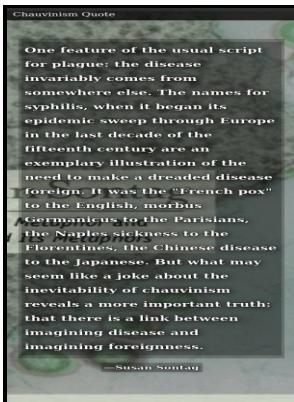


# AIDS and its metaphors

Allen Lane - 0312420137



Description: -

- AIDS (Disease) -- Social aspects.AIDS and its metaphors

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## Susan Sontag

Sontag does not limit the scope to which she describes the metaphors. They have to be exposed, criticized, belabored, used up. Conversely, if conscious beings had been born to a world free of disease, they would have still tried to find out how their universe functioned, and they probably would have employed the metaphor as an aid for conceptualizing notions not well understood.

## The fatal power of language / Review of 'AIDS and its Metaphors' by Susan Sontag

One way in which AIDS seems very different from cancer is, according to Sontag, that no one is tempted, at least not yet, to regard it as psychosomatic. Much of my injury does not show up on contemporary tests -- EMG's, CAT scans, MRI's, bone scans, sonograms. Publication Date: August 25, 2001 About the Author Susan Sontag was the author of four novels, including *The Benefactor*, *Death Kit*, *The Volcano Lover*, and *In America*, which won the 2000 National Book Award for fiction; a collection of stories, *I, etcetera*; several plays, including *Alice in Bed*; and nine works of essays, among them *On Photography*, which won the National Books Critics Circle Award for criticism.

## Susan Sontag

There is great analysis of the miasmic thesis that still permeates today. And not necessarily a death sentence. Of course, there are many factors-- such as environmental carcinogens, smoking, etc.

## Susan Sontag

Sontag is amazingly effective when she digs deep into the broader cultural fears that we projected onto this illness, and instead of merely setting up a bunch of cheap Reagan-era straw men to attack Jesse Helms, etc , she delves deeply into the history of why we fear of mass illnesses, about our fundamental mistrust, of the foreign, the different AIDS at the time primarily effected Homosexuals and Africans, two groups laden with socio-political misunderstanding , and how we co-opt certain types of rhetoric, whether, religious AIDS, like syphilis before it, is a divine judgement or military AIDS is an enemy to be guarded against and attacked. Before the advent of AIDS, regarding diseases as a punishment seemed a thing of the past.

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It is simply too early to conclude of a disease identified only seven years ago, that infection will always produce something to die from, or even that everybody who has what is defined as AIDS will die of it. Violence has plagued Mogadishu, the capital, since warlords ousted the former president.

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Consequently AIDS was no different, presented as an infestation of the third world, interestingly enough ignoring perhaps the more pertinent narrative concerning the spread of disease more generally through colonizing Europeans which would have added to the obliteration of indigenous populations and cultures, again something that Sontag notes brilliantly and succinctly. She spends time discussing tuberculars--waif-like, pale, romantic--and cancer patients--repressed, the 'cancer personality,' shame--then goes on to debunk these notions by stating that once the cause, cure, inoculation is found, the 'myth' or popular psychology of the disease no longer holds. We are not being invaded.

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