



Susan Sontag's Study of Illness as a Cultural Sign

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Abstract

Susan Sontag is an American writer and a political activist. She became famous with the publication of her essay "Notes on 'Camp'" in 1964. She examines certain illnesses as significant modern American cultural signs in her two nonfictional works *Illness as Metaphor* (1978) and *AIDS and Its Metaphors* (1989). In these works, tuberculosis is presented as a romantic illness; and cancer is described as a war. AIDS is presented as a cultural sign to suggest the moral depravity of people. After looking at how various illnesses in literature have been interpreted through metaphors, Sontag then rejects the use of these metaphors to see what actually the metaphorising of each illness means. The present paper examines the use of metaphors to represent illness with reference to Sontag's selected works.

Keywords: Cultural Sign, Illness, Metaphor, Tuberculosis, Cancer, AIDS.