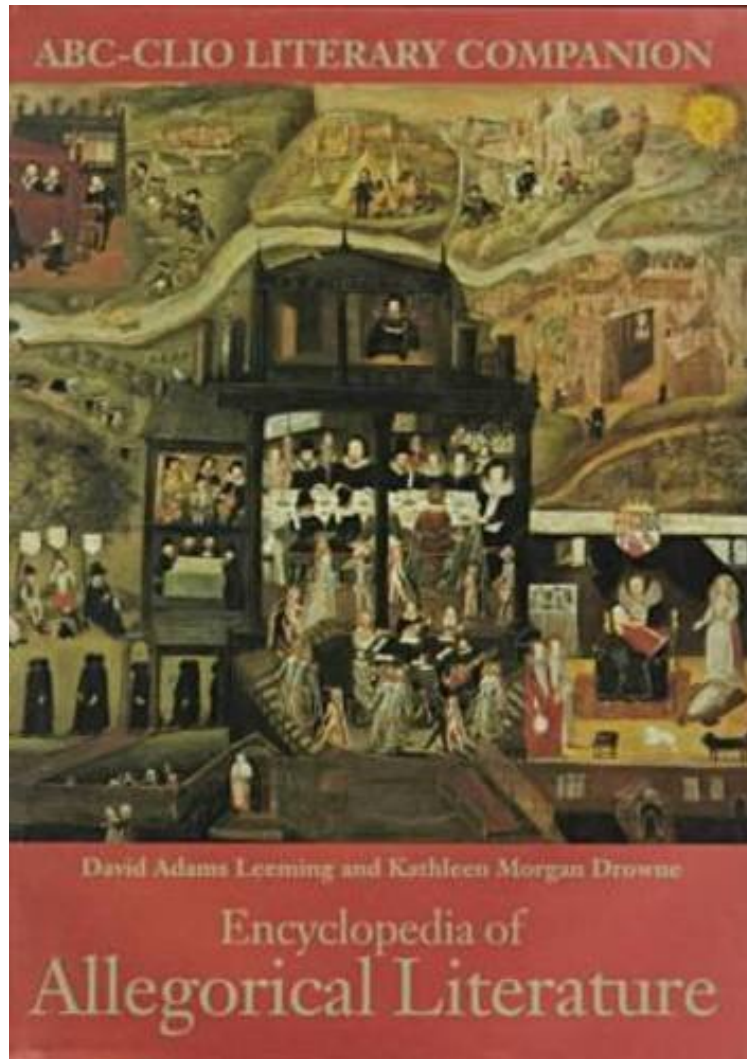


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Encyclopedia of Allegorical Literature (ABC-CLIO Literary Companion)

David A. Leeming, Kathleen Drowne
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David A. Leeming, Kathleen Drowne : Encyclopedia of Allegorical Literature (ABC-CLIO Literary Companion) before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Encyclopedia of Allegorical Literature (ABC-CLIO Literary Companion):

Entries cover the Western allegorical tradition, as well as selected Indian, Middle Eastern, South American, and African works.

From School Library Journal Grade 9 Up. Defining allegory as when an author "consciously uses characters, situations, and actions to stand for specific abstractions or for certain generalizations about human life," Leeming and Drowne emphasize that this device leads readers to a clear secondary meaning below the surface of the work. In addition, allegory is primarily didactic and may be expressed through many forms, such as gardens, buildings, poetry, and prose, as well as literature and painting. Alphabetically arranged and varying in length from a paragraph to several pages, entries in this well-written handbook range from the Old Testament's Song of Songs to Aesop's Fables and The Pilgrim's Progress. The broad coverage includes more than 400 articles, a diversity of art forms, and less widely known 20th-century allegories, such as the novels of Ishmael Reed and Thomas Pynchon. Black-and-white photographs of authors and works of art appear throughout. A solid, if somewhat specialized, choice. Mary H. Cole, Polytechnic Preparatory Country Day School, Brooklyn, NY Copyright 1997 Reed Business Information, Inc. From Library Journal Leeming (The World of Myth, Oxford Univ., 1991) and Drowne, a doctoral candidate, appear to have created the very first encyclopedia devoted exclusively to allegorical literature. It includes entries for works ranging from the classical era (Aesop's fables) through 1991 (Spiegelman's Maus). There are entries for specific works, authors, terms (e.g., "hyponoia"), and subjects (e.g., "Native American allegory"). The work clearly aims at being multicultural, but its emphasis is on European and American allegories of the past five centuries. Most entries are quite good, brief and to the point. Others strain. Ginsberg's "Howl" is deemed "perhaps somewhat allegorical," while the Odyssey is only "to some extent allegorical." There are very useful cross references, and the 17-page bibliography compensates for the rarity of citations within the entries. The index is excellent. A solid reference resource for libraries supporting literary studies. Peter A. Dollard, Alma Coll. Lib., Mich. Copyright 1996 Reed Business Information, Inc. From Booklist Considering the large number of reference sources devoted to literary subjects, it is somewhat surprising that this is the first to concentrate on allegorical literature, where characters, situations, or actions stand for ideas. The approximately 400 alphabetically arranged entries treat allegorical works; authors; and literary terms, devices, and forms closely associated with allegory (e.g., extended metaphor, fable, personification). Ranging chronologically from the Babylonian epic Enuma Elish to Art Spiegelman's Maus, a cartoon representation of the Holocaust, the 139 diverse literary works covered include not only true allegories like Everyman and The Pilgrim's Progress but also works that have been perceived by critics as having allegorical elements, such as The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn and One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest. Although Leeming, a retired professor of English and comparative literature, and Drowne, a Ph.D. candidate in English, focus primarily on allegory in literature, they also briefly explore the allegorical aspects of other art forms, such as church architecture, film, and painting and sculpture. Entries vary in length from a single sentence to more than three pages, but most are less than a page. Many include abbreviated bibliographical references to sources of additional information. Extensive cross-references facilitate access as does a detailed subject index of titles, authors, and topics. Other features include alphabetical and chronological lists of all works accorded entries, 27 black-and-white illustrations, and an extensive bibliography that provides complete information on titles cited in the entries. Unfortunately, this volume does not live up to its potential, since many of its entries are too concise to provide sufficient explanation or depth of treatment. Even some of the longer topical articles (such as The Bible and Allegory, Dream and Allegory, and Parable as Allegory) lack the substantive commentary and critical analysis that would be most helpful and instead rely on extensive excerpts from allegorical works. Although it provides neither in-depth nor comprehensive coverage of allegorical literature, this compilation nonetheless offers a systematic introductory approach that is not available in any other reference compilation. Since its uniqueness serves as a counterbalance to its weaknesses, it should be considered for larger public and academic libraries.