary of Astronomy*
26. 牛津文学术语词典 *Oxford Concise Dictionary of Literary Terms*
27. 牛津物理学词典 *Oxford Dictionary of Physics*
28. 牛津戏剧词典 *Oxford Dictionary of Theatre*
29. 牛津现代设计词典 *Oxford Dictionary of Modern Design*
30. 牛津现代英语俚语词典 *Oxford Dictionary of Modern Slang*
31. 牛津现代英语用法词典 *Oxford Fowler's Modern English Usage*
32. 牛津心理学词典 *Oxford Dictionary of Psychology*
33. 牛津艺术与艺术家词典 *Oxford Concise Dictionary of Art and Artists*
34. 牛津因特网词典 *Oxford Dictionary of the Internet*
35. 牛津英语词源词典 *Oxford Concise Dictionary of English Etymology*
36. 牛津英语谚语词典 *Oxford Concise Dictionary of Proverbs*

37. 牛津英语语法词典 *Oxford Dictionary of English Grammar*
38. 牛津语言学词典 *Oxford Concise Dictionary of Linguistics*
39. 牛津哲学词典 *Oxford Dictionary of Philosophy*
40. 牛津植物学词典 *Oxford Dictionary of Plant Sciences*

Contents

List of Special Entries

Abundance and Plenty

The biblical allusions **EDEN**, **GOSHEN**, and the **LAND OF MILK AND HONEY** represent places of plenty. While the idea of plentifulness can also be symbolized by the classical image of the **CORNUCOPIA**, scarcity can be suggested by **MOTHER HUBBARD** and her empty cupboard. This theme is closely related to the theme **Fertility**. ▶ *See also* **Idyllic Places**.

Johnny Appleseed Johnny Appleseed was the nickname of John Chapman (1774–1847) because he planted orchards for settlers in Pennsylvania, Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois. He was known for his woodcraft and the help that he gave to pioneer settlers.

> What about the doctor down in Hillsborough? The one with the runaway daughter and the fistful of amphetamines he's scattering around like Johnny goddam Appleseed?
> MAX BYRD *Finders Weepers*, 1983

Cornucopia In Greek mythology, Amalthea was a she-goat or goat-nymph, whose milk Zeus drank when he was first born. In gratitude, Zeus placed Amalthea's image among the stars as the constellation Capricorn. Zeus also took one of Amalthea's horns, which resembled a cow's horns, and gave it to the daughters of Melisseus, a Cretan king. It became the famous Cornucopia, the Horn of Plenty which was always filled with whatever food or drink its owner desired. It is usually represented as a goat's horn spilling over with fruit, flowers, and stalks of corn.

> There was a cornucopia of food and drink almost forbidding in its plentitude.
> FRED CHAPPELL *Farewell I'm Bound to Leave You*, 1997

Garden of Eden The Garden of Eden is the home of Adam and Eve in the biblical account of the Creation. It is imagined as a place of lush beauty, in which grows 'every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food' (Gen. 2: 9). ▶ *See special entry* □ **ADAM AND EVE** *on p. 5.*

> His eyes rested happily on the spreading green of the bread-fruit trees. 'By George, it's like the garden of Eden.'
> W. SOMERSET MAUGHAM 'Mackintosh' in *The Trembling of a Leaf*, 1921

> For the first seven thousand feet it is the Garden of Eden, a luxuriance of orchids, humming-birds, and tiny streams of delicious water that run by miracle alongside every path.
> LOUIS DE BERNIÈRES *The War of Don Emmanuel's Nether Parts*, 1990

> Flowers, shrubs, saplings had been brought here with their roots and earth, and set in baskets and makeshift cases. But many of the containers had rotted; the earth had spilled out to create, from one container to the next, a layer of damp humus, where the shoots of some plants were already taking root. It was like being in an Eden sprouting from the very planks of the Daphne.
> UMBERTO ECO *The Island of the Day Before*, 1994