

Source: Oxford English Dictionary Online

Data searched: Definition and related quotations for period 1500-1800

Consulted on 3/04/2012 at:

http://0-www.oed.com.catalogue.ulrls.lon.ac.uk/search?searchType=dictionary&q=fan&_searchBtn=Search

fan, n.¹

Forms: *α.* OE **fann**, (**fon**, *Northumb.* **fonnæ**), ME–16 **fann(e)**, ME– **fan**, 15 **phan**. *β.* ME–16 **vanne**, 16–**van**.

Etymology: Old English *fann*, str. fem., < Latin *vannus*, fem., = sense [1a](#). Compare French *van*.

Definition:

An instrument for agitating the air, to cool the face, etc. with an artificial breeze.

1. A fan to be held in the hand. A common kind, and the one always referred to in transferred senses relating to shape, is constructed so as to admit of being folded up in small compass, its form when unfolded being that of a sector of a circle.

1555 R. Eden tr. Peter Martyr of Angleria *Decades of Newe Worlde* iii. xi. f. 154, A fanne of golde, and an Idole.

1601 B. Jonson *Fountaine of Selfe-love* iii. iv. 70 For · · the least fether in her bounteous Fanne.

1641 S. Marshall et al. *Answer Hymble Remonstr.* (1653) §2. 5 Their daughters walking in Cheapeside with their fannes and farthingales.

1726 Swift *Gulliver* I. ii. v. 90 The Ladies gave me a Gale with their Fans.

1772 J. Adams tr. A. de Ulloa *Voy. S.-Amer.* (ed. 3) I. 32 Fans · · made of a very thin kind of palm in the form of a crescent, having a stick of the same wood in the middle.

2. Anything spread out in the shape of a fan; e.g. a leaf, the tail of a bird, the delta at the mouth of a river, fan-like tracery in a roof.

1599 T. Moffett *Silkewormes* 3 Then fig-tree fannes upon their shame they wore.

1692 R. L'Estrange *Fables* ccxxxiv. 204 The Peacock spreads his Tail, and Challenges the Other, to shew him such a Fan of Feathers.

Related words:

fan-stick n.

1686 *London Gaz.* No. 2149/4, Two Fan-sticks, Carved curiously with hollow work.

1761 [*Gentleman's Mag.*](#) XXXI. 498 The ladies began to count their fan sticks.

fanstick-maker n.

1723 [*London Gaz.*](#) No. 6170/9, Edward Bunn · · Fan-Stick-maker.

fan-maker n.

1710 [*London Gaz.*](#) No. 4781/3, Mr. Lewis Fortin, Fanmaker.

fan-painter n.

1723 [*London Gaz.*](#) No. 6188/10, John Gibbons · · Fan-Painter.

fan-bearing adj.

1596 M. Drayton [*Mortimeriados*](#) sig. T 1, No Apish fan-bearing Hermophradite.